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The fascination with ornament as an abstract language of form and color triggered an enthusiastic appreciation of the “arts of Islam” that became defined as “decorative” at the turn of the twentieth century. Retrospectively searching for the “essence” of Islamic art in its formative period, European theorists of ornament singled out its principal characteristic as the much-admired arabesque, originating in late antique prototypes that were allegedly transformed by an antinaturalistic Arab spirit, compounded by the strictures of Islam against representational images. Taxonomic classifications subsumed under the overarching category of the eternal arabesque comprised four categories (vegetal, geometric, epigraphic, and figurative), with its stylistic variations attributed to the ethno-racial “character” of different schools: Arabian, Moresque, Persian, Turkish, and Indian.

The still-prevalent fourfold formal taxonomy of ornament reflects an unabated desire to “define the essential character of Islamic art”: a desire that masks the diversity, historicity, and potency of individualized regimes of visuality with their own distinctive ornamental modes. These visual regimes simultaneously provided a global sense of unity to the dār al-İslam (abode of Islam) and negotiated its shifting internal divisions marked by varying degrees of localism. The taxonomic drive that has dominated most scholarship on Islamic ornament, with its encyclopedic connoisseurial agenda, generally seeks uniformity within variety, rather than attempting to account for change, fracture, and discontinuity. Formalist approaches have also overlooked the complex interaction of agencies, both human and nonhuman, in the production and consumption of ornament, that is, the animate and inanimate actors through which decorated objects become enmeshed in networks of intentionality.

The analysis of ornament as a field of cultural production and an active agent in the construction of temporality and spatiality entails considering its circulations in multiple domains. With a few exceptions, studies have tended to resist addressing the workings and efficacy of Islamic ornament in particular times and places. The preference to classify segregated pattern types, decontextualized from multimedia decorative ensembles, has directed attention away from the sensory, cognitive, and experiential affects of ornamented surfaces. The agency of ornament activates and transforms interactions between humans, portable objects, and built environments, thereby promoting new kinds of perceptual and bodily experience that complement rather than negate semiotic signification. Binding together communities of taste and at the same time mediating transcultural exchanges through circulation, decorated artifacts often become extensions of selfhood. By bringing the phenomenology and materiality of objects to the center of art historical inquiry, “thing theory” therefore promises to counterbalance the “power of images” with the potency of ornamented objects and built environments, capable of mediating subject-object relations and constituting subjectivity.

The essentialization of Islamic ornament through formal taxonomies of the timeless arabesque has failed to come to terms with transformations in early modern ornamental aesthetics, characterized by an increasing dose of naturalism that marginalized former abstract
vegetal and geometric designs. This paradigmatic shift remained unnoted by the Viennese art historian Alois Riegl (d. 1905) and his followers who regarded the arabesque as the last stage in the evolution of ornament, constituting the endpoint of a gradual retreat from naturalism since late antiquity. Riegl’s conceptualization of the arabesque as the grand finale of an autonomous progression of vegetal forms, independent of human history, impeded the study of later developments in ornament within Islamic visual cultures. My chapter therefore seeks to draw attention to the transformed visual universe of the early modern period by concentrating on the intertwined modalities of sixteenth-century Ottoman and Safavid ornament, with a particular focus on the former. Steering away from wide-angle lens generalizations about Islamic ornament, I zoom in on the aesthetics and politics of decorative design in these two neighboring rival polities. The close-up view of this interpretative endeavor not only brings into clearer focus the differences between each regime of ornament but also elucidates the problematic nature of the modernist notion of “pure decoration,” assumed to be merely aimed at triggering pleasurable delight.

While ornament may potentially induce pleasure and desire, the “pure aesthetic response is a myth” because it can neither explain the “manifold types of attachment between persons and things,” nor the social or semiotic relationships mediated by them. By the same token, ornament possesses not only the power to seduce but also to irritate, pleasure and repulsion being the two sides of the same coin in certain cases. To give an example, Renaissance grotesque ornaments so enthusiastically embraced in many circles were vehemently detested by sixteenth-century Vitruvian theorists and proponents of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. Naturalistic floral designs and sensually appealing lavish ornaments with little narrative content became the preferred mode of decorating religious architecture in Naples under the Spanish Viceroysof the Counter-Reformation, a sanctioned new mode of decoration in multiple media that complied with the liturgy as redefined by the Council of Trent (1545–63).

It was around the same time that the “classical” modes of ornament, associated with the Safavid and Ottoman territorial empires, respectively, became codified in the courts of Shah Tahmasp I (r. 1524–76) and his archrival Sultan Süleyman I (r. 1520–66). In their capacity to “convey and condense value,” the decorative arts foregrounding skilled craftsmanship contributed to the articulation of identity and difference between individuals, communities, and polities. It is my contention that these two distinctive regimes of ornament were formulated dialogically, in conversation with one another. They each took on a differentiated gestalt by transmuting a formerly shared international Timurid-Turkmen repertory of decorative motifs. I see this aesthetic transformation, through which ornament came to produce visible “distinction,” as a deliberate project of early modern place-making and culture-making, constructed at the interface of multiple agencies.

The remarkable coherence of both local idioms of ornament was informed, to some degree, by centralized or decentralized control of artistic production through royal and elite court scriptoria (kitābkhāna, kutubkhāna, naqqāshkhāna). In these institutions, calligraphers and painter-decorators specializing in the arts of the book
The Theorization of Safavid Ornament: Seven Fundamental Modes of Decorative Design

The Safavid theories of the “two pens” and “seven fundamental modes of decorative design” were both formulated in the court circles of Shah Tahmasp. These complementary theories attempted to augment the legitimacy and status of painter-decorators (sing. naqqāsh) by linking their profession with calligraphy. It has been shown that the theory of the “two pens” made its first appearance in the court poet and historian ‘Abdi Beg Shirazi’s poem, Āyīn-ī Iskandari (The rules of Alexander, ca. 1543–44), in a section titled the “Excellence of Art,” which glorifies artistic achievements during the reign of Shah Tahmasp, who himself was an accomplished painter. A passage in this section identifies the “tip of the pen” (qalam) as the “key to art,” explaining that God created two kinds of pen for the scribe and painter-decorator (the “vegetal” pen and the “animal” pen/brush, respectively), thanks to which the “days of talent have been adorned.” Parts of the text were paraphrased in later sixteenth-century Safavid album prefaces and in Qadi Ahmad’s biographical anthology of calligraphers and painters.17

The theory of the “two pens” echoed the close cooperation between calligraphers and painter-decorators in the Safavid royal workshop-cum-library (kutubkhāna, kitābkhāna), and it found visual expression in albums assembling specimens of calligraphy, illumination, decorative design, and painting. The theorization of the “seven fundamental modes of decorative design” (haft āṣl-i naqqāshāt) as a typological repertoire, paralleling the six pens in calligraphy, first appeared in Qutb al-Din Qissakhvān’s preface to a now-lost album dated 1536–57, where this storyteller of Shah Tahmasp explained, “as in calligraphy, which has six modes, in this art seven fundamental modes are to be found.”18 Yves Porter has perceptively proposed that since Qutb al-Din Qissakhvān paraphrased ‘Abdi Beg Shirazi on the theory of the “two qalams,” the modes of ornament too may have been conceptualized by this poet who, in another poem dated 1559, refers to “decorative designs in the seven fundamental modes” (naqsh ba-haft āṣl) without listing all of their names.19 In fact, previously unnoticed verses in the same poem to which I shall return later do enumerate these names independently, without alluding to the associated concept of the seven modes.20

One of the later Safavid album prefaces elaborating on the interdependent theories of the seven modes and two pens is that of Mir Sayyid-Ahmād in the Amir Ghayb Beg Album, compiled in 1564–65, which follows closely Qutb al-Din Qissakhvān’s preface mentioned above (1556–57).21 Like the court calligrapher Dust Muhammad’s earlier album preface, dedicated to the Safavid prince Bahram Mirza in 1544–45, that of Mir Sayyid-Ahmād attempted to legitimize the profession of painter-decorators by linking it with the Prophet Muhammad’s son-in-law, ‘Alī b. Abī Talib—the revered first Imam of the Twelver Shi‘a Safavid polity. Under the subheading “illuminators and painter-decorators [mudhāhibān va naqqāshān],” Dust Muhammad asserts that “the first person to adorn with painting and illumination the writing of the Word” was Imam ‘Alī: “A few leaves [barg], known in the parlance of painter-decorators [naqqāshān] as Islamic [islāmī] were invented by him.” Hinting at a sense of anxiety felt by the practitioners of this noble “art/craft [fann],” he offers further consolation: “If, by the externality of the religious law [shari‘a], the masters of depiction [arbāb-i taṣwīr] hang their head in shame, nonetheless what is gained from the writings of the great is that this craft originated with the prophet Daniel.” Dust Muhammad concludes that therefore the figural painter’s “conscience need not be pricked by the thorn of despair.”22

The story of the invention of abstract foliate ornament is further elaborated in Mir Sayyid-Ahmād’s preface by recourse to an imagined contest between
painter-decorators from Cathay (China) and Imam ‘Ali. The Cathayan artists supposedly challenge him by adorning a page with floral lotus scrolls, which they call “Cathayan [khaṭā’ī].” In response to this challenge, Imam ‘Ali draws “a charming islāmī that astonished the people of Cathay and when that prototype [aṣl] fell into their hands, all other decorative designs [naqshhā] were lesser in their view.”

These two modes of decorative design were fully integrated into the Ottoman and Safavid repertories of ornament. The first mode, referred to in earlier Timurid texts as islāmī and corresponding to the vegetal arabesque is the split palmette scroll derived from the vine and acanthus. The second mode, known as khaṭā’ī, is the Chinese lotus scroll. Sometimes featuring cloud bands and inhabited by dragons, phoehixes, auspicious mythical animals, and angels, it became domesticated in the eastern Islamic lands by the Mongols during the first half of the thirteenth century. A Turkish poem dated 1493–94, which eulogizes Sultan Mehmed II’s royal mosque in the Ottoman capital Istanbul, identifies the principal elements of its decorative repertoire as the foliate split palmette scroll (rūmī, synonymous with islāmī) and the Chinese floral lotus scroll (khaṭā’ī, or khiṭā’ī), the same motifs that dominated Timurid-Turkmen ornament. These motifs are deployed individually and jointly, in combination with curvilinear geometric matrices, in the so-called Baba Nakkaş Album, which preserves calligraphies and decorative designs attributed to Mehmed II’s (r. 1444–46, 1451–81) court workshop (fig. 11.1).

The transmutation of the Timurid term islāmī into islāmī is a conceit only encountered in Safavid texts. Its identification as a quintessentially “Islamic” prototype finds no counterpart in the relatively more secular contemporary Ottoman sources, which label the vegetal arabesque as islāmī, following Timurid precedent, or alternatively as rūmī (pertaining to the lands of Rum: the Ottoman Empire’s formerly Roman territories in Anatolia and the Balkans). The latter term is a regional rather than religious denomination, unlike the Safavid term islāmī (Islamic). It may well allude to the predominance of abstract foliate scrolls, often accompanied by geometric interlace motifs, in the ornamental repertoires of the Rum Seljuk sultanate and the post-Mongol Turkmen successor principalities of Anatolia (Rum), including the early Ottomans. If so, this geographical term assigns a territorial identity to the international split palmette scroll, thereby indigenizing it. The Safavid interpretation of the same decorative motif as “Islamic” curiously echoes the nineteenth-century European conceptualization of the vegetal arabesque in religious terms, albeit within an ethno-racial framework that associated it with an Arab mindset. This reveals that ornamental motifs could carry specific contextual associations, which were not universally shared.

The construction of a genealogy traced back to Imam ‘Ali—imagined to be a master calligrapher and illuminator, who was the first to decorate samples of writing with foliate scrolls bearing his own signature—reveals the mythmaking propensity of Safavid authors, intent on boosting the legality and status of painting. This may have been a response to the anxiety caused by the proliferation of figural imagery during the first half of the sixteenth century, which became far more visible in the public domain of Safavid Iran than in the Ottoman Empire. Legitimation attempts encountered in
Persian texts on the arts must be seen, in my view, against the backdrop of Shah Tahmasp’s growing religious strictness in the late 1540s and his promulgation of two successive edicts of Sincere Repentance (tawḥīda), which publicly endorsed the prohibitions of the shari’a. The timing of these public repentances from “forbidden acts” overlapped with Ottoman-Safavid military confrontations, accompanied by religious polemics that played no small role in dialogically shaping the visual cultures of each dynasty. The first edict was issued in 940 (1533–34) at a time of war with the Ottomans, culminating in Shah Tahmasp’s loss of Arab Iraq and its venerated Shi’a shrines to Sultan Süleyman. The second edict was promulgated in 963 (1555–56) immediately after the signing of the 1555 Amasya Peace Treaty between the two monarchs, which stipulated that the Safavid shah should enforce the shari’a in his domains. The latter edict overlapped with a “puritanical turn” and intensification of Tahmasp’s religious politics and his releasing from court service of poets, musicians, and painters, with the exception of a few favorites.27

In 1555–56, Tahmasp moved with his court to the new Safavid capital Qazvin, which replaced Tabriz because it was too close to the Ottoman frontier. Even though the practice of figurative painting did not cease, especially in architectural decoration, the move to Qazvin promoted a “reformed” style in the arts, codified by the few painter-decorators who had been the shah’s companions, primarily the master of figural painting (muṣawver) and drawing-design (ṭaḥrī) Muzaffar ‘Ali (a relative of the famous Bihzad and the teacher of Sadiqi Beg, the royal librarian of Shah ‘Abbas). Referring to this artist, the Safavid historian Iskandar Beg Munshi writes: “The paintings of the royal palace [in Qazvin], and of the royal assembly in the Čhehel Sotūn hall [completed ca. 1556], were drawn by him, and most of the painting was also his work.”28 Artistic reform kept pace with religious-political reform, aimed at strengthening the dynastic state and reducing the threatening factionalism of the Turkic qizilbash confederation. Located within a vast paradisiacal garden in Qazvin, the shah’s palace complex, whose construction began around 951 (1544–45), would reach completion by 965 (1558–59). At that time, Tahmasp commissioned from ‘Abdi Beg Shirazi poems in Persian that eulogized the newly finished royal palace, which are collected in the poet’s Khamsa (Quintet) titled Jannāt al-‘Adan (Gardens of Eden). As we shall see, some verses in this collection describe and name the seven decorative modes deployed in multiple media on the ornamented surfaces of major royal edifices, replete with poetic inscriptions and figural paintings depicting lyrical themes borrowed from Persian poetry (mostly Nizami), courtly pursuits (e.g., hunts, equestrian games, picnics, garden outings), and wars celebrating Tahmasp’s victories against the Georgians and Ottomans.29

It is not a coincidence, then, that the theorization of the seven modes—missing from Dust Muhammad’s earlier album preface (1544–45) and from the extant prefaces of two now-lost late Timurid albums—was formulated soon after the Amasya Treaty: a turning point that ushered in socio-political reorganization and the aspiration to bring Safavid Shi’ism closer in line with the shari’a. Around 1550, the elderly Sultan Süleyman too would develop religious scruples. Giving up listening to musical instruments and wearing silk robes, he removed gold and silver wares from his table in favor of china and ceramic plates, “in each case distinguishing what was canonically allowed and forbidden” by the shari’a.30

We should not forget that this was also a century of religious ferment in Christian Europe, where diatribes launched against the Roman Catholic Church by the Protestant Reformation hinged on the question of images and luxuriant ornamentation, culminating in the Catholic Counter-Reformation during the Council of Trent. Recent studies have posited that the parallel fashioning of competitive identities and religious orthodoxies in the Habsburg, Ottoman, and Safavid empires developed in dialogue with each other during the second half of the sixteenth century: an age of confessionalization and imperial polarization with “intimately relational, deeply intertwined” religious sensibilities.31 This is not to suggest that there was a comparable codification of “Sunni” and “Shi’i” artistic norms, but an a priori denial of any impact of heightened religious concerns on Ottoman and Safavid cultural politics is equally unwarranted.32

To return to the theorization in Safavid sources of the “seven fundamental modes of decorative design,” Qurb al-Din Qissakhvan’s album preface (1556–57) lists the following formal typologies: islāmī (Islamic), ḥaṭṭā’ī (Cathayan, chinoiserie), farangī (Frankish, European), fašālī (compartmentalized), abr (cloudlike, marbled), dāq (isic), should be vāq (inhabited scroll or grotesque with human and animal heads), and girīh (knotted, geometric interlace).33 A slightly modified version of this list appears in hitherto overlooked verses of ‘Abdi Beg’s 1559 poem, in the following order: ḥaṭṭā’ī, nilūfār (lotus), abr, farangi,
terns, was codified in a probably late-fifteenth-century mode, comprising interlocking star- and- polygon patterns the Great that mirrored the cosmos.38

passing counterparts in nature, to the mirror of Alexandr eulogizing the vivid India, in favor of naturalistic flowers. Contemporary texts jali girihbandī motifs to floor pavements and openwork windows. The theorization of the seven fundamental modes in Safavid sources is much more complex than the modern fourfold taxonomy of Islamic ornament, comprising the vegetal, geometric, calligraphic, and figural variants of the so-called arabesque. These four categories were even subsumed by Ernst Herzfeld under a single one, holistically “denoting the ornament of the art of the Muslim countries.” Referring to the arabesque, he writes:

It would indeed be possible to distinguish these from the arabesque, taking this word in a narrow sense, and to class them under the term “iconography”; but the value of these figurative elements is for the most part purely ornamental, while their composition is frequently closely connected with or even inseparable from the arabesque.

Echoing Goethe, Herzfeld rhapsodizes:

All provincial developments, apart from a few exceptions, change the style of the arabesque in its outward features only. The essential characteristics of the arabesque are preserved throughout, both as regards the
composition and the elements; there is therefore only one and the same arabesque in antiquity as well as in modern times, in the East and the West, and the South as well as the North.  

Differing from the fourfold classification of Herzfeld, the sevenfold Safavid taxonomy not only distinguishes between more numerous modes of decorative design but also treats calligraphy as an autonomous domain, entirely separate from yet parallel to that of ornament, rather than a subcategory of the arabesque. Furthermore, each domain is subdivided into “fundamental modes/prototypes” (aṣl) with derivative variants or branches (far), as noted in the painting manual by Sadiqi Beg, who stated that, once the seven modes are grasped, one “should have no difficulty with the variations.” The professional tips that he provided to practitioners, who must have “natural talent,” included attaching equal weight to the actual design (whatever it may be) and to the field in which its lies, drawing the circles of rosettes (gulbā-yi mudavvar) with maximum precision, and if desired, to connect the designs by an interlacing tendril without becoming “overly impatient” in neglecting “linking-hooks on the interlacing tendrils.” Like the principal modes and their variants classified in Islamic treatises on poetry and music, those of calligraphy and decorative design allowed a remarkably varied spectrum for creative improvisation, resulting in captivating artistic performances.

It is not always easy to identify the “seven fundamental modes,” because they often appear in combination with one another and in hybrid permutations. These modes not only formed the backbone of Safavid manuscript illumination but also of decorative design in multiple media, intimately connected with the book arts (fig. 11.2). Even though the seven modes were primarily theorized in Safavid texts with reference to manuscript illumination, their wider relevance to the decorative arts becomes apparent in Ottoman and Mughal sources that use similar terminologies for architectural ornament in diverse media. In fact, ‘Abdi Beg’s 1559 poem testifies to the extensive deployment of the seven modes in the architectural decoration (with mural paintings and tile revetments) of Shah Tahmasp’s recently completed palatial complex in Qazvin, surrounded by the garden palaces of his entourage. The poet likens the wondrous ornaments by painter-decorators (naqqāsh), which combined “decorative designs and figural images” (nuqūsh va suvar) addressing the “possessors of perceptive vision” (gāhib-nazar), to microcosmic reflections on the mirror of Alexander the Great (a comparison made above, with reference to the aniconic floral imagery of the Taj Mahal in later Mughal sources). ‘Abdi Beg’s allusion to both nonfigural and figural motifs (including angels, humans, real and mythical animals) in describing the seven decorative modes deployed at the Qazvin palace implies that they were not limited to aniconic designs. This is all the more likely, given that the purpose of their theorization and canonization in Safavid texts was largely intended to legitimize figural painting and design as an offshoot of manuscript illumination, embellishing the written word.

That the seven modes offered both aniconic and figurative alternatives can also be deduced from the relative flexibility observed in their amalgamation in Safavid arts and architecture. This predilection toned down the difference between decorative and representational art, that is, between ornament and image. Yet the distinction of ornament from ornamentality is important to maintain, so as to avoid conflating decorative designs and representational depictions comprising decorative elements.

The softening of boundaries between these categories was facilitated by the workshop training of multi-talented Safavid painter-decorators in diverse genres of picture making. Sadiqi Beg’s manual of painting explains that the seven modes of “decorative design” (naqqāshi) were complemented by two genres: “figural painting” (gūrat-gari) and “animal design” (janvar-sāzī). The author recommends that “figural painting” should be nourished by the direct observation of “Mother Nature alone,” unlike “decorative design” and “animal design” (real or imaginary), where the “shifting values of observation are not a desideratum; instead, a solitude for past models is at a premium.” The practitioners of the latter two genres must therefore modify archetypal models by old masters through “artful imitation” (tatābbū). Yet Sadiqi points to the “undesirability of repeating identical patterns” in a composition, which may indeed “have some magical appeal,” but ultimately becomes “monotonous.” In other words, representational figural art and portraiture should aim at a greater degree of mimetic naturalism than relatively more convention-bound decorative design, whether figurative or nonfigurative. Nonetheless, the relative fluidity and porosity of boundaries between these three genres (decorative, figural, animal design) is attested by
their frequent merging in Safavid ornamental compositions in different media including book arts, architectural decoration, textiles, carpets, metalwork, ceramic vessels, and tilework (fig. 11.3).40

Such a fluidity is also implied by Mir Sayyid-Ahmad’s album preface, which interprets both the seven modes and the figural images of painter-decorators as evocative mimetic abstractions of the cosmos, distilled from the divine artist’s wondrous creation: “They follow God’s craft from the compass of the spheres to the surface of the earth; / With their gazes fixed on creation, they take an image from every prototype.”41 No clear separation is made here between representational and decorative design, in keeping with the preface’s agenda to legitimate the depiction of animate beings through a genealogical connection with the illumination of calligraphy.

These boundaries would become more rigidly defined in the Ottoman regime of visuality, characterized from around the 1540s and 1550s onward by a predominantly floral, aniconic decorative repertoire in the applied arts and architecture, along with the confinement of figural representation largely to the arts of the book. This phenomenon coincided with the climate of growing religious orthodoxy in the later part of Sultan Süleyman’s reign, after which foreign visitors began to
Fig. 11.3. (a) Detail of figural knotted-pile carpet with a riding hunter, Safavid Iran, dated 949 (1542–43); wool and cotton pile on a cotton and silk foundation. Museo Poldi Pezzoli (ct.1), Milan. (b) Silk lampas textile fragment, riding horseman and child with male prisoner, mid-sixteenth century. Metropolitan Museum of Art (purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1932 [no. 32.20.12]), New York. (c) Velvet fragment with scenes of Khosraw and Shirin, mid-sixteenth century; cut voided silk velvet with precious metal thread. Topkapi Palace Museum (no. 13/1697), Istanbul. (d) Falconer with attendant, Safavid Iran, mid-sixteenth century; cut and voided velvet, satin weave foundation, faced with a silvery foil-wrapped silk. Cleveland Museum of Art (purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund [acc. no. 1944.239]), Cleveland, Ohio.
comment on the differing attitudes toward images in the Ottoman and Safavid domains. Reinhold Lubenau (1887–89), for example, reported that unlike the Iranians, who were fond of images “painted or woven in clothes,” the Turks abhorred figural representations.49

An Aniconic Universe: Ottoman Discourses on Ornament

Variants of the seven modes were familiar in the Ottoman context, judging by the terminology of pattern types in Iznik tiles made for two shore kiosks at the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul in the 1590s: epigraphy (muhatta, khatt), split palmette scroll (naqṣ-ı rümi), Cathayan (naqṣ-ı kitâyi), tulip (naqṣ-ı lâle), grape (naqṣ-ı engûr, naqṣ-ı aşma), split palmette scroll-cum-grape (naqṣ-ı rûmî ve engûr), cloud or marble (naqṣ-ı bulad, naqṣ-ı ebrû, naqṣ-ı mermer).49 This list exemplifies the addition of naturalistic motifs to traditional ones, which became the hallmark of the “classical” Ottoman repertoire of aniconic ornament in the second half of the sixteenth century. The chief architect Sinan’s autobiography, written in the mid-1580s, praises the royal tribune of the Selimiye Mosque (1568–74) in Edirne, decorated with Iznik tiles, for its innovative combination of designs in the khaṭa’i, rûmi (probably the geometric band-i rûmi), islîmî, and ‘irâqi modes, on which “many peerless masters expended eye-straining effort.” The latent paradisiacal associations of quasi-naturalistic floral designs, featuring blossoming Prunus trees and tulips, which frame the private mihrab of this royal tribune, were made explicit by a Qur’anic inscription expressing the patron, Sultan Selim II’s wish to be placed “among the inheritors of the Garden of Delight” (26:85). The mosque’s projecting public mihrab alcove is compared in Sinan’s autobiography to “a rose / flower garden of paradise, with the adornments of springtime,” and the flowing rhythms of its Qur’anic inscriptions in the majuscule thuluth script, designed by the “unrivalled” calligrapher Hasan Karahisâri, are likened to the river of Selsebil in paradise. The elaborately painted monumental dome of this microcosmic monument, in turn, is described as “lavishly draped with satin and silk brocades which to the seeing-eye appears an exemplar of the nine spheres.”50 By implication, the Selimiye’s domical superstructure with inscription medallions and painted designs recalling textile patterns evoked metaphors of a flourishing cosmos infused with harmonious order.

Floral ornament could simultaneously elicit celestial and terrestrial metaphors, judging by the parallelism in Ottoman court poetry between the “garden of paradise” and the “garden of the state and religion” cultivated by the caliph-sultan and his representatives, a parallel attested later on in poems glorifying the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (d. 1666). The metaphorical association of floral imagery with the Ottoman regime is unambiguously articulated in the Iraqi Turkmen poet Fuzuli’s famous poem celebrating the 1534 conquest of Safavid Baghdad by Sultan Süleyman, which turned the city into a blooming paradisiacal garden of justice. Replete with the rhetoric of flowers, this poem refers to the divinely appointed ruler as the “just gardener” who is “the rose of the garden of the caliphate.” Likewise, the crown prince Mehmed was referred to in 1582 as “the newly sprouted rose-bud of the state in the rose garden of the caliphate” and as the “bud of the garden of the sultanate.” A poem by Nev’i (d. 1599) eulogizing the paradise-garden-like palace of the vizier Siyavuş Pasha, on the other hand, attributed the youthful bloom of flowers in the “rose garden of the state” to the pasha’s guardianship.51 The equally prevalent image of the garden as a site of pleasure fostering the cultivation of sensual and cultural delights, hints at the multivalent evocative power of floral ornament, dependent on context and resonating with poetic imagery.52

Despite the usage of the seven fundamental modes in the Ottoman context, their theorization is notably absent in contemporary texts, as is the corresponding theory of the two pens. Instead, the divinely bestowed power of artistic invention is a key concept in Ottoman Turkish writings on the arts and architecture, in which the ideal of mimetic abstraction occupies a central position. The differing versions of Sinan’s autobiography are a prime example of the valuation of creative innovation.53 Yet another example is the biographical anthology of calligraphers and painter-decorators written by the polymath and bureaucrat-scribe Mustafa ‘Ali in 1586–87. This compendium attests to the currency of comparable yet distinctive discourses on these fields of artistic expertise in the “lands of Rum.” In accordance with the Ottoman court’s official Sunni orientation, the author marginalizes the prominence given in the Safavid literature on the arts to the first Shi’i Imam ‘Ali. He is identified as one of the four rightly guided caliphs, who along with other scribes in the Prophet’s entourage practiced calligraphy. Moreover, there is no mention of his inven-
tion of the islāmi (Islamic) motif, nor of his competition with artists from China in Mustafa ‘Ali’s text.14

This anthology highlights the regional distinctiveness of “rümü” (Ottoman) aesthetic sensibilities from those of Iran “acem.” A competitive rivalry permeates the text, which is infused with comparisons between the relative skills of artists in both regions. Interestingly, the author is critical of the masters of Rum who stubbornly showed resistance to a learning process based on the imitation of works by great masters.15 This can partly be explained by the dissolution of familial kinship ties in the relatively more centralized corporate structure of court workshops in Istanbul, where stricter Iranian imitative practices passing from father to son, or master to disciple were not adhered to.16 In another work, Mustafa ‘Ali considers it a “defect” of poets in the Ottoman lands (diyār-ı rūm) that, instead of finding a mentor (mürşid) and following a master (üstād), they were content with their own views (dāniş ü bīniş) in the process of acquiring skill, unlike the poets of Iran (“acem”).17

The rivalry with Iranian artists is also implied in an Ottoman biographical anthology of poets, written in 1546 by the poet Latifi, who criticizes the lack of innovation in the ornate style of poetry, merely “translated” Persian poetry by dressing it in Turkish clothes. Hinting at an “anxiety of influence,” this anthology celebrates the development of a more distinctive Rumi style in poetry, just around the time when a “classical” Ottoman aesthetic was emerging in architecture and the visual arts during the reign of Sultan Süleyman. The author proudly declares that the current Ottoman masters of poetry and prose had created an original manner of their own, distinguished from the aesthetic of Iran that used to be previously fashionable. That is why the contemporary poet Keşfi, an Istanbulite who composed Persian and Ottoman Turkish poems in the ornate style of poets in Iran, failed to achieve fame because he did not follow “the manner of the poets of Rum.” Latifi disparages imitative poets in favor of divinely talented ones, who directly emulate God’s creation, instead of deriving art from art. Criticizing the overly complex prose of some poets in Iran, from which even experts cannot “derive pleasure,” he prefers a less ornate style.18 Latifi considers himself to have invented a “new style” (tarz-ı nes) of eloquent prose, which was “picted and drawn on the tablet/page” of his mirrorlike pure heart: an allusion to the eternal Preserved Tablet (lawh al-mahfūz) of divine creation. He thus sets a limit to mimesis by tempering the naturalistic imitation of the cosmos through the mediation of mental abstraction.19

The same spirit of artistic innovation can be detected in the development of a seminaturalistic floral aesthetic in Ottoman ornament, which conspicuously departed from the former “translation” of international Timurid-Turkmen models into a local idiom. In my interpretation, this heightened self-consciousness of stylistic distinctiveness, closely associated with dynastic identity politics, contributed to the construction of increasingly differentiated idioms of ornament in the Ottoman and Safavid territorial empires, as both politics drifted away from their previously shared artistic heritage. While elements of mimesis and the reflexivity between microcosm and macrocosm were common in the sixteenth-century ornamental repertories of each polity, replete with garden imagery, Safavid artists relied more heavily on prototypes perpetuated by master-pupil relationships, whereas their Ottoman colleagues preferred to draw on divinely bestowed talent in the interplay of nature, art, and artifice.

Ottoman Floral Ornament: A Transcultural Aesthetic of Mimetic Abstraction

Novel experiments that laid the foundations of the Ottoman “classical” synthesis were triggered by the integration into Istanbul’s centralized court workshops of a cosmopolitan group of both native and imported artists, originating from the Safavid capital Tabriz (occupied in 1514, 1534, 1548, and 1585–1603), the Mamluk Sultanate of Syria and Egypt (abolished in 1517), the Balkans, and Europe. The professional apprentices trained by these experts became the masters of the next generation by the second half of the sixteenth century.20 The relative unity of taste across media was enhanced by the cross-fertilization of influences between royal workshops in the capital and their semicommercial and commercial counterparts in other Ottoman cities.

Archival documents from the 1520s through the 1530s confirm the sometimes disputed agency of painter-decorators (naqqāş) employed in Sultan Süleyman’s court scriptorium (naqqāşhane) in this process of cross-fertilization. The scriptorium not only supplied designs but on occasion loaned painter-decorators to other royal workshops in Istanbul, including those of tent makers, tile makers, and carpet weavers.21 The cross-cultural
exchange of design concepts was mediated by the agency of drawings on paper, like those sent to Venice in 1554, accompanied with written instructions for luxury fabrics privately commissioned by two Ottoman pashas. Around the mid-sixteenth century, the much expanded imperial workshop of luxury silk textiles in Istanbul began to regularly employ eight specialized textile designers (naqshbend) who, in addition to translating fashionable design types developed in the court scriptorium into repeat units drawn to scale for programmed looms, improvised artistic inventions of their own.

An early reference I found to a naqshbend employed in Istanbul’s imperial textile manufactory appears in a register of royal expenses (1527–31), which lists payments he received for making three drawings consisting of a rose (resm-kerden-i güllü), a carnation (resm-kerden-i qaranfil), and the mythical Huma bird or phoenix (resm-kerden-i murg-i humâ). The same register contains a revealing reference to the costs of making “a drawing for an ornamented carpet (resm-kerden-i qâlîqe-i múnaqqâş) by the hand of Usta Shah Quli Naqqâş,” who also refurbished and illuminated a Yâsuf va Zulaykhâ manuscript at that time, which proves that painter-decorators did provide designs for carpets. This multitalented Safavid artist was a specialist of design/drawing (tureh, ressâm), who moved from Tabriz to Amasya in 1514 or perhaps earlier. Shah Quli officially joined the corps of royal painter-decorators in Istanbul in the 1520s, after initially being paid from the private royal purse. According to Mustafa Ali, Sultan Süleyman honored him with a private workshop in the Imperial Palace and made him chief court painter-decorator. Rising to that post in the mid-1540s, this celebrated artist was succeeded upon his death by his native pupil Kara Memi in 1557.

Shah Quli is particularly renowned for his ink drawings in the “Cathayan” (khâtî’i) manner, dubbed by modern art historians the “saz style.” His designs in this Sinicizing manner evoke an imaginary world of lush vegetation with serrated leaves, lotus palmettes, and rosettes, often inhabited by winged fairies and auspicious mythical animals. Mustafa Ali specifies that Shah Quli had been trained by the famous Safavid master Aqa Mirak, who according to Sadiqi Beg’s manual of painting was a “true pearl of the Sea of Marvels,” capable of distinguishing “properly between the principles of figural painting [sûrat-garî] and those of animal-design [jânvar-sâzêl].” On the basis of an archival document, I have proposed elsewhere that the unrivaled masterpieces of the “Cathayan” manner in blue-white-turquoise underglaze painted ceramic tiles, reassembled after a seventeenth-century fire at the Sultan Odası of the Topkapı Palace, must have been based on stencils designed by Shah Quli in 1527–28. Payments made that year to the royal workshop of ceramicists (kâşkânâne-i hâşa) in Istanbul, refer to a team of painter-decorators who participated in the creation of custom-made tiles for a “new kiosk” commissioned by Sultan Süleyman at his royal palace. Such collaboration is reflected in the finely veined designs of these unusually large five-“picture panels,” composed of Sinicizing lotus palmettes and saz foliage inhabited by mythical qilins and birds. These unique panels differ considerably from less detailed and mostly aniconic versions of the full-blown saz style on later tiles, produced well into the seventeenth century in the semicommercial workshops of Iznik. Those workshops replaced the exclusive small royal atelier of Istanbul for the large-scale production of ceramic tiles during the chief architect Sinan’s tenure between 1539 and 1588.

A biographical anthology of Ottoman poets completed in 1568–69 testifies to the wide-ranging skills of Naqqâş Shah Quli, the “second Mani of the lands of Rum,” who wrote poetry under the pen name “Penâhi.” His unsurpassed talent in “figural painting” (muşavvîrîk) rivaled that of Bihzad, just as his expertise in the “seven fundamental modes of decorative design” (heft aṣl-i naqqâş) aroused the jealousy of the “eight paradies.” Like his master and colleagues in Iran, then, Shah Quli was fully conversant with the sevenfold taxonomy of decorative design and the conventions of representational figural painting. His artistic versatility was in keeping with the absence of rigid boundaries between decorative and representational court arts in the Safavid context.

Given Shah Quli’s expertise in decorative design, it is not surprising that his pupil and successor, Kara Memi, was primarily a specialist of illumination. This reveals the greater degree of specialization in Istanbul’s court scriptorium (naqqaşhânâne), whose staff was divided in the second half of the sixteenth century into two groups of “Ottoman” (rûmîyân) and “foreign” (‘acêmân) masters, the latter mostly but not entirely originating from Iran. That division may have intensified the consciousness of stylistic difference and the concomitant rûmî anxiety of ‘acêmî influence. The invention of innovative ornamental idioms by two successive Otto-
man chief painter-decorators, who were closely connected with the person and court of Sultan Süleyman, signals the great prestige of the applied arts as the “public face” of the empire, given the confinement of illustrated manuscripts and albums to a more private realm.

Kara Memi would subvert the Safavid paradigm of the seven fundamental modes with manuscript illuminations featuring botanically identifiable scrolls and bunches of flowers emerging from leafy mounds. The selective naturalism of this style injected new life into traditional abstract floral sprays in the “Cathayan” manner. The “classical” Ottoman decorative repertoire, distinguished by ubiquitous groupings of recognizable species of flowers, rose to prominence during Kara Memi’s tenure as chief court painter-decorator (naqqāşbaşı) in the late 1550s and 1560s. A manuscript of Sultan Süleyman’s Divān (Collected poems), dated 1566 and signed in a cartouche by “the poor and humble illuminator Kara Memi [müzehtib el-faqr Qara Memi el-haqir],” is illuminated with variegated floral designs (fig. 11.4).

It is assumed that the flowers of the new court style associated with Kara Memi were derived from illustrated European herbals. Mughal floral ornament codified later in the seventeenth century does, indeed, closely echo
The Ottoman taste for idealized depictions of gardens, with delightfully mixed bunches of flowers and blossoming trees, began to surface during the 1530s and 1540s in the polychromatic “Damascus phase” of Iznik tile panels and wares. They also appeared in a lacquer binding attributed to Kara Memi (fig. 11.5) and in a cut-paper garden (qaṭ’i) ascribed to the celebrated decoupage artist Efşancı Mehmed (d. 1534–35) (figs. 11.6a, 11.6b). The latter was a poet and imperial chancellery scribe closely affiliated with the royal court, who excelled in cut-paper calligraphies and flower gardens. No longer able to practice his art because he suffered from gout in old age, he retired and created a famous garden in Istanbul where nature imitated art. In it Efşancı Mehmed planted rare specimens of fruit trees and flowers for which he paid huge sums and invented poetic names. This earthly paradise, where he was eventually buried, became a garden club frequented by literati, artists, refined urbanites, and the youthful Sultan Süleyman, escorted by his favorite grand vizier Ibrahim Pasha (d. 1536).

The exuberant naturalism and vibrant colors of the multilayered Ottoman cut-paper garden that is illustrated here differs significantly from the abstract intricacy of a mid-fifteenth-century single-layer, cut-paper landscape featuring stylized trees and shrubs with perched birds, attributable to the Qaraqoyunlu or Aqqoyunlu Turkmen courts in Iran (fig. 11.6c). Comprising a great variety of trees, spring blossoms, and flowers, the Ottoman garden is framed by cartouches inscribed with a Turkish qasida in muḥaqqaq script. The verses celebrate the arrival of spring, which is personified as a carpet-layer that spreads on a grass meadow a convoy of flowers like the white jasmine and dark violet, resembling day and night. The new Ottoman floral aesthetic, which came into full bloom during the third quarter of the sixteenth century, found its paradigmatic expression in Iznik tiles, brocaded silk textiles, and to a lesser extent court carpets. It subordinated the bookish “seven fundamental modes of decorative design” to a selective repertoire of identifiable flowers (dominated by tulips, rosebuds, hyacinths, and carnations), often accompanied by geometric interlaces, foliate split palmette scrolls, floral lotus palmettes, Chinese cloud bands, wavy tiger stripes and triple dots continued to be used individually or in combination with one another (fig. 11.7). The uninhibited fusion of recognizable flower species with elements of European herbals and florilegia, as it generally comprises single-specie flowers growing from stems. However, Ottoman floral sprays often mix several species, unlike illustrations in herbals. Moreover, the tulip and hyacinth, which became favorite motifs in the Ottoman design repertory during the second quarter of the sixteenth century, were not even known in Europe at that time. I therefore prefer to interpret the increased naturalism of Ottoman floral ornament as a creative transformation of the “Cathayan” mode dominated by imaginary lotus-peony flowers and foliage. Istanbul’s royal and elite gardens too featured a diverse assortment of flowers, judging by the observation of a French traveler writing in 1573: “One can scarcely imagine how fond the Turks are of flowers, how they always hold them in their hands or (tuck them) into the folds of their turbans, treating them almost as a sacred thing. And the Grand Seigneur, if he finds any tree that pleases him more than others, plants in its shade many flowers of all kinds and of all scents. And in each of his gardens there is such a quantity of all kinds of flowers that merely by extending one’s hand one can pluck a mixed and varied bouquet of every imaginable hue.”

The creation of a quasi-naturalistic floral aesthetic in the visual arts paralleled the emergence of a burgeoning garden culture and an international flower market in the Ottoman capital. The city’s passionate floriculturists included Sufi shaykhs and the grand mufti Ebussuud Efendi (d. 1574), who cultivated new types of tulips named after him. It is no coincidence, then, that the earliest known example of an Ottoman Turkish agricultural treatise was written around the mid-sixteenth century. Titled Revnaq-ı Bustân (Splendor of gardens), its anonymous author explained that his ardent fondness for gardening made him create a “soul cheering” famous paradisiacal garden near Edirne, “decorated” with beautiful flowers and fruits. Despite such convergence of interest in the natural world, artistic exchanges with “objective/rational” scientific investigations are not to be found in the Ottoman context, where naturalistic floral ornament retained a metaphorical overtone. By contrast, in Italy we see the likes of the Bolognese natural scientist/botanist Ulisse Aldovrandi (d. 1603) collaborate with the painter-decorator Jacopo Ligozzi, whom the Grand Duke Francesco I de’ Medici invited to Florence in 1578. Such collaboration was complemented by the foundation in Rome of an academy of sciences (Accademia dei Lincei) in 1603, with its branch in Naples established in 1612.
excerpted from the seven modes and with other motifs (trees, pomegranates, artichokes, grapes, peacock feathers, sunbursts, crescents, stars, seals of Solomon, crowns, vases, lamps, medallions, arches, and colonnades) engendered a remarkably expressive aniconic visual idiom with an unmistakable identity of its own. Pushing the ideal of mimetic abstraction to its utmost limits, the selective naturalism of this innovative aesthetic mediated between nature and convention, the real and the imaginary.

The most luxurious silk fabrics were produced from the 1520s onward in the royal workshop of Istanbul, complemented by the semicommercial and commercial products of other Ottoman centers such as Bursa, Amasya, Baghdad, Aleppo, Damascus, and Chios (conquered from the Genoese in 1566). Unlike the more loosely ordered small-scale patterns of contemporary Safavid luxury fabrics, the repeat units of Ottoman textiles followed a limited number of layouts, echoing those of their Italian counterparts, especially ogival lattices and undulating vertical stems.79 Textile patterns with these two favorite layouts began to appear in the 1560s in Iznik tiles, whose unprecedented color scheme
Fig. 11.6 (a) Cut-paper garden and (b) a detail, attributed to Efıancı Mehmed, *Album of Shâh Mahmûd Nîshâpûri*, early sixteenth century. Istanbul University Library (F. 1426, fol. 47a), Istanbul. (c) Cut-paper intertwined trees and shrubs on a mound with perched birds, Qaraqoyunlu or Aqqoyunlu Turkmen, mid-fifteenth century. Topkapı Palace Museum (Album H. 2153, fol. 193a), Istanbul.
Fig. 11.7. (a) Long-sleeved Ottoman kaftan with an ogival vine bearing medallions, tulips, and blossoms, polychrome silk and no metal thread, a variety of kemhā (lampas) known as serenk, third quarter of the sixteenth century. Topkapi Palace Museum (inv. no. 13/932), Istanbul. (b) Short-sleeved Ottoman kaftan with stars and flowers in a wavy lattice, polychrome silk brocade with gold thread (kemhā) against a white background, third quarter of the sixteenth century. Topkapi Palace Museum (inv. no. 13/31), Istanbul.
expanded the former blue-white-turquoise palette with the addition of tomato red and green. The aesthetic impact of textiles on the Iznik tile industry is attested by tile revetments made in the early 1590s for the two royal shore pavilions at the Topkapı Palace mentioned above. These were based on drawings on paper prepared by a non-Muslim designer of patterned silk brocades (kemhâ), named Kemhacı Bali. The drawings were sent to Iznik together with forty-nine stencils for inscriptions created by a designer (ressâm) called Mehmed Çelebi. The painted decorations of these pavilions were executed by thirteen royal painter-decorators and their chief, Lutfi (Lutfullah) Agha, a team whose skills certainly transcended the arts of the book.81

The new colors and designs of Iznik tiles came closer to those of textiles, court carpets, and painted woodwork, dominated by red. Persianate color-glazed (cuerda seca) tile revetments used up to the late 1540s were abandoned in favor of predominantly white-ground underglaze tiles with vitrified, glasslike surfaces, which more effectively harmonized with the white stone and marble walls of Sinan’s light-filled architectural interiors. The transformation of Iznik into the leading center for imperial tileworks (complemented by provincial workshops in Diyarbakır and Damascus) turned the production of ceramic vessels into a subordinate offshoot of the tile industry. Sinan’s artistic agency likely played a role in this development, for the Iznik workshops had been placed under the jurisdiction of chief architects ever since the reign of Mehmed II.82

Religious and profane monuments built by Sinan and his team of court architects provided surfaces for the harmonious orchestration and display of applied arts in diverse media. The more lavishly decorated interiors of palaces and pavilions constituted visually dazzling multisensory and multimedia environments, whose aesthetic experience dissolved the emotive versus cognitive dichotomy. Ornamental resonances between bodies wrapped in patterned robes, furnishings, and architectural interiors promoted unified sensory-mental experiences through synesthesia and simultaneity. The kaleidoscopically varied repeat patterns of tiles, textiles, and carpets were complemented by “picture-panels” framing idealized gardens seen through arches or columnar arcades, evoking an illusion of transparency (fig. 11.8). The silk and silver-thread textile illustrated here echoes the design of woolen multiple niche Ottoman prayer rugs with its marble colonnade of pointed arches, featuring suspended lamps inscribed, “He is the Remaining, the Living Almighty.” While the arch spandrels are decorated with foliate split palmette scrolls, the idealized paradise garden seen through the columnar arcade comprises sprays of tulips, rosebuds, honeysuckle, and spring blossoms. Traditional geometric and vegetal “arabesques” thus became subordinated to more realistic floral designs, just as Kufic epigraphy and intricately intertwined multilayered scripts were wiped out by more legible majuscule cursive inscriptions against plain backgrounds.83

I would argue that the transcultural potential of Ottoman ornament increased with the disappearance of animate forms from the public realm of the decorative arts around the 1550s. The few exceptions included floral silk brocades and Iznik wares or tiles inhabited by deer, birds, peacocks, and mythical animals, as well as low-grade Iznik pottery with folksy representations of human and animal figures.84 The formation of a predominantly aniconic repertoire in Ottoman ornament, which restricted the use of figural imagery primarily to the arts of the book, sharpened the blurred boundaries between decorative and representational art, so characteristic of the Safavid visual universe. The increased autonomy of decorative design from the illustrated book, along with the breakdown of the seven fundamental modes of illumination, encouraged original abstract experiments with form, color, and scale that heralded a spirit of early modernity.

A comparison of Ottoman floral textiles with their Safavid counterparts (figural and nonfigural) illustrates the differing aesthetics and sensual/perceptual affects of the two regimes of ornament. The magnified bold patterns and radiant colors of the Ottoman floral aesthetic moved away from the subtle figure/ground ambiguities of intricate Safavid designs to produce a powerful impact from a distance (see fig. 11.7). This preference for legibility and monumentality contrasted with the visual density of sixteenth-century “classical” Safavid ornament, comprising less naturalistic small-scale designs generally rendered with the miniaturist’s attention to minute detail. The extent to which the representation of figures in Safavid applied arts was dependent on manuscript painting is exemplified by the delineation in ink of facial features (noses, eyes, and lips) in several textile hangings and tapestries. This curious blend of woven silk and ink-drawn faces has aptly been described as “painting ren-
Fig. 11.8. (a) Silk and silver-thread Ottoman floral textile with a columnar arcade and inscribed hanging lamps, sixteenth century. Museum of Islamic Art (MIA 12014), Cairo. (b) Three arched floral İznik tile panels from the Golden Road (Altın Yol) of the Topkapı Palace’s harem, originally made for a royal bath, dated 982 (1574–75). Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul.
dered in textile,” a translation that turned both into objects of luxury through the use of more precious materials, often including gold and silver threads.\(^8\) This translation of medium also transformed representational images into ornament, thus diminishing the distinction between the two categories. Compared to Ottoman textiles with daring, enlarged floral patterns and abstract motifs, their Safavid counterparts are generally saturated with miniscule details, inscriptions, and narrative figural imagery, consisting of courtly assemblies (majlis) and hunting scenes, as well as themes excerpted from Persian literature (see fig. 11.3).

It has been proposed that patterns for Safavid figural and nonfigural silk textiles were not prepared by painter-decorators of the court scriptorium, but by specialized textile designers. One of them was the famous designer-cum-weaver and poet, Ghiyath al-Din ‘Ali-yi Naqshband of Yazd (ca. 1530–90s), who even signed his coveted works, which were sent as gifts to the Ottoman and Mughal courts. Flourishing in the later part of Shah Tahmasp’s reign, he became affiliated with the inner court circles of Shah ‘Abbas I (r. 1587–1629), who appointed him as chief of the semicommercial silk textile manufactories of Yazd. The somewhat static designs of Safavid figural textiles, echoing the prevailing styles of manuscript painting and illumination, occasionally deployed a separate stock of images without parallel in book arts, such as those of the “prisoner silks” associated with Tahmasp’s Georgian expeditions (1540–53).\(^8\)

Like visual quotations of mythological subjects from classical literature in European Renaissance artifacts, abbreviated depictions in multiple media of familiar literary themes affirmed embeddedness in the prestigious tradition of Persian literature, thereby connoting the cultural kinship of the Turco-Iranian ruling elites of the Safavid policy. The unambiguous identification of this type of imagery with court culture was articulated by populating the narrative vignettes with personages wearing the qızılbaş tāj (red-head turban), an emblem of Safavid tribal and confessional affiliation. Distinguished by its tall baton, this characteristic headgear signified allegiance to the dynastic Sufi order of the Safavyya and the Twelve Imams of the Twelve Shi’ is. Additional emblematic accoutrements of status that Safavid courtly personages are often depicted with in the applied arts include belts, turban plumes, flasks, daggers, and swords. These were, in fact, exclusive emblems donated by the shah to favorites, according to

the eyewitness account of Michele Membré who was sent as ambassador by the Venetian Senate to Tahmasp between 1539 and 1542: “None can wear a velvet tāj unless the Shah gives it, nor have a belt or flask of gold, nor plumes on the head, nor a sword with a gold scabbard. And the Shah is always giving all those things to everyone, and granting them to those who deserve favour.”\(^8\) By contrast, the unisex designs of the Ottoman floral aesthetic avoided such conspicuous identity markers, as well as narrativity and visual intricacy.

Each neighboring visual regime brought about a dramatic unification of clothing, portable objects, furnishings, and architectural surfaces, whose similar ornamental designs reverberated with one another in manifold directions. These designs were transferable across media, often independent from the materiality of surfacescapes that animated objects and spaces. The different kinds of multisensory and cognitive experience engendered by such built environments were surely noticed by those who moved from one empire to the other: a phenomenological difference hardly accounted for by the reductive formalist taxonomies of the arabesque.

With its greater iconographic specificity, sixteenth-century Safavid ornament was primarily intended for internal consumption, unlike its aniconic Ottoman counterpart that more easily crossed cultural boundaries. Generally lacking inscriptions, Ottoman luxury products were widely consumed by non-Muslims both within the empire and beyond. Featuring freehand versions of designs on architectural tiles, joyful Iznik wares without any inscriptions or intrinsic symbolism appealed to Muslim and non-Muslim customers alike. A set of dishes with a coat of arms commissioned by an Italian patron confirms the semicommercial character of the Iznik workshops. Floral Iznik pottery and tiles were imitated in Padua and the Veneto, just as they decorated the palaces of Ottoman vassals, including the rulers of Crimea, Moldavia, Wallachia, and Hungary.\(^8\) It has also been suggested that the so-called Kubachi (Daghestan) underglaze ceramic vessels and tiles produced in the Safavid Empire likely drew inspiration from Iznik ceramics.\(^8\)

The taste for inscriptionless Ottoman carpets in the Balkans and Europe was similarly enhanced by the intentional ambiguity of their sensually appealing designs. Ottoman export carpets became a staple and signifier of prestige in upper-class Italian Renaissance...
households: a text published in 1546 included Turkish carpets and leather hangings among the things that lend distinction to a house. The same kinds of carpets served to relieve the austere bareness of the whitewashed Lutheran churches of the Saxon and Hungarian communities in Transylvania, where they were hung over altars, choirs, chancels, pulpits, benches, and organ galleries, especially when that region became an autonomous principality (1541–1699) under Ottoman suzerainty. (Between 1557 and 1568, the Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, and Unitarian communities were officially recognized on equal terms, thus turning Transylvania into a “safe harbor” for religious refugees from other countries.) Substituting for paintings or pictorial curtains in reformed churches, Ottoman carpets were “treasured as works of art” whose nonfigurative character appealed to Protestant sensibilities. It is worth mentioning that during the second half of the sixteenth century, Istanbul too became a hotbed for Protestant expatriate intellectuals, owing to the Ottoman court’s active support of this religious movement, so as to weaken Catholicism in the empire’s western frontiers.

Comparing a prayer carpet, probably woven in a court manufactory in Ottoman Cairo, with a synagogue curtain elucidates the adaptability of a mutual visual culture deployed by the empire’s multiconfessional subjects, which could be individualized by emblematic markers of difference (figs. 11.9a, 11.9b). In the case of the Torah curtain, the distinctive emblems include a chalice-shaped menorah in the center, ornamented with nine lamps, above a field of naturalistic garden flowers. Under the round arch supported by doubled columns with Corinthian capitals is a floral spray, and above it a Hebrew inscription band quoting the book of Psalms (118:20), which reads: “This is the Gate of the Lord: Through it the Righteous enter.” It has been observed that the iconography of the “gateway to heaven” and the similar forms of these two carpets show the “intermingling of Jewish and Islamic” artistic traditions.

Another case in point is Ottoman textiles with Greek Orthodox inscriptions and religious figurative imagery, intended for ecclesiastical vestments both within the empire and beyond. The hybrid designs of one such brocaded silk, used in a Russian Orthodox dalmatic (sakkos), include the enthroned Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child, flanked by angels, crosses, triple dots, and typical Ottoman garden flowers: the tulip, rosebud, honeysuckle, and spring blossoms against an ivory ground (fig. 11.9c).

Yet another fascinating example of the translatability and malleability of Ottoman floral ornament is the red-ground lacquered wooden paneling of the Aleppo Room, now kept at the Pergamonmuseum in Berlin (fig. 11.9d). Dated by inscriptions to 1009 (1600–1601) and 1012 (1603), this was once the reception hall of a Christian broker (simsār) in Ottoman Aleppo, a cosmopolitan emporium for the international silk trade. The wooden panels seamlessly intermingle Ottoman abstract and naturalistic flowers (tulips, carnations, hyacinths) with subordinate Persianate figurual vignettes inside medallions (real and fantastic animals, hunters, wrestlers, jesters, shaykhs, lovers, the bust of a Frank), as well as Christian motifs such as the Virgin and Child, and larger biblical narrative scenes. Accompanied by inscriptions (Arabic psalms with good wishes, Arabic and Persian proverbs), these designs once again reveal that the Ottoman Empire’s non-Muslim subjects deployed a predominantly floral collective language of ornament, stamped by personalized motifs.

The Decorum of Decor: Orchestrations of Taste, Style, and Status

Floral ornament simultaneously delineated cultural boundaries and crossed them as well. Not restricted to any specific medium, the Ottoman decorative repertoire was neither gender-specific nor monopolized by the imperial court. However, the court did exercise control
Fig. 11.9. (a) Wool prayer rug with a doubled-column triple arcade under a dome, Ottoman Cairo, second half of the sixteenth century. Bruschettini Collection, Genoa. (b) Wool Torah curtain with doubled columns supporting a round arch and dome, Ottoman Cairo, second half of the sixteenth or early seventeenth century. Textile Museum (acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1915 [inv. no. R. 164.4]), Washington, DC. (c) Dalmatic (sakkos), Ottoman brocaded silk with the enthroned Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child, flanked by angels, crosses, tulips, and blossoms against an ivory ground, dated before 1583. Kremlin Armory Museum (inv. no. TK-2766), Moscow. (d) Painted floral wooden panel with the Virgin Mary and Christ Child, detail from the Aleppo Room, commissioned by the Christian broker ‘Isa b. Butrus, dated 1600 and 1603. Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin.
over the quality of higher grade “designer” products by means of drawings on paper and by limiting the output of imperial workshops, often distinguished by more valuable materials. The amount of gold and silver thread in upper-grade textiles, for example, was regulated by successive royal decrees (issued in 1552, 1564, 1574, and 1577), which attempted to curtail the use of precious metals to a fixed number of state-controlled looms in Istanbul. Those dated 1552 informed the qāḍī of Bursa that gold cloth and sashes should only be woven for the “imperial treasury,” while the governor of Damascus was commanded to forbid the weaving of gold cloth and sashes.97

The communitas of elite material culture was offset by the hierarchical stratification of status markers, which often included prized foreign goods, whether imported or exchanged as gifts.98 For instance, Mustafa ʿAli mentions gilded chiming clocks from Europe, and carpets from Safavid Iran and Ottoman Egypt among the luxury and status symbols of Ottoman elites. Indeed, Safavid carpets, which were not a major export item prior to their commercialization under ʿAbbas I, became prestige items in the Ottoman and Portuguese courts during Shah Tahmasp’s reign.99 The esteem of foreign luxury goods is also attested in the Safavid court, where items given as gifts by Shah Tahmasp to the Mughal emperor Humayun, who had sought refuge at his court in 1544–45, included “Iraqi, Turkish, European and Chinese brocades.”100

The hierarchy of Ottoman status signs corresponded to codes of decorum that informed the ranking of luxury objects in terms other than merely aesthetic. For instance, Mustafa ʿAli states that the highest grade of “heavy silks and brocades, spectacular rare cloths of gold and silver [serāser], velvets, and brocaded silks [kemhā] in the latest fashion” ought to be reserved for the sultans and the royal family. Textiles of lesser quality were correlated with the high, middle, and low ranks of the ruling elite—a classification also encountered in other Ottoman texts that rank the quality of luxury goods as “superior,” “medium,” and “low.”101 The decorum of decor thus turned ornamented luxury artifacts into active agents in defining sociocultural space.

The indirect orchestration of decorum and taste across media and different levels of society was maintained by interventions that brought court-sponsored semicommercial and commercial industries outside the capital into closer accord with their courtly counterparts. For example, the central administration exerted control over the workshops of Bursa by sending an expert there in 1560 to check the quality of fabrics commissioned for the court and imperial treasury. Conversely, a master zerbāft weaver residing in Bursa was ordered to come to the capital in 1565, probably as a consultant for improving production in the court workshop.102 Late-sixteenth-century decrees likewise commanded named master tile makers from Iznik and carpet weavers from Cairo to be sent to Istanbul for special projects, just as named non-Muslim painters from Chios were recruited for the painted decorations of the Selimiye Mosque in Edirne.103 The latter choice is not surprising, given the presence of a silk textile industry in this Genoese island (conquered in 1566), which had been catering to the Ottoman market at least since the early sixteenth century.104 In fact, as we have seen above, Sinan’s autobiography likens the painted decorations of the Selimiye’s domical superstructure to lavish “satin and silk brocades.”

Ornament not only negotiated intercultural boundaries but also defined the empire’s territorial borders with a cohesive system of canonical motifs. The new aesthetic canon helped cement the hegemonic collective identity and esprit de corps of the multietnic Ottoman ruling elite, making visible and more legible the augmented magnificence of an increasingly centralized empire extending over three continents. The language of flowers became the language of things, of empire. The functionality, materiality, and “thingness” of objects with decorated surfaces, which circulated and were exchanged as gifts, meant that their signification process was largely dependent on context. Their interaction in specific settings, transactions, ceremonies, and spectacles with the gendered bodies of users and beholders activated diverse responses, informed by the subjectivity of individuals. As in other Islamic regimes of visuality, and its Safavid counterpart, Ottoman ornament simultaneously promoted aesthetic autonomy and elusive allusiveness. Its emblematic designs occupied a liminal zone between naturalistic representation and mimetic abstraction: a zone mediating between the body and the body politic.

To sum up, Ottoman floral ornament carved a new space of early modernity for itself. Besides emancipating decorative design from the former domination of book arts and narrativity, the floriferousness of ornament marked the empire’s territories with a recognizable visual idiom, enriched by multilayered cultural
associations. Portable objects with floral designs, generally lacking inscriptions, were less culturally and iconographically specific than the decorative arts of Safavid Iran. While accentuating the localism of Ottoman territorial self-identification, floral ornament more freely crossed international borders through objects that were intended to circulate and even became imitated abroad.

With the seventeenth-century decentralization of the Ottoman imperial regime and the banalization of its ornamental canon through sheer profusion, the status hierarchies of the former elitist visual order began to dissolve into a premodern mass culture, governed by the market forces of consumerism and worldwide commerce. The “classical” Safavid regime of visuality underwent conspicuous changes around the same time with the commercial initiatives of Shah ʿAbbas I, who actively sought international markets for new types of carpets and textiles. Unlike their Ottoman counterparts that flooded European markets from the late fifteenth century onward, it was not until his reign that Safavid carpets became a principal export commodity. The so-called Polonaise carpets, for instance, now lacked inscriptions and were dominated by larger scale abstract floriated designs that appealed to Western sensibilities and helped to speed up mass production. Around the mid-seventeenth century, the Mughals followed suit by developing their own floral brand of ornament in diverse media, partly inspired by European herbals. Thus coming closer to Ottoman precedents, the luxury products of the Safavid and Mughal court workshops aesthetically adapted themselves to the intercontinental tastes of an ever more globalized early modern world.
Chapter 11

4. A version of the fourfold taxonomy is adopted by Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, Objects in their exhibition catalogue Cosmophilias: Islamic Art from the David Collection, Copenhagen (Chesnut Hill, MA: McMullen Museum of Art, 2006) are grouped ahistorically according to “four themes of decoration” (figures, writing, geometry, and vegetation or the arabesque). They explain that this approach is based on the catalogue of The Arts of Islam exhibition, held in 1976 at the Hayward Gallery in London, whose preface proposed to “define the essential character of Islamic art . . . taken to be calligraphy, geometry, the arabesque, and the treatment of figuration” (13). Another variant of the fourfold classification is found in Eva Baer, Islamic Ornament (New York: New York University Press, 1998).
6. Exceptions include Oleg Grabar’s The Mediation of Ornament (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), which defines ornament as “any decoration that has no referent outside of the object on which it is found,” serving as a kind of intermediary between the object and viewer. He nevertheless analyzes ornament in chapters dedicated to four types of motif: writing, geometry, architecture, and nature. Grabar regards the primary function of Islamic ornament as sensory pleasure and highlights “universal principles” over cultural specificity (xxiv, 226–37). For the counterargument that “ornament does have external referents” of a “generalized” character, see Robert S. Nelson, “Letters and Language: Ornament and Identity in Byzantium and Islam,” in The Experience of Islamic Art on the Margins of Islam, ed. Irene A. Bierman (Reading, UK: Ithaca, 2003), 70–71.


9. Řígl, Stüfungen; Kühnel, The Arabesque. This paradigm is perpetuated in Markus Brüderlin, Ornament and Abstraction: The Dialogue between Non-Western, Modern and Contemporary Art, exh. cat. (Riehen: Fondation Beyeler, 2001); he argues that twentieth-century abstract art is a continuation of the history of ornamentation, in which "the main protagonist is first and foremost the arabesque" as the "last genuine ornament in the history of ornamentation" (12). He writes: "Just as Islamic ornament contained a vegetative component (the arabesque) and a geometrical one (stars formed of interlacing bands), so linear abstract art divided into two main strands" (23). See also his recent article, where he highlights the potential of the arabesque for defining global culture in the twenty-first century: Brüderlin, "L’art abstrait du XXe siècle, autour de l’arabesque," Perspective: La revue de l’INHA 1 (2010–11): 175.

10. For a comparable approach to French Renaissance decorative arts in the court of King Francis I (r. 1515–47), which largely "borrowed" art from Italy for the construction of a national style through difference and a distinctively French ornamental vocabulary, see Rebecca Zorach, Blend, Milk, Ink, Gold: Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). Zorach interprets the cultural politics of nonfigural ornament in France, dominated by fruits and vegetables, through which an aesthetic of natural abundance was constructed. Italian ornament was characterized instead by a restrained use of fruits and vegetables, in favor of flowers.

11. Gell, Art and Agency, 81–82. For my earlier critique of the concept of "pure decoration" in Islamic art historiography through a shorter comparison between Ottoman and Safavid ornament, see Necipoğlu, ‘L’idée de décor.’ A rebuttal of my critique is provided in Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, "Cosmophilia and Its Critics: An Overview of Islamic Ornament," Beiträge zur Islamischen Kunst und Archäologie 3 (2012): 39–54, esp. 45–47. The authors flatly reject the view that stylistic change can be triggered by politico-religious motives informing cultural politics; they remain convinced that Islamic ornament was primarily aimed at inducing pleasure.

12. On grotesque ornament, see André Chastel, La grotesque (Paris: Gallimard, 1993); and Marzia Faietti’s chapter in the earlier critique of the concept of “pure decoration” in Islamic art historiography, through a shorter comparison between Ottoman and Safavid ornament, see Necipoğlu, ‘L’idée de décor.’ A rebuttal of my critique is provided in Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, "Cosmophilia and Its Critics: An Overview of Islamic Ornament," Beiträge zur Islamischen Kunst und Archäologie 3 (2012): 39–54, esp. 45–47. The authors flatly reject the view that stylistic change can be triggered by politico-religious motives informing cultural politics; they remain convinced that Islamic ornament was primarily aimed at inducing pleasure.


16. Porter speculates that the two theories probably drew on an earlier Timurid literary tradition, but there is no evidence to support this conjecture: Porter, "From the ‘Theory of the Two Qalams’,” 109. See also Chahryar Adle, “Les artistes nommés Dost-Mehammad au XVie siècle,” Studia Iranica 42, no. 3 (1993): 249–96, esp. 240–44.


29. See Maria Szuppe, “Palais et jardins: Le complexe royal des premiers Safavides à Qazvin, milieu XVIIe–début XVIIe siècles,” Revue Orientale 8 (1990): 143–77, esp. 159. Szuppe cites Pietro della Valle’s early-seventeenth-century description of the palace complex sited in a garden, whose Turkish name was “Gennet Baghi” (Garden of Paradise), 169. The narrative subjects of painted murals are discussed in Echraghi, “Description contemporaine des peintures murales.” The walls of an extant palace in Nain (ca. 1556–72) are decorated with comparable literary scenes and poetic inscriptions.


32. On the a priori rejection of religious and political motives, see note 1 above.


34. ‘Abdī Beg Shīrāzī, Rawzat al-ṣifāt, 30–32, 50–52.


37. Cited in Porter, “From the Theory of the Two Qalams,” 145n8, from Muhammad Sāliḥ Khān’s Amal-i Sāliḥ, ed. Ghulām Yāzdānī, 3 vols. (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1912–38), 3:35. A reference in the same Mughal source to the “Frankish knot” (band-i farangī) may perhaps be interpreted as the European version of the arabesque-cum-grotesque (cited in Porter,


39. Sadıqi was dismissed from the post of royal librarian (kitâbâdar) by Shah Abbas I in 1597; he originated from the Turkmen Khudabadanlu tribe (a branch of the Shamlu) and was closely associated with Afshar chieftains. See Tourkhan Gandjavi, “Notes on the Life and Work of Sadıqi, A Poet and Painter of Safavid Times,” *Der islam* 52 (1973): 111–18.

40. See ‘Abdī Beg’s Shirāzī’s poem, *Rawzat al-ṣifāt*, 50; translated into English in Porter, “From the ‘Theory of the Two Qalams’,” 114. For relevant passages in Mir Sosyul-Ahmad’s preface, see Thackston, *Album Prefaces*, 25–26. On Timurid texts mentioning the “Cathayan” and “Frankish” modes, see a Chaghatay-Turkish literary work titled *Mahbūb al- ḫalīl* (The beloved of hearts), written in 1500–1501 by the vizier of the Timurid ruler Shahrukh, who is compared to a paradise.

41. For the statement that the seven decorative modes must apply principally to the art of illumination, see Thompson and Canby, *Hunt for Paradise*, 278. Citing Ottoman and Mughal texts, Porter tentatively speculates that the seven modes may not have been entirely nonfigural, but he does not refer to ‘Abdi Beg’s descriptions of the modes; see Porter, “From the ‘Theory of the Two Qalams’,” 114. ‘Abdī Beg Shirāzī, *Rawzat al-ṣifāt*, 30–32, 50–52.

42. This useful distinction is made in *Ornament/Ornamental*, special issue, *Perspective: La revue de l’INHA* 1 (2010–11).


55. Ibid., 210–25, 251, 261.

56. On the centralized organization of the Ottoman court ateliers, see Necipoğlu, “A Kanun for the State, a Canon for the Arts.”


58. Latiff criticizes those Ottoman poets


45. The same terms are used in an earlier work titled *Mahbûb al-kulûb*: *Mahbûbü’l-kulûb*: *Mudhahhib* / *khiṭā* muddahhib) to be skilled in the “Cathayan” and “Frankish” modes, see Porter, “From the ‘Theory of the Two Qalams’,” 114. ‘Abdī Beg Shirāzī, *Rawzat al-ṣifāt*, 30–32, 50–52.

46. This useful distinction is made in *Ornament/Ornamental*, special issue, *Perspective: La revue de l’INHA* 1 (2010–11).


48. Gülru Necipoğlu, “A Kanun for the State, a Canon for the Arts”; Reinhold Canby, *Hunt for Paradise*, 278. Citing Ottoman and Mughal texts, Porter tentatively speculates that the seven modes may not have been entirely nonfigural, but he does not refer to ‘Abdi Beg’s descriptions of the modes; see Porter, “From the ‘Theory of the Two Qalams’,” 114. ‘Abdi Beg Shirāzī, *Rawzat al-ṣifāt*, 30–32, 50–52.


59. Latifî, Tezkireti-i Şüerûd, 488. The mirror and slate metaphor in Ottoman and Safavid texts is discussed in relation to the ideal of mimetic abstraction in Necipoğlu, *The Scrutinizing Gaze*, 45–49.

60. Necipoğlu, “A Kanun for the State, a Canon for the Arts.”

61. Quoting studies by Michael Rogers, Jon Thompson agrees with him that it is difficult to prove the influence of court scriptoria on decorative arts in other media, even in the better documented and more centralized Ottoman court. For the debate, see his “Early Safavid Carpets and Textiles” in Thompson and Canby, * Hunt for Paradise*, 279–80, 311n29 and 34. The documents are cited in Necipoğlu, “L’idé de décor,” 147–52.

62. A register of imperial tents produced in the workshop of tent makers in Istanbul, dating from the first years of Süleyman’s reign, lists the costs for paper designs (kâğıd kim naqqâş), the wages of painter-decorators who prepared designs for ornamented tents (naqqâşân ki naqq-kâr den-i bâ zi naqq-i resm-i (şâh-ı mûnaqqâş), and costs for building a workshop for the painting of tent poles; see Başbakanlık Arşivi, Istanbul, Ali Emiri 12, fols. 32–33. For painter-decorators loaned to the royal workshop of tile makers in Istanbul in 1527, see Necipoğlu, “From International Timurid to Ottoman,” 139, 146–48, 163. Designs for carpets are mentioned in note 65 below.

63. Documents referring to these drawings for textiles ordered by the grand vizier Rüstem Pasha from Istanbul and by the Ottoman governor of Egypt, Dukkanîzade Mehmed Pasha from Cairo, are cited in Necipoğlu, “From International Timurid to Ottoman,” 153n49. Rüstem Pasha fostered the consumption of domestic fabrics by restricting the former large-scale importation of Italian luxury textiles for use in the Ottoman court as part of his fiscal policy; for his contribution to the formation of the classical canon, see Necipoğlu, “A Kanun for the State, a Canon for the Arts,” 198–203, 213; and Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 246–51, 314–31. The “Relazione” of the Venetian bailo Bernardo Navagero reports that this pasha, who was “born as a man of business,” did everything to promote “those silk and gold Bursa textiles of his, sometimes even wearing vests made of these” (instead of the customary European luxury fabrics); cited in Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, 334–35.

64. The drawings are mentioned among the expenses of the royal "workshop [kâtâne] of Usta Muhyiddin Zerbaft" in Bağbakanlık Arşivi, Istanbul, D.BŞM.BRZ 40816, dated 934–37 (1527–31), p. 72. The royal workshop is also listed in MAD, D.27884, dated 934–35 (1527–29), pp. 49–50, 62: It included several looms (tezâgh-i zerbaft, tezâgh-i qadîfî, tezâgh-i ’abâşî, tezâgh-i miyâna, tezâgh-i qârî) and may have been a branch of the "workshop of silk brocade weavers" (kârâhname-i kemêhçâyân), which is cited separately. The reference here to a velvet loom disproves the assumption that velvet weaving in Istanbul began later in 1543; for this assumption, see Atasoy et al., *Ipek*, 170, 183–85, 197–203.

65. Jon Thompson finds the idea that scriptorium artists provided designs for carpets tempting but says that there is no concrete evidence for this in the Ottoman or Safavid contexts; see his essay in Thompson and Canby, * Hunt for Paradise*, 311n34, 285, 288, 291–92.


There is little evidence to support the symbol of paradise and Mughal kingship. 217–24, where this style is interpreted as a floral style, including Flemish prints 72. On European models of the Mughal İpek for the Arts,” 205n16; and Atasoy et al., Necipoğlu, “A Kanun for the State, a Canon of sixteenth-century documents; see 71. This division disappears in seventeenth-century documents; see Necipoğlu, “A Kanun for the State, a Canon for the Arts,” 205n16; and Atasoy et al., Ipek, 233.


70. According to Rogers, little sense can be made of Mustafa Ālî’s assertion that Kara Memi was the leading pupil of Shah Qulî; see Michael J. Rogers, “Kara Mehmend Çelebi (Kara Memi) and the Role of the Ser-nakkâş,” in Soliman le Magnifique et son temps: Actes du Colloque de Paris Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, 7–10 mars 1990, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1992), 238n36. This judgment overlooks Shah Qulî’s expertise in illumination, attested in the source cited above in note 69. For Mustafa Ālî’s relevant passage, see Akun Kuvanc, Mustafa Ālî’s Ḫakâyât-i ʿEpic Deeds of Artists, 268.


72. On the Turkish cut-paper garden, and others like it from the same album (TSMK, H. 2153), see Çağman, Kat 1, 66–85. On the inscribed poem, see ibid., 103, 108. Its first part is from the qasida on springtime by the celebrated Ottoman poet Mesihî (d. 1512–13), while its second part is from a later spring qasida by the famous poet Bâki (d. 1600) dedicated to Sultan Süleyman’s grand vizier Semîz Ali Pasha (d. 1565). The album in which the Ottoman cut-paper garden is pasted is dominated by calligraphies of the Safavid calligrapher Shah Mahmud Nishapuri (d. 1564–65) and has been dated to the third quarter of the sixteenth century.

73. For Chios textiles, see Atasoy et al., Ipek, 172–73, 251–52. The main layouts of Ottoman patterned silk textiles are discussed on 204–7.


83. Necipoğlu, “’Qur’anic inscriptions on Sinan’s Imperial Mosques,” 70–79.

84. Rare examples of figural textiles and ceramics are illustrated in Atasoy et al., Ipek, 48–49, 100–103, 243–47, 271; and Atasoy and Raby, İznik, 103, 119, 247, 250, 255–57, 275, 282–93.


Wallachia, which were Ottoman vassals, see Black Sea via the land route of Moldavia and produced ceramics to Hungary, through the ca. 1550 in the dissemination of Safavid mass the Kubachi wares,” and of Azerbaijan before the many vessels found in Kubachi late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-
2014), esp. 170–81. However, it is unclear and Seventeenth Centuries (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 269–85. For the recently established
Pottery in the First Global Age: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Thanks to the maritime networks of the Portuguese, Safavid carpets were collected in the second half of the sixteenth century by Portuguese royal and elite patrons; see Jessica Hallett, “Carpet, Painting and Text,” in The Oriental Carpet in Portugal: Carpets and Paintings, 15th–18th Centuries, cat. (Lisbon: Fundação Oriente, 2007), 40–45.
100. Iskandar Munshi, History of Shah Abbas the Great, 1:164. On Ottoman and European silk textiles sent in 1600 as gifts by Sultan Süleyman to Shah Tahmasp, when the rebel Ottoman prince Bayezid sought refuge in Qazvin, see Gürsu, The Art of Turkish Weaving, 195.
103. Five named master tile makers from Iznik were ordered to be sent to the sultan’s court with their tools and implements in 1578 (1570); see Başbuğalak Arşivi, İstanbul, MAD 14, no. 819, p. 576. Ten named master carpet weavers from Cairo were ordered to come to the sultan’s court in 993 (1585) with a supply of died wool; see Ahmet Reşik, On Altrani Asrda İstanbul Hayatı (1533–1593) (İstanbul: Enderun Kitapları, 1988), 133, no. 54. For the unpublished decree recruiting five named painter-decorators from Chios in 1573, see Necipoğlu, The Age of Sinan, 242, 534n110. 104. For Chios textiles, see Atasoy et al., Ipek, 172–75, 251–52.

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89. For the recently established provenance of the so-called Kubachi wares and tiles in Qumisheh, a village of Isfahan to which ‘Abbas I moved the Safavid capital in the 1590s, see Lisa Golombek (project director and editor), Robert B. Mason, Patricia Proctor, and Eileen Reilly, Persian Pottery in the First Global Age: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (Leiden: Brill, 2014), esp. 170–81. However, it is unclear when the many vessels found in Kubachi came there and whether some of them were produced in Tabriz as well as other places. On the role of Tabriz, “a claimant for part of the Kubachi wares,” and of Azerbaijan before ca. 1550 in the dissemination of Safavid mass produced ceramics to Hungary, through the Black Sea via the land route of Moldavia and Wallachia, which were Ottoman vassals, see Savast, Safavid Art and Hungary, 69–84, esp. 71, 77. For the impact of tinak ceramics on late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century polychrome Kubachi wares, and their former attribution to Tabriz (reconquered by Shah ‘Abbas I from the Ottomans, who had occupied it between 1585 and 1603), see Denny, Iznik, 180; and Yolande Crowe, “La céramique dite de Kubatcha et la collection de T. B. Whitney,” in Purs d’arts; Arts d’Islam, regards du XIXe siècle; Collections Musée du Louvre Éditions, 2007), 198–203, esp. 201–2.
103. Five named master tile makers from Iznik were ordered to be sent to the sultan’s court with their tools and implements in 1578 (1570); see Başbuğalak Arşivi, İstanbul, MAD 14, no. 819, p. 576. Ten named master carpet weavers from Cairo were ordered to come to the sultan’s court in 993 (1585) with a supply of died wool; see Ahmet Reşik, On Altrani Asrda İstanbul Hayatı (1533–1593) (İstanbul: Enderun Kitapları, 1988), 133, no. 54. For the unpublished decree recruiting five named painter-decorators from Chios in 1573, see Necipoğlu, The Age of Sinan, 242, 534n110. 104. For Chios textiles, see Atasoy et al., Ipek, 172–75, 251–52.

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