



Ḥākānī's *Ḥilye* in Context

Text-Text versus Text-Image Configurations in Ottoman Manuscripts

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From the late 16th century onwards, the term *ḥilye* held a prominent place in the literature and art of the Ottoman Empire. Originally standing for “ornate” or “sheen,” it denotes creative works on two different levels: firstly literary texts — mostly poetry — describing the physiognomy of a person, usually a religious authority. And secondly calligraphic manifestations, notably calligraphic panels, of a text describing the physiognomy of a religious authority.¹ In the majority of cases *ḥilye* refers to the Prophet Muḥammad, but there are also texts and calligraphic panels about other prophets, the rightly guided caliphs, and Sufi saints.² Recent research has focussed on calligraphic panels, seeing *ḥilye*-panels as an exemplar for the iconicity of calligraphy in the Ottoman Empire.³ The interrelation of literary *ḥilye*-texts and their graphic design in manuscripts and printed copies, however, is still understudied.⁴ A closer look at the manuscripts helps us to better understand the interaction between the author or, as it may be, his text, on the one hand, and the users, i. e. the copyists, owners, readers, and beholders on the other. Which aspects of the text — content, language, structure — could be emphasised by graphic aspects of a copy, and how relevant might this have

¹ The 17th century diplomat and lexicographer Meninski defines *ḥilye* as: “ornatus gladii, pec. in capolo et vaginam, et externa forma descriptioque viri [...]” Meninski, Franciscus à Mesgnien: *Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium, Turcicae, Arabicae Persicae [...] nimirum Lexicon Turcico – Arabico – Persicum [...]*. 3 vols. Vienna 1680, here vol. 1, column 1801. Cf. also Uzun, Mustafa: “Hilye”. In: *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 18, 1998, pp. 44–47, here p. 44.

² This applies mainly to the texts, cf. Erdoğan, Mehtap: *Türk Edebiyatında Manzum Hilyeler*. Osmanlı Edebiyat Tarih Kültür Yayınları 2, Istanbul: Kitapevi, 2013, pp. 17–20. There are also calligraphic panels for authorities other than Muḥammad, e.g., a panel of the *Ḥilye-i Mevlânâ*, cf. Gölpınarlı, Abdülbâki: *Mevlânâ Müzesi Yazmalar Kataloğu*, vol. 2. Ankara: T.C. Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı 1971, pp. 368–369.

³ Cf. Schick, İrvin Cemil: “The Iconicity of Islamic Calligraphy in Turkey”. In: *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 53/54 (Spring–Autumn, 2008), pp. 211–222, or Elias, Jamal J: *Aisha's Cushion, Religious Art, Perception, and Practice in Islam*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 2012, here pp. 270–283.

⁴ There is a comprehensive study on the layout of other works, cf. Daub, Frederike-Wiebke: *Formen und Funktionen des Layouts in arabischen Manuskripten anhand von Abschriften religiöser Texte – al-Būṣīrīs Burda, al-Ġazūlīs Dalā'il und die Šifā' von Qāḍī 'Iyād*. (Arabische Studien 12). Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2016.

been for the process of reception? In the present case — a poem about the physiognomy of the Prophet Muḥammad — this poses the question how the configuration of a manuscript, including its illumination (i. e. graphic elements with an ornamental intention) or illustration (i. e. graphic elements with semantic function), mediated information about the interrelation of different texts — that is, between the author and his sources? And furthermore, is there any categorical distinction between works of high calligraphic art and those of “ordinary” copyists, regarding the iconicity of script?

In this study, I analyse manuscripts of the most widely read *ḥilye*-poem in the Turkish language, the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī*, which is named after its author Meḥmed Ḥākānī (d. 1015/1606–7). The poem was completed in 1007/1598–1599, it consists of a little more than seven hundred verses and is based on al-Tirmidhī’s (d. 279/892) *al-Shamā’il al-Nabawiyya*, one of the oldest and most authoritative texts about the physiognomy of the Prophet Muḥammad.

To begin, I will give a short description of the structure, content and character of the two texts, which helps us to understand how these aspects became manifest visually on the folios of a manuscript. Then, I will analyse manuscripts of al-Tirmidhī’s *Shamā’il* and Ḥākānī’s *Ḥilye* from the collections of the Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul. Almost all of the manuscripts are easily accessible as digitized images in the Süleymaniye Library, and my study is mostly based on these. Only in a few cases was a close study of the original required.

1. *Shamā’il* and *ḥilye* — Texts About the Physiognomy of the Prophet Muḥammad

Texts describing the physiognomy of the Prophet Muḥammad date from a very early period of Arabic literature. The most influential work on this theme is a collection of *ḥadīth*-texts compiled by Abū ‘Īsā al-Tirmidhī — *al-Shamā’il al-Nabawiyya* (“The Good Qualities of the Prophet”). The author, al-Tirmidhī, was a scholar of high renown, and his more comprehensive *ḥadīth*-collection — *al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḥīḥ* — is one of the canonical texts of Islamic scholarship.⁵ In comparison, *al-Shamā’il al-Nabawiyya* is a small book containing only traditions which focus on the Prophet’s physiognomy and character. It is, however, also structured by themes, just like the canonical collections, and includes the full chain of narrators (*isnād*) of every text. A first, introductory chapter contains general physical descriptions. The following 54 chapters each focus on a narrower topic, e.g. his hair, his way of dressing, his way of using antimony (*kuḥl*), his manner of walking. The collection also includes two chapters with quite similar titles — “the seal of prophethood” (*khātam al-nubuwwa*) and the “seal of the messenger of God”

⁵ However, it should be noted that, unlike the *Shamā’il*, this comprehensive collection contains only *ḥadīth* of the highest category (*ṣaḥīḥ*).

(*khātām rasūl Allāh*) — the first being about a mark on his back between his shoulders, the second an artefact, which he used to sign official letters.⁶ The concluding chapter of *al-Shamā'il al-Nabawiyya* collects accounts from people who saw the Prophet in their dreams.⁷

Probably the most influential *ḥadīth*-text from Tirmidhī's *Shamā'il* goes back to Muḥammad's cousin and son-in-law 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. The original text is not easily understandable and my translation is based on commentaries — especially 'Alī al-Qārī (d. 1014/1605).⁸ The intention is not to reconstruct the original meaning, but to reflect how the text was understood by readers in later times.

“Aḥmad ibn 'Abda al-Ḍabbī al-Baṣrī, 'Alī ibn Ḥujr and Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn (that is Ibn Abī Ḥalīma) reported [the following] to us, consistent in content.⁹ They said: 'Īsā ibn Yūnus reported to us from 'Umar ibn 'Abd Allāh, a client of Ghufra. He said: Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad, one of the descendants of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib — may God be pleased with him — reported to me. He said: 'When 'Alī described the messenger of God — God bless him and grant him salvation — he used to say:

'The messenger of God — God bless him and grant him salvation — was neither excessively long nor very small. He was of medium height. He had neither tight curls nor straight hair. His hair was slightly curled. His face was not full and meaty, nor was it furrowed with fury. His face was rather a bit roundish. His skin was light and slightly reddish. He had dark black eyes and long eyelashes. His joints and shoulders were sturdy. He was not very hairy (*ajrad*), but had body hair from chest to belly. His hands and feet were hard. When he walked, it was as if he was flying down a slope. If someone turned to him, so did he. Between his shoulders he had the seal of prophethood, since he was the last of the prophets. He was the best of all men as far as his chest was concerned, the sincerest in terms of his tongue, the mildest in mind, and the noblest with respect to his tribe. Those who saw him unexpectedly, stood in awe, those who associated with him and knew him, loved him. Whoever described him said: 'I have never seen anyone like him — neither before, nor after — God bless him and grant him salvation.'”¹⁰

In this *ḥadīth* Muḥammad is no unearthly beauty. The beauty of the Prophet is rather described as the absence of extremes — for example, in terms of his body

⁶ al-Tirmidhī, Abū 'Īsā b. Muḥammad b. 'Īsā b. Sūra: *al-Shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyya wal-khaṣā'il al-Muṣṭafāwiyya*. Ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Khālīdī. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2006, here chapter 2, “the seal of the prophethood”, pp. 16–20, and chapter 11, “the seal of the Prophet”, pp. 43–46.

⁷ al-Tirmidhī, *al-Shamā'il*, ed. al-Khālīdī, pp. 194–198.

⁸ al-Qārī, 'Alī b. Sulṭān Muḥammad: *Jam' al-Wasā'il fī Sharḥ al-Shamā'il*. Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-Ikhwānihi, 1318/1901, here p. 27. This work is also used by Zakariya in his translations, cf. Zakariya, Mohamed: “The Hilye of the Prophet”. *Seasons: The Journal of Zaytuna Institute*, Autumn–Winter 2003–2004, p. 15.

⁹ The phrase “consistent in content” suggests that there could have been smaller variations in the wording — a fact that was (and is) relevant for *ḥadīth* scholars.

¹⁰ al-Tirmidhī, *al-Shamā'il*, ed. al-Khālīdī, pp. 9–10, no. 7. Unless otherwise indicated translations are those of the author.

size, which is not too big and not too small. The points of reference are his contemporaries, or other human beings in general, even if Muḥammad is described as both exemplary and extraordinary.

The term *ḥilye* appears only once in al-Tirmidhī's collection, in a *ḥadīth* attributed to al-Ḥasan, the grandchild of Muḥammad: "I asked my uncle Hind ibn Abī Hāla, since he was one of those describing the *ḥilye* of the Prophet — God bless him and grant him salvation. And I was eager to hear something about it from him."¹¹ Subsequently Hind gives a description of Muḥammad's appearance very similar to the preceding *ḥadīth*-texts, without referring to the term *ḥilye* even once. The latter does not seem to be of great importance here, and the original meaning is difficult to reconstruct. Al-Qārī defines it in his commentary as "form or shape" (*ḥay'a wa-shakl*) and explains, "it is also used for ornament" (*wa-qad yusta'malu bi-ma'nā al-zayna*).¹² Taking the general problem of the term *ḥilye* into account, it is interesting to note that this *ḥadīth* is classified as "weak" or "very weak" in modern editions.¹³

The eleven *ḥadīth*-texts in the concluding chapter in al-Tirmidhī's *Shamā'il* describe people who saw the Prophet in their dreams. Most of the texts refer to Muḥammad himself and are very similar in their wording:

"Muḥammad ibn Bashshār reported to us. 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Mahdī reported to us. Sufyān reported to us from Abū Ishāq from Abū al-Aḥwaṣ from 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd from the Prophet — God bless him and grant him salvation. He said: Whoever sees me in his dreams, truly sees me, since Satan does not take on my shape."¹⁴

In all these versions the Prophet uses a phrase like "whoever sees me in his sleep" (*man ra'anī fī l-nawm* or *man ra'ānī fī l-manām*).¹⁵ All the statements confirm that seeing the Prophet in a dream is equivalent to truly seeing him. In all versions except one, this is supplemented by the statement that Satan cannot imitate him. The reader will regard this as a particular characteristic which differentiates Muḥammad from other human beings. The chapter includes only one narrative that describes an event after the Prophet's death. Yazīd al-Fārisī, a young Muslim from the second generation who had never met Muḥammad, told Ibn 'Abbās, a companion of the Prophet, that he saw the Prophet in his dreams.¹⁶ Ibn 'Abbās asked for a description and confirmed thereafter that that was indeed what the Prophet looked like. A narrative like this reveals to the reader at least one of the

¹¹ al-Tirmidhī, *al-Shamā'il*, ed. al-Khālidī, p. 11, no. 8.

¹² al-Qārī, *Jam' al-Wasā'il*, p. 33.

¹³ Cf. e. g. the classification "very weak" (*ḍa'if jiddan*) in the edition of Māhir Yāsīn al-Faḥl (1971–), al-Tirmidhī, Abū 'Īsā b. Muḥammad b. 'Īsā: *al-Shamā'il al-Nabī*. Ed. Māhir Yāsīn al-Faḥl. Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2000, here p 38.

¹⁴ al-Tirmidhī, *al-Shamā'il*, ed. al-Khālidī, p. 189, no. 407, and al-Tirmidhī, *al-Shamā'il*, ed. Māhir Yāsīn al-Faḥl, p. 221, no. 407.

¹⁵ al-Tirmidhī, *al-Shamā'il*, ed. al-Khālidī, p. 191, no. 414.

¹⁶ al-Tirmidhī, *al-Shamā'il*, ed. al-Khālidī, pp. 190–191, no. 412.

reasons why knowledge about Muḥammad's physiognomy can be of essential importance — among others, to recognise him, when seen in a dream.

In the 12th century, images of Muḥammad in Arabic and Persian literature diversified. One of the most influential works was al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ al-Yaḥṣubī's *al-Shifā' bi-ta'rīf al-Muṣṭafā* ("The Remedy Concerning the Determination of the Just Merits of the Chosen One"). Central aspects of al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's doctrine were Muḥammad's infallibility and immunity from sin. Muḥammad was a person who had reached perfection.¹⁷ As his essence, the "light of Muḥammad" (*nūr muḥammadī*) was created by God as the first being, even before everything else in the world. These ideas spread widely, but they were controversial. They were rejected based on the accusation that this resulted in a form of worshipping Muḥammad, which ultimately challenged monotheism.¹⁸

In his *Shifā'*, al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ discusses the aforementioned *ḥadīth* about Hind ibn Abī Hāla — as one of the persons "describing the *ḥilye* of the Prophet." He considers it a good introduction to his portrait of Muḥammad, but notes: "We add a friendly reminder concerning its strange and problematic character" (*naṣīluhu bitanbīhin laṭīfin 'alā gharībīhi wa-mushkilīhi*).¹⁹ In *ḥadīth*-scholarship, the term *gharīb* can imply different meanings — referring, for example to the terminology or the chain of narrators as well. Al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ was obviously more concerned about the terminology since he explained these in detail in a subchapter.²⁰ Still, even there, the term *ḥilye* is not mentioned, and thus seems rather marginal.

The reception of Tirmidhī's *Shamā'il* through the centuries was most probably characterised by a strong continuity, although this supposition needs further analysis. Striking — and for the Ottoman context relevant — is the high number of comprehensive commentaries, which were written in the late 16th and early 17th centuries in different areas of the Islamic world. Among them are the commentaries of al-Isfaryānī (d. 945/1538), Ibn Hajar al-Haytamī (d. 974/1567), al-Lārī (d. 979/1572), 'Alī al-Qārī (d. 1014/1605), and al-Munāvī (d. 1031/1622). Within only a few decades they had found their way into Ottoman libraries as manuscripts or as citations in marginal notes.

Almost simultaneously the term *ḥilye* — which, even for an author like al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, was marginal — developed a dynamic on its own: First, in the late 16th and

¹⁷ Khalidi, Tarif: *Images of Muhammad. Narratives of the Prophet in Islam Across the Centuries*. New York, NY: Doubleday, 2009, here pp. 209–213, and Nagel, Tilman: *Allahs Liebling. Ursprung und Erscheinungsformen des Mohammedglaubens*. München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2008, here pp. 135–179.

¹⁸ Riexinger, Martin: "Der Islam begann als Fremder, und als Fremder wird er wiederkehren" – Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhābs Prophetenbiographie Muḥtaṣar sirat ar-rasūl als Programm und Propaganda". *Die Welt des Islams* 55 (2015), pp. 1–61.

¹⁹ al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, Abū Faḍl 'Iyāḍ b. Mūsā b. 'Iyāḍ al-Yaḥṣubī: *ash-Shifā' bi-ta'rīf ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā*. Ed. 'Alī Muḥammad al-Biḡāwī. 2 vol. Cairo: 'Īsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī 1977, here vol. 1, pp. 198–208.

²⁰ al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, *ash-Shifā'*, vol. 1, pp. 209–214.

early 17th centuries, as topic and title of literary works, and a few decades later, in the second half of the 17th century, as a genre of panel-calligraphy. Mehtap Erdoğan edited and analysed nineteen Turkish *hilye*-poems about the Prophet Muḥammad in her monograph *Türk Edebiyatında Manzum Hilyeler*.²¹ Among those poems about the Prophet Muḥammad, five give verbatim quotes and direct references to al-Tirmidhī as part of their text.²² However, as Erdoğan shows, in Turkish literature the category of *hilye* is characterised by a broad variance.

In studies on the *hilye* in literature or art, the terms *shamā'il* and *hilye* are often used as synonyms, or even explicitly defined as such.²³ Erdoğan recognises this as an essential misunderstanding of the terms and their use. She defines *hilye* as a text which gives a physical and spiritual description. *Shamā'il*, however, describes the way and manners of living (*yaşayış biçimi*) of Muḥammad “as a human being” (*bir insan olarak*).²⁴ The latter phrase also points to the fact that the two terms frame different images of Muḥammad and the literary forms to which they refer.

2. The Concept of the *hilye* in Ḥākānī's Poem

In his poem Ḥākānī refers explicitly to his source, al-Tirmidhī's *Shamā'il*, from where the text derives its authority. Ḥākānī cites al-Tirmidhī phrase-by-phrase and word-by-word and translates and interprets these short citations into Turkish verses. This structure emphasises the poet's claim that his work is very close to the original. But Ḥākānī in fact creates an image of Muḥammad which differs clearly from canonical *ḥadīth* and provides the readers with a reinterpretation based on images and narratives of the Prophet Muḥammad that had developed only in the 12th century and later, in works such as al-Qādī 'Iyād's *Shifā'*. These differences already become obvious in three narratives within Ḥākānī's introduction: firstly the narrative of the creation of the “light of Muḥammad” (*nūr-i Muḥammed*), secondly the citation of an uncanonical *ḥadīth* about Muḥammad's *hilye*, and thirdly the narrative about the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd receiving Muḥammad's *hilye* from a Sufi beggar.

²¹ Erdoğan, *Türk Edebiyatında*, pp. 5–8. In addition, Erdoğan's monograph includes the editions of two *hilye*-texts on the rightly guided caliphs, one on the prophets before Muḥammad, one on Muḥammad's grandchildren Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, six on Sufi saints, and three on other religious authorities.

²² Cf. Erdoğan, *Türk Edebiyatında*, pp. 116–146 (Ḥākānī), pp. 150–154 (Hızrī), pp. 155–239 (Meḥmed Es'ad Efendi), pp. 240–288 (Nüvāzī), pp. 338–346 (Naḥīfī).

²³ Taşkale, Faruk – Hüseyin Gündüz: *Hat sanatında hilye-i şerife. Hz. Muhammed'in özellikleri. Hilye-i şerife in calligraphic art. Characteristics of the Prophet Muhammed*. Istanbul: Antik A.Ş. Kültür Yayınları, 2006, p. 19 (FN 9). Zakariya 2003–2004, pp. 13–22.

²⁴ Erdoğan 2013, p. 19. Cf. also Meninski's definition, Meninski, *Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium*, vol. 2, column 1858, s. v. “şemā'il: Indolis virtutes, talenta, etiam corporis qualitates. Qualità, virtù, proprietà, talenti.”

In the first narrative, like any classical Turkish poem, Ḥākānī's *Hilye* starts with the praise of God and his prophet. His narration of God's creation of the world is directly linked to the latter. God first created the "light of Muḥammad," and then, step-by-step, the rest of the world. In the translation of Elias John Wilkinson Gibb — who particularly aims to imitate Ḥākānī's language — the text reads as follows:

"At that same moment Love had birth;
 In a word, a Light²⁵ shone glorious forth.
 God loved that Light which He hailed 'My Love!'
 And fain was He of the sight thereof.
 Thereunto was the realm of the seen made o'er,
 It came into being with mickle gloire.
 With the Glory of Ahmed the world was filled,
 And the Love Divine ecstatic thrilled.
 When the Lord thereon His gaze did set,
 For shame and confusion that Light did sweat;
 On the spirit-world did those sweat-drops fall,
 And a Prophet was born from each and all.
 Then the Lord of Glory once again
 Looked thereon with passing love full fain,
 'Twas whelmed in a sea of sweat for shame,
 That Glory a dew-sprent rose became.
 The Master Etern from a drop thereof
 First fashioned a Kingly pearl through love;
 Then He gazed thereon in His majesty,
 And that pearl dissolved and became the sea.
 The cloud of His grace did sea-like rain,
 The waves and the vapours rose amain.
 Then God from the Foam and the Mists that rise
 From that Sea created our earth and skies."²⁶

The central theme of these verses is the "light", but they include other familiar attributes and metaphors of Muḥammad like the "beloved" (*ḥabīb*)²⁷, the "most laudable" (*aḥmed*), the "rose" (*göl*), and the "pearl" (*gevher*), which are omnipresent throughout Ḥākānī's text and describe his unearthly perfection.

²⁵ Gibb, Elias John Wilkinson: *A History of Ottoman Poetry*. 6 vols. London: Luzac and Co., 1900–1909, here p. 196. Gibb comments in a footnote: "This Light is closely connected, if not identical, with what is called the Light of Ahmed (or Muhammed) which is usually said to have been the first thing created."

²⁶ Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, vol 3, pp. 196–7. Cf. Ḥākānī, *Hilye*, Istanbul 1307, S. 5, Ḥākānī, *Hilye*, Istanbul 1264, pp. 5–6, Erdoğan, *Türk Edebiyatında*, p. 120, verses 50–62.

²⁷ Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, p. 196, translates "My love" (*ḥabībüm*).

In his second narrative, Ḥākānī continues citing a *ḥadīth*, which, in contrast to the rest of his citations, is not canonical. It vaguely takes up the topic of “seeing the Prophet in a dream” from Tirmidhī’s collection, although the *ḥadīth* cited by Ḥākānī omits the words “in a dream”:

“It is passed down according to ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, who said: ‘The Prophet said, ‘whoever sees my *ḥilye*, after I have passed away, it is as if he sees me. And from those who see it having a true desire for me, God will withhold the fire, and he will save them from the torment of the grave, and they will not be judged naked on the day of judgement.’ And according to another tradition he said ‘nude on the day of judgement’.”²⁸

The wording “whoever sees my *ḥilye*” (*man ra’ā ḥilyatī*) is rather abstract. The term *ḥilye* (“sheen”) might at first glance be read as referring to the characteristics of the Prophet’s physical appearance, but it can easily be reread as referring to a text or even an icon describing or depicting his physical appearance.²⁹ In his Turkish translation Ḥākānī compares “seeing my pure *ḥilye*” with “seeing my beautiful face (*vech-i ḥasenüm*)” — but again, the word *vech* has a broad semantic range, including “face, appearance, stature, figure.”

Finally, in his third narrative about the ‘Abbāsīd caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, the author introduces the idea of a blessing, immanent in the *ḥilye* written on a piece of paper.³⁰ Ḥākānī tells us the story of a poor man — a dervish — clad in black (*siyeh-pūş fakīr*), who approaches the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd and presents him a piece of paper:

“bir varak şundi eline bī-pāk / ki anda yazılmış idi ḥilye-i pāk
nazar êtdükçe aña şād oldu / kayd-i endişeden āzād oldu”

“A leaf he presented in his hand impure / on which was written the *ḥilye* pure
When he saw it, joy erupted / all his worry and fear dissolved”

Hārūn al-Rashīd realizes the particular blessing and its effect, and presents the poor man with gold and silver. The following night, in his dream, Hārūn al-Rashīd sees the Prophet, who compliments him on recognising the salutary effect of the *ḥilye* and showing him his awe and veneration. The Prophet then explains

²⁸ Ḥākānī, *Ḥilye*, Istanbul 1264, p. 12, Ḥākānī, *Ḥilye*, Istanbul 1307, p. 10. Erroneously attributed in Elias, *Aisha’s Cushion*, p. 273.

²⁹ Ḥākānī, *Ḥilye*, Istanbul 1264, p. 12, Ḥākānī, *Ḥilye*, Istanbul 1307, p. 11: “Ḥilye-i pākümü kim görse benim/Ola görmüş gibi vech-i ḥasenüm.”

³⁰ Ḥākānī, *Ḥilye*, Istanbul 1264, p. 14, Ḥākānī, *Ḥilye*, Istanbul 1308, pp. 12–13. Cf. also Stanley, Tim: “From Text to Art Form in the Ottoman *Ḥilye*”. In: *Filiz Çağman’a Armağan*. Eds. Erdoğan, Ayşe – Zeynep Atbaş – Aysel Çötelioglu Istanbul: Lale Yayıncılık, 2018, pp. 559–570, here pp. 563–564.

that those who see his *hilye* will rejoice, and must keep it and “make it the stronghold of their very life” (*hırz-ı cān eyleye*).³¹ He also asserts that it will protect them on the day of judgement from the fire of hell.

Ḥākānī's narrative about Hārūn al-Rashīd is much more precise on the salutary and apotropaic effect of the *hilye* than the cited *ḥadīth*. It is also explicit about the fact that the term *hilye* refers to an artefact, which can be viewed and kept like an amulet. The wording *hırz-ı cān eyleye* is quite suggestive, since *hırz* is used for “stronghold, fortification” as well as “amulet, talisman.”³²

According to Ḥākānī's poem, the caliph “sees” the *hilye* and becomes aware of its beneficial effect — the poet uses the verb *nazar etmek*.³³ In this narrative, the apotropaic effect of the *hilye* is confirmed by the Prophet in a dream, but it is not present itself. The *hilye* might very well be a *ḥadīth* written down on paper, but the reader might by analogy attribute the salutary and apotropaic effect even to Ḥākānī's poem itself — the *Hilye-i Ḥākānī*.

As mentioned above, the main part of Ḥākānī's poem focusses explicitly on his source — *ḥadīth*-texts from al-Tirmidhī's collection. The first citation reads: “The messenger of God — God bless him and grant him salvation — was bright of hue” (*kāna rasūl Allāh ṣallā Allāhu 'alayhi wa-sallam azhar al-lawn*). Ḥākānī translates and interprets this short passage in ten verses, which Gibb translates into English as follows:

“All the folk hereon agree
That the Pride of the world was bright of blee.
Full sheen was the radiance of his face
His cheeks were lustrous with lustre's grace
One of heart with the rose was his face's hue;
Like the rose, unto ruddiness is drew
Yclad his face in the light of delight,
’Twas the Chapter of Light or the dawn of light.
The scripture of beauty was that fair face;
The down on his cheeks was the verse of grace.
Shamed by his visage bright as day,
Life's fountain hid in the dark away.
Well may the comrades of joyance call:

³¹ Ḥākānī, *Hilye*, Istanbul 1264, p. 15, Ḥākānī, *Hilye*, Istanbul 1307, p.13: “Dēdi-kim ḥilyeñi ṣād ola gören / hırz-ı cān eyleye anı götüren / Āḥirü l-emr olıcaḳ rüz-ı kıyām / cismine nār-ı caḥīm ola ḥarām.”

³² Meninski, *Thesaurus Liguarum*, vol. 1, column 1745: “amuletum, mala et veneficia arcens.”

³³ On the apotropaic effect of “seeing” cf. Gruber, Christiane: “Go Wherever You Wish, for Verily You are Well Protected. Seal Designs in Late Ottoman Amulet Scrolls and Prayer Books”. In: *Visions of Enchantment. Occultism, Spirituality, and Visual Culture*. Ed. Daniel Zamani. London: Fulgur, 2018, pp. 23–35.

'The sheen of his visage conquers all!
Yon radiant face shone in the sky
The light of the harem-feast on high.
The Portrait-painter of Nature gave
Thereto all beauty that man may have.
When the sweat upon that sultan stood
He was forsooth like the rose bedewed."³⁴

Again, Ḥākānī uses the rose and the light as metaphors. Several references to the Qur'ān, are striking as it is — in Muslim doctrine — not created but eternal and inimitable. According to Ḥākānī's poem, Muḥammad's face is enveloped by light; a light which is compared to the "chapter of light" (*sūre-i nūr*) — one of the suras of the Qur'ān (i. e. no. 24, *al-Nūr*). His face is also compared with the "scripture of beauty" (*muṣḥaf-ı husn*) — in which the term *muṣḥaf* is usually used for a copy of the Qur'ān. In other words, Muḥammad is not compared to the inimitable beauty of the Qur'ān but a manuscript copy of it, which again is qualified as *al-Husn* ("the beauty"). In Ḥākānī's commentary, the points of reference for Muḥammad's beauty are not other human beings, but words, texts, or even written words as artefacts (the *muṣḥaf*).

In sum, al-Tirmidhī's *Shamā'il* is essential for Ḥākānī's poem as a frame of reference and textual reservoir of information. The images of Muḥammad they convey differ, however. Both texts were important for Ottoman book culture of the 17th to 19th centuries. So, the question remains, how did the interrelation of these two texts become manifest in the manuscripts?

3. The scholarly Context of *Shamā'il*-Manuscripts

In the corpus I have surveyed, manuscripts of al-Tirmidhī's *Shamā'il* originate to a large extent from scholarly environments. This context had a considerable effect on paratexts and graphic aspects. In the following, I will explicate this by example, with reference to seven copies of the *Shamā'il* from the Nuruosmaniye collection — founded in 1169/1755 by Sultan 'Oṣmān III.³⁵ An impressive example is manuscript Nuruosmaniye 1174, which includes a number of paratexts documenting the process of production. The colophon is dated 9 Muḥarram 1122 h. (03. 03. 1710) and describes in detail the examination of the copyist by different scholars at the Ḥekīm Çelebi convent in Istanbul, which led to the granting of a teaching licence (*ijāza*). This licence is recorded in the teacher's own hand at the beginning of the manuscript. Directly preceding Tirmidhī's text, the reader finds a supplementary chain of narrators from the author to the copyist's teacher. An alternative chain of narrators is documented in a rectangular box on the margin

³⁴ Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, pp. 197–198.

³⁵ Süleymaniye Library, mss. Nuruosmaniye 1168–1174.

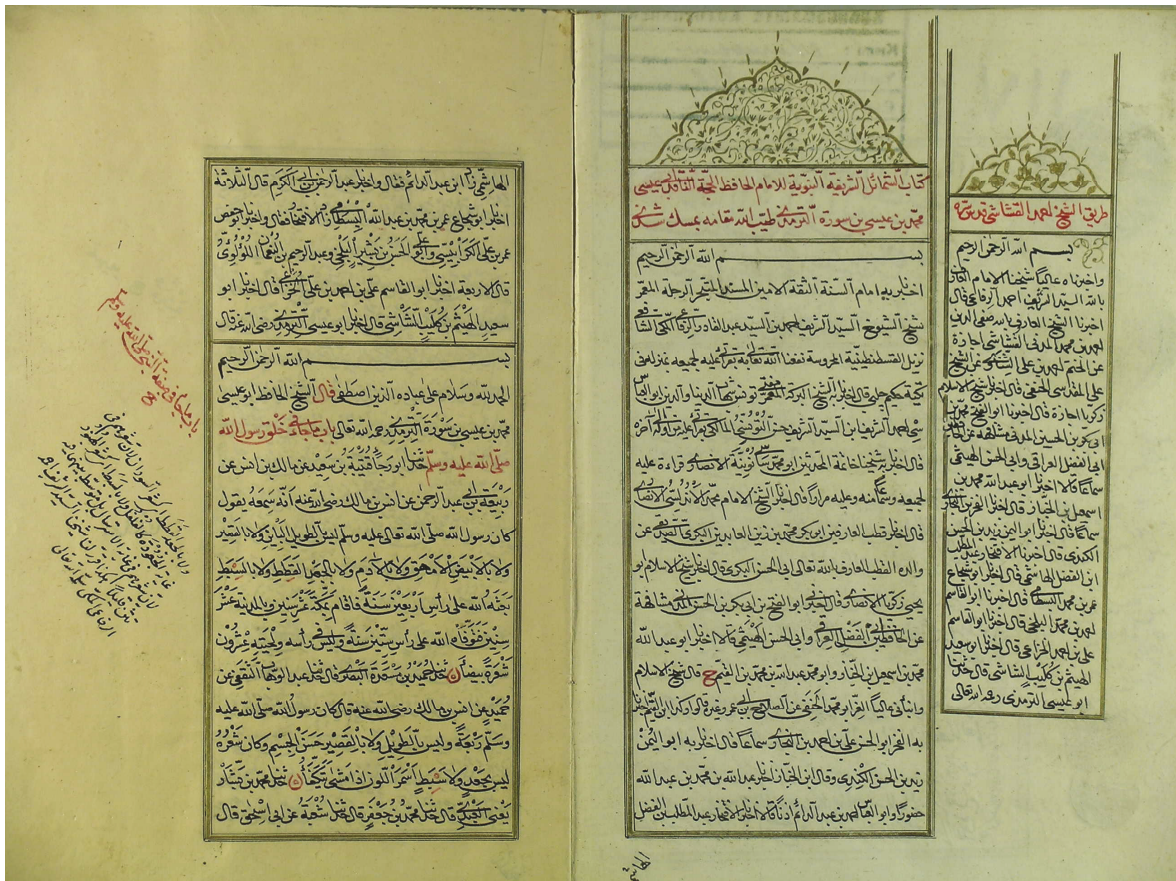


Fig. 1: *Shamā'il*-manuscript with paratexts documenting the process of production (Süleymaniye Library, Nuruosmaniye 1174, fol. 3b–4a)

of this page. Both the text itself and this small box are headed by the typical floral illumination of a title page (*serlevha* or *‘unvān*) executed in gold, but in a plain, simple style (fig. 1). The whole manuscript is written in an elaborate — but not, in the narrow sense, calligraphic — *nesih* ductus. It is collated, and contains only occasionally vowel marks. The headings of the chapters are in red. On the whole, Nuruosmaniye 1174 is a typical scholarly manuscript copy.³⁶

Similarly, information about the context of production can be found in two other manuscripts. In both cases, however, these were most probably copied from an older original. Nuruosmaniye 1169 is an undated manuscript from the 17th or 18th century. On folio 1a it includes detailed notes dated Sunday, 22 Jumādhā II 711 h. (Friday 05. 11. 1311), explaining the process of collation and the abbreviations for the margins. The margins of the manuscript were prepared with a ruling board but ultimately left blank. Nuruosmaniye 1170 is dated Dhū l-Qa‘da 914 (February–March 1509), but gives no further information on the context of production in its colophon. Like Nuruosmaniye 1174, however, it includes an introductory passage, which supplements the *isnād* from the author to scholars of the

³⁶ The exam was conducted in a Sufi convent, and some of the scholars were affiliated to a Sufi order, which was common among Ottoman scholars.

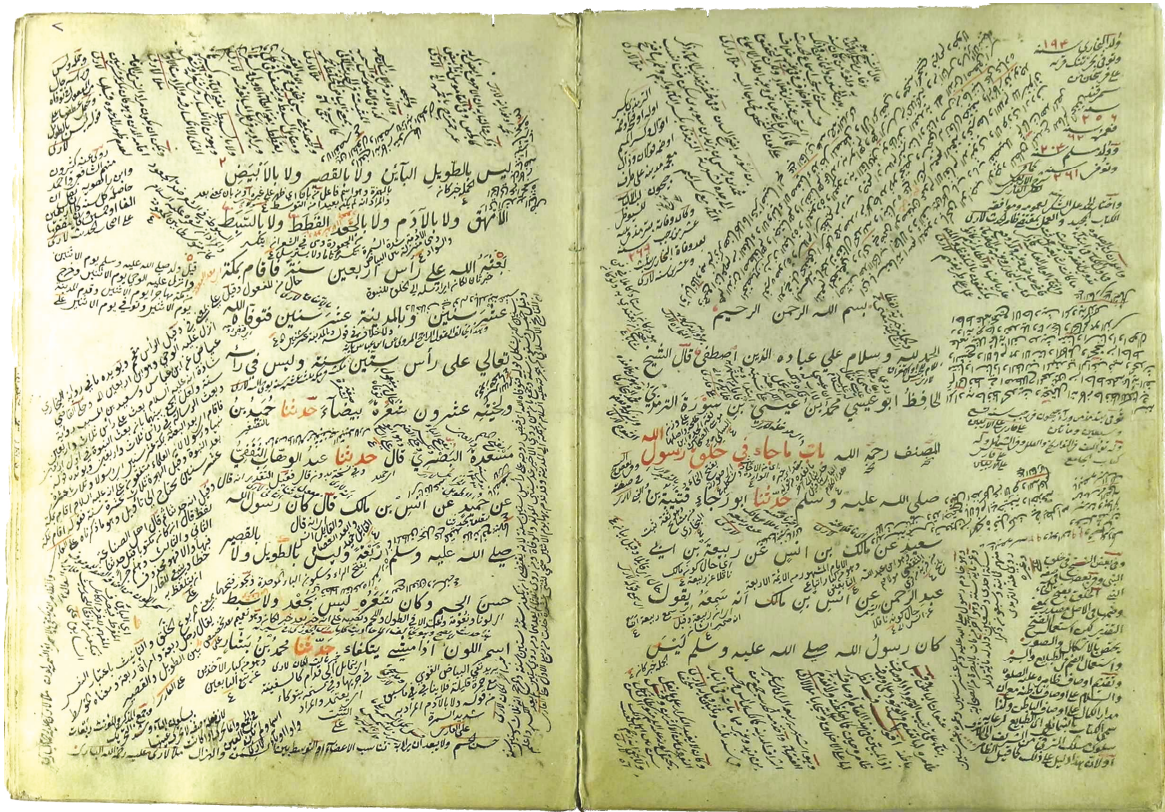


Fig. 2: *Shamā'il*-manuscript with marginal and interlinear glosses (Süleymaniye Library, Nuruosmaniye 1173 fol. 1b–2a)

14th century (dating one *ijāza* to 743/1343). It is obviously a 16th-century copy of a 14th-century manuscript. Both manuscripts — Nuruosmaniye 1169 and Nurusomaniye 1170 — are written in *nesih* with very few vowel signs. The sparse use of vowel signs is a general characteristic of the seven *Shamā'il*-manuscripts.

So far, a closer examination of the texts establishes the scholarly context of these manuscripts. In contrast, the impressive number of interlinear and marginal notes makes it obvious at first glance that the next two specimens are scholars' copies: Nuruosmaniye 1173 is characterised by a complex layout, which combines interlinear and marginal notes, rotated at different angles (fig. 2). These notes are extensive citations from the already mentioned commentaries of Ibn Ḥajar, al-Lārī, and al-Qārī — in each of these notes, the name of the respective author is given at the end. At first glance, this combination of interlinear and marginal notes seems chaotic. But, upon closer inspection, it has a didactic purpose and guides the reader's eye to certain words and phrases. Significantly, this kind of layout was still esteemed in the 19th century and quite often adapted for lithographic prints of scholarly books. In Nuruosmaniye 1172, however, excerpts from commentaries — al-Qārī and al-Munāwī — are restricted to the margins, which



Fig. 3: *Shamā'il*-manuscript with an illuminated title page (Süleymaniye Library, Nuruosmaniye 1168, fol. 1b–2a)

are framed. In addition, all these citations are written on the line. Overall, the manuscript appears much tidier. The layout of the margins is different in both cases. Yet it sends a signal: This is a text that requires exegesis. This is possibly combined with the suggestive message that paper, as an expensive resource, is used and exploited as effectively as possible for imparting knowledge.³⁷

There is, however, a single exception within the Nuruosmaniye collection, which does not fit the general scheme of a scholarly manuscript. The copyist of Nuruosmaniye 1168 identifies himself as a calligrapher at the Sultan's palace — the colophon includes the date 1164 h. (1750–1751) and the signature “Ibrāhīm the calligrapher, son of ‘Abd Allāh, disciple of Muḥammad known as Imāmzāde, may God be pleased with him and his master, living at the Sultan's palace in the barracks of the Seferli corps.”³⁸ The manuscript is written in a calligraphic *nesih* with very few vowel marks. The manuscript is collated. Even on the

³⁷ On paper cf. e.g. Bloom, Jonathan M: *Paper before Print. The History and Impact of Paper in the Islamic World*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2001, here pp. 215–226.

³⁸ Süleymaniye Library, Nuruosmaniye 1168, fol. 168a–168b: “Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abd Allāh min talāmīdh Muḥammad al-ma‘rūf bi-Imāmzāde raḍiya ‘llāhu ‘anhu wa-mawlāhi as-sākin fī saray

very representative opening pages with its gold sprinkled margins we find a collocation note within a cloud-shaped frame (fig. 3). In contrast to copies from a scholarly context, it does not include the introductory passage which supplements the chain of narrators from al-Tirmidhī to one of his contemporaries. The title is richly illuminated with floral ornaments in gold and colour. There is also an eye-catching detail on this page — in the first line, above the elongated letter *sīn* of the invocation of God, two roses are depicted. On the one hand, these pick up the ornaments of the illumination above, on the other hand, the roses also might be read as a visualisation of Muḥammad, comparable to illuminations in manuscripts of the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī*, and seen as a connecting element between the using context of al-Tirmidhī's *Shamā'il* and Ḥākānī's *Ḥilye*.³⁹

4. *Ḥilye* Manuscripts as Commentary or Visualisation

a. Calligraphy and iconicity

Verses from Ḥākānī's *Ḥilye* were often chosen by calligraphers to practice. Uğur Derman refers to *muraqqa'*-albums by 'Arabzāde Meḥmed Sa'dullāh Efendi (1180–1259/1767–1843) or Yesārīzāde Muṣṭafā 'İzzet (d. 1265/1849) (fig. 4).⁴⁰ The semi-verses are written in an elegant *ta'lik* ductus, and Derman already pointed to the fact that the abbreviate characters in between the lines are to be read as *sa'γ* ("effort, endeavour, exertion"). These calligraphic albums had the character of a draft for a full copy as well as a work of art on their own.⁴¹ The term *sa'γ* can obviously be read as reference to the artistic exercise. However, it also has the aspect of religious exercise, and subsequently copying Ḥākānī's text was thought to have a blessing effect.

The percentage of copyists who identify themselves as calligraphers or pupils of master calligraphers is very low in *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* manuscripts. In the surveyed collections of the Süleymaniye library, even the more elaborate copies are not signed by persons who identify themselves as calligraphers in the colophons. Still, even the "ordinary" scribe had a very conscious approach to the configuration of layout, ductus, and illumination.

al-'āmira khāne-i seferli li-sana arba'a wa-sittīn wa-mi'a wa-alf min hijrat man lahu l-'izz wa-l-sharaf."

³⁹ For the devotional use of scholarly works cf. Daub, *Formen und Funktionen des Layouts*, pp. 182–187.

⁴⁰ Uğur Derman: *Letters in Gold, Ottoman calligraphy from the Sakıp Sabancı collection, Istanbul, Metropolitan Museum of Art/Los Angeles County Museum of Art*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art 1998, here pp. 102–103. Cf. also the facsimile print: Karataş, Abdullah (ed.): Mustafa İzzet (Yesarizade). *Hilye-i Hākānī*. Mürekkebat. Istanbul: Abdullah Karataş, n.d.

⁴¹ For a full copy of Ḥākānī's poem cf. Berk, Süleyman: "Hattat Arabzāde Mehmed Sadullah Efendi'nin Ta'lik hat eseri bir Hilye-u Hākānī". *Art+Decor* 6 (2000), pp. 94–95.

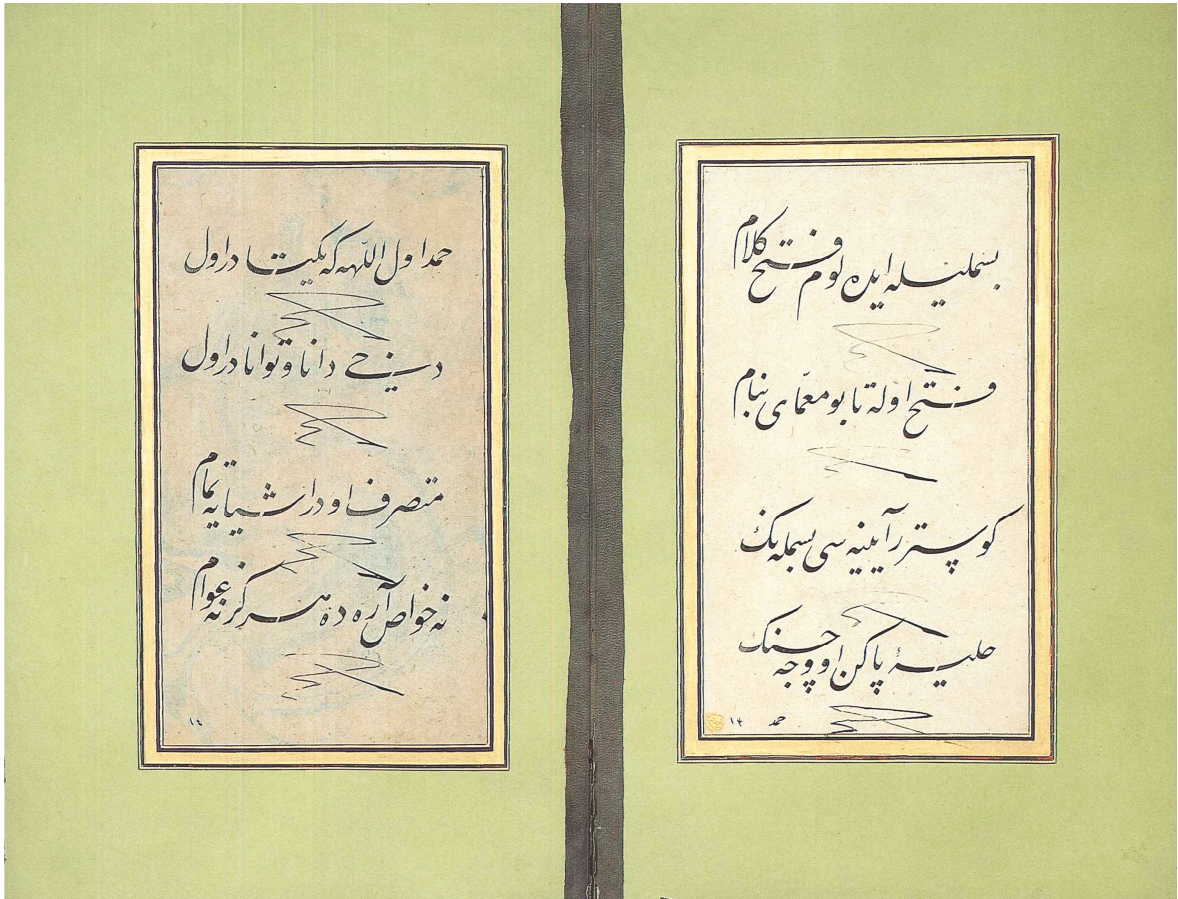


Fig. 4: *murakka'*-albums by 'Arabzāde Mehmed Sa'dullāh Efendi with verses from Ḥākānī's *Hilye*, collection of the Sakıp Sabancı Museum (SSM 120-0379)

The Nuruosmaniye collection, for example, includes two copies of Ḥākānī's *Hilye* — Nuruosmaniye 789 and Nuruosmaniye 790. Both are obviously written by copyists with calligraphic training, but they do not include colophons with names, professions or dates. They were produced in the late 17th or first half of the 18th century — terminus ante is the date of the foundation and donation of the library, 1169/1755. Binding and illumination are elaborate, which does not necessarily indicate a courtly context.⁴² Nuruosmaniye 789 is copied in *ta'liq*-ductus, citations from the *ḥadīth*-texts and headings are written in red, and illuminated with floral ornaments in gold (fig. 5). Citations occasionally include vowel marks, but not consistently. Nuruosmaniye 790 is a multi-text manuscript, which includes Ḥākānī's *Hilye* and Cevrī's *Hilye* of the rightly guided caliphs — a frequent combination. On the last folio a *ḡaṣīde* is later added in a cursive ductus, probably by another hand. The manuscript is copied in *nesih*-ductus, text and headings are fully vocalised (fig. 6). Headings and citations are written in gold with a broader pen and illuminated with floral ornaments in red, yellow and blue.

⁴² Only a smaller part of the Nuruosmaniye collection consists of manuscripts with users' notes that indicate an owner or user in the context of the palace. A larger part was obviously acquired by the Sultan for the purpose, of being donated to the newly founded library, cf. e. g. the paragraphs above, about the *Shamā'il*-manuscripts.



Fig. 5: *Hilye-i Hākānī*-Manuscript with citations from Tirmidhī's text in red with illumination (Süleymaniye Library, Nuruosmaniye 789 fol. 11b–12a)

In both examples an indexical link between the beauty of the calligraphy and the beauty of the language, and hence the beauty of Prophet, which the poem describes, seems manifest. Still, was the choice of the ductus just the preference of the copyist or the patron who commissioned a manuscript? There is some evidence that the choice of the ductus, and the use of vowel signs were an essential aspect of the iconicity of calligraphy. On the one hand, the manuscripts were read as texts. On the other hand, the graphical aspects of the writing had their own semantics. It is striking that in 19th century typographic prints in Istanbul and Cairo poetry — and especially *divān*-poetry — is rather often set in *ta'lik*-types, whereas texts in prose, and especially scholarly texts, are with extremely rare exceptions set in *nesih*. In these cases, *ta'lik* with its aspiration to elegance was associated with poetry; *nesih*, however, as an easily readable ductus, with an authentic transmission of content was associated with prose.

In addition, in Ottoman-Turkish texts, vowel signs are — due to the vowel harmony — not very helpful, except for those marking the Persian *izāfet*. The vowel signs in fully vocalised texts fulfil a rather iconic function, which indicates the



Fig. 6: *Hilye-i Hākānī*-Manuscript with citations from Tirmidhī's text in gold with illumination (Süleymaniye Library, Nuruosmaniye 790 fol. 8b–9a)

religious character of the text. The combination of the ductus *nesih* and the vowel signs — in analogy to the Qur'ān — emphasises the religious character and the authenticity of transmission. Correspondingly, the copy Nuruosmaniye 789 in *ta'liq*-ductus underlines the poetic character of the texts with all its beauty and elegance, the copy Nuruosmaniye 790, however, refers more directly to the sources of the text — a *ḥadīth*-collection — and its authority.

b. Source, translation, and commentary — the layout of interrelation

The structure of a page and graphic aspects of script are relevant in scholarly texts, as well as in poetry — or hybrids like didactic poems. In a poetic context, “responses” to texts are not only translations or commentaries, but also “imitative pieces of poetry” like the poetic forms *naẓīre* or *taḥmīs*.⁴³ A particularly complex example is a manuscript of an imitation (*taḥmīs*) to al-Būṣīrī's popular poem *Qaṣīdat al-Burda* in the Sadberk Hanım Museum (Sadberk Hanım Müzesi,

⁴³ Daub, *Formen und Funktionen des Layouts*, pp. 106–116. Gacek, Adam: *Arabic Manuscripts – A Vademecum for Readers*. (Handbook of Oriental Studies, Section 1 The Near and Middle East, 98). Leiden: Brill 2009, here p. 178.



Fig. 7: Imitation (*taḥmīs*) to al-Būṣīrī's *Qaṣīdat al-Burda* (Sadberk Hanım Müzesi, Küt. 615, 22b–23a)

Küt. 615).⁴⁴ The copy dates from the 15th century. The first semi-verse (*mısrāʿ*) of each of al-Būṣīrī's lines is written alternate in red *şülüṣ* and black *reḫānī*. The second semi-verse is written in red *nesih* below, at a declining angle, and the three imitative semi-verses by an unidentified author in black *nesih*, below and centred. Moreover, a Persian adaptation of the two original semi-verses of the *Qaṣīdat al-Burda* is added above, on the left, also in a declining angle (fig. 7). The manuscript also includes a word-by-word translation of the original semi-verses into Turkish, written in a chancellery ductus (*dīvānī*) under the respective words. On the whole, the structure of the page is a visualisation of the complex interrelation between the four texts, similar to marginal commentaries in scholarly manuscripts. Similar interrelations can be found in *Ḥilye*-manuscripts from my corpus, even if they do not match this manuscript of al-Būṣīrī's poem in their complexity.

As stated above, the character of a commentary is already inherent in the structure of Ḥākānī's text. In some of the manuscripts this is emphasised by graphic aspects, especially the layout, the choice of colour, and ductus. This can be exemplified by manuscript Fatih 4328 in the Süleymaniye library, which was donated by Sultan Maḥmūd I in 1742 as part of the newly founded *vakf*-library at the Fatih-Mosque in Istanbul. The manuscript does not include a colophon; the date of the

⁴⁴ Tanındı, Zeren: *Harmony of Line and Colour: Illuminated manuscripts documents and calligraphy in the Sadberk Hanım Museum Collection*, 2 vols. Istanbul: Sadberk Hanım Müzesi, 2019, here vol. 1, pp. 284–285.



Fig. 8: List of Muḥammad's attributes preceding a copy of Ḥākānī's *Hilye* (Süleymaniye Library, Fatih 4328, fol. 0b–1a)

donation is the *terminus ante*. In a broader sense, Fatih 4328 is a multi-text-manuscript, since Ḥākānī's *Hilye* is preceded by a double page giving a list of Muḥammad's attributes, which is supplemented by an interlinear translation into Turkish. It is headed by the line “this is the *hilye* of the Prophet — peace be upon him.”⁴⁵

Certain aspects of the two texts are designed parallel — the use of colour and ductus. Both are executed quite accurately, but not from a master calligrapher's hand, who followed the norms of these ductuses in every detail. The short *Hilye* preceding Ḥākānī's poem is a list of attributes of Muḥammad, written in red *sülüs*. Under each of the words a Turkish translation is added in black *nesih* (fig. 8). They recall interlinear commentaries or word-by-word translations in scholarly manuscripts. Similar, but more elaborate compositions exist also as panel calligraphy, e. g. by Ḥāfız 'Oṣmān (d. 1110/1698), who had also developed the classical composition of the *hilye* as a panel.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Süleymaniye Library, Fatih 4328, fol. 0b–1a.

⁴⁶ E.g. SHM 11724–Y.25, cf. Tanındı, *Harmony of Line and Colour*, pp. 540–541, and Taşkale–Gündüz, *Hatt Sanatında Hilye-i Şerife*, pp. 34–37.



Fig. 9: Ḥākānī’s *Hilye* as interlinear comment to Tirmidhī’s text (Süleymaniye Library, Fatih 4328, fol. 11b–12a)

The copy of Ḥākānī’s poem in Fatih 4328 is arranged correspondingly — citations from the *ḥadīth*-texts and headings are written in red *sülüs*, Ḥākānī’s verses in black *nesih* (fig. 9). The highlighting of citations and headings by the choice of colour and ductus is the same as in the two manuscripts from the Nuruosmaniye collection. But the analogies in design to the short *Hilye* at the beginning of manuscript Fatih 4328 makes the character of Ḥākānī’s poem as “interlinear translation” or “interlinear commentary” more obvious.

c. Illustration and illumination

Illustrated manuscripts of Ḥākānī’s *Hilye* are rare. In addition, it is rather difficult to draw a clear line between the iconicity of calligraphy and — in a narrower sense — illustrations.⁴⁷ In none of the illustrated manuscripts do we find any figurative illustrations, which refer to a particular passage in Ḥākānī’s poem — e.g. the story about Hārūn al-Rashīd and the poor man. The illustrations are all positioned at the end of the text, hence they can — just like Fatih 4328 — also be understood as another “text”. Two manuscripts from the Süleymaniye library may serve to explicate the interrelation of “text” and “illustration.”

⁴⁷ Schick 2008, pp. 211–22, Elias, *Aisha’s Cushion*, pp. 272–275.

Manuscript Hamidiye 1075 is written in a calligraphic *ta'lik*. The text is framed in gold, the title page, the headings and Arabic citations from al-Tirmidhī's text are richly illuminated — mainly with floral ornaments. The copy has no colophon, but the last verse is followed directly by the picture of a rose, which is signed *Eser-i Kelek Mehmed Yemeni Muḥarrem 1130* ("work of Kelek Mehmed Yemeni Muḥarrem 1130/December 1717") (fig. 10, Hamidiye 1075, fol. 21b–22a).⁴⁸ The signature avoids a clear wording like *naqashahu* ("painted it") or *katabahu* ("wrote it"), but prefers the neutral *eser* ("work of"). So, the dating refers most likely to the whole manuscript, even if the calligrapher, illuminator, and painter were different persons. Christiane Gruber has already suggested that we may see the picture of the rose not only as a part of the floral illumination of the manuscript but also most likely as a reference to the omnipresent metaphors to the Prophet Muḥammad in Ḥākānī's poem.⁴⁹

We have observed the use of a similar graphic element in the *Shamā'il*-manuscript Nuruosmaniye 1168, in which the roses above the *sīn* of the invocation of God are, at first glance simply an illumination, but might, on closer inspection, also be read as an illustration — a floral visualisation of Muḥammad. The graphic characteristics of illumination and illustration, their ornamental vs. semantic use, apparently form a continuum. In the case of Hamidiye 1075, the positioning, the size, and the signature make the character as illustration and visualisation distinct.

Apart from the rose, the "seal of prophethood" (*khātam al-nubuwwa*, tr. *mühr-i nübūvet*) is another graphic element, which can be found in *Hilye*-manuscripts. In manuscript Şehid Ali Paşa 2755, which is dated 1075/1665, an illustration of the seal of prophethood follows the texts of Ḥākān's *Hilye*, in a fashion very similar to the rose in Hamidiye 1075 (fig. 11).⁵⁰ Şehid Ali Paşa 2755 is a multi-text manuscript which includes three *hilye*-texts as well as a heterogeneous mixture of 26 treatises in the fields of theology and Sufism.⁵¹ The seal of prophethood can therefore be understood both as illustration to Ḥākānī's *Hilye* or as just another text in this collection. The graphic of the seal ends with the formula "finished" (*tammāt*) in the same way as Ḥākānī's poem. It consists of three concentric circles in a rectangular frame. The space between the two outer circles is filled with the iteration of the formula of confession "There is no god but God. Muḥammad is

⁴⁸ Süleymaniye Library, Hamidiye 1075, fol. 21b–22a.

⁴⁹ Cf. Gruber, Christiane: "The Rose of the Prophet, Floral Metaphors in Late Ottoman Devotional Art". In: *Envisioning Islamic Art and Architecture, Essays in Honor of Renata Holod*. Ed. David Roxburgh. Leiden: Brill, 2014, 227–254, here p. 230.

⁵⁰ Süleymaniye Library, Şehid Ali Paşa 2755, Tuesday, 18 ZA 1075/2 June 1665 (date on fol. 34b).

⁵¹ The first three *hilye*-texts are Ḥākānī's *Hilye*, the already mentioned poem on the *hilye* of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs (*Hilye-i Çar Yār-i Güzīn*) by Cevrī İbrāhīm Çelebi (d. 1065/1654), and a treatise in prose about the Prophet's *hilye* by a certain Şemseddīn Sivasī — probably the famous Ḥalvetiye sheikh of this name (d. 1006/1597).

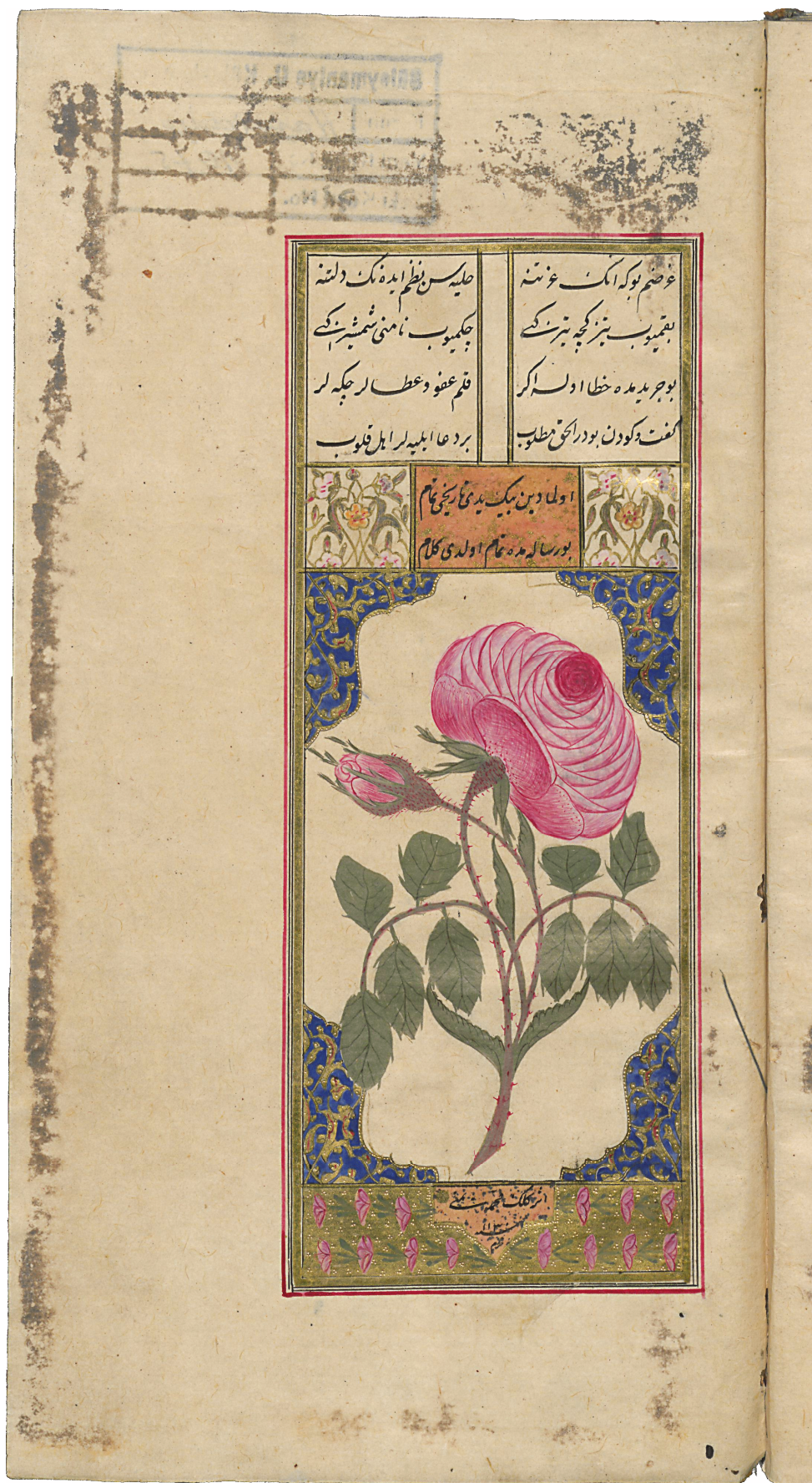


Fig. 10: Final page of Hākānī's *Hilye* and the image of a rose (Süleymaniye Library, Hamidiye 1075, fol. 21b–22a)

<p>پر تو نور جناب عزت شب جسم حمله اولادند ابن دن پدرم ابراهیم کهرم اول صد فلک جو هر بدر دائمه آئینت سبک انی نظیر باعث دولت مادر زادم</p>	<p>کو هر خاتم دست قدرت خواجه ادم اولان آدمین سم دیدی لطفه اول طبعه سلیم بجاناسک فنی بک بکر زمد یعنی کیم خلفا و خلفا نقد بر اولدر القصد اورن مین دم</p>
<p>حمد لیکه ایدوب ختم کلام سوزی ایدرم بو حدیث ابقام</p>	<p>خاتمه کتاب</p>
<p>بمی، جمله عصمت عصمت ماهدن ماهیه دکن ملک و ملک اولدیلر هر بری عبد ملوک نه قدر ایدرم اید جرم و قصه بجان لطف ایلست، تخته ایله فالمه اک کلکمه سلطه غم وصفتک ایدیلور بالاکمال سکا جاننده فداینده فدای عذره حاشتمه فالور خانی مدح و لغت ایترا اووال کفر</p>	<p>ای شفا ساز بلای افات خاک در کاهک ار لر بری ننگ سایه پر کلاه کده ملوک مدحکنده سنگ ای قلم نوز عفو ایدوب غنمی احیا ایله قابل شرح و کل نقصانم بزده بوق مدحتک لطفه مجال حاصلی ای شه اقیم وفا وصفتک اولمجنن پایاست کسه معصود است ای کوره</p>

ختم



Fig. 11: Illustration of the seal of prophethood following Ḥākānī’s poem (Süleymaniye Library, Sehîd Ali Pasa 2755, fol. 19b–20a)

the messenger of God”. The space between the inner circles and the centre of the circles contains pseudo-script. The edges between the circles and the frame contain the formula “Oh God, bless Muḥammad and grant him salvation, and also all of his family and companions” (*Allāhumma ṣalli / ‘alā Muḥammadin wa-‘alā / ālihi wa-ṣaḥbihi / ajma’īna*). Two aspects need further discussion: One, the similarity of this graphic with the composition of a *ḥilye*-panel, two, the iconicity of the seal of prophethood:

1. The four parts of this formula in the corners are very reminiscent of the names of the four rightly guided caliphs in the classical composition of a *ḥilye*-panel.⁵² In another multi-text manuscript, Fatih 5385, a similar image of the seal of prophethood names *in lieu* of the above mentioned formula the four caliphs (fig. 12).⁵³ A note dated 1079 (1668–1669) and written in a more cursive ductus at the end of the manuscript documents that the copyist had spent three years of his life compiling this anthology (*mecmū’a*). The two manuscripts were created in

⁵² Cf. the article by Emine Küçükbay in the present volume, and Gruber, Christiane: *The Praiseworthy One. The Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Texts and Images*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018, here pp. 285–301.

⁵³ The manuscript does not include Ḥākānī’s *Ḥilye*, but a much shorter version by another poet, who is identified by Uzun as Hüdā’ī Maḥmūd, cf. Uzun 1998, p. 44.



Fig. 12: Image of the seal of prophethood naming in the corners the four rightly guided caliphs (Süleymaniye Library, Fatih 5385, 304a)

close temporal — and probably also local — proximity to Ḥāfiẓ ‘Osmān’s *hilye*-panels. It is, however, essential that both manuscripts — Şehid Ali Paşa 2755 and Fatih 5385 — construct an implicit parallel between the seal of prophethood and Muḥammad’s *hilye*. Both emphasize the salutary and apotropaic effect which the “image” or “written copy” (*şūret*) of the seal of prophethood carries. The version in Şehid Ali Paşa 2755 reads: “Everybody who bears this image upon him/her and looks at it from time to time will be saved from the fire of hell, and he/she will be respected among the people, and God will not deny those who write it and bear it upon them Muḥammad’s intercession”.⁵⁴ This is very close to Ḥākānī’s conclu-

⁵⁴ Süleymaniye Library, Şehid Ali Paşa 2755, fol. 20a: “Her kim işbu mühr-i nübüvî yanında getürse ve gâh gâh nazar etse haqq ta’âlâ anuñ bedenini cehennem odına harâm eyleye ve halk içinde ‘azîz ola ve yazanı ve getüreni haqq ta’âlâ hażret-i Muḥammed şefa’atından maḥrûm eylemeye.”

sion about the *ḥilye* — as an artefact — from the very first *ḥadīth* he cites and his narration about Hārūn al-Rashīd.⁵⁵

2. Schick has argued that the seal of prophethood is, alongside the *ḥilye*, a characteristic example of the iconicity of calligraphy.⁵⁶ By calligraphing the text, which was written on Muḥammad’s seal, the artist produces an image (*ṣekil*) — respectively icon — of the relic. The calligraphic panel that Schick analysed dates from the end of the 19th century and includes rather detailed explanations about the source of information — i. e., al-Tirmidhī — and the apotropaic and salutary effect of looking at this icon. As I have already mentioned above, the reference to al-Tirmidhī is actually misleading, since the different concepts of the “seal prophethood” and the “seal of the messenger of God”, which al-Tirmidhī addresses in his *Shamā’il*, are here amalgamated. According to the explanations on the panel, the text is “concealed” (*bāṭin*) within the seal — which obviously refers to a hidden inscription on the mark on Muḥammad’s body, between his shoulders and not to the object which Muḥammad used to sign his letters.⁵⁷ In the images of manuscripts Şehid Ali Paşa 2755 and Fatih 5385 the pseudo-script might be a hint to the fact that they depict a concealed inscription — a fact that makes the iconic character of these graphics even more obvious.

Keeping the iconicity of script in mind, the text-text and text-image interaction is very similar in the three analysed manuscripts. In case of Fatih 4328, the descriptive poetry of Ḥākānī’s poem interacts with the preceding double page, which looks very similar to an early *ḥilye*-panel by Ḥāfīz ‘Osmān, and as such can be “read” or “seen” as a visualisation of Muḥammad. In Şehid Ali Paşa 2755, too, the seal of prophethood can be read as just another text in an anthology (*mecmū’a*), but it functions also as icon and visualisation. Finally, in Hamidiye 1075 the “visualising text” is the picture of a rose. In these manuscripts the illustrative effects of texts and images resembles a continuum.

⁵⁵ On the “images” of seals and their apotropaic effect cf. also Gruber 2018, pp. 23–29.

⁵⁶ Schick 2008, pp. 211–213, and Elias, *Aisha’s Cushion*, pp. 272–275.

⁵⁷ According to al-Tirmidhī, the seal of the messenger of God fell into the well of Arīs (near Medina) during the reign of the caliph ‘Uthmān, al-Tirmidhī, *Shamā’il*, ed. al-Khālidī, p. 43, no 95.

d. Manuscript Hüsrev 36 — a *hilye*-anthology

Another multi-text manuscript, which is dated 1196/1781–2, combines several aspects of the preceding examples.⁵⁸ In contrast to these, Hüsrev 36 contains exclusively *hilye*-texts — two copies of the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī*, one of the copies with and one without vowel-signs, Cevrī's *Ḥilye-i Çār Yār-i Güzīn* (*hilye* of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs), Neşāṭī's *Ḥilye-i Enbiyā'* and some unidentified, shorter *hilye*-texts in verse and prose. In my analysis, I focus on two aspects: Firstly, is it of any significance that the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* is represented twice in this volume — with and without vowel signs? And secondly, how did users most likely “read” several configurations reminiscent of the classical *hilye*-panel of Ḥāfız 'Oşmān?

The answer to the first question depends very much on whether the whole manuscript was copied by the same hand. During our workshop in Bamberg we discussed whether different shapes of the same letter in the same ductus in this manuscript might originate from different calligraphic schools. The copyist wrote an accurate and appealing *nesih*. Still, he or she most likely did not identify as a calligrapher belonging to a certain school as his or her pedigree and affiliation are not noted in the colophon. It is generally difficult to decide if the different texts were copied by the same hand. Still, in my opinion this volume is most probably an anthology (*mecmū'a*), which was originally planned and produced as such.⁵⁹

The two versions of Ḥākānī's *Ḥilye* in manuscript Hüsrev 36 — written in *nesih* with and without vowel signs — may have suggested a different approach to the text — to a certain degree comparable to the two manuscripts Nuruosmaniye 789 and Nuruosmaniye 790, even if, in that case, the ductus (*nesih* vs. *ta'lik*) also differed. Again, I argue that the *nesih* with vowel signs is used to emphasise the religious authority of the text, the version without vowel signs leaves more room for the poetic aspects. In addition, the first version with vowel signs also documents text variants in marginal notes. Consequently, manuscript Hüsrev 36 may be interpreted as an amateur's *sa'y* (“endeavour”) or even his aesthetic deliberation, comparable to a calligrapher's process of writing a *muraqqa'*-album. Accordingly, the volume helps the readers to reflect on these different approaches to Ḥākānī's poem.

The third text in manuscript Hüsrev 36 is Cevrī's *Ḥilye-i Çār Yār-i Güzīn* (*hilye* of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs).⁶⁰ On the following pages, a series of page

⁵⁸ The colophon gives only the date, but no name or any further information, Süleymaniye Library, Hüsrev 36, fol. 71a.

⁵⁹ Only after the workshop, in February 2020, did I get the chance for an autopsy, which showed that the whole manuscript is probably written on the same paper with very few watermarks.

⁶⁰ Süleymaniye Library, Hüsrev 36, fol. 38b–45a.

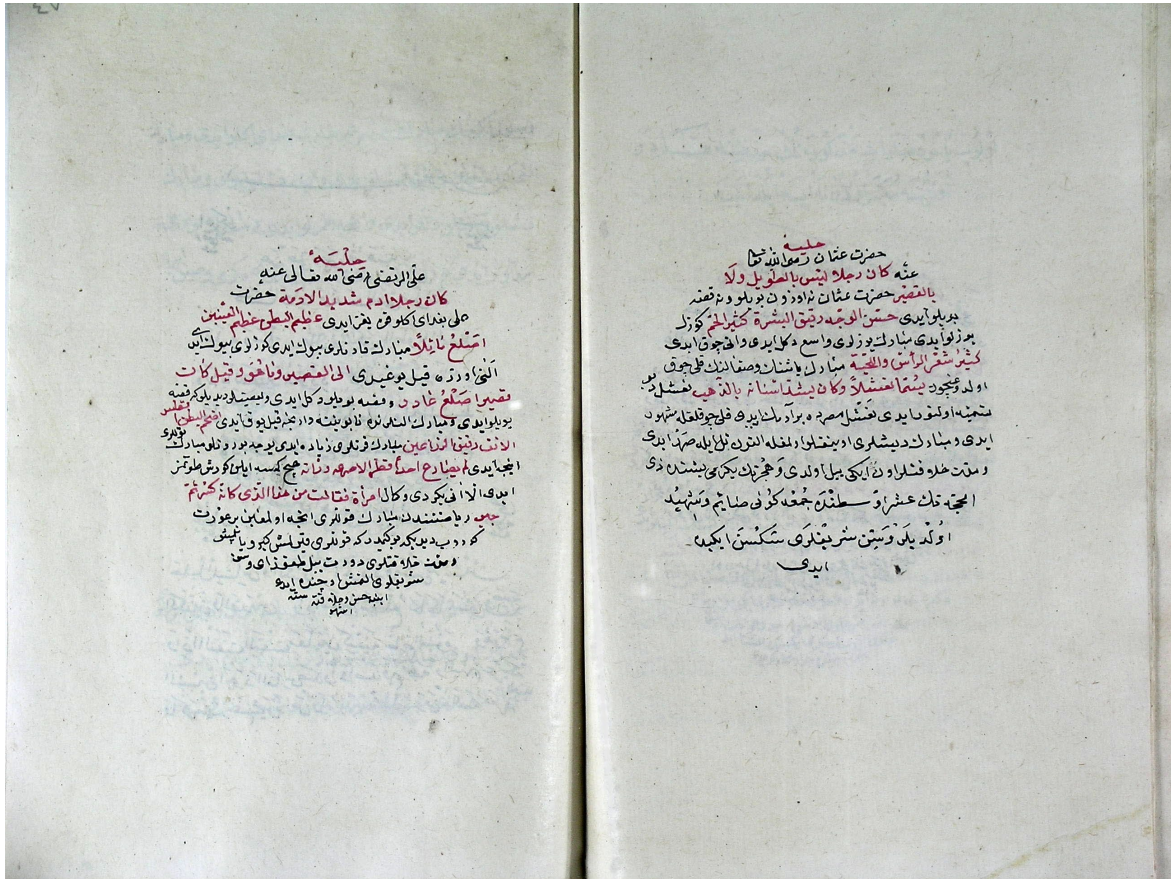


Fig. 13: Visualisations of the *ḥilye* of the rightly guided caliphs ‘Alī and ‘Uthmān (Süleymaniye Library, Hüsrev 36, fig. 47)

configurations begins, which are reminiscent of the classical *ḥilye*-panel. By the 1780s, *ḥilye* as a genre of panel calligraphy had already become popular. On folios 45b–47a, four short texts are written in the shape of a circle in the middle of an otherwise blank page. Each of these is an abbreviated version of the *ḥilye* of one of the rightly guided caliphs (fig. 13). The citation of the Arabic text is written in red, the Turkish translation in black ink, which gives the circles a certain visual dynamic. These circles may be seen as visualisation of the preceding text, Cevrî’s poem. They may also remind one of the four small circles surrounding Muḥammad’s *ḥilye*, but presenting them as circles on an otherwise blank page gives them a much higher authority. In fact, in Cevrî’s poem also, the focus is on the *ḥilye* of each of the four caliphs.

The following page shows a configuration of Muḥammad’s *ḥilye* which is very close to Ḥāfız ‘Oṣmān’s panels (fig. 14).⁶¹ The first line contains the invocation of God. Below, the first part of the *ḥadīth* is written in circular shape, surrounded by the names of the four rightly guided caliphs. The rest of the *ḥadīth* is written in the lower part of the page in a rectangular shape. The following pages pick up this

⁶¹ Cf. E.g. Hatcher Graduate Library, Michigan University Ann Arbor, Isl. Ms. 238; Gruber, *Praiseworthy*, pp. 286–287.

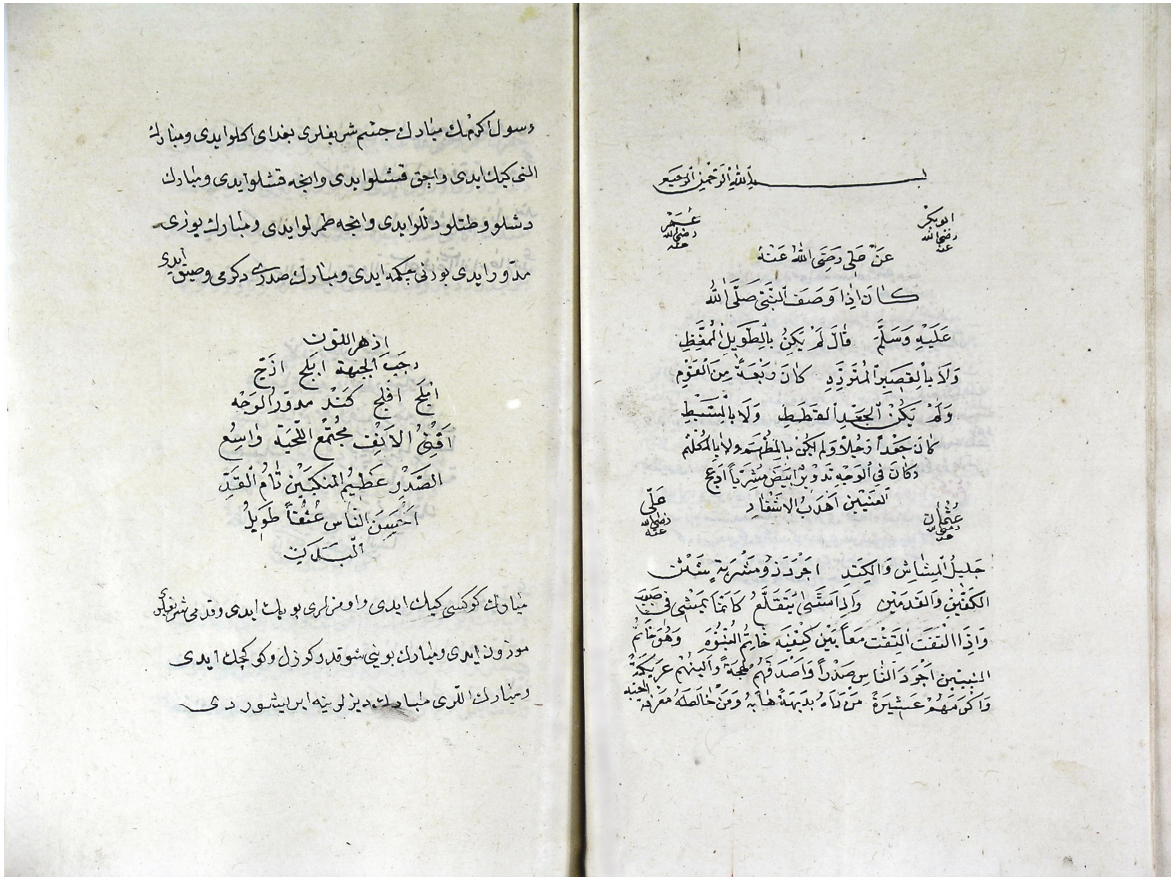


Fig. 14: Different *hilye*-texts in a multi-text manuscript (Süleymaniye Library, Hüsrev 36, fig. 48)

contrast of circular and rectangular text blocks. It is an anonymous *hilye*-text in prose, in fact a Turkish translation of one of the *ḥadīth*-texts from the *Shamā'il*.⁶² In the centre of each page the Arabic original is written in circular shape with vowel signs, in the upper and the lower part of the page the Turkish translation is written in rectangular shape without vowel signs. This page configuration obviously had priority over the correlation of the cited text and its translation, because there are slight discrepancies between these texts. The configuration visualises the hierarchy of texts by means of colour (red vs. black), shape (circular vs. rectangular) and script (use of vowel signs), but it also adapts the iconicity of the panel calligraphy. Still, the circular shape in general brings us back to the topic of the seal of prophethood.

e. Hybrids of the *hilye* and the seal of prophethood

In the 19th century, a hybrid form of the *hilye* and the seal of prophethood found their way into manuscripts and printed books. A printed version of Bursalı İsmā'il Hāḫḫı's (d. 1137/1725) commentary (*Ferah er-Rūḥ*) on a 15th-century poem about basic religious knowledge, e. g. the Prophet Muḥammad, creation and the day of judgement — Yazıcıoğlu Muḥammed's (d. 855/1451) *Muḥammedīye* — serves as

⁶² Süleymaniye Library, Hüsrev 36, fol. 48a–50a.

an impressive example for the interaction between the two images. For my analysis, I chose the version of İsmā'īl Hakkı's commentary, which was published as a typographic print in Cairo 1258 h. (1842). The configuration of the text and the *hilye* remains the same in a number of manuscripts and prints (fig. 15, *Ferah er-Rūh*, Cairo 1258 h., vol. 2, p. 64).⁶³ The printed image of Muḥammad's *hilye* is not interpolated into the chapter about Muḥammad's characteristics and physiognomy, where it is most likely to be expected, but into the chapter about his death.⁶⁴ Thus it is linked to a new narrative. The verses immediately preceding the *hilye* describe the scene where, on his deathbed, Muḥammad asks his companions to tell him if he is still in debt to someone or owes anyone compensation or retribution. All discharge him from any debt or guilt except for 'Ukkāsha ibn al-Miḥsan, who reminds them that the Prophet had hit him once with his whip by accident, and he insists on recompense. The Prophet confirms this and asks 'Ukkāsha to hit him back now. The companions beg 'Ukkāsha to discharge the Prophet, who was weak and faint by then, but he insists on his right. When Bilāl is finally asked to bring the whip and the Prophet removes his robe, ready to be hit on his back, the seal of prophethood between his shoulders becomes visible to all, and it illuminates the whole environment like a flash of lightning.⁶⁵ At this point in the narrative, the print of *Ferah er-Rūh* interpolates the *hilye*-design, which is at first sight very close to Ḥāfiz 'Osmān's panels. The following ten verses tell that the companions of the Prophet thereupon lamented excessively. 'Ukkāsha was perplexed when he saw what he unwittingly unveiled. Then he wept, too, and regretted that he had intended to touch the Prophets blessed body with his own (*mübārek cismüñe cismüm ulaşsun dēyü*).⁶⁶ But Muḥammad tells him that God will withhold from him the fire of hell and reward him with paradise.⁶⁷

Yazıcıoğlu's original text links 'Ukkāsha's act of unwittingly unveiling the seal of prophethood and thereby the light of Muḥammad with the promise of paradise. In the print of *Ferah er-Rūh* from 1258 h. (1842) a similar link is presented by the interpolation of the *hilye*. The *hilye* here consists of three elements: a slightly abbreviated version of the *hadīth* about the apotropaic and salutary effect of seeing

⁶³ Heinzelmann, Tobias: *Populäre Religiöse Literatur und Buchkultur im Osmanischen Reich. Eine Studie zur Nutzung der Werke der Brüder Yazıcıoğlu*. (Istanbul Texte und Studien 32). Würzburg: Ergon, 2015, here pp. 200–204, fig. 6.11 on p. 525.

⁶⁴ Çelebioğlu, Âmil: *Muhammediye*. 2 vols. Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1996, here vol. 2, pp. 124–127, verses 1916–1961.

⁶⁵ Çelebioğlu, *Muhammediye*, vol. 2, pp. 255–259, verses 3912–3956.

⁶⁶ Çelebioğlu, *Muhammediye*, vol. 2, p. 259, verse 3956. İsmā'īl Hakkı, Bursalı: *Şerh el-Muhammediye el-musemmā bi-Ferah er-Rūh*, 2 vols. Cairo: Dār el-ṭibā'a el-bāhire, 1258 h., vol. 2, p. 65.

⁶⁷ Which actually contradicts Yazıcıoğlu's chapter about those who were promised paradise by the Prophet, where 'Ukkāsha is not mentioned, cf. Çelebioğlu, *Muhammediye*, vol. 2, pp. 308–309, verses 4711–4720.

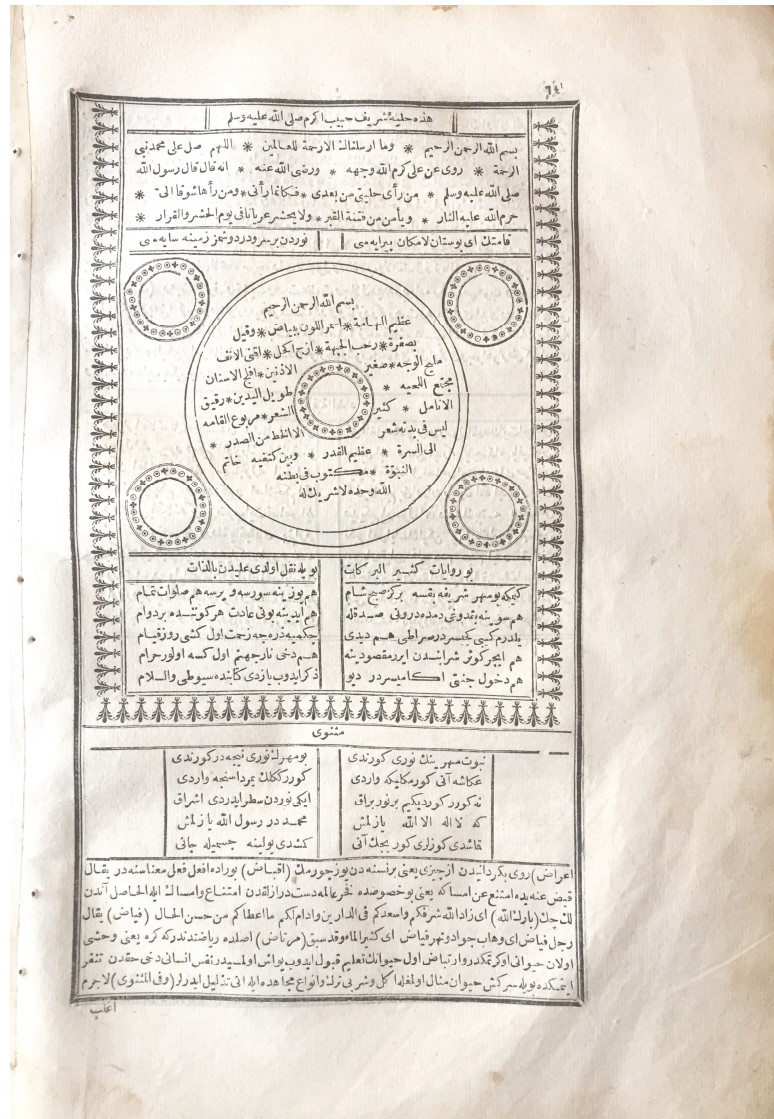


Fig. 15: *ḥilye* as interpolation in a typographic print of Ismā'īl Ḥaqqī's *Feraḥ er-Rūḥ*, Cairo 1258 h., vol. 2, p. 64

the Prophet's *ḥilye*, the typical *ḥilye*-design reminiscent of the configuration of Ḥāfiẓ 'Osmān's panels, and four additional verses which explain the apotropaic effect of the image of the seal of prophethood.⁶⁸ The configuration implicitly equates the two: the image of the *ḥilye* and the image of the seal of prophethood. The adaptation of the *ḥilye*-panel here consists of the large circle with the text of a *ḥadīth* describing Muḥammad's physiognomy and five small, ornate circles — one in the centre of the large circle, and four in the corners between the large circle and the rectangular frame. The names of the four rightly guided caliphs, however, are lacking. The fact that the text of the *ḥadīth*, which is uncanonical, differs from those on the panels is remarkable, and conveys again a hybrid concept of the seal of prophethood. The last sentence reads: “Between his shoulders he has the seal of prophethood, and it was written on its inside (*fī baṭnihi*)

⁶⁸ Ismā'īl Ḥaqqī, *Ṣerḥ el-Muḥammedīye*, vol. 2, p. 64.

[i.e. as a concealed inscription]: “God is the only one. He has no associates” (*Allāh waḥdahu lā sharīk lahu*).⁶⁹ The seal of prophethood as a mark on Muḥammad’s body is amalgamated with the idea of the seal as an artefact bearing an inscription. Its “copy” or “image” (both for *ṣūret* or *ṣekil*) can be used as apotropaic device — again as an artefact, be it as a single page in the whole manuscript or printed book, or be it as a graphic on a separate piece of paper or wooden panel.

Taking the narrative about ‘Ukkāsha into account, the idea that the seal of prophethood is a phenomenon of light, which was normally veiled by Muḥammad’s clothes, is transferred to the image of the *ḥilye*. This suggests that the *ḥilye* in this print — and probably also in some other contexts — was interpreted as a visualisation of the light of Muḥammad.

5. Conclusion

Ḥākānī’s *Ḥilye* is remarkable for its construction of the interrelation between a text and its written manifestation. This is based on two significant factors: Firstly, its claim to be directly based on one of the important sources of Islamic belief — the *ḥadīth*, i. e., the tradition of the Prophet, and secondly the authorisation given by the Prophet in a dream, to use a piece of paper as an artefact and profit from its beneficial effect. These different approaches become visible in the manuscripts. On the one hand, there are manuscripts which visualise — by colour, ductus, and illumination — the hierarchy and interrelation of the commentary (Ḥākānī’s poem) and the source (al-Tirmidhī’s *Shamā’il*). On the other hand, Ḥākānī’s *Ḥilye* is complemented by other texts, illuminations or illustrations which visualise that beneficial artefact which is mentioned in the text — the *ḥilye* written on a piece of paper.

The narrative of the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd as a part of this poem explicitly addresses the iconic character of the *ḥilye* and its apotropaic effect. It might have been logical for copyists and illuminators to take up this suggestive theme. Still, manuscripts of Ḥākānī’s *Ḥilye* with illustrations or illumination are relatively rare — and illustrated prints do not exist at all. The specimens analysed, are remarkable in their use of three textual and graphic additions — supplementary texts, illumination, and illustration, which constitute a continuum. A complementary *ḥilye*-text, a list of the Prophet’s attributes as in Fatih 4328, might be read as just another text in an anthology. Still, the iconicity of such a list becomes obvious if we take a similar panel of Ḥāfiz ‘Oṣmān into account. The same applies

⁶⁹ In the above mentioned *ḥilye*-panel of Ḥāfiz ‘Oṣmān, the part of the *ḥadīth* which is written within the circle ends with the sentence about the seal of prophethood. It is, however, the original version of the *ḥadīth*, not mentioning any inscription, Hatcher Graduate Library, Michigan University Ann Arbor, Isl. Ms. 238, Gruber *Praiseworthy*, 286. But this configuration is not a general characteristic of *ḥilye*-panels. In some of them, this sentence is in the central, circular zone; in some of them it is in the rectangular zone below.

to images of the seal of prophethood. The picture of a rose, which covers two thirds of a page, might have more of the character of an illustration than two small roses in between the lines. Still, if both can be read as a reference to the text, the line between is blurred.

It is difficult to say anything about the social context of the manuscript users. In the case of al-Tirmidhī's *Shamā'il*, paratexts indicate that they were used in a scholarly environment. Only a single manuscript in my corpus — Nuruosmaniye 1168 — was possibly a copy used for devotion and contemplation in the context of the Ottoman palace in Istanbul. The data on the users of Ḥākānī's *Hilye* are extremely scarce. Still, they indicate that in this corpus of manuscripts, the associated strategies to visualise Muḥammad was not confined to a small elite group.

Sources of Illustrations

Fig. 7: Sadberk Hanım Müzesi, Istanbul — Fig. 4: Sakıp Sabancı Müzesi, Istanbul — Fig. 1–3, 5–6, 8–14: Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul — Fig. 15: Author's collection