

*Original article***THE ILLUMINATORS OF THE MANUSCRIPT DALA'IL AL-KHAIRAT AND THEIR SIGNATURES IN LIGHT OF A NEW PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED COLLECTION AT THE MANIAL PALACE MUSEUM IN CAIRO AND THE EGYPTIAN NATIONAL LIBRARY**Abdel-Salam, M.^(*) & Kishk, Sh.*Islamic Archaeology dept., Faculty of Archaeology, Cairo Univ., Giza, Egypt***E-mail address: Maig6367@gmail.com***Article info.****Article history:**

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Abstract:

The art of gilding is considered one of the authentic arts of the book, which the Muslim artist in the Ottoman era paid attention to and was keen to apply in various manuscripts, especially religious ones, such as the manuscript *Dala'il al-Khairat* (the subject of the research). This copy was decorated and gilded with the most creative and wonderful decorations that attract attention with the beauty, mastery and creativity of their execution. The significance of the study comes from focusing light on three of the most famous manuscript illuminators in the Ottoman era, especially the period of the 13th century AH/19AD and they are "Aḥmd A'ṭā - Muhammad Nuri - Āsmā 'yl Ālzhdy," whose signatures appeared on three exquisite copies of the manuscript *Dala'il al-Khairat*- never previously published. The study revealed the decorative artistic methods of these illuminators in implementing colored and gilded decorations and the extent of their contribution to enriching the art of gilding in that period when this art was exposed to weakness and stagnation.

1. Introduction

Gilding is a decorative technique for applying a very thin coating of gold over surfaces [1]. It is one of the oldest arts practiced by man in decorating things, which was practiced by shaping and melting gold in a specific way and in the absence of it other mineral, plant and animal materials can be used to replace it [2]. The art of gilding developed greatly in the Ottoman era and gained the attention of sultans, princes, and senior statesmen, to the point that this care included the illuminators themselves in terms of adopting their works and providing them with the necessary materials to produce their works in the best possible way. This resulted in many illuminators competing in that field, to the point that painters were doing manuscripts gilding and signing their names on them as illuminators [3]. Consequently, many calligraphers appeared who had the ability to practice the art of gilding and binding, meaning that they became comprehensive artists [4]. The Turks call the art of decorating manuscripts with gold and colored decorations "HELKARI," in which gold or the golden color^(a) occupies a major place compared to other colors, in the implementation of various decorations,

whether they are floral motifs, geometric shapes, abstract elements, or various written texts, which the Turks call "ZER-ENDUD" [5]. The work of the illuminator was linked to the art of gilding the manuscript and decorating it with the most creative and wonderful decorations and colorful and gilded drawings^(b). The work of the illuminator comes second after the calligrapher [6], as his work on the manuscript comes after the calligrapher has finished copying, in order to fill the spaces left by the calligrapher with colored and gilded decorations [7]. And despite the illuminators were classified next to the calligraphers in importance that did not diminish the significance of them, as many sultans and princes took care of them and showered them with grants and gifts for the splendor of their gilded work in various manuscripts [8]. The manuscript illuminators in the Ottoman era were keen to register their names on the works they completed and excelled in producing them with the most creative images, therefore many of them arise in this field. The work of the illuminators in the manuscript began by delimiting the pages of the manuscript with two parallel golden frames, one of which was wide,

called “KUZULU,” and the other was thin, called “KUZU”, and this method was called “CEDVEL.” These two frames were surrounded by spaces on the four sides called margins or “framework,” which were left sometimes void, while other times they are filled with colorful and gilded decorations. The Turks used to call the artist who made the artistic divisions or frames with which the decorative designs would be executed “CEDVELEKS,” meaning thread corset, and the artist who executed the gilded and colored decorations was called “TARAB.” Often only one artist was the one who combined the two work functions together, so he held both headings [5].

2. Methodology

The subject of this research paper is related to temporal and spatial limits bound by the Ottoman Empire in the period of the 13th century AH/19th century AD, as well as to objective limits related to the signatures of the two calligraphers on copies of the Dala’il al-Khairat^(c,d) manuscript preserved at the Manial Palace Museum in Cairo and the Egyptian National Library. As for the methodology of the research paper, it is based on the taxonomic and descriptive study that was carried out after the field visit to the Manial Palace Museum in Cairo and the Egyptian National Library to investigate copies of the Dala’il al-Khairat manuscript preserved in them. The analytical approach was also followed, which represented the study of the industrial and decorative methods of the two illuminators who copied the Dala’il al-Khairat manuscript (the subject of the study) and the decorative elements that decorated the various parts in those manuscripts. The inductive approach was also followed, through which the results of the study were derived.

2.1. Cases study

The signatures of craftsmen on applied antiquities and manuscripts are considered as lavish field for knowing their artistic and decorative styles, their names, and the names of their professors, and then being able to trace the connection between apprenticeship and professorship. Likewise, through their dated works, they can be used to date artistic antiques or undated manuscripts. This research paper relies on investigating the signatures of the artistic styles of three manuscript illuminators who worked in the Ottoman era, especially in the 13th century AH/19th AD. These illuminators are as follows.

2.1.1. The Illuminator Aḥmd A’ṭā

Aḥmd A’ṭā is one of the illuminators who worked on illuminating religious manuscripts in the Ottoman era. His name appeared as a signature at the end of the text of a copy of the Dala’il al-Khairat manuscript dated 1200 AH/1786 AD, which is preserved in the Manial Palace Museum, inventory No. 311. As revealed the illuminator Aḥmd A’ṭā gave great attention to enriching this copy of the Al-Dala’il manuscript, as he added colorful and gilded decorative elements in many parts of the manuscript, such as the beginning page in which the introduction to Imam al-Jazūli was written, and the beginning page of the first litany “al-ḥizāb” for Monday. Notably the ingenuity of the illuminator was greatly demonstrated in the decoration and gilding of the beginning pages of this manuscript, which are considered artistic paintings, in which

everything that should be present in an artistic work in terms of harmonious colors and balance between the elements [9]. The beginning page of the manuscript and the beginning of the first litany were designed in the form of an oblong, the top of which is decorated with the Ottoman Rumi, Baroque and Rococo rakish decorations represented by branches and lanceolate plant leaves that were executed in the shape of the letter C, which were interspersed with bouquets of pomegranate flowers and local roses, in addition to architectural elements such as towers and trees that were all colored red, green, orange and pink, fig. (1). The attention of the illuminator Aḥmd A’ṭā to decorating and gilding various parts of the manuscript also reached the point of decorating the margins surrounding the body of some pages of the manuscript with various exquisite, colorful and gilded decorations. For instance, he decorated the margins of the first two pages from the beginning of each of the eight litany of the manuscript along with the closing page, with floral decorations represented by the plant branches that emerge with serrated lanceolate leaves, pomegranate flowers, and rosettes with multiple, gilded petals, colored blue, red, orange, pink, green, and violet. This is in addition to the decoration between the lines of the beginning of the manuscript with the shapes of wavy gilded cornice, fig. (1 & 2). The illuminator Aḥmd A’ṭā, also decorated the separations between the formulas for blessing *Prophet Muhammad* (PBUH), and the various supplications and prayers in the manuscript with the most creative floral and geometric decorative elements, such as the shape of a gilded circle enclosed within it a specific shape resulting from the intersection of upright and inverted diagonal lines - a rosette of six petals from which emerges the saz leaf - a rosette of six petals with a star inside it. Hexagonal gilded rosettes - colorful and gilded rose flowers - pomegranate flowers - rosette with six gilded and colored petals - rosette with four-petals colored and gilded - gilded circle with colored leaflets inside it. Among the parts that the illuminator Aḥmd A’ṭā paid attention to decorating and filling with the most beautiful and colorful decorations are the oblong fillings that the artist allocated for recording the headings of litany, quarters, thirds, and various parts of the manuscript in thuluth script. The artist used to write the headings of the various parts of manuscripts in the middle of the rectangular panel designated for that on a gilded ground. The two sides of this area are filled with various decorations, represented by the Ottoman Baroque and Rococo rakish decorations, represented by large lanceolate leaves and C-shaped motives colored in blue, pink, red and orange on a blue, green and gold background, fig. (1 & 2). The Basmallah is also one of the parts that the artist paid attention to decorating and gilding, as the calligrapher made sure to begin the text of the manuscript with the Basmallah when starting with the introduction of Imam al- Jazūli. This is in addition to repeating the Basmallah within the manuscript in several parts, such as: the first litany of Monday - the beginning of the description of the noble Rawdah - the beginning of mentioning the names of Allah - the beginning of the Prayers of good deeds - the beginning of al-Nawawi litany and intention Prayers. The top of the Basmallah in all of these parts was decorated in the form of a bouquet of natural flowers such as local rose flowers and pink, red and orange pomegranate flowers. The separation marks are among the parts that the

illuminator Aḥmd A'ṭā was interested in gilding, and they are the marks that indicate the different parts of the manuscript and its parts, which were decorated in this copy with the shapes of vases with spring roses, sunflowers, and pomegranate flowers colored in red, blue, orange, and gold, fig. (1 & 2). Concerning the colophon, it was decorated with the most creative colorful decorative elements in bright, beautiful, and gilded colors. This colophon was written at the end of the manuscript in the form of an inverted triangle, the sides of which were filled with Ottoman Baroque and Rococo decorations represented by the shapes of the spiraled lanceolate leaves and the curved shapes in the form of the letter C with the gilded plant branches.



Figure (1) the first double pages.

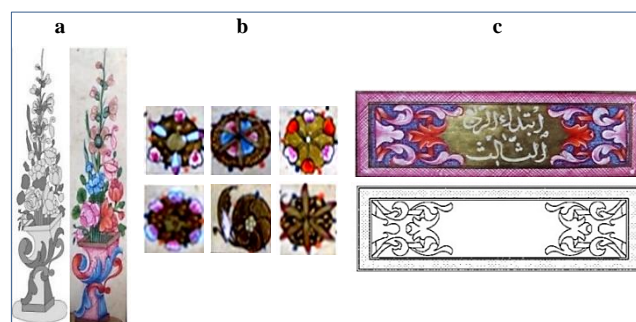


Figure (2) a. the form of group marker and its drawing, b. the different forms and shapes of supplications and formulas for praying for Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) stops, c. the dividing panel and its drawing.

2.1.1.1. The artistic methods of the illuminator Aḥmd A'ṭā

In gilding the manuscript under study, Aḥmd A'ṭā followed the method of colored gilding, which is implemented on the manuscript leaves in several ways, such as executing it directly on the manuscript page. This is a precise and difficult method because in it the illuminator plays both his role and the role of the artist in drawing the decorative elements. Additionally, he copies the decorative elements from a design previously prepared for this purpose by pressing on the decorations drawn with a pencil, and their effect is imprinted on the manuscript page, and then the illuminator colors and gilds them [10]. Another method is drawing the decorations on an external sheet of paper first, and then attaching them to a metal plate, piercing the decorative elements in it, and sprinkling talcum powder on them. Then this paper is moved to the desired

position on the manuscript page, and a small part of the design is revealed, then a piece of gauze containing a soft powder is passed over the paper. After that, the illuminator specifies the drawing in gold and then applying the colors on the decorations [5].

2.1.1.2. The signature of the illuminator Aḥmd A'ṭā

The signature of the illuminator came at the end of the manuscript after the colophon in Naskh script in three lines in white ink “mudad” on a green background inside an oval medallion. This medallion is decorated on the outside with the shapes of pink-colored acanthus leaves, in the form “gilded by Aḥmd A'ṭā,” as he mentioned the word “gilded” before his name to indicate professional specialization, then mentioned his name alone without mentioning the name of his professor, fig. (3). Consequently, the illuminator Aḥmd A'ṭā used the colorful gilding style to gild the decorative elements which varies between Baroque and Rococo and floral decorations such as plant branches - serrated spear leaves - Saba' palm flowers - pomegranates multi-petal rosettes and vases. Also, he executed the geometrical designs such as the stars. The illuminator Aḥmd A'ṭā used multi colors in gilding such as red – orange – blue – green – orange and pink. This was used in the Basmallah – the names of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) - the noble Rawdah - depictions of Mecca and Medina - title panels - the separations between the formulas of prayers upon the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH), and the supplications - dividing marks - the margins of some pages of the manuscript - the closing page and the colophon.



Figure (3) the signature of the illuminator Ahmed A'ṭā and its drawing.

2.1.2. The Illuminator Muhammad Nuri

The signature of the illuminator Muhammad Nuri came at the end of the colophon of Dala'il al-Khairat manuscript copy dated 1202 AH/1788 AD, preserved in the Egyptian National Library, Talaat Sufism inventory No. 693. This copy of the Dala'il al-Khairat manuscript is distinguished by its decorative and artistic richness, which was evident in several parts, such as the beginning page, which was designed in the form of an oblong, above which a large lobed arch is occupied. The bottom is decorated with interlaced plant branches from which emerge the five-petals rosettes (saba palm flowers), plant leaves, and colorful pomegranate flowers in white -red - orange -pink -green and blue. Besides the illuminator Muhammad Nuri paid attention to decorating the margins of the beginning of the manuscript with gilded and colorful floral decorations represented by the wavy plant branches from which emerge pomegranate flowers, plant leaves, and multi-

petal rosettes. Concerning the title's panels, they came in oblong centered by a medallion that comprises the chapter's title on a gilded background, on its sides are floral decorations, represented by small plant branches from which plant leaves emerge, small rosettes with five petals, large lanceolate leaves, and half-palm fans colored in white, purple, gold, and blue, on a gilded or blue background, fig. (4). Hajj Muhammad Nuri also removed the decorative spacers that were designed in the form of an eight-pointed star, gilded and colored - a circle decorated with wavy lines - a rosette with four petals colored and gilded - a gilded circle with colored and gilded leaves inside it, or pomegranate flowers. Also gone were the positions of the Basmallah in the front of the manuscript and the first part, which were decorated in a manner A wavy plant branch from which emerge leaves and rosettes of multi-petals, gilded and colored in green, orange, blue, and yellow, fig. (5). The illuminator Muhammad Nuri also gilded the division marks in the manuscript, which took the form of pentagonal, hexagonal, and eight-petal rosettes - a lobed bowl filled with five-pointed rosettes with colored and gilded petals - an eight-pointed star. The top and bottom of the text of the description of the Noble Rawdah were also occupied and decorated with gilded floral decorations represented by the long, slanted plant branches from which emerge rosette shapes with five petals and golden leaves. The colophon was also decorated with gilded colored decorations in the form of horizontal lines that end in the shape of an inverted triangle, the sides of which are filled with various decorations represented by plant branches emanating from rosettes with five petals, single-lobed leaves, and palm leaves executed on a gilded and blue background, fig. (4 & 5).

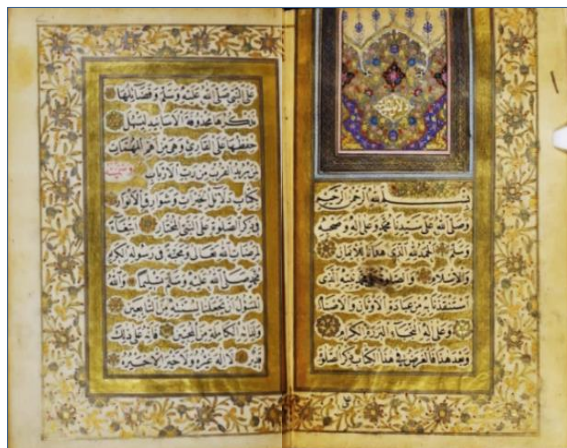


Figure (4) the first double pages of manuscript

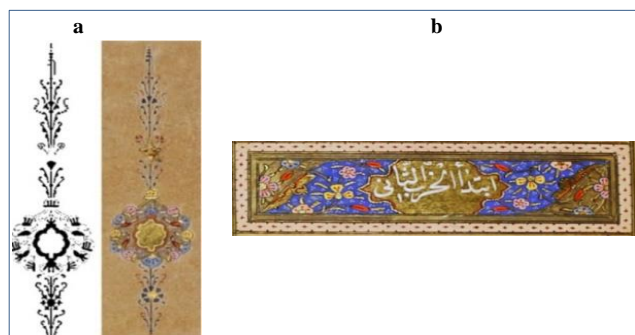


Figure (5) a. the dividing panel, b. the form of group marker and its drawing.

2.1.2.1. The signature of the illuminator Muhammad Nuri

The signature of the illuminator came at the end of the manuscript after the colophon in Naskh script in three lines in gold ink "mudad" on a black background inside a lobbed medallion in the form "gilded by Hajj Muhammad Nuri," as he mentioned the word "gilded" before his name to indicate professional specialization, then mentioned his name alone without mentioning the name of his professor, preceded by the title Hajj to indicate his pride and honor in visiting the Holy House of God and his prestigious social status, fig. (6). The bottom line with regard to the style of the illuminator Muhammad Nuri is that he used the colored gilding method in gilding various decorative elements that varied between floral ornaments such as plant branches - plant leaves - palm flowers - pomegranate flowers - carnation flowers. He also implemented some geometric shapes such as multi-pointed stars. The illuminator Muhammad Nuri used many colors in gilding: blue, green, pink, yellow, red, and orange, in several parts, such as at the top of the Basmallah - the starting page - the noble Rawdah - depictions of Mecca and Medina - title fillings - the breaks between the prayer formulas. The names of the *Prophet Muhammad* (PBUH), and the supplications - division marks - margins of some pages of the manuscript - the closing page and the colophon.



Figure (6) the signature of the illuminator Mohamed Nuri and its drawing.

2.1.3. The illuminator Āsmā'yl Ālzhdy

2.1.3.1. The artistic methods of the illuminator Āsmā'yl Ālzhdy

By examining the pages of the manuscript, it is clear that the illuminator Āsmā'yl Ālzhdy followed two methods in implementing the gilded decorations in the manuscript. The first is the method of sprinkling or scattering with gold [2], which appeared in the margins of the pages of the manuscript, which were all decorated with frills and golden dots. In implementing this method, he relied on sprinkling gold dots to give the page splendor, beauty and shine. This method of gilding manuscripts among the Turks is called ZEREFSAN or SERPME YALDIS [11], and it is also called "TARMIEL". This method of gilding is carried out on manuscript paper by dripping very fine dots of gold ink on the paper or by placing flakes of fine gold in a bag with holes, and then sprinkles it on the surface of the paper [12]. Āsmā'yl Ālzhdy also followed the method of colored gilding, that is, the use of colors with gilding in the implementation of the various decorative elements that were implemented in several places in the

manuscript, such as the two beginning pages, which were designed in the form of an oblong, the top of which is occupied by a large lobed arch, the bottom of which is decorated with floral decorations represented by the overlapping plant branches that emerge. Including rosettes with five petals, vegetal leaves, and pomegranate flowers colored in white, red, and green, fig. (7). The illuminator paid attention to decorating the margins of the beginning page of the manuscript with gilded plant branches from which emerge spring flowers and multi-petal rosettes with gilded plant leaves, and also the two pages of the beginning of the manuscript's introduction with straight plant branches from which emerge spring flowers, spear-shaped leaves and gilded wheat spikes. Regarding the panels of the titles, it came in an oblong shape centered with a medallion in which the title of the chapter is written on a gilded ground, on both sides of which are floral decorations, represented by small plant branches from which emerge plant leaves, palm-leaf flowers, plant leaves, and half palmettos colored in white - red - green, on a gilded ground, figs. (7 & 8). Besides Āsmā'yl Ālzhdy gilded the decorative separators which were designed in the form of floral decorative elements, such as a rosette with four colored and gilded petals - plant leaves - pomegranate flowers, as well as geometric shapes such as a hexagonal shape that adorns each of its vertices, a small rosette - a rhombus or square occupied by the shapes of colored braided lines - a circle enclosed within it is a triangle shape that is decorated single-lobed leaves and small rosette shapes - eight-pointed star - circle decorated with wavy lines. Furthermore the separator marks were designed in the shape of lobbed medallion which is occupied by decorations of plant branches from which emerge small rosettes and colorful plant leaves executed on a gilded ground, and finally from the parts of gilding in the manuscript at the top of the Basmallah in the front of the manuscript and the first part, which is decorated in the form of a wavy plant branch from which emerge plant leaves and rosettes of multiple petals, gilded and colored in green - orange - blue and yellow, figs. (7 & 8). Subsequently regarding the method of the illuminator Āsmā'yl Ālzhdy, he recorded his name preceded by the word "gilded by" to indicate professional specialization, in addition to mentioning the name of his teacher, Hajj Hussein, in recognition of his kindness and merit over him in his field of work. Also, for mentioning the date of completion of gilding the manuscript, he used the style of colored gilding. The method of gilding with sprinkling gold for applying various decorative elements that varied between floral ornaments such as plant branches - palmettos - plant leaves - spring flowers - palm of the palm flowers - pomegranate flowers - wheat spikes were also used. He also implemented some geometric shapes such as triangle and hexagonal shapes - rhombuses - circles - eight-pointed stars. He used many colors in gilding, such as white - green - orange - blue and yellow in several parts, such as at the top of the Basmallah - the beginning page - the names of the *Prophet Muḥammad* (PBUH) - the noble Rawdah - pictures of Mecca and Medina - panels of titles - separations between the formulas of prayers upon the Messenger, and supplications - dividing marks -

margins of some pages of the manuscript - the closing page and the colophon.

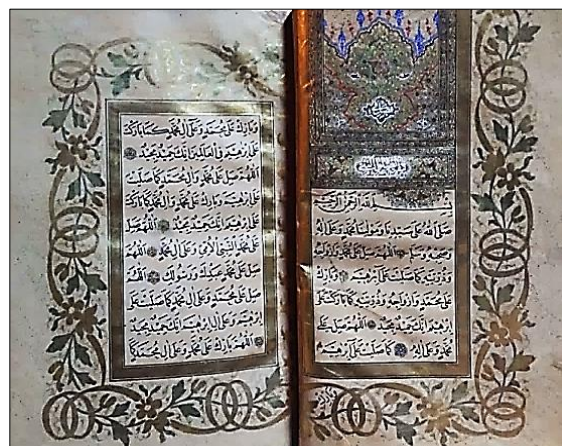


Figure (7) first double pages of manuscript

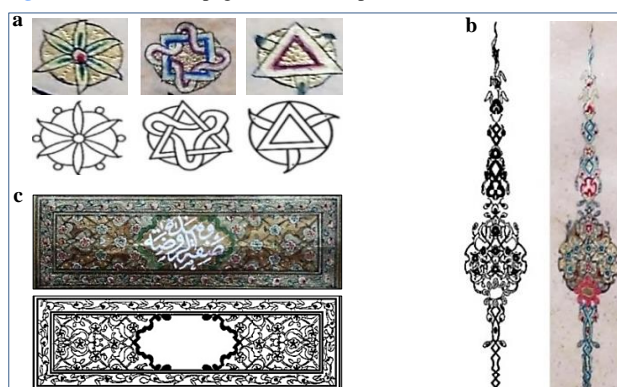


Figure (8) a, the different forms and shapes of supplications and formulas for praying for Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) stops and its drawing, b, the dividing panel and its drawing, c, the form of group marker and its drawing

2.1.3.2. The signature of the illuminator Āsmā'yl Ālzhdy

The signature of the illuminator Āsmā'yl Ālzhdy appears on both sides of the end of the copy of the manuscript Dala'il al-Khairat dated 1280 AH/1863 AD and preserved in the Manial Palace Museum, inventory No. 348. The text of the signature is recorded on both sides of the text within two right-angled gilded triangles, written in the first with white ink in thuluth script, "gilded by Āsmā'yl Ālzhdy from his disciples," while in the second one: "al-Sayyid al-Hajj Hussein, may Allah forgive them 292", fig. (9). It is noted from the text of the illuminator's signature that he records his name alone, preceded by the word "gilded by" to indicate professional specialization, in addition to mentioning the name of his professor from whom he learned the art of gilding, namely Mr. Hajj Hussein, who it is clear was a great professor in the field of gilding at that time and had an art school, as many illuminators learned from him and inscribed his name on their artistic works. The illuminator recorded the completion date of gilding the manuscript, which was 292, meaning 1292 AH, which is a date twelve years later than the date of completion of copying the manuscript, which is 1280 AH/1863 AD. It is clear from this that he took twelve years to gild the manuscript, or that he began gilding the manuscript several years after the com-

pletion of its copying, fig. (9). It is worth mentioning that Ismail Ālzhdy was signed as an illuminator in the holy Qur'an "al muṣḥaf alsharīf"^(e) 1291 AH/1874 AD with the text "gilded by Ālzhdy who was among the disciples of Hajj Hussein, may Allah forgive them 1291 AD." It is clear from this text that the illuminator Ālzhdy finished gilding this copy of the holy Qur'an after a year from completing his work on gilding the copy of the Dala'il al-Khairat manuscript under study [5]. Ālzhdy also participated in gilding some manuscripts with another illuminator, as his signature was mentioned with the "Al-Hassan" in the holy Qur'an^(f) dated 1294 AH/1877 AD, at the end of which the illuminator's signature was mentioned with the text "gilded by Ālzhdy and Al-Hassan 96," which is an indication of the year of completion of copying in 1296 AH/1879 AD. It is noted that the style followed by both illuminators is similar to the style of gilding, and decorations of the previous Qur'an, which was also gilded by the Illuminator Ālzhdy. It is likely that Ālzhdy's family was one of the large families that was famous in the field of copying and gilding manuscripts in this period, and he was also one of the students of A'bd Ālqādr Ālškry, the calligrapher of the holy Qur'an^(g) dated 1243 AH/1828 AD [5].

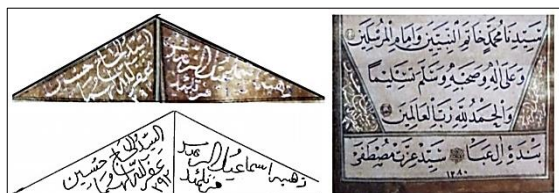


Figure (9) the signature of the Illuminator Āsmā'yl Ālzhdy and its drawing.

The signatures of the gilders in the manuscripts of Dalail al-Khayrat closely resemble those in the holy Qur'an manuscripts. For instance, the signature of "Sayed Ahmed" appears on a dated Qur'an manuscript from 1230 AH/1814 CE, preserved in the Islamic Art Museum in Cairo, catalog number 18142, within a multi-petal rosette below the margin of the text and inscribed in white ink. Similarly, the signature of "Isma'il" is found above the marginal text of a dated Qur'an manuscript from 1238 AH/1822 CE, preserved in the Manial Palace Museum in Cairo, catalog number 356, executed in Isma'il's distinctive style within a multi-petal rosette. Additionally, the signature of "Rida Ahmad Shakir" appears above the concluding supplication of a dated Qur'an manuscript from 1243 AH / 1827 CE, preserved in the Manial Palace Museum in Cairo, catalog number 323 [5]. The gilding techniques used by these artisans closely resemble those employed in the manuscript collection, including the colored prose gilding style and gradients of gilding. Gilding primarily adorned the first two pages, encompassing surah titles, section markers, and the cover, signifying units referring to surahs, sections, and prostrations [13,14].

3. Results

At the conclusion of this research paper, through examples of copies of the Ottoman manuscript of Dala'il al-Khairat, signed with the names of its illuminators: "Aḥmd A'ṭā - Hajj Muhammad Nuri - Āsmā'yl Ālzhdy," which had not previously been published, several results were reached:

- 1) The study revealed the artistic methods followed by the manuscript illuminators of the study group, such as the method of spraying or spreading - the method of colored gilding, in gilding and decorating various parts on the pages of manuscripts with various decorations such as floral decorations - geometric shapes - *Baroque* and *Rococo* decorations.
- 2) The study showed the extent of the spread of European influences in the period of the 13th century AH/19th century AD on the Ottoman arts, which became evident in the work of the illuminator Aḥmd A'ṭā, who decorated most of the pages of the manuscript with Baroque and Rococo decorations.
- 3) The study found that many illuminators were keen to record their signatures on the distinguished work they accomplished, whether the name was alone or preceded by a title, such as the title "Hajj," which was recorded by the illuminator Muhammad Nuri to indicate his social status and his pride in visiting the Holy Ka'bah.
- 4) The study demonstrated the keenness of the illuminators to record the word "gilded by" before mentioning their names to indicate professional specialization.
- 5) The study confirmed the keenness of some illuminators to record the date of completion of manuscript gilding, which helped to produce bibliographies of these illuminators and use their works in dating other undated manuscripts.
- 6) The study shed light on the relationship of apprenticeship and professorship, which became clear through the signature of the illuminator Āsmā'yl Ālzhdy, who recorded the name of his teacher, Sayyed Hajj Hussein, from whom he learned the art of gilding, at the end of the copy of the Dala'il al-Khairat manuscript dated 1280 AH/1863 AD.

4. Discussion

The study focused on the signatures of three gilding artists who worked during the Ottoman era in the 13th AH century/ 19th AD century. This investigation involved their contribution to gilding three copies of the manuscript 'Dala'il al-Khayrat', preserved in the Museum of Al-Manial Palace in Cairo with inventory numbers 311-348, and at The Egyptian National Library with inventory number Sufism Talaat 693. The research also highlighted the diverse techniques and decorations employed in gilding the pages of these manuscripts. It also revealed the artists' inclination to inscribe their names at the end of the gilded manuscripts, either individually or alongside the names of their teachers whom the artists learned from and shed light on apprenticeship and professorship which become clear through the signature. Additionally, the study illustrated the artists' meticulous use of professional terms such as 'gilded by' before mentioning the name of the gilding artist.

5. Conclusion

Finally, the art of bookmaking received significant attention during the Ottoman era from sultans, princes, and high-ranking officials, who generously supported artists working in this craft, including gilders. These artists were highly valued and received exceptional support, which enabled and inspired them to create beautifully gilded and ornamented manuscripts and Their signatures, that clearly placed

at the end of these manuscripts beneath those of the calligraphers, attest to their high status during the Ottoman period, and highlighting the dedication and progress in the art of bookmaking during that era.

Endnotes

- (a) The methods followed by the illuminator in preparing the gold ink used to gild the pages of various manuscripts have varied, but they all depend on dissolving gold flakes in several ways by mixing these flakes with gum Arabic, mercury, ox bile, vinegar, honey, lemon, etc. In addition to this, the Ottoman illuminator used gold colors and compounds, which were made in multiple ways and used in coloring and gilding. Among these materials that were used in the manufacture of gold ink was powder mixed with fenugreek water, saffron, red arsenic, sulfur, white alum, and yellow vitriol. Aldmšqy, M., (1938). *ālṅṅwm ālsārḡāt fy ḡkr b'ḡ ālsnāy' ālmḡtāḡ ālyhā fy 'lm ālmyqāt*, Firist Edition, Aleppo.
- (b) In the process of gilding the various manuscript pages, the illuminator uses several tools, including the tools designated for crushing gold, which is the plate - the knife used for cutting and pasting gold foil. Among the auxiliary tools that the illuminator uses in his work is the dryer used to transfer gold powder to its storage containers - the straight-ended wooden ruler used in underlining and making artistic and decorative divisions - the inkwell designated for preserving gold ink, as well as colored inks designated for coloring decorations. Among the basic tools that the illuminator uses in his work are pens, which include feather pens and hair pens, as well as polishers such as an agate stone polisher. Ibn ālraswl, Y., (1989). *ālmḡtr' fy fnwn mn ālsn'a*, , Kuwait.
- (c) Preserved in the Manial Palace Museum, inventory No. 311-348, and the Egyptian Library of Sufism Talaat 693.
- (d) The manuscript Dala'il al-Khairat, authored by Imam al-Jazūli (d. 870 AH/1465 AD), includes between its covers a collection of supplications and formulas for praying for *Prophet Muḡammad* (PBUH), which may be recited secretly or aloud in groups. Reading Dala'il al-Khairat has many spiritual benefits that accrue to its reader, and it is an expression of piety and sincerity, and this is what Imam Al-Jazouli explained it in the introduction to the book. Yahya, F., (2021). *Illustrated and illuminated Manuscripts of the Dalail al khairat from southeast ASIA*, journal of islamic manuscripts, 12, university of London, PP.529-581.
- (e) Preserved in the museum of Islamic art in Cairo inventory No18049.
- (f) Preserved in the museum of Islamic art in Cairo inventory No18109.
- (g) Preserved in the manyal palace museum inventory No 233.

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