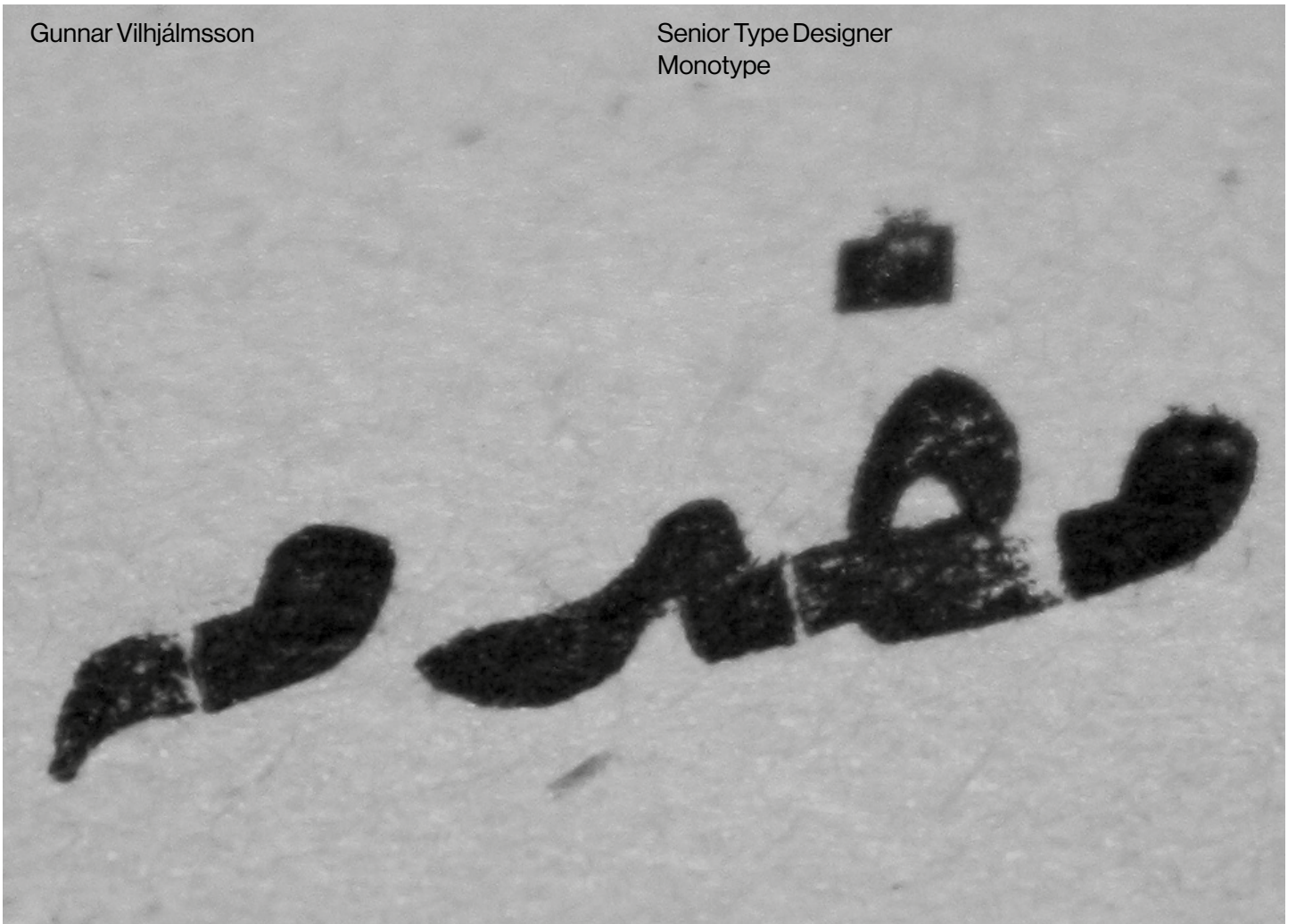


The Ruq'ah style and its role in Arabic typography

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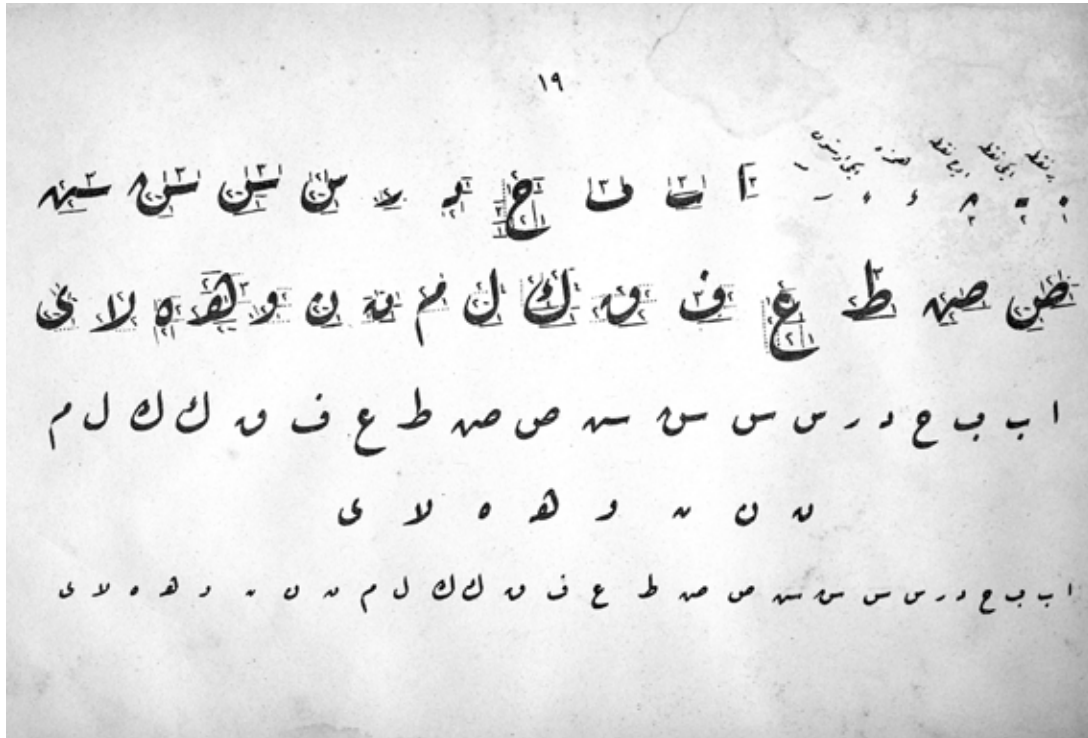
The Ruq'ah style and its role in Arabic typography

Ruq'ah is a handwriting and calligraphy style used to write the Arabic script and is extremely widespread throughout the Arab world.

This talk aims to give a brief introduction to the origin and application of the Ruq'ah style, with focus on typography. It reveals how Ruq'ah developed in the hands of Ottoman authorities as one of the official handwriting systems during the height of the Empire's bureaucracy and why it spread over the Arab world to become the most common handwriting. Furthermore, it examines peculiarities of the style: Simplification of strokes, relation to baseline and word structure. It compares typefaces made in the style since nineteenth century, from metal characters to modern day digital software as well as the obstacles encountered when designing a Ruq'ah typeface, even with the most state-of-the-art technology.

At the time it was first translated into a typeface, in late nineteenth century Ottoman Empire, Ruq'ah could be found in the majority of books published, with various kinds of typographical applications. This is not true today. Ruq'ah is still a widespread and popular writing style but there are only a few typefaces available. This study tries to shed light on the reasons why.

Detail of an Imperial document, from the Ottoman chancery, written in Ruq'ah style. Courtesy of Ottoman archives, Istanbul



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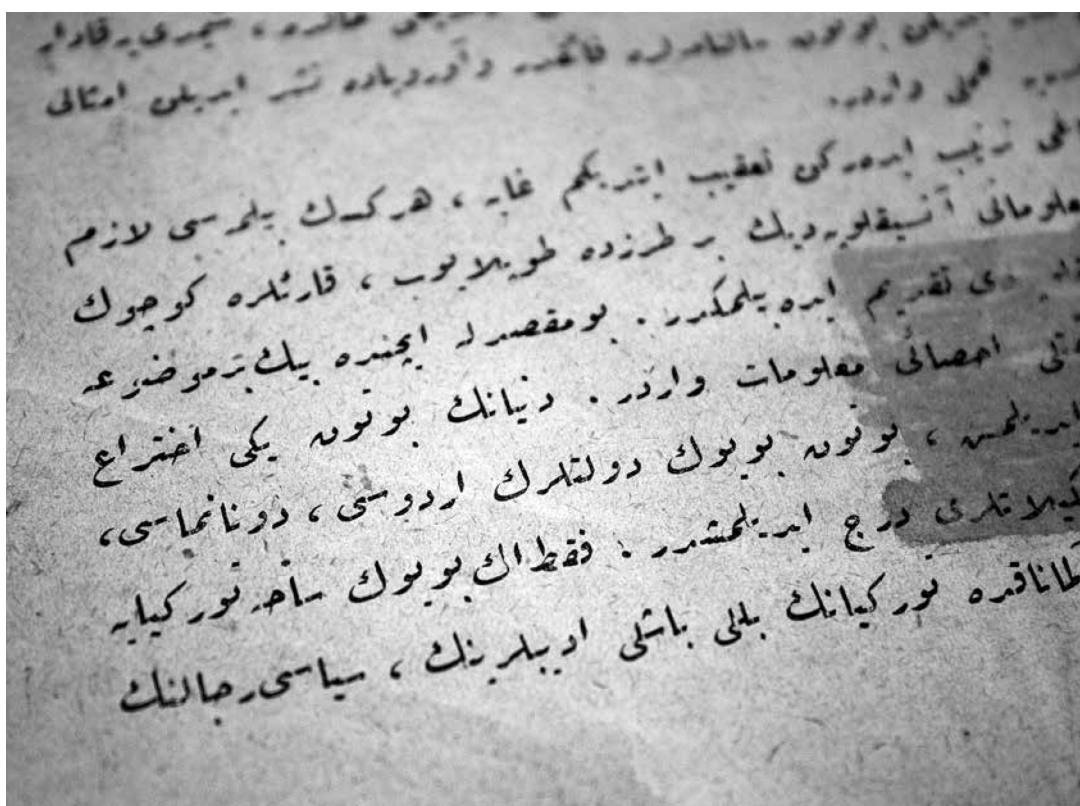
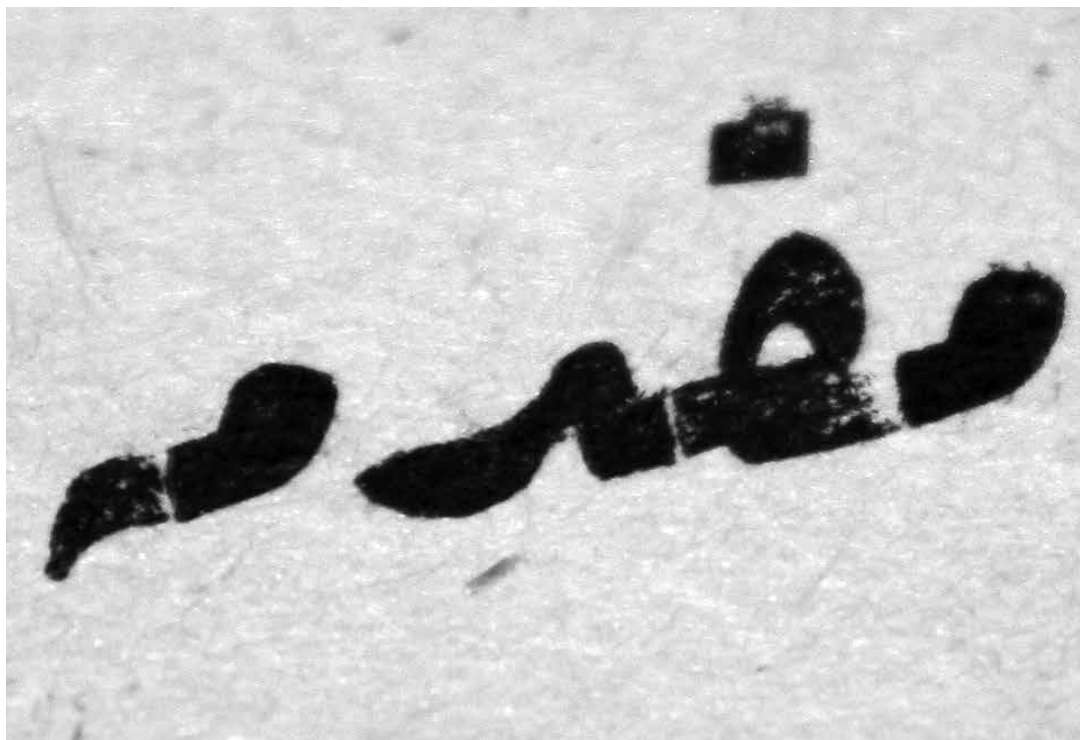


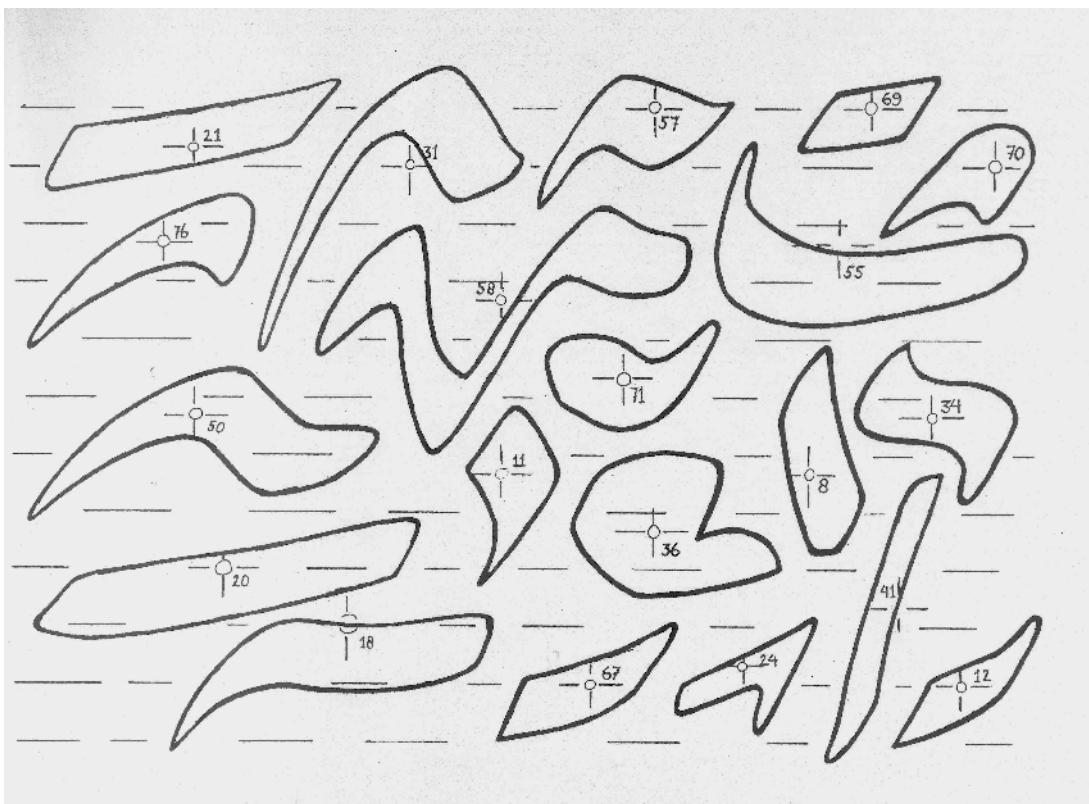
Image
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Linotype Ruq'ah, released in 1988, was made for CRTronic computer driven photocomposition

5

6

A selection of pen strokes serving as the building blocks of Decotype Ruq'ah, 1985



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Thank you

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