

*Islamic calligraphy traditionally took its inspiration from the Muslim belief in the divine origin of Arabic writing. In early Islam the use of Arabic writing is.*

Reviewed by Dana De Zoysa Any typographer can tell you that the shape and form of a letter create a mood. Just compare Times Roman with Helvetica or imagine a wedding invitation written in a script used for auto ads. But no matter how footloose and fancy-free the designer may become with decorativeness, type design is still at bottom a utilitarian thing. Islamic calligraphy is not based on aesthetics or logic -- although many of its scripts certainly have that -- but on what Muslims call *tawqif*, language established by God. The word of God is the things of God -- if the word of God is heard in a tree, then the tree is an act of God. The human voice is an instrument for celebrating the creating eminence of God. Instead of "to articulate is to create" as found in the Greco-Roman tradition, Islam operates on the principle, "to create is to articulate," and, of course, the Creator is God. The infant learns the ability to tune itself into the voice of the divine. As the authors of *The Splendor of Islamic Calligraphy* put it, "Calligraphy is the plainsong of the divine. The Splendor of Islamic Calligraphy shows just how ignorant is the belief that Muslim culture is rigid, monolithic and anachronistic. The Prophet never learned to read and write. As the merchant he was before the prophecies began to come, he probably used a calculational system still used in vast stretches of the world today, in which the fingers, knuckles and web between the fingers designate specific numbers; bargaining by two people who do not speak the same language can occur simply by pointing out the right sequence of fingers. Unlike *tawqif*, the "secular" form of the Islamic language is called *istilla* -- language fixed by human conventions. *Istilla* is the language of commerce and poetry. Note the emphasis on the word rather than the number as the foundation stone for human interaction. As in the West during the days of troubadours and bards, Islamic poetry was committed to memory and recited in exact or ever-so-slightly improvised forms by their creators or reciters. Long practice in the skill of memorizing had resulted in a highly developed capacity for mental retention. Vying for poetic -- i. The prizes are token: And, for those who regard Islam as a monolith of male-mindedness, women do participate and have won. As poetry is for the tongue, calligraphy is for the page. The Western style went its own way by including images of humans and animals and God depicted as a human, thereby reviving the Greek and Roman sense for imagistic art lost during the dark storms of barbarism. Muslim and Chinese calligraphers largely avoided the pictorial when they used their scripts, thereby forging the linkage between poetry as a visual art. The calligraphic line from Muslim reed pens led to geometric stylization -- best known in the arabesque -- that no other culture developed so exquisitely. Interlaced design evolved, as did the use of polychromy for diacritical marks akin to dotting all the "i"s in red and crossing the "t"s in blue, as did outline-form scripts inside which other scripts are written -- rather like every letter in a word having its own words aside. In all of these, the complex, interlaced, concatenated, multiplex character of the Arabic mind shines clearly through regional styles and forms. From out of innumerable experiments and primal urges, some styles proved more enduring. Up till the early seventh century C. Common Era the letters of the Arabic alphabet were written separately, like Hebrew. Gradually rules were established for linking many of the Arabic letters. A number of scripts for different styles of writing developed. One of the earliest, developed in the second half of the eighth century C. While its regulation of form was important, far more important was the adapting of it for artistic decoration on textiles, ceramics, coins, utensils, epitaphs and architectural monuments. Kufi developed a complete and regularized writing system. To all but the diehard minimalist, it is not a very beautiful script. Early calligraphers -- who evolved out of the profession of public scribe -- soon set themselves to the task of beautifying their scripts. By the late ninth century more than 20 cursive styles were commonly used in addition to several Kufi-based angular scripts. In the 10th century, a famous calligrapher named Ibn Muqla systematized the writing of the proliferating variants of cursive Arabic calligraphy. He saw the need for rules of proportion common to any given letter in any script. Letters were given precise measurements for their vertical, horizontal, and curved strokes. The authors of *The Splendor of Islamic Calligraphy* sum up his role eloquently: Ibn Muqla defines the general principles of this discipline: His letter

describing a plot against the caliph was shown to the caliph, who rather disapproved of the notion. So Ibn Muqla took up the pen with his left hand and learned to write all over again, some of it, again, incriminating letters. Ibn Muqla continued to write. He was thrown into prison and died there. And you think your editor rules with a rough hand. Better to remember Ibn Muqla, therefore, as the designer of the cursive, rounded script known as Naskhi. It is the proto-style from which came most of the scripts one sees today. Each of the various angular and rounded scripts has a distinguishing name Thuluth, Muhaqqaq, Maghribi. To the practiced eye they can be differentiated by how the hooked heads of verticals are made, the form of letter endings, the compactness of the letters, the degree of slant of the letters, the amount of horizontal or vertical elongation and the degree of rounding of comers. Unsurprisingly, an aesthetic philosophy emerged to set all this in the largest possible context. The calligraphic artist Rashid Korashi stated that the personality of the utterer is written inwardly before the word is spoken. Hence the spoken sound -- and its calligraphy -- is a search for pure sign. The word is a painting, filled with desire and energy. Writing a word sculpts the meaning of the word. Language is a laboratory of tongues, not a domain of fixed meanings. We do not need to know a language to be able to appreciate its script. All this and more is set forth in a book backed up with ultra-sharp large images, so the precise character of the strokes shines through. Hence many of the illustrations are gigantesque, seeming to invite the reader into them rather than be appreciated as a shape on a page in a lap. The authors, being Maghribi from the Mediterranean coast of Africa, make an overly strong case for the beauty of the Maghribi script, with its strong linears, fluid curls and deep descenders. This leads to a few notable absences. India, with its fabulous tradition of Mughal art and calligraphy, gets barely a nod. There are no images of the scripts decorating the wonderful mosques of nether Asia, for example the compressed Thuluth decorating the dome of the Grand Mosque of Shah Alam in Malaysia. Nor is there any mention of the Uzbeki calligraphic style with its marvelous use of delicate pastels and very low relief, as in the lacelike mosque at Mukah of Sarawak Borneo. Also, regrettably, the book has no index. However, this carping is a blade of dry grass in the fertile forest of the rest of the book. It is a pity that the Western infatuation for Zen minimalism in Japan, the paintbrushy quality of Chinese pen-and-ink work and the wild colors of India have veered so many eyes from an art form that combines all three. The Splendors of Islamic Calligraphy is a February Dana De Zoysa has a passion for developing-country authors. He can be reached at DanaDeZoysa aol.

## Chapter 2 : The Splendour of Islamic Calligraphy : Abdelkebir Khatibi :

*Calligraphy, the art that combines visual image and written word, is perhaps at its most brilliant in the arts of Islam. Islamic calligraphy traditionally took its inspiration from the Muslim belief in the divine origin of Arabic writing, the medium through which the Qur'anic revelation to the Prophet Muhammad was recorded.*

Writing in Arabic script soon became a hallmark of Islamic civilization, found on everything from buildings and coins to textiles and ceramics, and scribes and calligraphers became the most honored type of artist. We know the names, and even the biographies, of more calligraphers than any other type of artist. Probably because of the intrinsic link between writing and the revelation, Islamic calligraphy is meant to convey an aura of effortlessness and immutability, and the individual hand and personality are sublimated to the overall impression of stateliness and grandeur. In this way Islamic calligraphy differs markedly from other great calligraphic traditions, notably the Chinese, in which the written text is meant to impart the personality of the calligrapher and recall the moment of its creation. Islamic calligraphy, by contrast, is timeless. The reed pen qalam was the writing implement par excellence in Islamic civilization. The brush, used for calligraphy in China and Japan, was reserved for painting in the Islamic lands. In earliest times Muslim calligraphers penned their works on parchment, generally made from the skins of sheep and goats, but from the eighth century parchment was gradually replaced by the cheaper and more flexible support of paper. From the fourteenth century virtually all calligraphy in the Muslim lands was written on paper. Papermakers developed elaborately decorated papers to complement the fine calligraphy, and the colored, marbled, and gold-sprinkled papers used by calligraphers in later periods are some of the finest ever made. Almost all Islamic calligraphy is written in Arabic script. Unlike many other scripts that have at least two distinct forms of writing—a monumental or printed form in which the letters are written separately and a cursive or handwritten form in which they are connected—Arabic has only the cursive form, in which some, but not all, letters are connected and assume different forms depending on their position in the word initial, medial, final, and independent. The cursive nature of Arabic script allowed calligraphers to develop many different styles of writing, which are usually grouped under two main headings: Since the eighteenth century, scholars have often called the rectilinear styles "Kufic," after the city of Kufa in southern Iraq, which was an intellectual center in early Islamic times. This name is something of a misnomer, for as yet we have no idea which particular rectilinear style this name denoted. Scholars have proposed various other names to replace kufic, including Old or Early Abbasid style, but these names are not universally accepted, in part because they carry implicit political meanings, and many scholars continue to use the term kufic. Similarly, scholars often called the rounded styles naskh, from the verb nasakha to copy. The naskh script is indeed the most common hand used for transcription and the one upon which modern styles of typography are based, but the name is also something of a misnomer, for it refers to only one of a group of six rounded hands that became prominent in later Islamic times. As with kufic, scholars have proposed several other names to replace naskh, such as new style often abbreviated N. Medieval sources mention the names of many other calligraphic hands, but so far it has been difficult, even impossible, to match many of these names with distinct styles of script. Very few sources describe the characteristics of a particular style or give illustrations of particular scripts. Furthermore, the same names may have been applied to different styles in different places and at different times. Hence it may never be possible to link the names of specific scripts given in the sources with the many, often fragmentary, manuscripts at hand, especially from the early period. Both the rectilinear and the rounded styles were used for writing from early Islamic times, but in the early period the rounded style seems to have been a book hand used for ordinary correspondence, while the rectilinear style was reserved for calligraphy. Although no examples of early calligraphy on parchment can be definitively dated before the late ninth century, the importance of the rectilinear style in early Islamic times is clear from other media with inscriptions, such as coins, architecture, and monumental epigraphy. The Fihrist by Ibn al-Nadim d. The major change in later Islamic times was the gradual adoption and adaptation of round hands for calligraphy. Various explanations have been proposed for this transformation of rounded book hands into proportioned scripts suitable for calligraphing fine manuscripts. These explanations range from the

political e. The change from rectilinear to rounded script coincided with the change from parchment to paper, and the new style of writing might well be connected with a new type of reed pen, a new method of sharpening the nib, or a new way that the pen was held, placed on the page, or moved across it. In the same way, the adoption of paper engendered the adoption of a new type of black soot ink midad that replaced the dark brown, tannin-based ink hibr used on parchment. From the fourteenth century calligraphers, especially those in the eastern Islamic lands, developed more stylized forms of rounded script. These elaborately planned calligraphic compositions typically contain a Persian quatrain written in colored and gold-dusted inks on fine, brightly colored and highly polished paper and set in elaborately decorated borders. The swooping strokes of the letters and bowls provide internal rhythm and give structure to the composition. In contrast to the anonymous works of the early period, these calligraphic specimens are frequently signed and dated, and connoisseurs vied to assemble fine collections, which were often mounted in splendid albums. Calligraphy continues to be an important art form in modern times, despite the adoption of the Latin alphabet in some countries such as Turkey. Some calligraphers are trying to revive the traditional styles, notably the Six Pens, and investigate and rediscover traditional techniques and materials. Societies teaching calligraphy flourish. The Anjuman-e Khushnvisan-e Iran Society of Iranian Calligraphers , for example, has branches in all the main cities of the country, with thousands of students. Other artists are extending the calligraphic tradition to new media, adopting calligraphy in new forms, ranging from three-dimensional sculpture to oil painting on canvas. More than any other civilization, Islam values the written word. New Haven , Conn. Yale University Press, Khatibi, Abdelkebir, and Sijelmassi, Mohammed. *The Splendour of Islamic Calligraphy*. Thames and Hudson, World of Islam Festival Trust, Calligraphy and Islamic Culture. New York University Press, Bloom

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## Chapter 3 : Free the splendour of islamic calligraphy PDF

*Calligraphy, the art which combines images with the written word, is perhaps at its most brilliant in the Islamic world. Islamic calligraphy took its inspiration from Muslim belief in the divine origin of Arabic writing, the medium through which the Quranic revelation to the Prophet Muhammad was.*

Most striking of these is its Mashq, or extension of the horizontal axis of the letters. This was a common feature of the Kufic style, but rarely practiced to such an extent as here. In fact, calligraphy has been among very few manifestations of the representational art in Islam, as the iconoclastic tradition of Islam has often discourages any figurative imagery of divine. In the 12th century, the Naskh alphabet was invented, which instead of angled lines used curved alphabet. Elaborations, such as foliation, interfacing, and other complexities were added later to ornate the manuscript. The Eastern Kufi style of this 11th century Iranian Quran is perhaps the oldest calligraphic style of the city of Kufa in Iraq. The style is characterized by its exaggerated angularity and flattened geometrical composition. This style was highly flexible for decorative use in architecture of mosques and various vessels. This page of a 12th century Quran written in the Andalus script is an elegant expression of the representational art of the spiritual world of Islam. The geometric interlaces of golden patterns with a black border are scattered throughout the text with decorated Arabic alphabet letters and the triple golden acorns which serve to mark the end of each sentence. This Andalusian manuscript on pink paper, early 13th century was made for a member of an oligarchic family, probably from Granada or Valencia. The pink paper was produced in the town of Jativa, south-west of Valencia al-waraq al-Shatibi. Koran manuscript, 13th century. They modified Aramaic for writing. The affiliation between Nabataean and Arabic scripts has now been fully documented by J. Healey with almost a complete consensus among scholars on the Nabatean origin of the Arabic script Healy, J. It was first built in during the Liao Dynasty and was reconstructed as well as enlarged under the Kangxi Emperor r. Other tribes in nearby cities adopted with enthusiasm the art of writing. The stiff, angular, and well-proportioned letters of the Jazm script came in different styles representing different regions such as the Hiri, Anbari, Makki, and Madani and would later influence the development of the famous Kufi script. In addition to the Jazm, many other scripts were developed. The chapter heading in red ink has been added later in nashki script, and differs from the rest of the text. Short vowels are indicated by small diagonal strokes above or below letters. Calligraphers use dots and diacritical points in their creative styles to beautify and decorate the text, adding a transcendental dimension. Written from right to left, the Arabic script at its best can be a flowing continuum of ascending verticals, descending curves, and temperate horizontals, achieving a measured balance between static perfection of individual form and paced and rhythmic movement. There is great variability in form: The range of possibilities is almost infinite, and the scribes of Islam labored with passion to unfold the promise of the script. Moreover, technical aspects were not separated from aesthetic and even personal criteria. Inscriptions are found incorporated in the decoration of almost every Islamic work, and in that of a large number of objects as well. Abu Bakr sent for me after the heavy casualties among the warriors of the Battle of Yamama. Abu Bakr turned to me and said: So I started locating Quranic material and collecting it from parchments, scapula, leaf-stalks of date palms and from the memories of men who knew it by heart. This angular script reached its final form around BC and was used until the 6th century. Nabataean tomb inscription from Madeba, First century AD. However, it is more than doubtful whether any of the fragments preserved in the museums date back to the time of the first caliphs, as is claimed by their proud owners. The earliest datable fragments go back to the first quarter of the eighth century; but it is possible that the recently discovered Korans in Sanaa, which are at present being inventoried and analyzed by a German team, may offer a further clue to the early development of writing. They were written in two different styles; Muqawwar which was cursive and easy to write, and Mabsut which was elongated and straight-lined. Developed in the Hijaz area, that includes the Holy city of Mecca and Medina, hence the name. It is the earliest form of Arabic calligraphy, already being used in the emergence of Islam. These were created by the renowned calligrapher Qutbah al-Mihrr. Tumar that was formulated and extensively used during the reign of Muawieyah Ibn Abi Sufyan, the founder of the Umayyad

dynasty, became the royal script of the succeeding Umayyad caliphs. The dots were placed either above or beneath the letter, either single or in groups of two or three. This system of diacritical marks is known as Tashkil vocalization. Different colors also were introduced to differentiate between these marks--black for the diacriticals and red or yellow for the vocalics. Calligraphy entered a phase of glory under the influence of Abbasid vizier and calligrapher Ibn Muqlah. According to Welch, Ibn Muqlah is regarded as a figure of heroic stature who laid the basis for a great art upon firm principles and who created the Six Styles of writing: Unfortunately, for many people and scribes the system was unclear and confusing. A more sophisticated system was needed. The new system gained wide popularity throughout the Islamic world, and its calligraphy acquired the characteristics of beauty, sanctity, and versatility. The Abbasid dynasty, the last of the Islamic caliphates, ended in when Baghdad was sacked by Chengiz Khan, his son Hulagu, and their Mongol armies. That was a major turning point in the history of Islamic culture, especially in the fields of arts and architecture. Abaqa, the son of Hulagu, established the Ilkhanid dynasty in Persia. Ghazan, taking the Muslim name of Mahmud, dedicated himself to the revival of Islamic culture, arts, and traditions. By the end of the 14th century, the Timurid dynasty had succeeded the Ilkhanids in Persia. This script is used for the first copies of the Al-Quran. It was the preferred script to be used in the 8thth Century. As with Hijazi, the main characteristic of this script is that it is angular and squarish in shape. There are two further variants of the Kufic script -- Maghribi and Andalusí. These two script still retains the angular characteristics, however it is less rigid with more curves. The arts and architecture under the Timurids and their contemporaries set a standard of excellence and elegance for generations in Iran, Turkey, and India. During this era, special attention was given to the arts of the book -- elaborate arts involving transcription, illumination, illustration, and binding. The Safavid dynasty in Iran also produced alluring and attractive masterpieces of Islamic art. These two relatively young scripts soon were elevated to the status of major scripts. He was adorned with an elegant style and a sweet hand, and even the great calligraphers recognized his mastery. Ayat al-Kursi Quran 2: The Persian calligrapher Mir Ali Sultan al-Tabrizi invented this script and devised the rules to govern it. It was done by a Persian master calligrapher, Shah Muhammad al-Nishaburi, in The reign of Shah Abbas was the golden era for this script and for many master calligraphers, including Kamal ad-Din Hirati, Ghiyath ad-Din al-Isfahani, and Imad ad-Din al-Husayni who was the last and greatest of this generation. The Mughals lived and reigned in India from to This dynasty was the greatest, richest, and longest-lasting Muslim dynasty to rule India. The dynasty produced some of the finest and most elegant arts and architecture in the history of Muslim dynasties. A minor script appeared in India called Behari but was not very popular. The intense development of calligraphy in India led to the creation of new versions of Naskh and Thuluth. These Mughal scripts are thicker and bolder, the letters are widely spaced, and the curves are more rounded. One name remains closely associated with the Taj Mahal, -- in particular with the superb calligraphic inscriptions displayed in the geometric friezes on the white marble -- that is the name of the ingenious calligrapher Amanat Khan, whose real name was Abd ul-Haq. She was buried in a tomb located in a madrasa complex This incomparable calligrapher came to India from Shiraz, Iran, in In all probability, Amanat Khan was entrusted with the entire calligraphic decoration of the Taj Mahal. Flowering Kufic, where the script is merged with vegetal and floral motifs. He signed his work inside the calligraphic inscription on the left side of the southern iwan -- Amant Khan al-Shirazi, followed by the date Muslims in China who used the Arabic scripts for liturgical purposes adopted the calligraphic styles of Afghanistan with slight modifications. Muslim Chinese calligraphers invented a unique script called Sini Chinese. The features of this script are extremely rounded letters and very fine lines. Another style was derived from Sini for ornamental purposes and was used on ceramics and chinaware. This ornamental style is characterized by thick, triangular verticals and thin horizontals. Although this word can be used for any distinctly Chinese forms of Islamic calligraphy, Sini specifically refers to a rounded, flowing script, whose letters are distinguished by the use of thick and tapered effects. Original at the West Mosque, Cangzhou, Hebei. Under Ottoman patronage, a new and glorious chapter of Islamic arts and architecture was opened, especially the arts of the book and Arabic calligraphy. The Ottomans not only adopted the most popular calligraphic scripts of the time, but also invented a few new and purely indigenous styles such as Tughra. Arabic calligraphy was highly esteemed and incorporated into such

artistic objects as mosques, madrassahs, palaces, miniatures, and other literary works. Uthman Ibn Ali, better known as Hafiz Uthman, was another figure in a line of famous calligraphers. The detail from Tugra from Bosniak Institut in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina Diwani style was a formal calligraphy style of the Ottoman court and used for the most significant documents such as the diplomatic decree Ferman and legal documents Berat. The Shikasteh style is characterized by extreme density resulting from tightly connected ligatures, very low and inclined verticals, and no marks. Ibrahim Munif was a master calligrapher who is credited with the invention of Deewani script which was later refined by the Shaykh Hamdullah. Deewani is excessively cursive and structured. Its letters are undotted and joined together unconventionally. Jali script is attributed to Hafiz Uthman and his students. The major features of Jali are its profuse embellishments, making the script perfect for ornamental purposes. Arabic calligraphy acquired a sublime reputation for being the divine, moral, and artistic representation of Islamic faith and arts. The contributions of calligraphers and their legacies still remain today. The rules governing the use of scripts, the writing techniques, and the entire calligraphic culture the scripts generated are a valued part of the heritage of the Islamic world.

### Chapter 4 : Splendour and Bliss | Gemeentemuseum The Hague

*The Splendor of Islamic Calligraphy, widely acclaimed on first publication as the most lavish and sumptuous study of its kind, provides a comprehensive and fascinating survey of the subject from its earliest origins to the present day.*

### Chapter 5 : The Splendour of Islamic Calligraphy - Abdelkebir Khatibi, Mohammed Sijelmassi - Google Books

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### Chapter 6 : The Splendour of Arabic Calligraphy - Khatt Foundation

*Islamic calligraphy traditionally took its inspiration from the Muslim belief in the divine origin of Arabic writing. In early Islam the use of Arabic writing is sacred, and official texts gave rise to a wonderful profusion of scripts and a calligraphic tradition that has flourished for over a.*

### Chapter 7 : The Splendour Of Islamic Calligraphy by Abdelkebir Khatibi

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### Chapter 8 : Islamic Calligraphy

*Exhibition to showcase splendour of Islamic calligraphy 08 May - One of the calligraphy works to be displayed at the exhibition at the QM Gallery Al Riwaq this month.*

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