



ARABIC CALLIGRAPHY





Arabic calligraphy is a creative art on its own. It has many schools and trends as well as its inventors and fans. Like other forms of art, Arabic Calligraphy, developed itself from classical teachings to superior creativity. With this ability, Arabic calligraphy thrived in the history of Islamic arts and created for itself a special personality for every age.

The invention of the alphabet with its fonts is considered as the first step towards urbanization, and the most important human phenomenon. Arabic calligraphy is unique compared to other international languages, in its ability to create art in itself, aside of its role in writing. Similar to Chinese symbols, the Arabic Calligraphy is not just a means of writing, but rather, writing became a way to express the talent of calligrapher. It became like creating a painting, in which words and letters overlap in creative forms, using the different fonts such as: Al Thuluth, Kufi or Diwani. The writings become a painting, which is a work of art on itself, not easy to imitate or repeat.



The craftsmanship of Arabic calligraphy is also reflected in the formation of its fonts executed on architecture, furniture, paintings, utensils, etc. This gives it a high artistic value, exceeding its material value even if it is crafted on precious metal.

If we go back to the history and development of Arabic calligraphy, we discover that it did not come as a solid art. Each font underwent a long series of experiences and attempts that lasted many years and centuries. Until the final calligraphy for each font developed and reached what we currently know now.

Some of the Arabic fonts were known before Islam and others after it. The image of the Arabic letters became more important through its association with the writing of the Quran, and the art of Arabic calligraphy spread with the spread of the Islamic religion around the world.



The most famous Arabic calligraphy fonts are Kufi, Al Thuluth, Al Nasikh , Al Muhaqqaq and Al Rayhani. These fonts were used to decorate the Qurans, books, mosques and paintings.

The Kufic font is the first font in which Arabic writing was recorded. It remained popular until the end of the third Islamic century. This font was initially not dotted and unformed, but because of the openness of Arabic culture to other cultures, that has their own native languages, it was not easy for non-Arabs to understand the Arabic meanings of words when reading the Arabic text, due to the lack of dots on some letters.



The scientist, Abu Al Aswad Al Doaili, started solving this issue in the year 69 of the Islamic calendar. However, the full dotting of the Arabic letters was completed by his fellow linguistic Naser bin Asem. In the year 170 of the Islamic calendar, the famous Arabic linguistic, Al Khaleel bin Ahmed, added the formation of the letters and set up the grammar that governs it until now.

The fonts of Al Thuluth, Al Naskh , Al Muhaqqaq and Al Rayhani, started appearing in the age of Al Mamoun, the Abbasid Khalifa. The basic art and rules of these famous fonts were laid out in geometric dimensions. Persian calligraphy, such as Ta liq, Nasta'liq, and Maker, only started to appear from the sixth and seventh centuries on the Islamic calendar. The Andalusian font was characterized by roundness, overlapping words, and lengthening some of the letters.



The Most Famous Arabic Fonts

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۱۴۰۲

Al Kufi

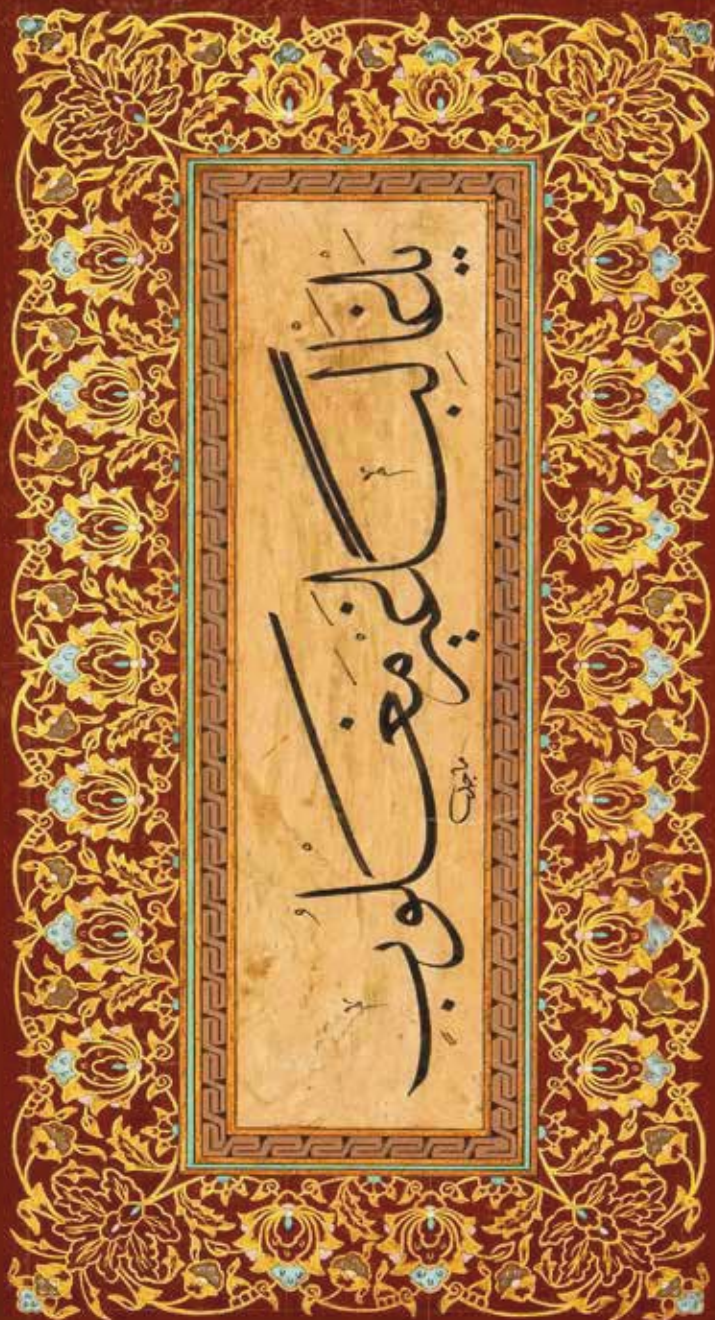
Al Kufi is considered by many as the most beautiful and patterned font among the other Arabic fonts. It is based on geometric rules that eases the rigidity ornamentation, whether the words are connected or separated, forming the background of Arabic writing in that age. The Kufic font does not need to be explained or commented on, with no specific rules for each letter. It is one of the first Arabic calligraphy fonts, which artists used to decorate buildings and large writings.

يَا لَيْلَى مَنِيَّ فِي الْهَوَى الْعُذْرِي مَعِزَّةً .

Al Thuluth

One of the finest and most complete fonts, but one of the most difficult as well. The talent and genius of the calligrapher is best reflected in following the rules and the similarity of letters to compose words using this font. Compared to other fonts, Al Thuluth characters and letters need larger spaces when writing with it. This is one of the strongest fonts, so it needs more training to master in comparison to other fonts. It feels luxurious and powerful with features of humanity and beauty. It is used for writing on large spaces with few words. It is also used to write the names of books on its covers and early verses of Quran.

In general, Al Thuluth font is a line that is usually leans slightly to the left. It is not horizontal and is not confined to the usual Arabic formation of horizontal drops.



Al Muhaqqaq

It emerged and originated in the early Abbasid state and its appearance had a favorable effect in improving and refining other fonts. It is the first font to undergo the process of refining and engineering work on its characters and letters. Its origins were developed based on the circle and the point, and the origin of the font was made starting with a dot.



Al Rayhani

It is one of the most innovative and beautiful fonts from the Abbasid era. This font is very similar in its features to Al Muhaqqaq font. The difficulty in this font lays in the accuracy of drawing its characters with high pen control.

Al Muhaqqaq and Rihani calligraphy scripts were most used among artists in the Islamic kingdoms until the eleventh century of the Islamic calendar in the writing of the Quran and sometimes in the Diwan. Later on, their fame gradually began to decline because they were slow to use and difficult to write with. It also needed more time, effort and space in order to master them.

[illegible]

Al Naskh

This font is both easy and beautiful. The letters and shapes are similar to Al Thuluth font without the decoration.

It was used in writing wise words, proverbs and paintings in mosques and museums. Newspapers have adopted it as a basic font, and it has become one of the most used fonts officially in writing newspapers and books today.

The font that calligraphers write today with, is the font of the ancient Abbasids who created it and mastered it. It does not accept installation and overlap in a circular, oval, or any other shape. This font runs horizontally, without overlapping between its letters and words. The movements of its letters and words are complete, for easy and fast reading, because of its clarity. It was used in the writing of the Quran since the tenth century of the Islamic calendar to present days. As a result, the letters of this font were adopted in modern printing.

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