Arabic Calligraphy | Calligraphic Schools

‘Calligraphers prepared their own ink compounds and cut their own reed pens.’

Arabic calligraphy was applied to a wide range of media, including parchment and paper. Calligraphers prepared their own ink compounds and cut their own reed pens. The inscriptions included many topics. Although calligraphy was a profession, private citizens practiced it too, regardless of social background. In Islamic societies calligraphic works by famous masters were not treated lightly, but were collected and preserved as cultural treasures.



Name:
Inkstand

Dynasty:
Hegira second half of the 7th century / AD second half of the 13th century Ayyubid

Details:
Museum of Islamic Art at the Pergamon Museum
Berlin, Germany

Justification:
This highly decorated metal inkpot and reed-pen holder would have belonged to an affluent person. But every calligrapher would have owned his own instruments and tools.



Name:
Stand

Dynasty:
Hegira 6th–7th century / AD 12th–13th century Ayyubid

Details:
The British Museum
London, England, United Kingdom

Justification:
This ceramic stand is most probably an inkpot and reed-pen holder.



Name:
Writing set

Dynasty:
Pen-cutting slab (makta), burnishing tool (mühre) and knife (kalemtra#): hegira 12th–13th century / AD 18th–19th century; Scissors (makas): hegira 13th / AD 19th century; case (kubur): dated hegira 1131 (AD 1718) Ottoman

Details:
Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Turkey

Justification:
Calligraphy reached its Golden Age during the Ottoman period, reflected in the great artistry afforded to the tools and instruments of the art.



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Writing set

Dynasty:

Pen-cutting slab (makta), burnishing tool (mühre) and knife (kalemtra#): hegira 12th–13th century / AD 18th–19th century; Scissors (makas): hegira 13th / AD 19th century; case (kubur): dated hegira 1131 (AD 1718) Ottoman

Details:
Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts
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Justification:
Cutting slab; part of a calligrapher's set.



Name:
Writing set

Dynasty:
Pen-cutting slab (makta), burnishing tool (mühre) and knife (kalemtra#): hegira 12th–13th century / AD 18th–19th century; Scissors (makas): hegira 13th / AD 19th century; case (kubur): dated hegira 1131 (AD 1718) Ottoman

Details:
Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Turkey

Justification:
A polishing tool used to smooth the surface of the paper; part of a calligrapher's set.



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Writing set

Dynasty:
Pen-cutting slab (makta), burnishing tool (mühre) and knife (kalemtra#): hegira 12th–13th century / AD 18th–19th century; Scissors (makas): hegira 13th / AD 19th century; case (kubur): dated hegira 1131 (AD 1718) Ottoman

Details:
Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Turkey

Justification:
Paper case; part of a calligrapher's set.



Name:
Writing box

Dynasty:
Reign of Sultan Abdülmecid I (r. Hegira 1255–78 / AD 1839–61) Ottoman

Details:
Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Turkey

Justification:
This writing box would held all the instruments needed to practice calligraphy within its purpose-made compartments. This box belonged to Sultan Abdülmecid who was himself a calligrapher.
