Arabic Calligraphy | Kufic Script

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In the early years of Islam, kufic became the main calligraphic style employed for copying the Qur’an, it was used on coins and on architectural inscriptions. The kufic style went through several phases of development, from flat and stiff in shape – from which ‘muhaqqaq’ script was developed – to a more lenient phase, which subsequently led to the thuluth, Maghrebi, and riqa’a scripts. The various types of kufic script were gradually standardised, making it almost impossible to identify and attribute an inscription to a particular region by looking at the calligraphy alone.



Name:
Ablutions basin

Dynasty:
Hegira 377 / AD 988 Umayyads of al-Andalus, Caliphate period

Details:
National Archaeological Museum
Madrid, Spain

Justification:
The presence of this kufic inscription, despite the invention of Maghrebi script, is testimony to the universality of the kufic style, which was employed right across the Mediterranean.



Name:
Fragment of a basin

Dynasty:
Hegira 5th century / AD 11th century Taifa Kingdoms

Details:
National Museum of Antiquities and Islamic Arts
Algiers, Algeria

Justification:
The kufic style was widely used in Arabic calligraphy in a multitude of ways, here seen on an architectural fragment.



Name:
Jar

Dynasty:
Hegira late 4th–early 5th century / AD late 10th–early 11th century Fatimid

Details:
Burrell Collection, Glasgow Museums
Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom

Justification:
A Fatimid jar that is decorated with an inscription band in kufic script comprising the repetition of the word, 'baraka'.



Name:
Minbar

Dynasty:
Hegira 558 / AD 1163 Atabeg/Zangid

Details:
Hama Museum
Hama, Syria

Justification:
A minbar (pulpit) that displays a rich and intricate set of carved-wood decorations including calligraphic inscriptions in the thuluth style.