

Arabic Calligraphy | Monumental Calligraphy

'Arabic calligraphy was one of the main characteristics that distinguished architecture of the Islamic period.'

From early on in the Islamic world, calligraphic inscriptions were applied to a variety of architecture: religious, military, civic and private. Arabic calligraphy was one of the main characteristics by which to distinguish architecture of the Islamic period. The earliest surviving building that displays this element is the 1st- / 7th-century Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.



Name:

Dome of the Rock

Dynasty:

Hegira 72 / AD 691 Umayyad

Details:

Jerusalem

Justification:

The inscription band nearest the centre of the Dome displays a verse from the Qur'an, the 'Throne Verse' (2: 255) from the Qur'an in thuluth script.



Name:

Dome of the Rock

Dynasty:

Hegira 72 / AD 691 Umayyad

Details:

Jerusalem

Justification:

Detail of the mosaic above the arches and just underneath the dome of the Dome of the Rock, comprising a narrow inscription band in thuluth script.



Name:

Dome of the Rock

Dynasty:

Hegira 72 / AD 691 Umayyad

Details:

Jerusalem

Justification:

Detail of the wide, painted and gilded inscription band above the upper arches at the top of the drum of the Dome of the Rock.



Name:

Nilometer

Dynasty:

Hegira 247 / AD 861 Abbasid

Details:

Cairo, Egypt

Justification:

Two styles of kufic calligraphy appear on the structure: the inscription band carved in stone above the arch is one of the earliest versions of kufic script known, while that on the wooden beam above the measuring column is a later rendition.



Name:

Buinaniya Madrasa

Dynasty:

Hegira 751–6 / AD 1351–6 Marinid

Details:

Fez (Old Town / medina), Morocco

Justification:

Founded in 751 / 1351 by the Sultan Abu 'Inan (r. 751–6 / 1351–6), the inner courtyard of the school displays an impressive inscription band running around the top of the walls.
