

Arabic Calligraphy | Monumental Calligraphy

'Minimalist, angular kufic script was the first style of Arabic calligraphy to appear on monuments.'

The minimalist, angular kufic script was the first style of Arabic calligraphy to appear on monuments. It then developed in the 5th / 11th century to become foliated and to include floral ornamentation on the tips of the letters, such as seen on the maqsura (the space reserved for the caliph or imam) in the Great Mosque of Kairouan. Although kufic script – with its horizontal and vertical lines – perfectly complemented a number of architectural features in buildings, especially pillars and supports, from the 6th / 12th century monuments were also decorated with other styles of Arabic calligraphy such as the more lenient naskhi script, as seen on the Khanqah (hostel) of Sultan Baybars in Egypt.



Name:
Great Mosque of Kairouan

Dynasty:
Hegira 221 / AD 836 Umayyad, Abbasid

Details:
Kairouan, Tunisia

Justification:
A wooden screen from the maqsura in the Great Mosque, this particular one reserved for the Fatimid Caliph Al-Mu'izz. The screen is decorated with a band of kufic script that runs across the top edge.



Name:
Khanqah of Baybars al-Gashanqir

Dynasty:
Hegira 709 / AD 1309 Mamluk

Details:
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:
An engraved inscription, in thuluth script which names the sponsor and relates the decree to construct the khanqah and grant it as an endowment for Sufis.



Name:
Khanqah of Baybars al-Gashanqir

Dynasty:
Hegira 709 / AD 1309 Mamluk

Details:
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:
Detail of the entrance doors to the Khanqah of Baybars al-Gashanqir.



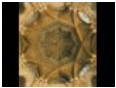
Name:
Khanqah of Baybars al-Gashanqir

Dynasty:
Hegira 709 / AD 1309 Mamluk

Details:
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:

General view of the Khanqah of Baybars al-Gashanqir.

**Name:**

Great Mosque of Córdoba

Dynasty:

Hegira 169–377 / AD 786–988 Umayyad of al-Andalus, Emirate and Caliphate periods

Details:

Córdoba, Spain

Justification:

Part of the work to expand the Great Mosque undertaken by al-Hakam II (r. 350–66 / 961–76) was the mosaic decoration on the dome preceding the mihrab. A magnificent achievement with calligraphy an integral part of it, the inscription runs around the octagon at the centre of the dome.

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Great Mosque of Córdoba

Dynasty:

Hegira 169–377 / AD 786–988 Umayyad of al-Andalus, Emirate and Caliphate periods

Details:

Córdoba, Spain

Justification:

Detail of the mihrab in the Great Mosque of Córdoba which is decorated with a mosaic inscription in kufic script above the arch.

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Great Mosque of Córdoba

Dynasty:

Hegira 169–377 / AD 786–988 Umayyad of al-Andalus, Emirate and Caliphate periods

Details:

Córdoba, Spain

Justification:

Detail of the lace-like arches in the Great Mosque of Córdoba, with the mihrab in the distance.
