

## THE ROLE OF CALIGRAPHIC ARTS IN CIVILIZATION ISLAMIC CULTURE

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### Abstract

*Calligraphy, one of the Islamic arts, has received great attention in the Muslim community. Basically, calligraphy is artistic writing ( khat ) taken from the Al-Qur'an and it is named based on the place: Makki , Madani , Anbari and Baghdadi. By the time, names of ( khat ) are shown, seems like Khufi , Mutsallats , Mudawwar and some other types of writing. Calligraphy has a big role in developing Islamic civilization in the world. The influence of Islamic power the development of calligraphy and influenced the development of science especially in the Abbasid period. after the Abbasiyyah period, the phenomenal calligraphers like Ibnu Muqlah .*

**Key word** : Calligraphy arts, Islamic civilization

### A. Introduction

Art is a product of conscious activity. Has the aim of obtaining or achieving aesthetics, and also functions as a rule or way of interpreting symbols. the degree or quality of these symbols and aesthetics is somewhat influenced by the sublimation between balance, difference, waves. Rhythm, along with the seriousness of a way of birth of art. Therefore, art is often associated with aesthetics or beauty.

Ismail al-Faruqi describes Islam, or the majlis of a similar Islamic culture, which describes beauty or beauty as a value on which all Islamic legality rests, which emerges through the levels of beauty of the completeness of the Qur'an. Most High, nothing can surpass the power of the Qur'an except Allah as His origin. The next implication, aesthetics in Islam is a sublimation of the fact of divinity, namely the i'jaz (drajat) of the Qur'an cannot be imitated or compared, both in terms of literature, rhythm, composition, beauty of balghah, perfection of style and dignity in expressing meaning. In the conception in Islam, Allah is the main source of these aesthetic values.

Calligraphy is a work of art in Islam and the most important. Islamic calligraphy stands in the Arab world which is a growth of art in writing beautiful Arabic letters which are said to be Khat. This understanding is actually exactly the same as the etymological meaning of the word calligraphy, which comes from the Greek word calligraphy (beautiful writing). In its growth, Arabic letters which are objects of Khat art develop according to the development of the place where Khat existed. In the 10th century, for example, the style that followed was the first growth of Khat, which was initially more or less stiff, became more elastic and ornamental, although angular. Then, as time changed, there were developments regarding the cursive (oblique) forms of Khat which could be

realized in art forms called *nakli*, *raiham*, *sulus*, *riqa* and *tauqi*. In later times, the use of *riqa* and *tauqi* was no longer visible.

Islamic calligraphy is a visual embodiment in the crystallization of spiritual actualities (*al-Haqa'iq*) contained in Islamic inspiration. Calligraphy appears to hold a very special exclusive position in the Islamic Religion so that it can be said to be the ancestor or culture of traditional Islamic visual arts and has a very special path to Islamic civilization.

The presence of *Al-Khat Al-Arabi* in a beautiful and very beautiful form which is very important in pre-Islam, because *al-Khat* is original art and in it the spirit of civilization and Islamic philosophy is obtained.

Thus, calligraphy has become one of the writing arts that has developed until now, and has made an important contribution to the development of Islam throughout the world.

## B. Discussion

### 1. Definition Calligraphy

Calligraphy sec etymology originated from language Greek , calligraphy or *kaligraphos*. *kallos* which means beautiful and *graphio* ( writing ). Thus calligraphy has two elements, namely writing (script) and beauty (aesthetic value). In Arabic, calligraphy is called *Khat* , which means basic lines, pen strokes, or handwriting. The karja form of *khat* is *khatta* which means *kataba* (writing) or *rasama* (drawing). Arabic term calligraphy as *khat* (writing or lines, which is meant in beautiful writing ( *al-kitabah al-jamilah* or *al-khat al-jamil*). An expert usually writes with the word *al-khat-tat* (calligrapher). Calligraphy in the sense of " the art of penmanship" is true in fact because of agility in soft writing which is actually the skill of using a pen in writing.

Whereas in terms of terminology, it was explicitly stated by Shaykh Syamsuddin Al-Afkani, namely someone who is an expert in the field of calligraphy, in his book named *Irsyad al-Qasid* in the chapter *Hasyr al-Ulum*, " *Khat* is the science that studies the form of single letters, their accuracy, and the method of the sequence that makes it an inscription or something written in lines (writing). How to write it and (determine which ones) don't need to be written and which ones should be written, change the spelling that needs to be changed and how to write letters, arrange them in a certain composition in order to achieve the harmony and balance required in a work of art.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "The History of the Development of Calligraphy in the Islamic World," *Hilyatul Qalam* , January 11, 2009, <https://hilyatulqalam.wordpress.com/2009/01/11/History-perkembangan-kaligrafi-di-dunia-islam/>.

elastic and ornamental, although angular. Then, as time changed, there were developments regarding the cursive (oblique) forms of Khat which could be realized in art forms called nakli, raiham, sulus, riqa and tauqi. In later times, the use of riqa and tauqi was no longer visible.

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## 2. Origin Arabic script

Letters Arab has 28 kinds letter , begins on letter alif and terminated with letter f yes '. And if compared on sums letter other languages that have \_ range of 24 to 26 letters . Therefore the number is in the middle between the letters of other languages. These languages consist of Greek, Romance, Persian, Sicilian and finally the Turkish language which has 24 to 26 letter variations. Whereas in the Hebrew and Greek nations, kopoti kuna, while in Hindustani it has a capacity of 32 to 36 letters.

Various opinions were expressed about who first created calligraphy. To find out, religious stories are the most reliable. The messengers from Arabic or Muarrikh noted that the Prophet Adam As was the first to recognize calligraphy. This knowledge comes from Allah SWT himself through revelation. "Allah taught Adam the knowledge of all the names", as explained in the Qur'an (Sura Al Baqarah, verse 31). It is said, that 300 years before his death, Adam wrote on a tablet which was then burned into pottery. After the earth was flooded at the time of Prophet Noah As and the water had receded, every nation or group of descendants got pottery with these inscriptions.

In the history of Islamic civilization, the art of writing Arabic letters whose contents are in the form of fragments of verses from the Qur'an or the Hadith of the Prophet SAW has a very special place. Every Muslim believes that Arabic is the language used by Allah SWT when the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW. This language is also used in all worship systems by Muslims around the world. Because in Islamic teachings painting in the form of living things is something that is prohibited, Muslims express their passion for art, among others, through this calligraphy art. These calligraphy works have become decorations in many fields, ranging from buildings, coins, decorative arts, gems, textiles, weapons to manuscripts.

The revival of the literacy of the Muslims began in 2 Hijriyah when the Prophet made it obligatory for prisoners of war who could not afford to pay

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<sup>2</sup> "(PDF) *The Art of Calligraphy: Its Role and Contribution to Islamic Civilization* ," ResearchGate, accessed 16 May 2020, <http://dx.doi.org/10.18860/el.v0i0.2014>.

ransoms to teach Muslims to read and write. At that time calligraphy still used Khat Kufi (elbow-shaped khat) which was the oldest calligraphy. Kufic at that time still did not have punctuation marks until at the time of Caliph Ali bin Abi Talib the writing had perfect punctuation.

During the Umayyad caliphate, dissatisfaction with Kufic khat began to arise, which was considered too stiff and difficult to scratch, so the formulation of writing that was softer and easier to scratch began. Even though Arabic had actually developed long before Islam was born, this language spread rapidly in line with the development of Islam. Caliph Abdul Malik (685-705 AD) from the Umayyads made a very important political decision in this field, namely by establishing Arabic as the official language of all Islamic regions, even though at first Arabic was not the language used in these areas. It produces several types of writing namely, Khat Tumar, Jalil, Nisf, Tsulus and Tsulusain. The famous calligraphy figure at that time was Qutbah al-Muharrir.

In the beginning, Islamic calligraphy was mostly written on leather or palm leaves. The discovery of paper in China in the mid-9th century AD played a significant role in the development of this art, paper was relatively cheaper, quite abundant, easy to cut and in terms of coloring techniques it was easier than the materials used before.

Ibn Muqla (886-940 AD) was one of the best calligraphers in the early days of the development of Islamic calligraphy. He developed geometric principles in Islamic calligraphy which were later widely used by calligraphers who came after him, he also played a role in developing cursive writing which later became known as the Naskh style which was widely used to write Qur'anic mushafs.

The development of calligraphy continued to develop until the time of the Abbasids so that calligraphy emerged which was a new style or a modification of an old style such as Khat khafif Tsulus, Khafif Tsulusain, Riyasi and al-Aqlam as-Sittah (Tsulus, Naskhi, Muhaqqaq, Raihani, Riq'ah and tauqi). The famous figures at this time were Ibn Muqlah, Ibn Bauwab and Yaqut al-Musta'tsimi.

The 13th century, which along with Yaqut, was a century of destruction and rebuilding in the Eastern Islamic lands. The devastation occurred as a result of invasions by Genghis Khan (1155-1227) and his Mongol armies, and culminated in the capture of Baghdad by his son Hulagu in 1258 and the final fall of the Abbasid caliphate.

The rebuilding was almost immediate by the establishment of Mongol rule, and Hulagu's son, Abaga (1265-82), was the first ruler to grant the new dynasty the title of Il-Khan (ruler of the Tribe).

It is truly amazing that Islam was able, after being destroyed in such a way, to rise again and continue its undiminished vitality. Less than half a century after the destruction of Baghdad, Islam won a victory over its infidel conqueror, because not only did Hulagu's great-grandfather Ghazan (1295-1305) embrace Islam, but he also made Islam the official religion of all the countries he ruled.

In Indonesia, Arabic letters are commonly referred to as al letters al hijaiyyah (hijaiyah letters) in the Indonesian meaning, namely spelling letters. A grammar expert from Arab named Sibawaihi and Al-Khalil mentioned the letters ul 'arabiyyah or ul lighatil 'arabiyyah which means Arabic letters. With

which the Arabic language is composed. From historical records, it can be seen that the 28 letters of the alphabet came from the Nabthiyyah (Nabatea) letters which had been used by the Arabs during the pre-Islamic Jahiliyah period. Apart from the Hebrew letters/alphabet which they "borrowed" from the Jews, in pre-Islamic times they easily inhabited the areas around Medina (Yatsib) or Mecca.

Nabitah letters are letters used by the Nabati people who inhabited the northern part of the Arabian peninsula in their era since 150 BC and had a strong government (kingdom). and Hera. However, later this kingdom was destroyed by the Roman Empire in 105 AD. With the fall of this kingdom into the hands of the Romans, most of the Nabthy people, who could not stand the pressure and intimidation launched by the new rulers, preferred to flee to the interior of the Arabian peninsula (especially the Hejaz) while bringing their culture and then developing it in their ancestral lands. which eventually grew into the Arabic script. However, what needs to be known is that the Arabic alphabet as we can see today has undergone quite a lot of changes in its original form. Other evidence that supports the opinion that the Arabic script originates from the Nababhity script is the discovery of a new writing known as Naqsh an Nammarah in 328.

Roman numerals, which at that time were commonly used among the general public, but were later considered to be stiff and inefficient, were replaced with Arabic numerals, which turned out to be more flexible and efficient. In commenting on a change that has occurred in the Quraysh community which was originally an illiterate society but has now become a literate society. A professor of literature at Qohiroh University in Egypt, Dr. Ahmad Amin in his book *Fajrul Islam* said. That the Arab nation, which in the pre-Islamic era only had 17 people who could write and read (while Jurji Zaidan) mentioned 12 people) after the presence of Islam, changed into a nation who was good at writing and reading statements, providing evidence that pre-Islamic Arabs were a nation that was not good at write and read.<sup>3</sup>

### 3. Both Arabic Calligraphy

Calligraphy itself is often called "the art of Islamic art". The qualification is appropriate because calligraphy reflects the meaning of art whose essence comes from values and a concept of faith. Titus Burckhardt, for example, he views the cosmic Islamic art, including Iranian (Persian) Islamic art, cannot be separated from a doctrine or Islamic insight itself which seeks to reach the spiritual world and transcendence of a Muslim as reflected in the worship itself, which is also reflected on Islamic architecture and the art of calligraphy. For this reason, calligraphy has a very large influence on other forms of expression of Islamic art, as recognized by Western scholars who study Islamic art a lot, for example Martin Lings, Titus Burckhardt, Annemarie Schimmel and many other scholars who study Islamic art. the.

The specialty of this calligraphy art in Muslim society itself is because art is touted as a form of embodiment of the sacred words of Allah, and art which is closely related to hadiths, such as art evidence which is very related to the verses

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<sup>3</sup> Humam Abubakar, " A Glance About the Origins of Arabic Letters and Calligraphy in Indonesia ," *Journal of Humanities* 0, no. 2 (June 25, 2013): 65-66, <https://doi.org/10.22146/jh.2093>.

of Al-Qur'an. The Qur'an and the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, in special places for Muslims, for example, mosques and small prayer rooms. Meanwhile, the Persians (Iran), who have long been known as producers of noble arts and culture, even long before the presence of Islam itself, developed and explored the art of calligraphy, not only limited to what was previously known and developed. They combine it with elements, themes, elements, and other forms of art, such as landscape paintings, nature paintings, animal (bird) paintings, and leaves, flowers in their calligraphy works, which they apply to architecture. on the paintings themselves.<sup>4</sup>

#### **4. The Development of Arabic Calligraphy in the Period of the Prophet and Ar-Rashidun**

At the time of the Prophet and al-Khulafa ar-Rashidun, the style of calligraphy was still considered ancient and took names written in special places, such as in Makki (Mecca writing), Madani (Madinnah), Hejazi (Hedzjaz), Anbari (Anbari), Hiri (Hirah), and Kufi (Kufa). Kufic is the most frequently used and is the only Calligraphy that is commissioned to write the Mushaf (codification) of the Qur'an until the end of the reign of al-Khulafah ar-Rashidun.

Then an interest in reading and writing arose among Muslims starting from the second year of Hijriyah, when Rasulullah SAW made it obligatory for each of the prisoners of war, namely during the Battle of Badr, who were unable to pay ransom, to teach ten Medina youths to read and write.

The Prophet ordered these youths to teach the knowledge they knew to their friends or relatives, so that in a relatively short time the knowledge of reading and writing spread to Medina.

Meanwhile, the Spirit of the Qur'an itself provides an input or encouragement that is concluded in the first revelation (QS 96: 1-5) regarding the command to read and write. Meanwhile, encouragement from Rasulullah SAW regarding the matter as conveyed by the hadith narrated by Dailamai and Musnad al-Firdaus. "Beautiful calligraphy will add to the obvious truth."

Regarding beautifying a piece of writing, the Prophet Muhammad SAW also conveyed, as stated in the hadith narrated by Tabrani and al-Kabir, "tie knowledge with writing" and "the beauty of writing is your legacy. It is one of the keys to livelihood."

It is from here that Muslims are advised to beautify the writing of the Qur'an, and become the basic capital for any development of calligraphy.<sup>5</sup>

##### **a. Umayyad Preode (661-750)**

On development Bani Umayyad (661-750M) existed a number of type variety art the calligraphy on at first developed with based on name the place and city he developed through writing . From various type character writing only three styles of writing that are often worn and connected known inscriptions in Makkah \_ and Medina is Mudawwar ( round ), Mutsallats ( triangle ) , and , Tim ( arranged twins from triangle and round ). from all three

<sup>4</sup> jazznwords, " *Calligraphy as Islamic Civilization*, " *Rest Room* , 27 August 2014, <https://jazznwords.wordpress.com/2014/08/27/kaligrafi-Jadi-peradaban-islam/>.

<sup>5</sup> " *Rasulullah Encourages Development of Islamic Calligraphy Arts* ," *Republika Online*, 16 March 2016, <https://republika.co.id/berita/dunia-islam/islam-digest/16/03/16/o446yf313-rasulullah-dorong-pengembangan-Islamic-calligraphy>.

these are the only two that take precedence that is gaua cursive and very easy written with style muqawwar who have characteristic soft , supple as well as style Mabsun characteristic \_ rigid and consists from scratches thick (rectilinear). Two style this is what gives rise formation a number yet another style among them Mail (italics), Masyq ( enlarged ) and Naskh ( inscriptive ). Masyq and Naskh styles are increasingly developing message, while Mail is increasingly sinking year after year or being abandoned, because it loses to Kufic developments . The growth of Kufi also gave birth to several variations in both vertical and horizontal lines. Both regarding the letters and the ornaments. Kufic styles emerged, namely Murabba' (straight), Muarraq (decorated with leaves), Mudhaffar (woven), Mu'acqad (accurately connected) and many other styles. And the cursive style has developed tremendously and even surpassed the Kufic style, both in terms of the diversity of new motifs and their use, in this case [the copying of the Qur'an, religious books, correspondence and so on.

Among the famous Umayyad calligraphers who developed cursive writing was Qutbah al-Muharrir. He found four types of writing namely Thumar, Jalil, Nisf, and Tsulusts . These four writings are mutually complementary between one motive and another so that the value becomes perfect. The characteristics of Thumar's writing are upright, straight, written using a large pen in uncut tumar-tumar (full sheets, rolls of leather or paper). The writing was used for the written communication of the caliphs to the emirs and the writing of official palace documents. While Jalil 's type of writing has a slanted standing shape which is used by the wider community.

The history of the development of calligraphy in this period has not been revealed by the subsequent caliphs, namely the Abbasids, who destroyed most of their remains for political purposes. There are only a few examples of inscriptions remaining such as the construction inscription and those built by Mu'awiyah, the remaining inscriptions are such as the inscription on the construction of the Dam built by Muawiyah, inscriptions on Qubba Ash-Shakharah, Kufic inscriptions on a pond built by Caliph Hisham and others.<sup>6</sup>

#### **b. Period Abbasiyyah (750-1258)**

During this period of development, the Abbasids used the style and technique of writing calligraphy which grew and expanded the faster the calligraphers were born, including Ad-Dahhak ibn 'Ajlan who lived during the time of Caliph Abu Abbas As-Shaffah (754 AD), Ishaq ibn Muhammad at the time of Caliph al-Mansur (754-775 AD) and al-Mahdi (775-752 AD). Ishaq made a significant contribution to the development of Tsulusts and Tsulustsain writings and popularized their use. Then another calligrapher, namely Abu Yusuf as-Sijzi, who studied jalil from Ishaq. Yusuf managed to create soft letters from the past.

There is also a recorded calligrapher in the Abbasid dynasty who has a big name, namely Ibn Muqlah, who in his youth at that time studied calligraphy from Al-Ahwal al-Muharrir. It was Ibn Muqlah who greatly contributed to the development of cursive writing because of his spectacular discovery of geometrical formulas in calligraphy which consisted of three standard unified elements in the creation of the letters he offered, namely: dots, alifs, and circles.

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<sup>6</sup> "The History of the Development of Calligraphy in the Islamic World."

His opinion regarding each letter that must be made based on this provision and can be called AL-khat al-Mansub (standard writing). He also pioneered the use of six main types of writing ( al-aqlam as-Sittah) , namely Tsulust, Naskhi, Muhaqqaq Raihani, Riqa', and Tauqi, all of which are cursive types of writing. The writings of Naskhi and Tsulusts became popular because they had the efforts of Ibn Muqlah who could eventually shift the dominance of Kufic khat.

Ibn Muqlah's efforts were continued by his famous students, including Muhammad ibn As-Simsimani and Muhammda ibn Bawwab. Ibn Bawwab further developed the formula pioneered by Ibn Muqlah, known as Al-Mansub Al-Faiq (beautiful leaning letters). He has great concern for the radical improvement of Khat Naskhidan Muhaqqaq. However, only a few of his works remain today, namely a Qur'an and secular fragments.

Next came Yaqut al-Musta'simi, who at that time introduced a new method of writing calligraphy in a more refined and gentle manner towards the six main types of styles that were famous for it. Yaqut was a great calligrapher during the time of the Abbasid Daula until the collapse of this dynasty in 1285 AD due to an attack by the Mongolian army.

Its use during the Abbasid daula period showed very real diversity, far from the Umayyad period. The calligraphers of the Abbasid daulah were very ambitious in exploring new discoveries or deforming motifs that were still developing. Calligraphy works were dominantly used as ornaments and architecture by the Abbasids rather than the Ummayyads, who only dominated elements of floral and geometric ornaments influenced by Hellenism and Sasanian culture.<sup>7</sup>

### c. Advanced Period (Post-Abbasid)

In addition to the area of the Islamic country in the east (al-Masyirq) which stretches to the east of Libya including in the country of Turkey, which is the western part of the Islamic country (al-Maghrib) which consists of all the Arab countries west of Egypt, including Andalusia (Islamic Spain) ). This area takes on a different shape. The calligraphy style that developed dominantly was the Maghribi Kufi which was different from the style in Baghdad (Iraq). The writing system invented by Ibn Muqlah is also not fully accepted, so the existing cursive writing style is conservative.

While part of the Masyriq region, after the destruction of the Abbasiyyah Daula by the Mongol army Si Bawah Gengis Khan and his son Hulangu Khan, the development of calligraphy can soon revive no less than half a century. With Hulagu Khan's grandson Ghazan who had embraced Islam, artistic culture was rebuilt. His successor, Uljaytu, also continued Ghazan's efforts, he encouraged well-educated people and artists to continue working. The art of calligraphy and decoration of the Qur'an also reached its peak. This dynasty had several calligraphers mentored by Yaqyt such as Ahmad al-Suhwardi who copied the Koran in the Muhaqqaq style in 1304 Mubarak Shah Al-Qutb, Sayyid Haydar, Mubarak Shah al-Suyufi and so on.

Developments in the advanced Abbasid period had many periods such as the period of the II-Khan Dynasty which lasted until the 14th century, the

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<sup>7</sup> " *The History of the Development of Calligraphy in the Islamic World* ."



Timurid dynasty which declined towards the 15th century, then in the Indian Region and Afghanistan whose calligraphy developed more continentally with the Behari style in the 15th century. 14th. Then during the period of the Ottoman dynasty in Turkie, and so on.<sup>8</sup>

### 5. Factors Causing Calligraphy to Grow Rapidly

The factors that have caused calligraphy to develop rapidly in various parts of the world are none other than the role of the Al-Qur'an as the holy book of Muslims in various parts of the world, and not only the Al-Qur'an is influenced by the expansion of Islamic rule. There are at least three things related to the expansion of Islamic regional power after the death of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The expansion soon extended far beyond the Arabian peninsula. These three things are massive urbanization to conquered areas, and the Arabization process in these areas.<sup>9</sup>

### 6. The Role of Calligraphy Art on the Contribution of Islamic Culture

This role has a contribution to the civilization of the Islamic world which we can see from all the aspects that influence it, including;

#### a. Religious aspect

Is an Islamic da'wah through the art of calligraphy. It is the calligraphy of the Koran which conveys Islamic revelation and at the same time depicts comments from Muslims on a divine message. The dots are written to create a celestial shape or pattern on the calligraphy of the Qur'an as well as the lines and contents of natural law which not only form space, but also the space of Islamic architecture. Through writing and reading these letters, words, and verses, humans begin to feel that these sentences are sentences of the Qur'an in a beautiful form of calligraphy, not just sentences that radiate ideas, but also radiates the power within the reader within the reader.

#### b. Ethical aspects

This aspect is the awareness of religious rituals. Through the art of calligraphy someone who can know the essence of the meaning of the Almighty. The values of the Qur'an that are mixed up by calligraphers can bring their readers to understand and interpret a life in accordance with the verses written.<sup>10</sup>

## C. Conclusion

From what has been explained above, we can conclude that the art of calligraphy has a very positive contribution in the spread of Islam throughout the world. This calligraphy art is one of the arts that is very valuable, valuable, classy and respected by all Muslims. Calligraphy which is the "embodiment" of the word of Allah SWT which will always and will continue to develop with various models as a form of appreciation of all Muslims for a beautiful Arabic writing, so that the art of calligraphy continues to experience very rapid development and it

<sup>8</sup> " *Development of the Kalighrafi World - Ahmad,*" accessed 17 May 2020, <https://julyadi.web.ug.ac.id/2015/01/01/perkembangan-dunia-kalighrafi/>.

<sup>9</sup> " *Calligraphy Spreads Evenly in the Islamic World, What's the Reason ?* | *Republika Online,*" accessed May 17 2020, <https://republika.co.id/berita/p5xrjc313/kaligrafi-mebar-merata-di-dunia-islam-apa-sebabnya>.

<sup>10</sup> "(PDF) *Art Calligraphy .*"

is not inevitable that there will be calligraphers. great class with Ibn Mullah during the Abbasid period.

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