

Design Course

## Chronology of Calligraphy Art

History of Calligraphy art

by

Farzan Kermaninejad

IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/course/chronology-calligraphy-art>



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### 30,000 BC to 1 BC



30,000 BC: The primitive drawings found in the Chauvet Cave, in the South of France depict graphic designs of animals.



14,000 BC: Similar designs showing animal figures have been seen in Lascaux cave of France.



3,100 BC: Sumerians did Pictographic record-keeping on clay.



2,500 BC: Some of the early cuneiforms.

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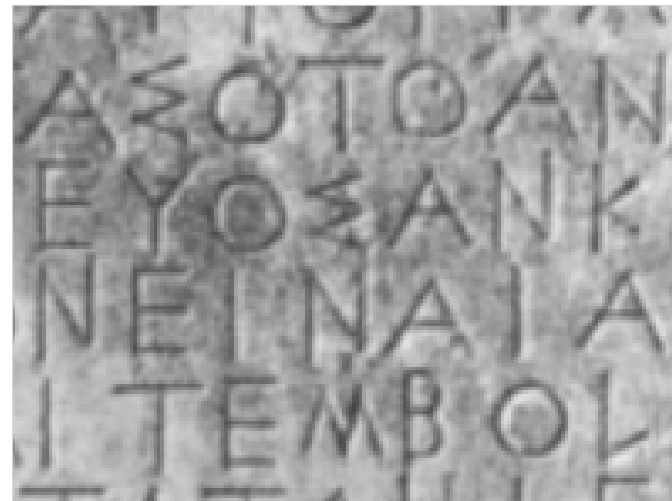
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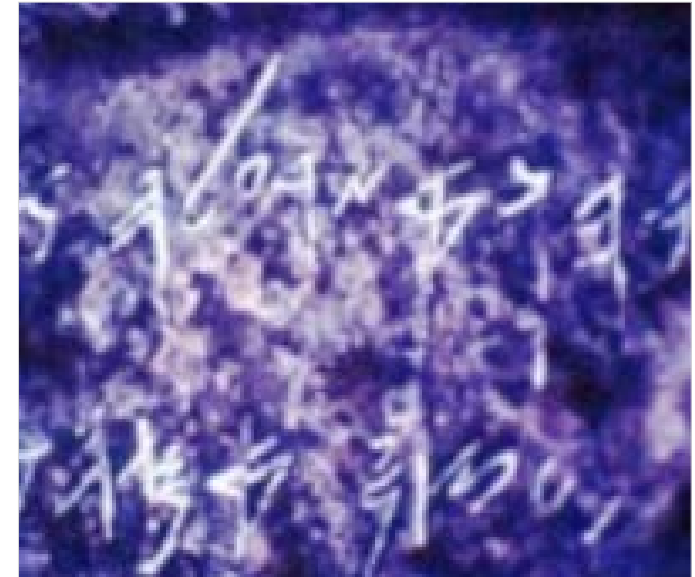
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2,000 BC: The picture is of Early Cretan pictograph/ Phaistos Disk.



1,000 BC: Initial traces of development of alphabets in Greece.



850 BC: Aramaic alphabets were developed.



753 BC: Rome was founded by Romulus.

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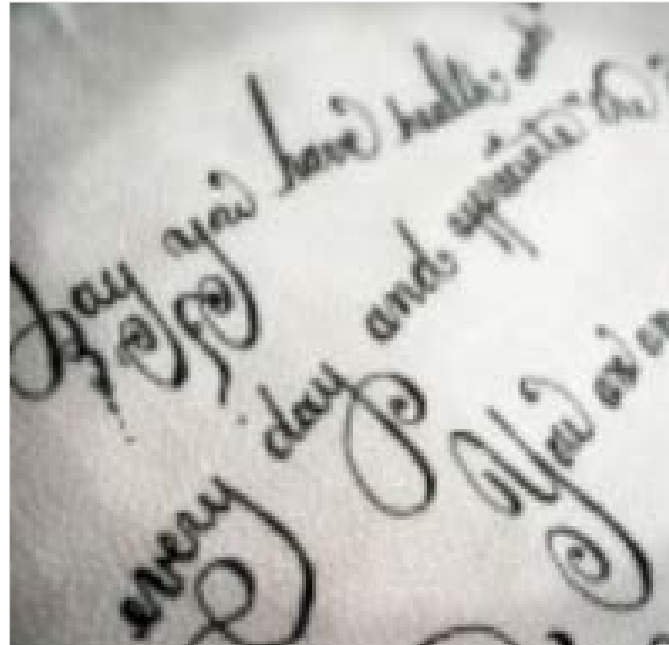
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**600 BC:** The first Roman alphabet appeared in Rome, and by the first century developed into Roman imperial capitals carved on stones, Rustic capitals painted on walls, and Roman cursive for daily use. In the second and third centuries the Uncial lettering style developed. The monasteries preserved the calligraphy traditions during the fourth and fifth centuries, when the Roman Empire fell and Europe entered the Dark Ages.



**250 BC:** Small Chinese Calligraphic seals were used.

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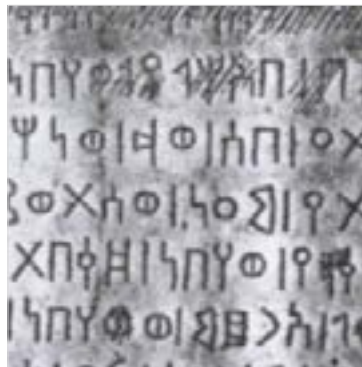
### 1st to 10th Century AD



105: Papermaking was invented by Cai Lun in China.



570: Mohammed ibn Abdullah (570-632 CE), divine prophet of Islam was born in Mecca.



500: Early Arabic alphabet appeared. Although the historians disagree on both the birthplace and the birth date of Arabic writing, but it is widely accepted theory that it developed from Nabataean, which is one of the many West Aramaic dialects which served as the international language of the Middle East between the 4th century B.C. and the 7th century C.E.



590 A.D.: Almost founded the Islam. Arabic script appeared in the Arabian Peninsula. The Kufic and Naskh styles were the first to be used by the ancient Arabs. For inscriptions on stones, Kufic script proved to be at once the easiest to incise and was the most majestic in appearance. The impressive style was carried over to record sacred works on parchment.

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622 Hijra (flight of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina): The beginning of Islamic era.



624: **House of Muhammad** in Medina was built. The main centre for prayer in the city of Medina was the Prophet's house. It was roughly square in plan, each side measuring some 56m, with nine small rooms along the East wall. Colonnades of palm trunks supporting palm branches were added along the North and the South walls as protection from the Sun, and the qibla orientation changed from Jerusalem to Mecca. This simple form had a lasting influence on the development of the **Masjid** in **Islamic architecture**.



642 – 650: Arab conquest of Persia (642: Azerbaijan, 649: Fars 650 Khurasan and 652 Merv).



651: **The first Islamic coins** were struck during the Caliphate of Uthman (644 to 656). These were the Persian dirhams that had an image of the Persian emperor Yazdgerd III with the addition of the Arabic sentence Bismillah (in the name of Allah). However, the first original minting of the Islamic dirham was done in 696-7 during Umayyad period.

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**656:** Marked the murder of 'Uthman and beginning of the First Civil War in Islam; Ali ibn Abi Talib (600–661) reigned over Rashidun Caliphate. He was cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad and the Fourth Caliph. Some Muslims believe he was the **first Islamic Calligrapher**.



**661** saw decline of 'Ali Umayyad's Dynasty (661–750), the first major ruling Muslim dynasty that was established in Damascus. Following the murder of Ali, power passed into the hands of Mu'awiya, the Governor of the province of Syria, a member of the powerful Banu Umayya family of Mecca, and a cousin of the murdered Caliph 'Uthman. He became the first Umayyad Caliph.



674-8 witnessed First Arab siege of Constantinople (former name of Istanbul, port city in northwest Turkey).



**7th-8th centuries:** The style of decoration on early Islamic metalwork is characterized by geometric and arabesque ornament, together with **inscriptions in Kufic**. Typically it is engraved, although some examples of inlaid decoration are also known. This silver ewer features engraved griffins and an eagle within ovoid medallions, niello geometric motifs, and gilding. It was made in Iran or Central Asia during the 7th or early 8th century.

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**691: Dome Rock Masjid** in Jerusalem was built. Standing near the centre of the artificial platform known as the Haram al-Sharif ('the Noble Sanctuary'), the Dome of the Rock is the earliest Islamic monument to have survived in its original form to the present day. The form and decoration of the building are largely derived from Byzantine church architecture, and the ornament contains a number of motifs from Sasanid Iran. However, the inclusion of a Qur'anic inscription clearly identifies the building as Islamic. The earliest occurrence of **Qur'anic calligraphic inscription** can be found in the dome Rock Masjid.



**7th century and early 8th century** manuscripts were found in **Hijazi script**. The style of script used in Western Arabia during the first decades of Islam is known as Hijazi. The example shown here dates from the early 8th century.



**705-14/15 Umayyad Masjid** ('Great Mosque') in **Damascus** built at the order of the Caliph al-Walid I (705-15) at a time of political expansion. The Great Masjid of Damascus is a clear expression of the power and prestige of the Umayyads. The oldest part of the Masjid is the prominent and noteworthy square 45-meter minaret. The earliest restoration of the minarets dates to 1090, during the Seljuk dynasty. The minaret exhibits intricate bands of carved **Kufic inscriptions** along its length, that alternate with bands of stylized ornaments in patterns and muqarnas.



**710** Arrival of Muslim armies in **Spain**. After sweeping across North Africa, Arab forces sieged Spain, led by Tariq ibn Ziyad (after whom Gibraltar-Jabal Tariq, or Mount Tariq - is named). The forces defeated the Visigoths, taking their capital Toledo in 712.



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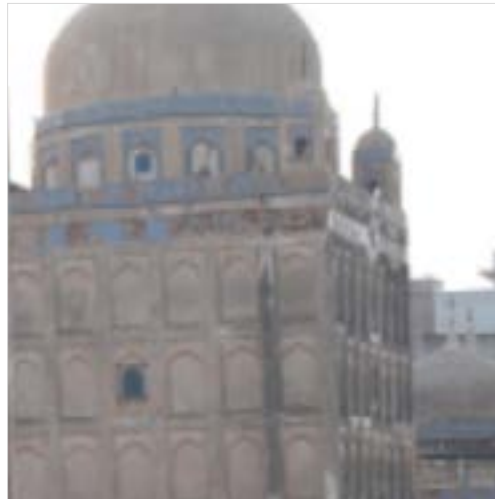
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711 Arabs conquered the Indian province of Sindh by Muhammad bin Qasim and brought their influence and coverage with them. Traces of early Islamic architecture on the subcontinent can be seen from the first half of the 8th century, at Hanbhore, East of Karachi, where foundations indicate a Masjid of Arab plan.



722 Arabic became the official language of the Khorasan and Transoxiana.



727: The art of Islamic calligraphy reached Indian subcontinent. The earliest writing among the fourteen inscriptions discovered from the Muslim city of Banbhore is dated 109 A.H (727 CE) and 294 A.H. (906 CE) The Site of Banbhore (today the port Barbaricon) is located on the Northern Bank of Gharo Creek, 65 Kilometer East of Karachi, Pakistan.



750: Abbasid dynasty (750–969) established. It was the major Muslim dynasty that ruled in Baghdad. Ongoing rebellions in the vast and diverse territories conquered by the Umayyads finally led to the outbreak of a major revolt in Eastern Iran, which spread throughout the Islamic territories. The Umayyad dynasty was overthrown and power passed to Al-Abbas, a member of a rival family from Mecca, who descended from the Prophet's uncle. The Abbasid period saw the emergence of a full fledged Islamic style with its own distinctive repertoire of motifs; while at the same time philosophy, literature and theology thrived, and numerous works of science were translated from Greek into Arabic.

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750 Around; this year the animal fables known as **Kali-la wa- Dimna**, of Sanskrit origin, known as **Panchatantra**, translated into Arabic from a Pahlavi source. During the 13th century, they were translated into Spanish, and a later French version was acknowledged as one of the sources of La Fontaine's fables.



751: Chinese defeated by Arab armies near Talas. Following this victory, the art of paper-making was introduced by Chinese prisoners of war. With learning of paper-making, the book-making and calligraphy were developed. Many of the surviving Arabic documents from the first three centuries of Islamic rule are on papyrus. Most of these are from Fustat, and record various aspects of daily life and administration.



762 was the year of founding of **Baghdad**. In 762 the Caliph al-Mansur found a new capital, officially called **Madinat al-Salam** ('City of Peace'), better known as **Baghdad**. Al-Mansur's city was circular in plan with a diameter of some 2000m, and bisected by four main thoroughfares covered with barrel vaults. It was entered through elaborate two-storeyed gateways. Houses and shops formed an outer ring, while at the centre of the city were the palace and Masjid, and the **Green Dome** - a high dome, surmounted by a statue of a rider with a lance. Baghdad was the centre of **Islamic calligraphy** till late 13th century.



770: The first dated **relief printing** by Chinese.

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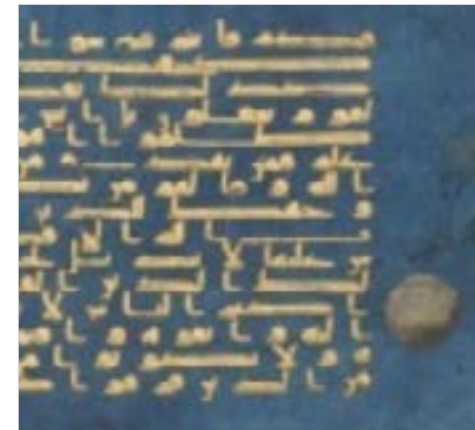
784-5 (168 A.H.): one of the dated known copies of the Qur'an in Kufic. It is perhaps the one earliest and there are several others of the ninth century C.E.



819: Samanid Dynasty (819-1005) founded. The Samanids, a Persian dynasty, are appointed as governors of Transoxania and Khurasan for the Abbasids. Their capital, Bukhara, is a brilliant cultural centre, associated with the flowering of Persian language and literature.



784-6: Great Masjid of Cordoba was built in Spain. A large hypostyle hall with aisles running perpendicular to the qibla wall, the Great Masjid of Cordoba is the most important monument of Umayyad Spain. (Today it houses a Gothic cathedral at its centre.) There are splendour Kufic inscriptions in this Masjid.



9th century: 'Blue Qur'an'. There are very few extant examples of Qur'ans dating before the 9th century. They are typically written on parchment, and the highly evolved Kufic scripts are sometimes accompanied by brilliant illumination in gold. The example shown, with its dyed pages, is from the celebrated 'Blue Qur'an'. It was copied in Tunisia or Spain in the 9th century.

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**861 Saffarid Dynasty** (861-1003) founded. The Saffarids are one of the first Iranian dynasties to challenge the rule of the Abbasids in Eastern Iran. They ruled in Sistan Southeast of Iran.



**909 Fatimid Caliphate** (909-1171, Cairo) founded. The Fatimid rulers in Cairo (founding in 969) proclaim themselves Caliphs in direct challenge to Abbasid power. They are Isma'ilis, an extreme branch of Shi'ism. The Fatimid Caliphate reached its peak during the reign of Al-Mustansir (1036-94), when its prosperity rivaled that of Baghdad.



**940 July 20 Ibn Muqlah** (Abu 'Ali Muhammad Ibn 'Ali Ibn Muqlah Shirazi) was murdered in Baqdad. He was an Islamic calligrapher, one of the foremost of the Abbasid age. Ibn Muqlah was an Iranian Origin vizier in 'Abbasid court. He achieved great honour by completing the development of Kufic from its ancient forms into new forms, and his elegant new style was copied throughout Islamic calligraphy.



**10th century slip-painted bowls from Nishapur and Samarqand;** These slip-painted earthenware bowls from Nishapur typify the ceramic production of Eastern Iran during this period. The former from Nishapur were decorated with a superb band of calligraphy, the ascending strokes pointing inwards; the simple contrast between the white ground and the dark Kufic script which was highly effective. The Samarqand bowls were decorated with a seated figure.



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970: Around this year the **Seljuk Turks** arrived to Islamic lands.



977 **Ghaznavid Dynasty** (977-1186). Power on the Eastern fringes of the Islamic world, in Central Asia and Afghanistan, gradually passes into the hands of local Turkic tribes, newly converted to Islam, who establish their own dynasties. The Ghaznavids are one of the first major Turkic dynasties. Their capitals were Ghazna and Lahore.



973 Birth of **Abu Rayhan Biruni** often known as Al-Biruni (d. 1048), perhaps the greatest intellectual figure of medieval Islam, in a village in southern Khwarazm. Alongside being a celebrated historian and geographer, Al-Biruni was also a highly accomplished physician, chemist, mathematician and astronomer. Following the Ghaznavid conquest of Khwarazm in 1007, Al-Biruni was taken to Ghazna, where he continued to write. Al-Biruni earned the “founder of Indology” and “first anthropologist” titles for his remarkable description of early 11th century India.



991 (381 AH.) **Mahmud of Ghazni** (r. 997-1030 C.E./387-421 A.H.) invaded Northern India. He vowed to raid India every year. Sultan Mahmud since 1001 C.E./392 A.H. till 1025 C.E./416 A.H., during 24 years, several times invaded different locations of India. He did that apparently for the intentions of Jihad with Indian infidels but he struggled to plunder their assets.

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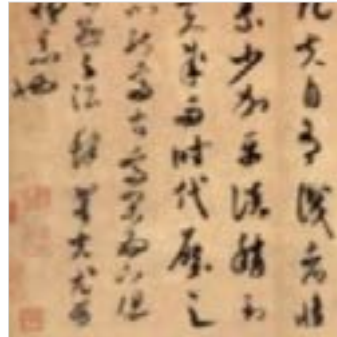
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**1000: Chinese Calligraphy printed perfection.** In the East calligraphy has been consistently practiced as a major aesthetic expression. In China, from the 5th century B.C., when it was first used, calligraphy has always been considered equal, or even superior, to painting. Chinese calligraphy began with a simplified seal script, known as “chancery script,” in which the width of the strokes varies and the edges and ends are sharp. The perfection of the brush in the 1st century made possible the stylization of chancery script into “regular script,” distinguished by its straight strokes of varying width, and clear, sharp corners, and a cursive “running hand.”



**1000 Ghurid Dynasty (c. 1000 - 1215).** The Ghurids, from the mountainous area of Afghanistan, southeast of Herat, extend their rule to include much of Khurasan, and raid deep into the Indian subcontinent, conquering Delhi in 1192.



**1000: The early knitting** from Egypt has Islamic calligraphy knit into it (mostly ‘Allah’, occasionally blessings).

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## 11th Century AD



**1006** A Kufic inscription at the bottom of the **tower of Gonbad-i Qabus** in North of Iran. This spectacular tomb tower is located near Gorgan, southeast of the Caspian Sea. The exterior takes the form of a tapering ten-pointed star; the interior is smooth and circular. In contrast to the Samanid mausoleum in Bukhara, decoration is very restrained, and the fine brickwork is broken only by two inscription bands. It was built for a local Ziyarid prince, Qabus ibn Vashmgir, whose coffin may originally have been suspended inside.



**1010** Ferdowsi, Iran's national poet and possibly its greatest hero completed the national Iranian epic, **Shahnameh**, The Book of Kings.



**1022** Ibn al-Bawwab (Ali ibn Hilal) died in Baghdad. He perfected the rules of penmanship and conceived a number of variations of Thuluth style.



**1022 (413 AH):** A **Thuluth** inscription alongside decorative Kufic at the top of Mihrab of **Qerve Jami Masjid** in Zanzibar province, Iran.

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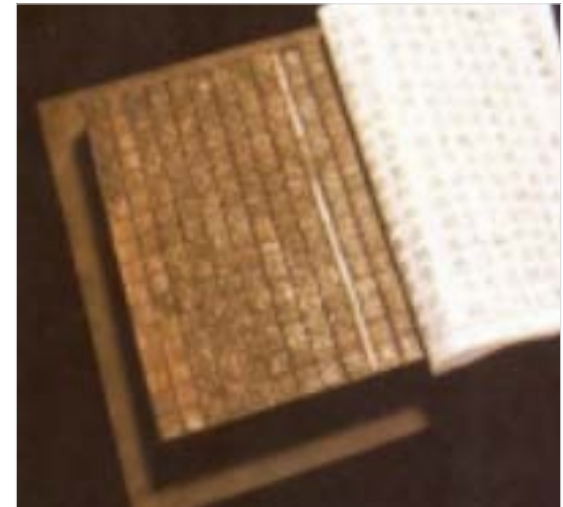
1024 The temple of **Somnath** was destroyed by Mahmud Ghazni who raided the temple from across the Thar Desert. Mahmud's armies stripped the temples of their wealth and then destroyed them. During the period of Mahmud's invasion, the Sindhi Swarankar Community and other Hindus who escaped conversion fled from Sindh to escape sectarian violence.



1031: Fall of Umayyad dynasty in Spain.



1035: A specimen of the **early Kufic stone inscription** is in the collection of the Indian Museum, Calcutta. It is dated 437 A.H (1035 C.E.) and comes from the African coast of the Red Sea.



1040: Bi Sheng invites **movable type printing** in China.



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**1040 Seuuk Dynasty (1040-1194).** The Seljuks are a Turkish tribe from Central Asia, members of the Oghuz and originally from the area East of the Aral Sea. They served the Qrakhnids during the 10th century, when the latter were fighting the Samanids. In the 11th century they swept into Khurasan, took Nishapur in 1018, and in 1055 defeated the Buyids and took Baghdad.



**1056 (448 AH),** A Kufic inscription on **Gonbad-e Ali** a Buyid monument in Abarkooh, Yazd province, Iran.



**1056 (448 AH),** A Kufic inscription on the minaret the **Jami Masjid** of Saveh, Seljuk-era Masjid, Markazi province, Iran.



**1059** the Ghaznavid ruler **Sultan Ibrahim**, (r. 1059–1099 C.E./451-492 A.H.) titled **Zahir ud-Dalah** the grandson of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni came to power. He was himself a skilful calligrapher in Naskh style. He used to write and send a Qur'anic manuscript every year to Mecca.

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Half of 11th C C.E.(5th C AH.), Sayyid-ul-Kuttab Jamal-uddin Lahorei a renowned calligrapher of the latter at the time of Ghaznavid ruler Sultan Ibrahim, (r. 1059–1099 C.E./451-492 A.H.) introduced a good tradition of Islamic calligraphy to India. According to some authorities, he equalled in skill to that of distinguished master calligrapher, Ibn Muqlah (886-940 C.E./272-328 A.H.).



1074 (466 AH) An inscription on the minaret of the **Jami Masjid of Kashan**, Seljuk-era Masjid, Isfahan province, Iran.



Late 11th C: **Friday Masjid, Isfahan**. The Friday Mosque (Masjid-i Jami') at Isfahan was probably built during the 9th - 10th century. During the late 11th-early 12th century, however, it was substantially transformed by the Seljuks, who gave the Masjid its distinctive court facade with four iwans, and a large dome over the mihrab. This was to become the standard form of the Masjid, madrasa and caravanserai in Iran. There are several gracefulness **Thulth**, **Nasta'liq** and **Bann'ae inscriptions** from different eras in this great Masjid.



1092 Nizam al-Mulk was the renowned prime minister of Malik Shah of the Seljuq dynasty. Under his guidance, Malik Shah controlled virtually the entire Eastern segment of the Islamic world, from Syria to Afghanistan. He is also well-known for systematically founding a number of schools of higher education in several cities, the famous Nizamiyyah schools, which were named after him. In many aspects, these schools turned out to be the predecessors and models of universities that were established in Europe.

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1095, Beginning of the Crusades. It was Military expeditions, during the late 11th-14th C, that were organized by Western Christians in response to centuries of Muslim wars of expansion.

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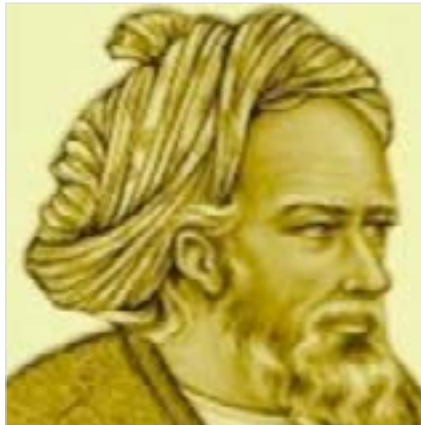
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## 12th Century AD



1108 (501 AH), A Thuluth inscription on Chehel Dokhtaran (forty girls) minaret in Isfahan. It is one of the first Thuluth inscriptions on minarets.



1122 Omar Khayyam (1048-1122) was dead in Neyshabur. He was a great mathematician, poet and astronomer, who performed the mathematical calculations to reform the Persian calendar, one of the most accurate calendars in the world and still in use to this day.



1114: The Ribat-i Sharaf (or Robat-e Sharaf) was built around this year. This huge monument is a caravanserai, or rest place for travellers in northeast Iran between Merv and Nishapur. The building looks like a fortified rectangle from the exterior. The courtyard and four Iwan floor plans are that of the traditional Standard Iranian Masjid. The walls and the pishtaq, the entranceway inside an iwan, are decorated with various elegance Kufic and Thuluth inscriptions in different styles as well as vegetal and geometric patterning that function to provide a good example of the "Textile Metaphor" seen in Middle Eastern architecture of this era. The caravanserai consisted of two inter-related four Iwan planned courtyards, famous for owning some of the most diverse and beautiful brick decorations in Iranian architecture.



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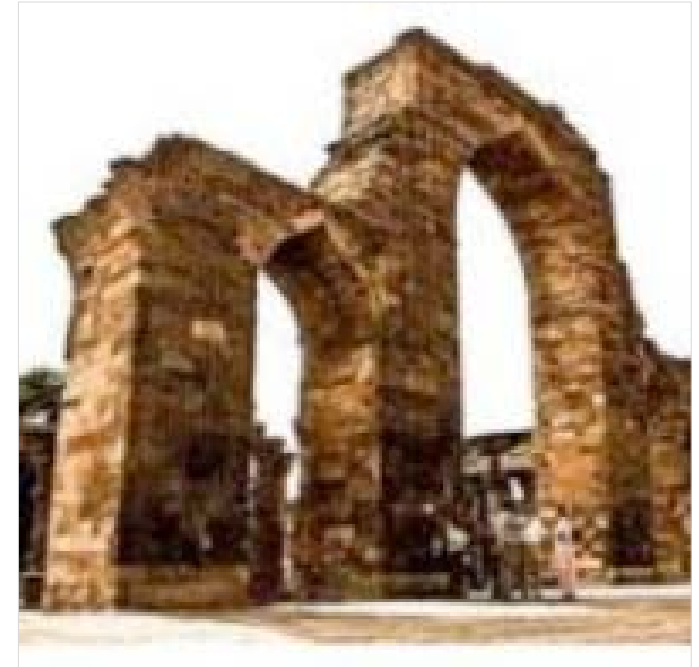
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1127 Kalan Minaret in Bukhara built. It is a tapering cylinder more than 51m high. The entire surface of the shaft is covered with broad bands of decorative brickwork, interspaced with bands of inscription by two lines of Kufic and Thuluth; the geometric designs within each band are different from those of the next.



1152 Mausoleum of Sanjar in Merv completed. The mausoleum is the largest and most spectacular Seljuk mausoleum to have survived to the present day. Built entirely of brick, it consists of a soaring dome some 14m in height, which rests upon an octagonal drum; this in turn sits upon a square chamber, the walls of which are particularly thick and unbroken by any major decorative scheme. There is an elegant Naskh inscription on the tombstone in the Mausoleum of Sultan Sanjar.



1191 (587 A.H.) the inscription of the inner Eastern gateway of the Quwwat ul Islam Mosque (meaning 'Might of Islam') in Delhi was written by pure Naskh. The language of this inscription is Persian and it is interesting to know that Persian appears to be used for epigraphic purposes in India much earlier than Iran. The Masjid was built immediately after the Ghurid conquest and is the earliest significant Islamic monument to have survived on the subcontinent. Columns reused from Hindu and Jain temples surround the courtyard, with most of the figural sculpture removed, and low Hindu domes stand over the qibla aisle. In 1198 a richly decorated screen wall of pointed arches was added on the courtyard side of the prayer hall.

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**1192:** Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad of Ghur defeats the Rajput Prithvi Raj and conquers Delhi. What come him to power the **Delhi Sultanate period** (1192 - 1526 C.E./588 to 932 A.H.) started. It was shared by several dynasties. Five dynasties, one after another, occupied the throne of Delhi. There is a rare specimen of calligraphy during **Bahri Mamluks** or Slave Kings (1206-1288 C.E.) The styles of calligraphy as seen in the inscriptions of the above Sultans reached their culmination in the **Khalji** period (1288-1321 C.E.). Then the latter half of the **Tughlaq** period (1321-1414 C.E.) saw the appearance of some new styles. The reign of the **Sayyid** dynasty (1414-1450 C.E.) was very brief and there seems to have been no new development in the field of calligraphy during that period. But the calligraphers of the Lodi period (1451-1526 C.E.) appear to have shown some new styles of calligraphy. Regional dynasties, which at time accepted the power of Delhi, held sway in Sindh, Gujarat, Malwa, Gulbarga, Bidar, Jaunpur, Bengal, Bijapur, Golkonda and other provinces.



**1193:** The **Qutb Minar** construction commenced under the orders of India's first Muslim ruler Qutb-ud-din Aibak, and the topmost storey of the minaret was completed in 1386 by Firuz Shah Tughluq. This huge minaret was built soon after the Ghurid conquest of Delhi. It is ribbed and surrounded by decorative bands and splendour **calligraphic inscriptions** in carved stone. This building is notable for being one of the earliest and most prominent examples of Indo-Islamic architecture and masterpieces of its inscriptions.



**1199:** The **Arhai Din Ka Jhonpra, Masjid in Ajmer, Rajasthan** is a masterpiece of Indo-Islamic architecture a Masjid which stands in ruins today, was built by Mohammed Ghori in two-and-a-half days on the outskirts of Ajmer. A Sanskrit college, motifs and Islamic calligraphy adorn its facade. There is a masterpiece of calligraphic inscription on the central Mihrab of this Masjid by elegance Naskh. This inscription is pure elegant Naskh and done here on a carefully prepared floriated background. The Kufic and Jalil style inscription of historical interest was carved on the West wall of Arha'i-Din-ka-Jhonpra at Ajmer same as Quwwat ul-Islam Masjid's inscriptions in 1199.

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## 13th Century AD



**1206:** The Delhi Sultans (1206-1555) established. **Mamluk dynasty** (1206 – 90) founded. It was the first of the five dynasties known as the sultanates ruler from Delhi (1206 - 1526). Following the loss of the Ghurids' Western dominions to the Khwarazm Shahs, the Mu'izzi Sultans or Slave Kings ruled independently from Lahore. The successors of a Ghurid commander in India, the Mu'izzi Sultans are the first of a series of dynasties - known collectively as the Delhi Sultans - to rule independently in northern India.



**1204 (600 AH) Nizami Ganjavi** (1141 - 1209) who is considered as the greatest romantic epic poet in Persian literature completed the fifth part of his famous book Quinary ("Panj Ganj" or "Khamsa") after more than 30 years. The **Khamsa** was a popular subject for lavish manuscripts illustrated with painted miniatures at the Persian and Mughal courts in later centuries.



**1233 (676 A.H)** The earliest specimen of Bahari or **Bihari style** calligraphed by Ilyas bin Qazi Abu Bakar bin Nasrullah of Lehri, in Pakistan, was preserved in Afghanistan Museum.

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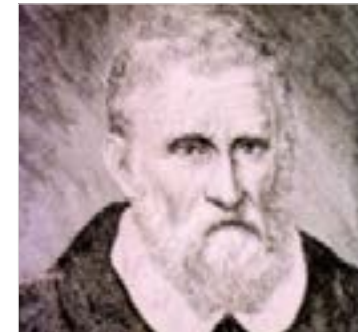
**1235** (633A.H.): A calligraphic inscription is in the celebrated emperor **Ilutmish Alud'Din Khalji** (1295-1315 C.E./694-715 A.H.) at Delhi. These inscriptions record a Quotation from the Holy text and give only a very highly ornamental variety of the Kufic executed on stone.



**1246:** The Slave king, **Sultan Nasirud'Din Mahmud Shah** (r. 1246-1265 C.E./644-664 A.H.) become to power in Gujarat. He was a good calligrapher himself and used to copy the Qur'an. Ibn Battuta (1304-1368 or 1377 C.E./703-768 or 779 A.H.) mentions having seen a calligraphy of Qur'anic manuscript written by the Sultan Nasirud'Din. He was a great patron of calligraphy too.



**1256:** Establish of **Ilkhanid Dynasty** (1256-1353) by Genghis Khan's descendant, **Hulagu Khan**. He destroyed much of Iran's northern part in 1258 (656 A.H). The invasions of Baghdad and Samarkand caused mass murders, such as when portions of southern Khuzestan were completely destroyed. Following the death of Genghis Khan in 1227, the vast Mongol empire was divided between his male relatives. Hulagu establishes the Ilkhanid dynasty (from the word *ilkhān*, meaning 'subject ruler') in northwestern Iran, with its capital at Maragha.



**1271:** The Venetian traveller **Marco Polo** journeyed through Persia on his way to China. In his *Book of Travels*, he wrote about the Mongols' savagery: How sad it is, the destruction, waste and death inflicted upon this once mighty, prosperous and beautiful Persia. He arrived at the court of Kublai Khan in 1275.



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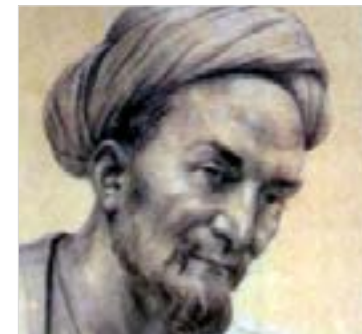
**1273:** Rumi (1207-1273) died. He was the greatest mystical poet of the Persian language and the author of Mathnawi, which elevated Sufism to unprecedented heights. Although a Persian, he lived in Anatolia (his parents had migrated in fear of the Mongols' brutality).



**1295:** Islam became the religion of Ilkhanids and Ghazan Khan (1271 – 1304) became the first Mongol Il-Khanid leader to convert to Islam. The early Mongol rulers adopted various religious faiths - Chinghis Khan himself followed Shamanism, and Hulegu favoured Buddhism. Ghazan Khan was the first to declare Islam the official religion of the state, in 1295; and his successor Oljeitu though baptized a Christian, later converted to Islam.



**1290:** Khilji dynasty (1290–1320) founded. They ruled large parts of South Asia and were the second Muslim dynasty to rule the Delhi Sultanate of India.



**1292:** Sa'di (1213 - 1292) died. His poems exercised wide influence in India, Central Asia and as far as the Muslims in China. His poems emphasized the interdependence of all mankind regardless of nationality, race or religion. He wrote two of the most significant Persian works, The Bustan and The Gulistan.

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1297: Sultan Ala ud din Khilji (1296–1316) conquered Gujarat.



1298: Jamal al-Din Yaqut al-Musta'simi (1242-1298) died in Baghdad. He is a famous master of calligraphy throughout Islamic calligraphy history. He developed sextet classical styles and created the Yaqut style, a variant of Thuluth. After his revision, Thuluth became an important style and was proper for Inscriptions.



1299: The Ottoman Empire was founded in Anatolia.

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## 14th Century AD



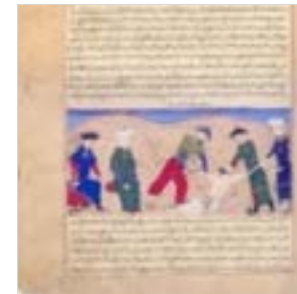
**1301:** Around this year or a few decades after that completed the **Demotte Shahnameh**. Among the greatest illustrated copies of the Shahnameh to be commissioned by the Ilkhanid rulers is the Demotte Shahnameh, named after the dealer who originally divided it. The page illustrated here shows Bahram Gur sending Narsi as viceroy to Khurasan; it was painted at Tabriz during the 1330s, or slightly later. This illustrated book was written by **Naskh**.



**1310:** The inscription of Ala'i **Darwaza** was written in an extension of the Quwwat ul Islam Masjid in Delhi. The Delhi Imperial style of the Naskh which is characterised by boldness, vigour and elegance reached its climax in the calligraphy of the Al'i Darwaza inscriptions.



**1313:** The first series of inscriptions on the dome of **Mausoleum of Oljeitu** in Sultaniyeh Northwest of Iran were written. There are a number of **Kufic, Thuluth and Naskh inscriptions** in different styles. This vast mausoleum, the only significant part of the Ilkhanid capital at Sultaniyeh to have survived, was built for Oljeitu. The blue-tiled dome, more than 50m high, sits on an octagonal chamber with eight huge vaulted niches on the interior, and can be seen from a great distance across the surrounding plains.



**1314:** The historical book of Jami' al-Tawarikh was written by the great Persian vizier of Ilkhanid Rashid al-Din Fadl Allah Hamadani. Anxious to legitimize their rule in Western Iran, the Ilkhanids were responsible for the patronage of a large body of historical writing, including the Rashid al-Din's Jami' al-Tawarikh ('Compendium of Chronicles'). The illustration shown here depicts Shakyamuni offering fruit to the Devil.



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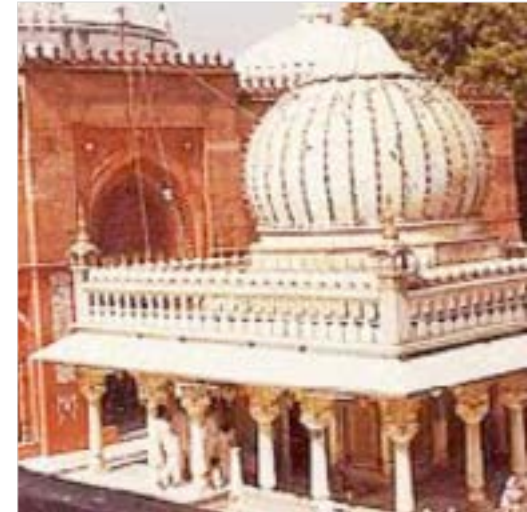
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1321: The Tughlaq Dynasty (1321-1414) was started in Delhi by Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq (r. 1321-1325).



1325: Muhammad bin Tughluq (born c.1300, d. 1351) also known as, Jauna Khan (r. 1325-1351 C.E./725-752 A.H.) second sultan of the Tughluq dynasty came to power. He briefly extended the rule of the Delhi Sultanate of Northern India over most of the subcontinent. He was personally an expert in calligraphy.



1325: Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya (1238 -1325) the famous Sufi saint of the Chishti Order died in the Indian Subcontinent.



1336: Vijayanagar dynasty (1336–1565) was founded as the Kingdom of Bisnaga by the Portuguese in the Deccan Plateau.



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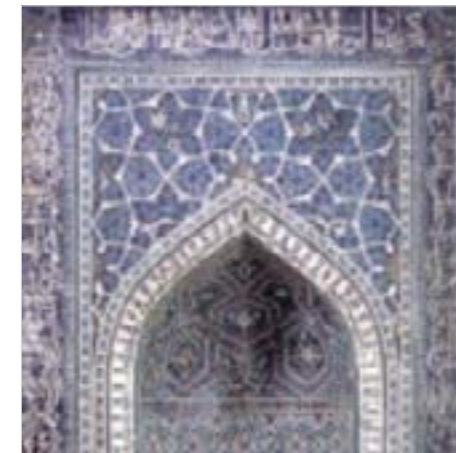
1340: Muzaffarid dynasty (ca. 1340–1393) came to power in Southwest of Iran following the breakup of the Ilkhanate in the 14th century.



Early-mid 14th century: Some superb Qur'ans were produced under the Ilkhanids, in particular Oljeitu, and also for the great vizier Rashid al-Din. These have brilliantly illuminated frontispieces and art typically written in either the **Muhaqqaq** or **Rayhan** script. One Ilkhanid Qur'an found its way to Mamiuk Cairo when it was to influence Qur'an production there.



1347: Bahmanid sultanate (1347–1528) the first independent Islamic Kingdom in South India northern Deccan started.



1354: The Mihrab of Madrasa Imami, a religious school founded in Isfahan in Iran. It is made of glazed earthenware cut into small pieces and embedded in plaster with masterpieces of calligraphic inscription.

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1360: Jalayirid rule (ca. 1360–1406) came to power in northwest of Iran.



1375: A Kufic inscription forming the upper panel of a piece of Tughra writing cut in the stone over the prayer niche in the transept of the Adinah Masjid at Panduah, Bengal.



1370 April (771 AH), The Timurids, was founded by the legendary conqueror Timur (Tamerlane). The campaigns of Timur were devastating and far-reaching: Baghdad was taken in 1393, Delhi in 1398, and the Ottoman Sultan Bayazid I was defeated near Ankara in 1402. Artists and craftsmen were taken from the cities Timur conquered to embellish his capital, Samarqand. His vast empire collapsed after his death, but Herat emerged as a brilliant cultural centre during the 15th century under his son Shah Rukh. Timurids were great patrons of art and calligraphy.



1390: Hafez died when he was 70 years old. He is the greatest lyric poet of the Persian language and wrote his most famous work, The Divan. Hafez was a Sufi and his poetry is characterized by the sense of beauty, love of humanity and devotion to God.

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1395: Mir Ali Tabrizi wrote Divan Of khajo-e kermani in Nasta'liq for Sultan Ahmad Jalayer (1381-1400) in Baghdad. The invention of Nasta'liq calligraphy style is attributed to him.



1398: Timur's forces crossed the Hindu Kush and descended upon northern India, sacking Delhi. Timur began a trek starting to invade the reigning Sultan Nasir-u Din Mehmud of the Tughlaq Dynasty in the North Indian city of Delhi.

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## 15th Century AD



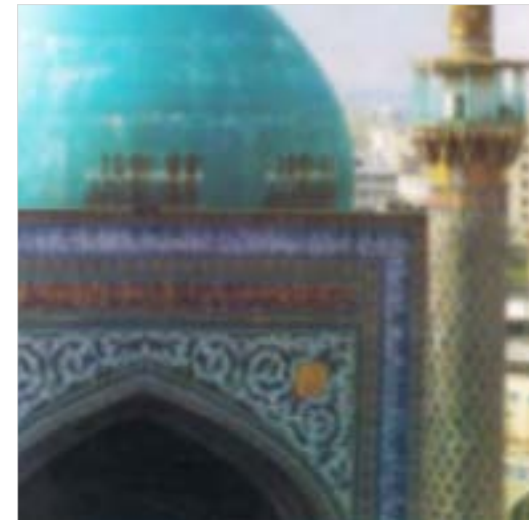
1402 Aq Qoyunlu Turkomans (1378–1508) first acquired land, when Tamerlane granted them all of Diyarbakir, in present-day Turkey. For a long time, the Aq Qoyunlu (meaning 'people of the White Sheep') were unable to expand their territory, as the rival Qara Quyunlu (meaning 'Black Sheep') kept them at bay. However, this changed with the rule of Uzun Hassan who defeated the Qara Quyunlu Turkoman leader, Sultan Jahanshah, in 1467. Following the defeat of the (Qara Quyunlu in 1467 and of the Timurid ruler Abu Sa'id in 1468, they became masters of Iraq, Azerbaijan and most of Iran, ruling from the old Jalayirid and Qara Quyunlus capital, Tabriz.



1406: Qara Quyunlu dynasty (1406–1469) conquered Tabriz. They ruled over the territory comprising the present-day Armenia, Azerbaijan, north-western Iran, Eastern Turkey and Iraq.



1414 Sayyid dynasty (1414–1451) the fourth dynasty of the Delhi Sultanate succeeded the Tughlaq dynasty.



1418 (821 AH) Prince **Baisoḡor Mirza** Gourkani (1399-1433/802-837 AH) wrote inscription of Guharshad Masque in Thulth when he was 20 years old.



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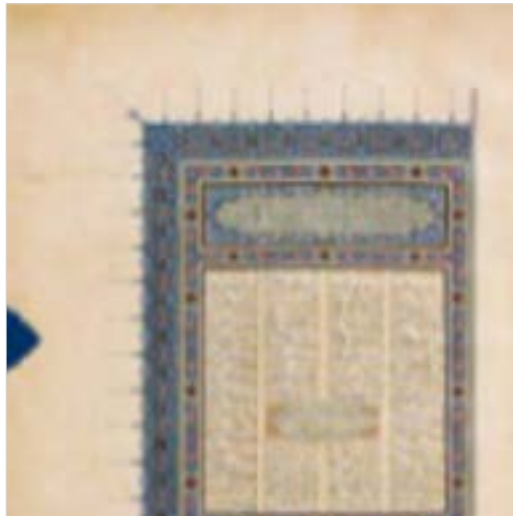
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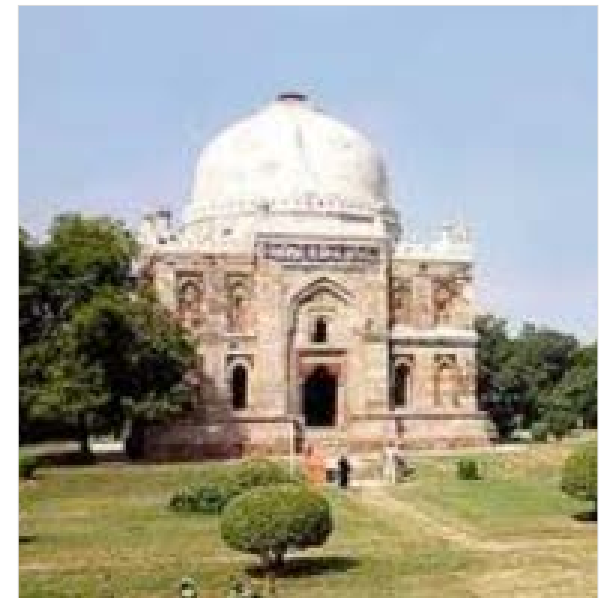
1420 (823 AH) Mir Ali Tabrizi died. Some critics believe he died in 850th of Hijra (1446-7).



1445: The oldest known Nasta'liq inscriptions are on the gravestones of Timurid princes in Herat. The headstone dates 849, 850 and 853 AH, which coincides with the 1445, 1446 and 1449.



1430 January 30 (5 Jomādā 833 AH) Baisongqori Shahnama written in Nasta'liq style by Jafar Tabrizi known as Jafar Baisongqori. This masterpiece started in 1426 (829 AH) and was completed after 4 years. It had 22 delicate miniatures. The patron of this manuscript was Prince Baisongqor Mirza Gourkani (Bayasanghor or Baysonqor) (1399-1433/802-837 AH), grandson of Timur (1336-1405).



1451: Lodi dynasty (1451–1526) the least significant of all dynasties of Delhi Sultanate founded.

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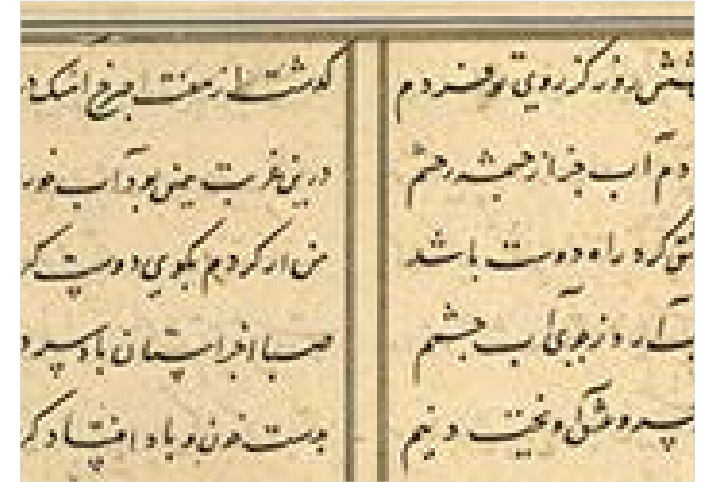
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1453: The Ottoman conquest of Constantinople cemented the status of the Empire as the pre-eminent power in southeastern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean.



1454: Johannes Gutenberg developed the first printing press in Mainz, Germany, he adopted the Gothic style, making it the first typeface. The Gothic script evolved from the Caroline in the eleventh century. It was more compact and made it possible to fit more text on a page. The Gothic calligraphy styles became dominant in northern Europe.



1455 (859 AH) Jafar Tabrizi (859-785 AH) known as Baisonghori, who worked under the patronage of Baisonghor Mirza (1399-1433/802-837 AH) in his library died.



1469: Husayn Bayqarah (1438 – May 4, 1506) the last great Timurid ruler came to power in Herat. His father was Mansur, a great-grandson of Timur.

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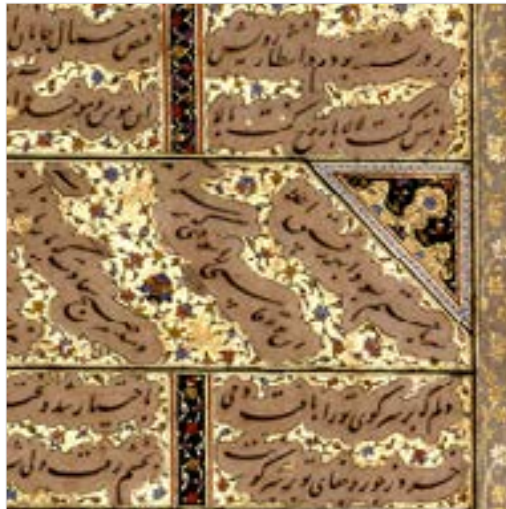
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1475 (880 A.H.) Abdullah Ashpaz al-Hervi died. He was a well-known calligrapher in Arabic style. He came from Baghdad after the fall of Caliphate (1258 C.E./656 A.H.) to some part of Indian subcontinent. He adopted excellently the traditional style of Yaqut al-Musta'simi (1242-1298 C.E.), acknowledged as one of the most accomplished and influential masters in the entire history of Islamic calligraphy.



1475 (880 A.H.), Azhar Tabrizi who was pupil of Jafar Tabrizi (Baisanqori) died.



1490 Deccani sultanates, (ca. 1490–late 17th C) including the five Muslim-ruled late medieval kingdoms - Bijapur, Golkonda, Ahmadnagar, Bidar, and Berar of south-central India.



1492: The master navigator and explorer Christopher Columbus (1451 – 1506) discovers the Americas.



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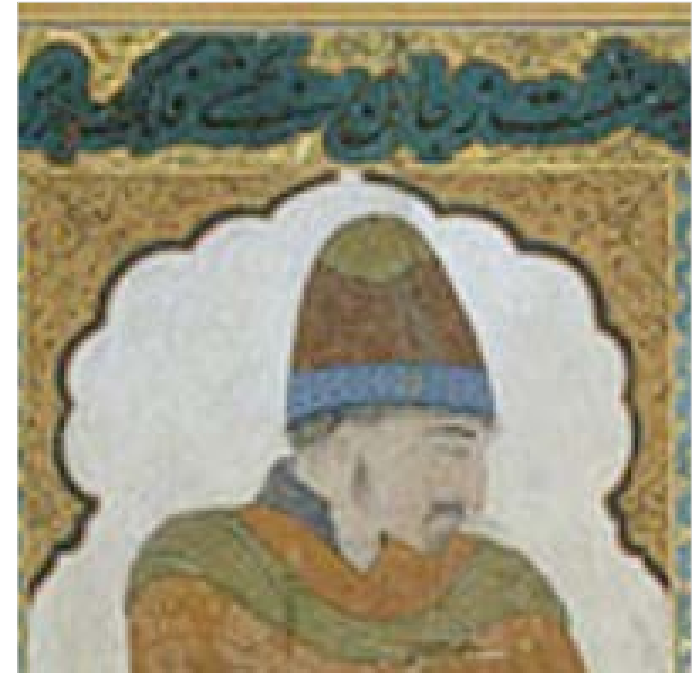
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1498: The Portuguese explorer **Vasco de Gama** (1469 –1524) discovers a feasible sea route to **India** thus initiating Portuguese commercial dominance over the Indian Ocean for the next century.



1500 **Shaibanid dynasty** (1500–1599) was founded in Central Asia.



1499 **Nayaka dynasties** (1499 – 1763) one of the royal dynasties of Karnataka founded.

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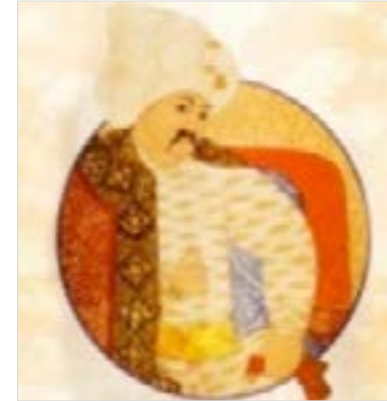
## 16th Century AD



**1501 Safavid dynasty** (1501 – 1722) was founded by **Shah Isma'il I** (r. 1502–1524). He defeats the Aq Qoyunlu Turkman dynasty and establishes the capital city at Tabriz. Safavid dynasty was set up the Shi'a sect of Islam as the state religion. Following repeated Ottoman attacks on Tabriz, his son Tahmasp moves the capital to Qazvin; later, Shah Abbas moves it again, to Isfahan. As well as being responsible for the patronage of some magnificent art and architecture, the Safavids are of great significance in the history of Iran since they imposed Shi'ism as its official religion. The period of Safavid Rule was a golden age of art and calligraphy in Iran.



**1510** About this year, hand-written and hand-decorated books largely stopped being produced, after **printing** became ubiquitous. However, at the end of the 19th century, William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement redefined, revived and popularised English broad-pen calligraphy.



**1512:** Accession of **Ottoman Sultan Selim 'The Grim'** (r.1512-20). The victory against the Safavids and the addition of Mamluk Syria, Egypt, and the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina to the Ottoman realm leads to the increased presence of Iranian and Arab artists and intellectuals at the Ottoman court.



**1514:** Shah Isma'il's army is defeated at the **Battle of Chaldiran** by the Ottomans who gain control over the north-western part of Iran.

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1514: The Portuguese capture the island of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf. It remained under their control for over a century until the reign of Shah 'Abbas I (1587–1629).



1520 Sultan Ali Mashhadi (1453-1520) died in Mashhad. From 1470 to 1506 Sultan 'Ali worked at the Timurid court in Herat for the royal author Sultan Husayn Bayqarah (1438–1506), the last great Timurid ruler, a notable poet, statesman, and patron of the arts and literature. He wrote a treatise on calligraphy, which is known as Sratalstur.



1520 (926 AH) Shaykh Hamdullah Amasi (1429-1520) one of the greatest and most esteemed calligraphers of the Ottoman period died. He is credited with having instructed Sultan Bayazid II. Shown above is a leaf from a calligraphic album by Shaykh Hamdullah, which dates from the early 16th century. He trained a lot of pupils and through them, calligraphy encouraged to Ottoman Empire.



1520: Accession of Ottoman Sultan Suleyman 'The Magnificent' (r.1520-66). His reign is characterized as a 'golden age' in Ottoman history with geographic expansion, trade, economic growth, and tremendous cultural and artistic activity. Developments in calligraphy, manuscript painting, textiles and ceramics are particularly significant.

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1521 (928 A.H), The earliest inscription in pure Nas-ta'liq discovered in India.



1524 (930 AH) began the production of **Tahmasbi Shahnameh**, mistakenly known as Houghton's one of the biggest Iranian works of art, by order of Shah Isma'il I (r. 1502–1524). This book which was compiled upon the instruction of Shah Tahmasb I (1524-1576) originally 700 pages contained 258 miniatures. Tahmasbi Shahnameh is an exceptional work of art in which several great Safavid master painters and their students were engaged. This is a treasure house of the best paintings in Iran. Tahmasbi Shahnameh was completed and perfected within a period of 20 years by masters such as Mir Mosavar, Sultan Mohammad, Aqa Mirak, Doost Mohammad, Mirza Ali, Mir Seyed Ali, Mozafar Ali, Abdolsamad, and tens of other artists.



1524: Accession of the second Safavid ruler **Shah Tahmasp I** (r. 1524-76). He was a young governor of Herat who succeeded his father Shah Isma'il I. He had longest rule in Safavid dynasty and he personally has been famous in calligraphy.



1526 Timurid prince Zahir ud-Din Mohammad, commonly known as Babur (r.1526-1530 C.E./932-937A.H.) the ruler of Ferghana in Central Asia invaded India. He defeated Ibrahim, the sultan of Delhi at Panipat and captured Delhi marking the beginning of the **Mughal Empire** (1526-1858). His descendants enlarged their territory to include Rajasthan, Gujarat and the Deccan. The period of Mughal Rule was a golden age of art and calligraphy in India. The reign of Mughals constituted the most glorious period in the development of the art and architecture, literature and translation of various books into various languages in India as well as calligraphy as the most respected of Islamic art.



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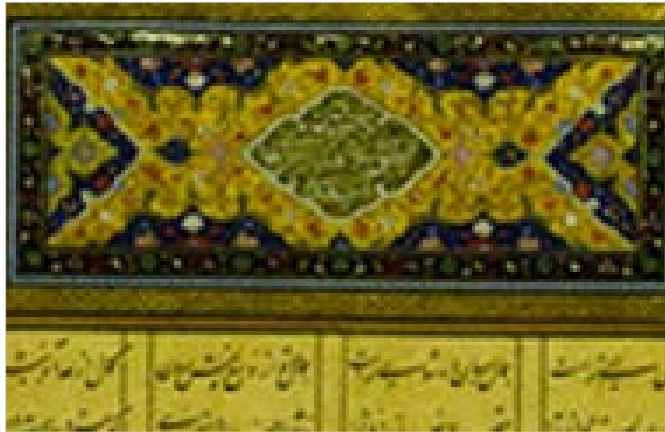
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1528 (935 AH.) **Obaid Khan** nephew of Muhammad Shaybani (r. 1500-10) founder of Shaybanids, took Herat for a short time and carried **Mir Ali Heravi** (d. 1544) into captivity to Bukhara.



1534: The Ottomans temporarily occupy the Safavid capital of Tabriz.



1530: Babur died and his son **Humayun** assumed power.



1539: **Shah Muhammad Neishaburi** wrote the Holy Qur'an in Nasta'liq. There is only one copy of the Qur'an written in this style.

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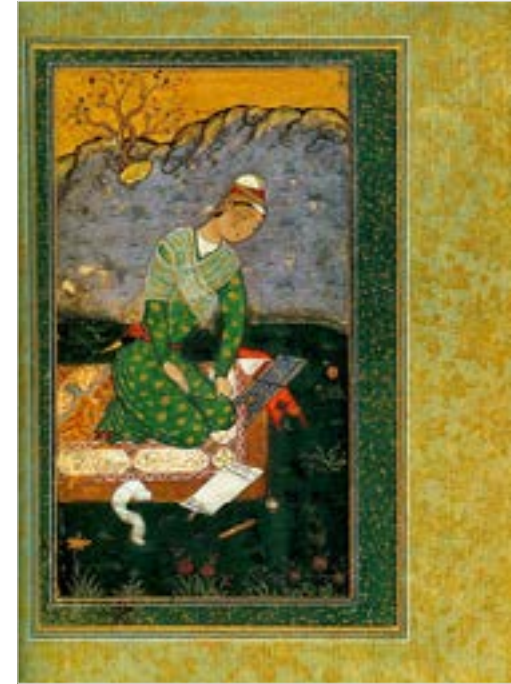
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1540: Afghan Leader Sher Shah defeats Humayun and seizes the empire. Humayun fled to the refuge of the Safavid Empire in Iran.



1555 (936 A.H), Mir Sayyed Ali Tbrizi and Khwajah Abdul Samad were two well-known painters who were brought to India by Humayun when he recovered his crown and throne. Abdul Samad was honoured with the title of Shirin Raqam (Sweet pen) not only was he a promising painter and had more influence in funding Mughal painting school but he was also a skilful calligrapher. He was expert in both Jali and Khafi writing. He wrote Surah Ikhlas on a single poppy seed to prove his skill. The credit of calligraphy of the Hamzanama most probably goes to him. This book is one of the most important works of bookmaking during Mughal period. The illustrated manuscript created during the Akbar's reign originally comprised 1,400 canvas folios. According to Badayuni and Shahnawaz Khan the work of preparing the illustrations was supervised initially by Mir Sayyid Ali and subsequently by Abdus Samad. It took fifteen years to complete the work.



1555 (936 A.H) Humayun with Persian aid re-conquered Delhi and recovered his crown and throne.

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1555: Shah Tahmasp I transfers the Safavid capital from Tabriz to Qazvin.



1556: Accession of King Philip II of Spain (r.1556-98) and later of Portugal (as Philip I, r.1580-98).



1555: Suleyman the Magnificent establishes the Treaty of Amasya with Shah Tahmasp I.



1556 March 4 Humayun dies, young Akbar (r.1556-1605) is enthroned. The Mughal During period of Emperor Akbar there is a flowering of a syncretistic Mughal style in architecture and the arts, as also reflected in Akbar's new religious doctrine.

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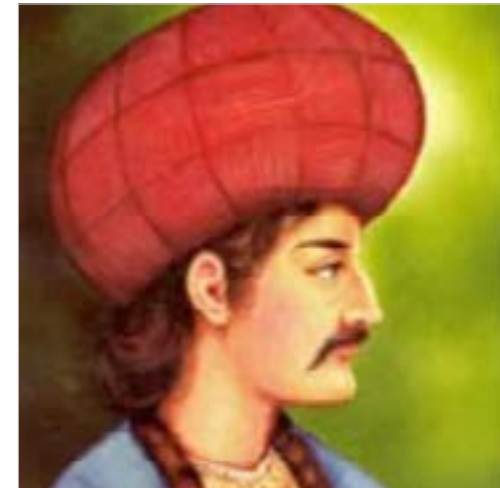
1567 Accession of King James VI of Scotland (r.1567-1625) and later as first Stuart King of England (r.1603-25) Literature and drama flourish at his court, as the king lends his patronage to such luminaries as playwrights Ben Jonson (1572-1637) and William Shakespeare (1564-1616).



1571: Built of the Jama Masjid complex in Fatehpur Sikri was completed. There are some elegant inscriptions by Thuluth as well as Nasta'liq in different parts of this complex. The grand Jami' Masjid at Fatehpur Sikri is one of the largest Masjids in India.



1572 Accession of the Ming Emperor Wanli, whose long rule (r.1572-1620) witnesses the decline of the empire. China is one of the wealthier and more populous nations in the world during this period, largely due to efficient production and trade in tea and luxury goods such as silk and porcelain. His reign witnessed some of the earliest Western inroads into China.



1576 August 22 Shah Isma'il II (r.1576-7) was crowned in Iran as the third Safavid ruler..

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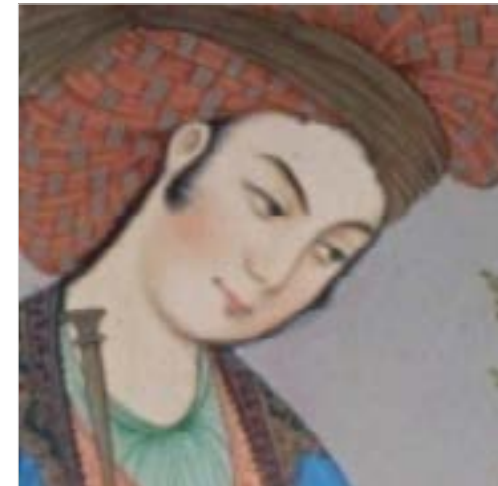
1576: Accession of Rudolph II as Holy Roman Emperor (Habsburg King of Hungary, Austria, Moravia and Bohemia [r.1552-1612] and Emperor [r.1576-1612]). He raises court patronage in post-Renaissance Europe to a new level of breadth and extravagance.



1577: Accession of the fourth Safavid ruler Shah Muhammad Khudabandeh (r.1577-87).



1576: Shown here is the Tughra of Murad III, dated 1576. During 16th century Ottoman, Tughra became a particular characteristic of Ottoman calligraphy. This consisted of the name of the sultan together with that of his father, followed by the traditional Turkish title Khan and the words 'ever victorious'. The earliest surviving Tughra dates from the first half of the 14th century, and is relatively simple; by the 16th century, the design had become considerably more elaborate.



1577: Prince Abbas was made governor of Khurasan province at the age of seven.

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1577 (984 AH) Safavid Prince **Sultan Ibrahim Mirza Abolfath** (946-984 AH/1539-1577 CE) died. He was son of Bahram Mirza and grandson of Shah Ismail Safavi as well as son-in-law of Shah Tahmasb. He had served 12 years as ruler of Khorasan. His prominent collection included the best masterpieces of calligraphy, painting, jewellery and porcelain. His Muraqqa' (album) known as Muraqqa'-e Ibrahim Mirza Safavi is very famous. Sultan Ibrahim Mirza Safavi was a perfect calligrapher in Nasta'liq. He was pupil of Malk Dailami and followed the style of Mir Ali Heravi. He wrote Nastaliq in large size (Jali) very well as well as in small size (khafi). Her signature was, "Faqir Ibrahim" (poor Ibrahim) or "Faqir Ibrahim ibn Bahram".



1578: The Ottomans under **Sultan Murad III** (r1574-1595) waged war on the Safavids from 1578 to 1590.



1579: Accession of the Deccani **Sultan Ibrahim 'Adil Shah II** (r.1579-1626). A poet, calligrapher and musician himself, he is the dynasty's greatest patron of the arts. During his reign, Bijapur became the most important centre of painting in the Deccan.



1583: Accession of **'Abdullah Khan Uzbek II** (r.1583-98). A distinctive school of painting develops at Bukhara in Central Asia under the Uzbeks.



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**1587:** The greatest of the Safavid monarchs, **Shah 'Abbas I** (r.1587–1629) came to power at the age of sixteen as the fifth Safavid ruler. The reign of Shah 'Abbas the Great marked the pinnacle of the Safavid dynasty. He developed a disciplined standing army and defeated the Ottomans. Shah 'Abbas I was one of Iran's most influential leaders. Combining his ruthless ambition with a desire for stability, he left a far-reaching mark on the society and artistic heritage of Iran, renovating the country's spectacular shrines and transforming its trading relations with the rest of the world. He moved his capital from Qazvin to Isfahan and set about lavishly decorating the city with some stunning architecture, including the Masjid-i Shah and Masjid-i Shaykh Lut-fallah. During reign of 'Abbas I, Persian craftsmen and artists excelled in creating fine silks, cloths, porcelain, metalwork, calligraphy, miniatures and carpets.



**1589:** The **Uzbeks** seize control of Mashhad from the Safavids for the next nine years.



**1590:** The **Ain-i-Akbari** or the "Institutes of Akbar" written by Abu'l-Fazl ibn Mubarak, vizier of Akbar.



**1598:** Shah Abbas I (r. 1587-1629) moves the Safavid capital from **Qazvin to Isfahan**. A strong supporter of the arts, especially architecture, he adorned Isfahan with some of the finest Islamic monuments in the world. He built a number of Masjids, schools, bridges and a major bazaar. The reign of Shah Abbas I is probably the pinnacle of the Persian arts and calligraphy. Many master calligraphers created the best inscriptions and manuscripts including Abdul-Baqi Tabrizi (d. 1629) Aliresa Abassi (d. 1628), Mohamad Reaz Imami Isfahani (1629-1677) Mirza Ahamad Neirizi (1676-1742), and Emad al-Molk Qazvini Hassani known as Mir Emad (1554-1615) who was the greatest master in Nasta'liq.

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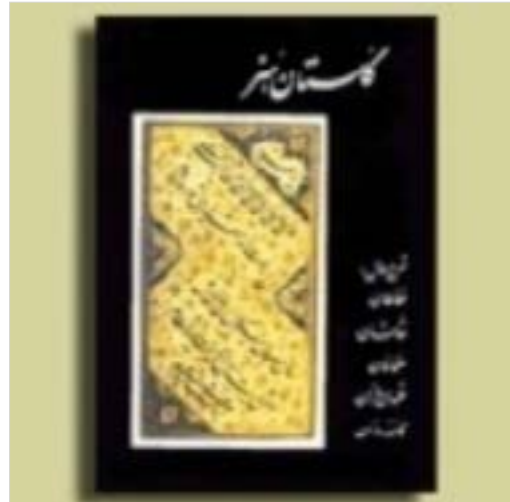
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1598 **Golestan-e Honar**, treatise on the art of calligraphy, with brief biographical notices on a selection of past and contemporary calligraphers and artists were written by the Safavid author and historian Qazi Ahmad b. Sharaf-al-Din Hosayn Monshi Qomi Ebrahimi.



1600 The East India Company was founded, as The Company of Merchants of London Trading into the East Indies.

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## 17th Century AD



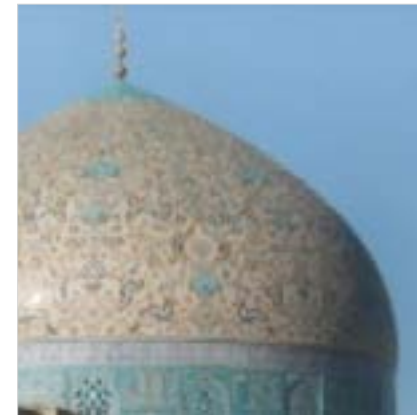
1601: Shah 'Abbas performs a barefooted pilgrimage from Isfahan to the Shrine of Imam Riza at Mashhad.



1603, Death of **Queen Elizabeth I** (r.1558-1603). By this time England had become the centre of a rich literary culture and, with its powerful navy, maintained numerous trading interests in Europe and the East and claims in the New World.



1602: Establishment of the **Dutch East India Company**.



1603 Sixteen-year construction of the **Shaykh Lut-fallah Masjid** begins in the Naghsh-e Jahan maিদan at Isfahan. There are some elegant specimens of Islamic tiles and calligraphic inscriptions outdoors and indoors of this glorious Masjid.

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1603-4 Shah 'Abbas forcibly resettles thousands of industrious **Christian Armenian** families from Julfa in Azerbaijan to New Julfa, a suburb of Isfahan, to bolster the luxury silk trade.



1602 (1010 AH) **Ali Reza Abbasi Tabrizi** wrote the Thuluth inscription of the golden dome of Imam Reza shrine in Mashhad. He was Shah Abbas' companion and worked under his patronage. He wrote a lot of perfect Thuluth inscriptions in Qazvin, Isfahan and Mashhad. In addition to Thuluth and Naskh, he was an expert in Nastaliq too. Ali Reza Abbasi was a pupil of Mohammad Hossein Tabrizi (Mir Emad's teacher) and later on became Mir Emad's opponent. During 1601-6 Shah 'Abbas commissions the renovation of Imam Riza's shrine, including the re-gilding of the golden dome.



1605, Death of Akbar and succession of son of the fourth Mughal Emperor **Jahangir** (r.1605-27). From his capital at Agra, he and his wife Nur Jahan set a tone of courtly elegance combining Indian and Persian culture, and they continued an active patronage of art.



1607-8, Shah 'Abbas presented a large **donation** to the shrine at Mashhad in the form of antique Qur'ans and other religious and scientific manuscripts. At the same time he made a large charitable donation to the Arda-bil Shrine, including over a thousand pieces of Chinese blue-and-white porcelain, and ordered the construction of the Chini-Khaneh for their display in the shrine.

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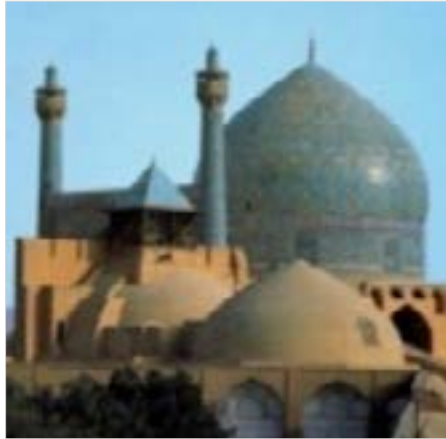
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1612-13 Construction of Shah 'Abbas's grand congregational Masjid, the **Masjid-i Shah** (also called the Masjid-i Imam), begins in Isfahan. The Masjid-i Shah in Isfahan is an outstanding example of Safavid architecture. Almost the entire surface of the interior, together with the main portal facade, is sheathed in polychrome glazed tiles (predominantly turquoise, and largely replaced in the 1930s). The soaring bulbous dome, some 52m high, is also covered with tiles decorated with spiralling arabesques. There are number of elegant specimens of calligraphic inscriptions in this magnificent Masjid.



1615 August 15 **Mir Emad** (Emad al-Molk Qazvini Hasani) the most celebrated Persian calligrapher, implicitly sentenced to death by Shah Abbas I.



1615: (1024 AH) '**Abdul Rashid Deylami** otherwise known as Aqa, a pupil of Mir Emad migrated to India and settled in Kashmir. He joined ShahJahan court and was appointed as trainer of Prince **Dara Shokuh**. 'Abdur Rashid was appointed an instructor in calligraphy for the crown Prince Dara Shikoh by Shah Jahán. Emperor Aurangzeb's daughter, Zebu-n-nisa, is also stated to have been a pupil of Aqa. Most of the critics believe he was greatest master of calligraphy who came to India from Iran.



1622 Using the ships of the **British East India Company**, Abbas ousts the Portuguese from Hormuz to regain control of trade through the Persian Gulf. The English sent a diplomatic embassy to Shah Abbas, headed by Sir Dodmore Cotton.

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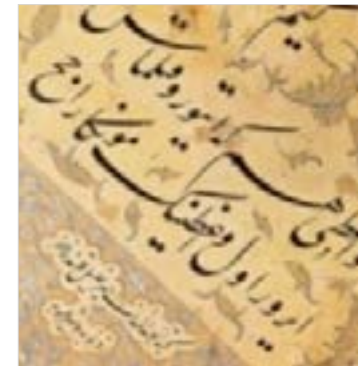
1622, Shah 'Abbas's army, aided by the ships of the English East India Company, expelled the Portuguese from the island of Hormuz.



1623, The Safavids conquer Najaf, site of the Shrine of Imam 'Ali in Iraq, from the Ottomans.



1625, Accession of Charles I (r. 1625-49) as King of Great Britain and Ireland. Known as a great collector of artworks and patron of many of the period's great artists such as the Flemish painter Peter Paul Rubens.



1626, (1035 AH.) Mir Khalil ullah Shah known as the "Malik-ul-Qalam" (The king of the pen) and "Qalandar" the Iranian calligrapher in the late 16th and early 17th century died. He spent few years in court of Ibrahim Adil Shah II (r. 1556 – 1627 CE /963-1035 AH) ruler of Deccan. Mir Khalil ullah Shah was greatly honoured in his days. He copied the "Nav-Ras" with great care and made a present of it to Ibrahim Adil Shah II (sultan and later shah of the Indian kingdom of Bijapur). The king was extremely pleased with the gift and the accomplishment of the artist. He gave him the title of "Malik-ul-Qalam" and a mark of extraordinary honour made him sit on his throne.



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1627, Shah 'Abbas endows the Shrine of Fatimeh Ma'sumeh with over a hundred precious manuscripts. There are some inscriptions by Kufic, Bana'ei and Thuluth for different eras.



1627 Jahangir dies and Shah Jahan (1592 – 1666) assumes the throne, crushing his rivals. He was the fifth Mughal emperor. The period of his reign was the golden age of Mughal architecture. Shahanshah Shah Jahan erected many splendid monuments, the most famous of which is the legendary Taj Mahal at Agra built as a tomb for his wife, Empress Mumtaz Mahal. The Pearl Masjid and many other buildings in Agra, the Red Fort and the Jama Masjid in Delhi, Masjids in Lahore, extensions to Lahore Fort and a Masjid in Thatta also commemorate him.



1627, Abdul Rahim Khan-e-Khana (1556 – 1627 / 964 – 1036 AH.) died. He was a composer in the times of Mughal emperor Akbar, and one of his main nine ministers (Diwan) in his court, also known as the Navaratas. He was accompanied by his father, Bairam Khan, who was a strong patron of Persian Art in Mughal court.



1629, 19 January Shah Abbas I died. During his long reign the Safavid Empire's reach comprised Iran, Iraq, Armenia, Azerbaijan Republic, Georgia and parts of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. After him Shah Safi I (r. 1629–1642) became the sixth Safavid ruler.

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1642 Abbas II (r. 1642–1666) the seventh Safavid Emperor assumes power.



1637, The Safavid emperor, Shah Safi (r. 1629–42) loses Baghdad and Qandahar.



1631, Shah Jahan's queen Mumtaz Mahal died during childbirth; Shah Jahan commissioned the building of her tomb, the Taj Mahal.



1634, (1044 AH) In Lahore, Masjid-i-Wazir Khan preserves an excessive and acquisitive work of Thulth writing of Shahjhan's time.

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1638 (1048 AH), the calligraphic inscriptions of the Taj Mahal were created by Amanat Khan Shirazi (Abd ul-Haq). He came to India from Shiraz, Iran in 1609. Thereafter On June 13, 1632, Shah Jahan conferred on him the title of Amanat Khan as a reward for his “dazzling virtuosity”. During Jahangir’s reign, Amanat Kahn had been responsible for the calligraphic work of the Akbar mausoleum at Sikandra (completed in 1613), and for that of the Madrasah Shahi Masjid at Agra. The Taj Mahal was built from 1632 to 1647 by Shah Jahan for his favourite wife Mumtaz Mahal, who died in child-birth in 1631. The octagonal tomb is surmounted by a huge, bulbous central dome set on a cylindrical drum, and surrounded by four corner pavilions crowned with chhatris. It is faced entirely with white marble and stands on a high platform with four tall minarets. This platform is flanked by a Masjid and a guesthouse in red sandstone. The mausoleum stands at the northern end of a rectangular garden with an elongated pool at its centre. The garden is entered through a massive gateway to the South, from where the mausoleum is seen reflected across the pool.



1642 (1052 AH.), Hassan Khan Shamlu ruler of Herat in the time of Shah Abbas I died. He was a great master of Nasta'liq in addition to his literary, political and administrative features.



1658 Shah Jahan’s son Aurangajeb executes his brothers, imprisons his father and ascends to the throne of Delhi.



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1659 (1070 AH), the Persian calligrapher **Mohammed Saeed Ashraf Mazandarani** migrated to India. He grew up in Isfahan and joined to Aurangzeb court.



1666, Suleiman I of Persia (r. 1666–1694) came to power as the eighth Safavid Emperor.



1666, Shah Jahan died in Agra.



1689 (1100 AH.), **Morteza Quli Khan Shamlu** son of Hassan Khan Shamlu was died. He was the Safavid ruler of Herat in the time of Suleiman I (r. 1666- 1694 C.E./ 1077- 1105 A.H) as well as one of the earliest calligraphers in Shekasteh style. Some critics mentioned his name as the creator of Shekasteh.

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**1694** Sultan Hoseyn I (r. 1694–1722) assumes power. His reign saw the downfall of the Safavid dynasty, which had ruled Persia since the beginning of the 16th century.



**1698** Grate calligrapher in Ottoman court **Hafiz Osman** (1642 – 1698) died. He was largely responsible for the revival of naskh and the other classical hands, the use of which had declined somewhat by the end of the 16th century. He was tutor to the sultans Ahmed II, Mustafa II and Ahmed III, and was esteemed by the sultan Mustafa II who held his inkwell as he wrote. He is credited with reinvigorating the tradition of Shaykh Hamdullah, in particular with re-introducing a number of scripts that had fallen into disuse. The development of Diwani Jali was credited to him.

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## 18th Century AD



1707 The last great Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707) died in Ahmadnagar. Although he belonged to one of the most esteemed and impeccable imperial blood lineages of the world and was the ruler of the biggest empire of the age. He used to earn his salary by stitching caps and making copies of the holy Quran in his own calligraphy. He lived according to the life-style described in the Islamic faith and governed the empire mostly according to the Islamic way.



1722 Mahmoud Khan, an Afghan chieftain and a vassal of the Safavids, attacked Persia and captured Isfahan with virtually no resistance, thus ending the Safavid dynasty.



1724 Nizams of Hyderabad (1724–1948) founded by Nizam-ul-Mulk, Asaf Jah I.



1737: Darvish Abd al-Majid Taleqani the most important historical figure in Shikasta style was born in Taleqan, Iran. Afterwards, he went to Isfahan.



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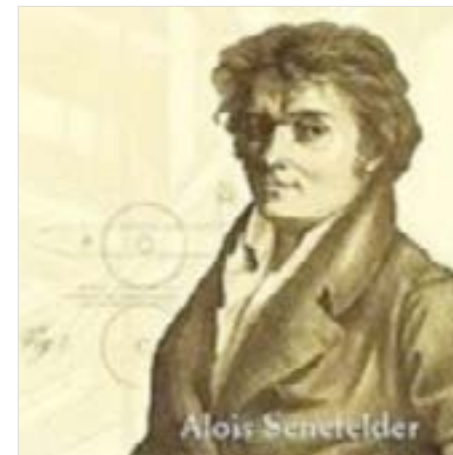
1739 Invading **Nadir Shah** (1729-1747) king of Iran massacred Delhi. He was a brilliant military strategist, defeating the Ottomans, Russians, Indians and various local tribes. During his invasion of Mughals, Nader Shah captured valuable trophy from India. After the conquest of his army, Mughal dynasty in India became too weak. After his death, his great military machine collapsed.



1751 **Zand dynasty** (1751-1794 CE), founded by Karim Khan Zand (1747-1779) who ruled over Isfahan and briefly had Shiraz as his capital. Karim Khan Zand gained control of central and southern parts of Iran. He was a compassionate ruler who refused to assume the title of Shah and referred to himself as the Representative of the People.



1794 **Qajar dynasty** (1794–1925 CE), founded by Agha Mohammad Khan (1794-1797). He gradually vanquished the Zands after Karim Khan Zand's death in 1779. The Qajars were originally a powerful Turkmen tribe from the Caspian's Eastern coast. The founder of the dynasty, Agha Muhammad, captured Tehran in 1786 and made it his capital. He was crowned Shah in 1796.



1796, Invention of **lithography** by Alois Senefelder (1771 – 1834).

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1800, The first Fat Face Typeface was designed by Robert Thorne.

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## 19th Century AD



1803, Modern papermaking began in Europe with the development of the Fourdrinier machine.



1857, the Mughal Empire was formally dissolved by the British Raj after the Indian rebellion.



1831, Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar (r. 1848–96) was born in Tehran. He began his reign as a reformer but became increasingly conservative.



1862: Bahadur Shah II the last of the Mogul rulers dies. India becomes a British Colony. He was an expert calligrapher.

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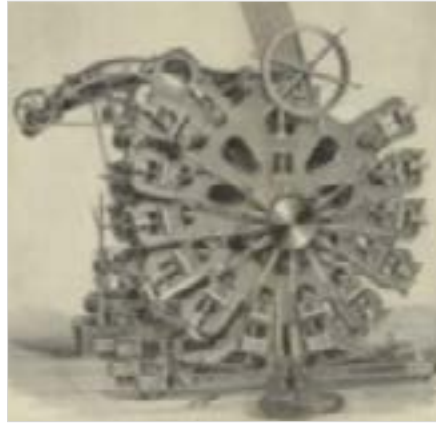
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1865: William Bullock invented the **Bullock Press**, which was the first press to be fed by continuous roll paper.



1882: **Mohammad Reza Kalhor** (1829-1892) calligraphed the Ordo-e Homayoun (auspicious camp) Newspaper. He was one of Nassereddin Shah's calligraphy tutors. Kalhor had a special interest in Mir Emad's calligraphy style and followed his rules in calligraphy; but ultimately he had his own flavour in Persian calligraphy that made his art different. He adapted Nasta'liq style with modern lithography techniques.



1884 (1301 AH) **Mirza Gholam Reza Isfahani** (1830-1887 / 1246-1304 AH.) wrote a Nastaliq inscription in Sepahsalar Masjed in Tehran. He was a great calligrapher in Nastaliq and Shekasteh of Nasseraddin Shah Qajar court.



1892: **Mirza Mohammad-Reza Kalhor** (1828 - 1892) died.

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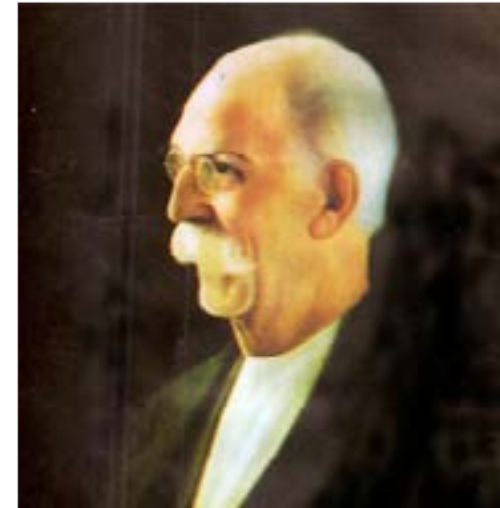
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## 20th Century AD



1906: The typewriter was invented. **Monotype** and **linotype** designs are built on the keyboard of the typewriter.



1911: The first Iranian Academy of Fine Arts (the Madrasa-i Sanayi-i Mustazrafa) was founded by **Kamal al-Mulk** (1852–1940), who directed the school until 1927.



1906: Discontent with Qajar corruption and mismanagement led to the Constitutional Revolution and the establishment of Iran's **first parliament** or Majles.



1914 World War I started.

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1919 Walter Gropius, Founded Weimar Bauhaus and manifest.



1922: The Ottoman Empire after World War I (1914–18) was abolished by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.



1921 King Fuad I (r. 1917 – 1922) called the famous Turkish calligrapher, Muhammad 'Abd al-'Aziz ar-Rifa'i to Cairo, where he transcribed the Qur'an and gilded the result. Soon afterwards King Fuad founded a school to pass on the learning and artistry of the finest calligraphers of our time.



1925: Reza Shah overthrew Ahmad Shah Qajar, the last Shah of the Qajar dynasty, and founded the Pahlavi Dynasty.

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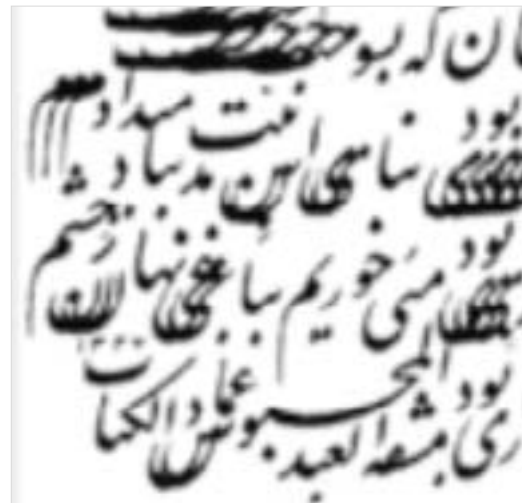
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1928: In Turkey abandoned the Arabic script they were to use for nearly a thousand years until the introduction of the new Turkish alphabet.



1939: (September 1st) Germany invaded Poland without warning sparking the start of World War II.



1936: Emad-ol-Kottab (1861-1936) was dead. He was Ahmad Shah's calligraphy tutor. Even after Ahmad Shah's era, when took over, he also was Reza Shah Pahlavi's command writer and mentored Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi when he was a prince.



1941: Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi came to power during World War II after an Anglo-Soviet invasion forced the abdication of his father, Reza Shah. During his rule oversaw the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry in 1951 under leadership of the Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq which had been since 1913 under British control through the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, today known as British Petroleum (BP).

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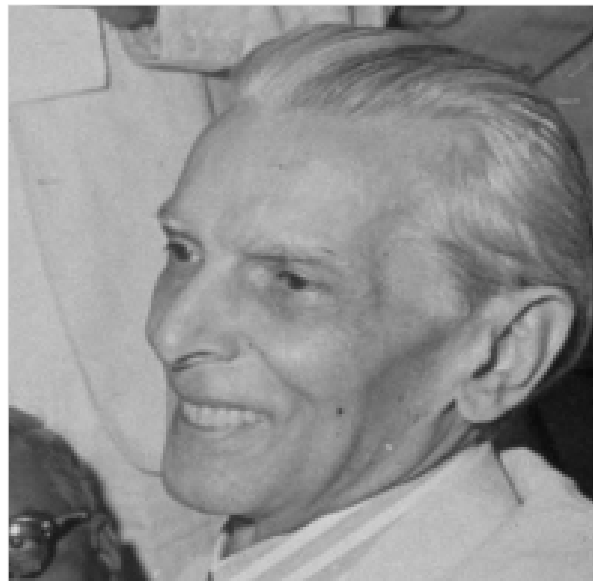
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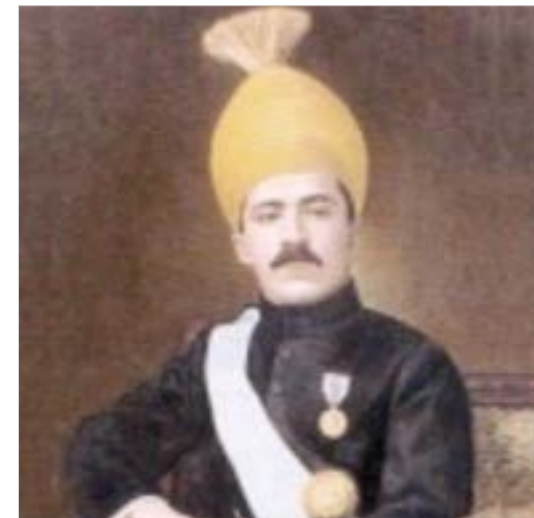
1947 (August 15) India became an independent nation.



1951 (1371 AH or 1329 Solar Hijra) Iranian Associate Calligraphers was established in Tehran. This organisation had a rich influence of the revival and development of Iranian contemporary calligraphic process.



1947 Pakistan, as the Muslim state of East and West Pakistan, is created out of the partition of the Indian subcontinent at the end of British rule.



1967: Asaf Jah VII the last titular of Nizams of Hyderabad died.

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1984 (January 24) The first Macintosh was introduced.



1979: The Islamic revolution in Iran occurred.



1985 (October 15-19) The First **Chinese Modern Calligraphy Exhibition** was held in the China National Art Museum in Beijing.

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