Arabic miniature-painting depicting a scene from the Maqam al-Hafiz, a literary narrative by al-Qasim ibn Ad-Daraj (d. 1122), produced in Iraq, probably in Baghdad, in 1236, with pseudo-calligraphic designs decorating the borders of the robes and the curtains, which no doubt directly influenced European paintings of the Middle Ages. Compare the robe borders and cushions in a painting of the Coronation of the Virgin by the Italian painter Paolo Veneziano (d. 1362).
Calligraphic signs and devices

In general the historical development of Islamic calligraphy is from the simple to the more elaborate. Conventional decorative forms such as zoomorphic motifs became increasingly popular during the 19th century. The **şınviri**, a calligraphic form invented by the Ottoman Turks, is an elegant and decorative emblem which each Ottoman sultan adopted to bear his name and to serve as his official signature.

147 Şînvarî of the Ottoman Sultan Süleyman I (1520–66), written in the large calligraphic form known as **şınvarî** (Şînvarî).

148 Şînvarî of the Ottoman Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (1520–66), with the Sultan’s epigraph in ornamental **şûrûh** script at the base.

149 The phrase **al-ḥamd, al-Wali, al-Ḥamd** — “Praise to the worthy benefactor”, written in connected **Thuluth** in **Gülşân** style by Ahmad Qâshâbî in 1547, probably in Istanbul.
150 (left) Ornamental Kufic and Naskhi scripts manipulated to represent Noah's Ark. Composite calligraphic page from the Ottoman period. Turkey, probably early 19th century.

151 Stylistic ornamental Naskhi, Persia, dated 1883. The text translates: 'O Muhammad 'Abd Allāh, may peace be upon you'

152 Ornamental Kufic script in the shape of a mosque, from a wall of the Great Mosque in Bursa. Turkey, probably late 16th century. The text is praise of the Prophet Muhammad.

153 Calligraphic page of square Kufic script in the form of a mosque, probably by Darwīsh Amin Naqshbandī. The text is the Shahadah: 'There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God.' Turkey, Istanbul, 1743.


157. Mirror-writing, with the letter sa ‘u (and) in Guhdar style repeated reversed left to right in the body of a ewer. This is followed, at the juncture of the letters, by a phrase in Thuluth: “mâ ‘alâ ‘Alluhi.” Whatever God wills”. Turkey, probably late 18th century.
The Shahādah – ‘There is no god but God, and Muḥammad is the Messenger of God’

The Shahādah – Lā ilāha illā Lāh, Muḥammad rasūl Allāh – is the profession of faith which all Muslims must proclaim.

158 The second part of the Shahādah, Muḥammad rasūl Allāh, in ornamental Indian Naskhī verging on Thuluth. India, probably 12th century (above)

159 Part of the Shahādah reading ‘... but God’. Ghāznawī alabaster frieze-fragment with ornamental foliated Kufic. Afghanistan, 12th century

160 The second part of the Shahādah, from the side of a Chinese porcelain incense-burner. 16th century

161 The second part of the Shahādah carved on a column in the Great Mosque of Kairouan, 10/11th century