

Persian Calligraphy

The Development of an Art Form

EZAT O. NEGAHBAN

Iran is one of many cultures in which the written word has been transformed into an art form, an extension of its function beyond documentation and communication. Iranian calligraphers employed their talents to produce styles and patterns of writing that were applied to such different mediums as architecture, pottery, and metal work, in addition to the page itself. They have made Persian script rich in variety and beauty and produced many masterpieces of art, particularly when calligraphy was combined with miniature painting.

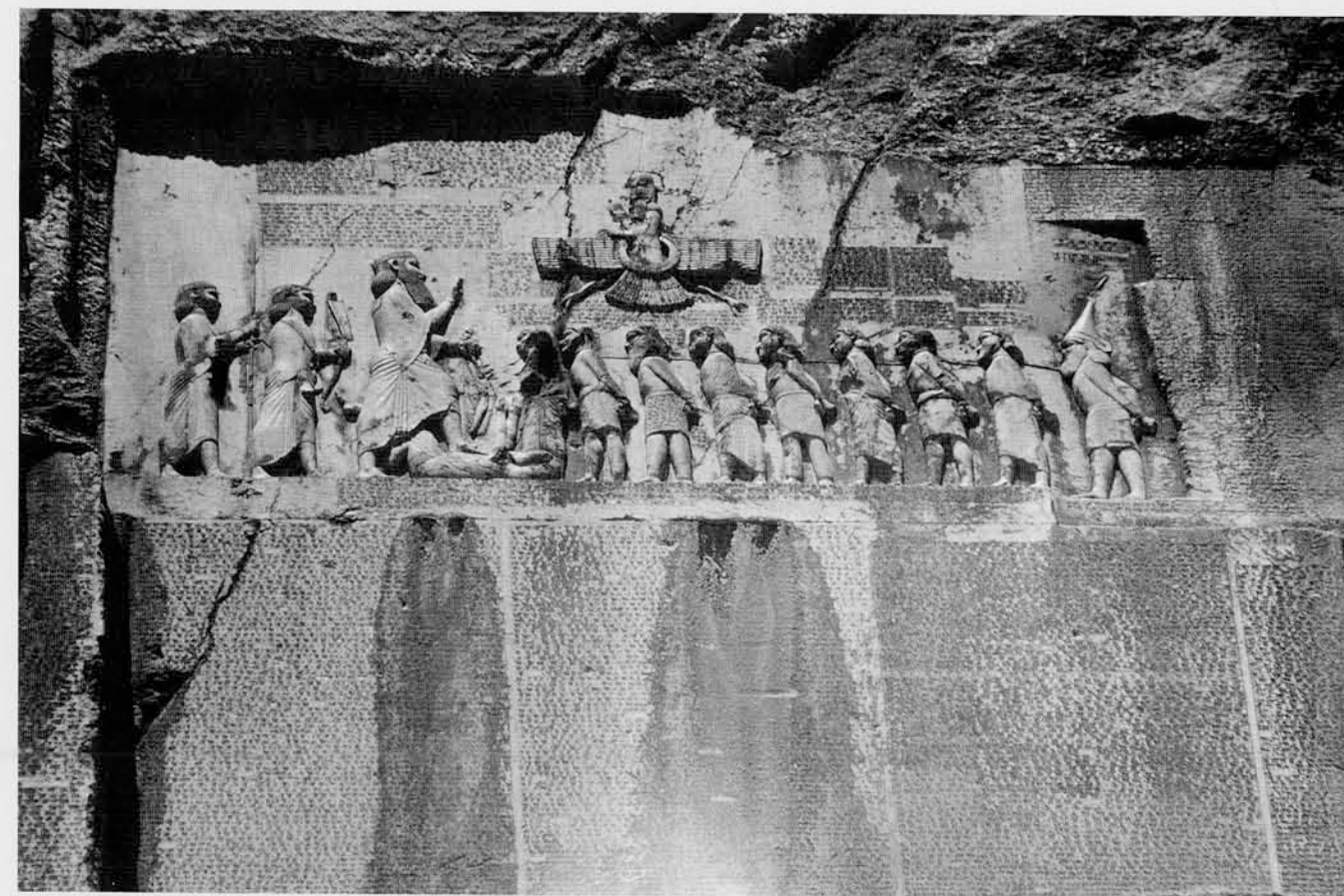
In this article I shall outline the major types of Persian calligraphy, with a brief reference to some of the master calligraphers. I will also draw on my own experiences to provide an example of the role that this art form still plays in Persian life and culture.

Historical Background

Before the Islamic era, there were several types of script in Iran. The earliest was cuneiform, executed with wedge-shaped strokes made on clay tablets or cut into stone. Cuneiform script was used for several millennia by peoples speaking a variety of languages, who occupied the area from the eastern Mediterranean to the Indus Valley. In Iran both the Elamites in the third and second millennia B.C. (Figs. 1,2) and the Persians in the first millennium employed cuneiform script.



1 This clay tablet found at Haft Tepe is written in the Elamite language and dates to the middle of the 2nd millennium B.C. Located in the lowland plains of southwestern Iran, Haft Tepe was an important political and religious center. The text gives instructions on the use of a sheep's liver to predict future events concerning the fate of the army and the city itself. (H.T. no. 152)



2

Trilingual inscription of Darius the Great carved in cuneiform script on a sheer rock face at Bisitun, Iran. The text, written in the Elamite, Babylonian, and Persian languages, tells of the Persian king's victories. It is located next to a prolific spring on the main road from Mesopotamia to the east, and for the past 2500 years its lifesize figures have served to impress travelers with the power of the Persian empire. (Photo courtesy of M. M. Voigt)

At the end of the Achaemenian Empire, the angular and relatively inflexible cuneiform was gradually replaced by cursive scripts. In Iran, Aramaic script was used along with cuneiform during the Achaemenian Period (Fig. 3). Beginning in the 7th century B.C., Aramaic served as a lingua franca throughout the Near East until it was replaced by Arabic after the Islamic Conquest. Later, during the Parthian and Sassanian periods, Avestaic (Fig. 4) and Pahlavi scripts were used, Pahlavi being the more common.

With the downfall of the Sassanian dynasty and the emergence of Islam (7th century A.D.), two new scripts appeared in Iran: Kufic, which was angular with horizontal connections (Figs. 5-8,11,12,13,30), and Naskh, which was more rounded (Figs. 10,16,19). Based mainly on Coptic and Soryani scripts (which had in turn de-



3

Fragment of a stone mortar with Aramaic writing, from a storeroom of the treasury building at the Persian capital of Persepolis, 5th c. B.C. Many mortars, pestles, and plates, all made of green chert, were sealed in this room when the site was destroyed by Alexander the Great in 330 B.C. Inscriptions such as this one indicate that these artifacts were used in a religious ritual. H. 5.6 cm. (Photo courtesy of The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, P. 60681/ N. 40358, Persepolis field neg. P-1156; Bowman 1970:Pl. 21:89)

۱. ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰
 ۲. ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰
 ۳. ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰
 ۴. ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰ ۱۳۰۰

4 Modern copy of the oldest known text of the Avesta, in Din Dabireh script (Sassanian Period). The Avesta is the religious book of the Zoroastrians, written in the 6th century B.C. (Fazaeli 1971:93)

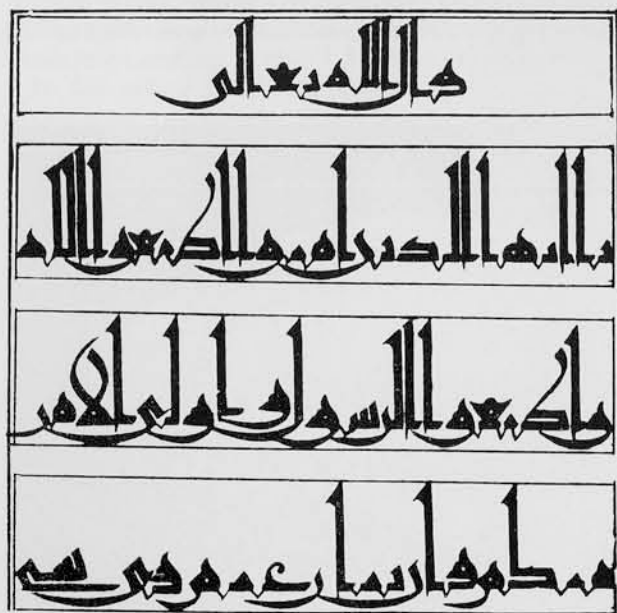
veloped from the Aramaic and Phoenician), both were already in use in Arabia before the time of Mohammad (Fazaeli 1971).

During the first centuries of the Islamic era, Kufic and Naskh were used in a simple form, but gradually the Iranian scribes began to develop them, adapting them to the Persian language. New styles and patterns evolved during the

period of the Abbasid Caliphs, particularly during the time of Ma'Moon (786-833 A.D., 170-218 A.H. [After Hejira]), when a great expansion took place in all branches of art, especially calligraphy.

One of the great pioneer calligraphers was Ibn-Moghleh Beidhavi Shirazi, the Grand Vazir of Al-Moghtader Bellah. Shirazi codified

several types of script in the *Aghlam-i-Setteh* (The Six Styles of Writing). These six styles included Naskh, the slightly rounded script which had been known before the emergence of Islam (Fig. 10); Mohaghghegh, also known as Araghi or Warraghi, a compact cursive script; Reyhan, similar to Mohaghghegh but more elaborate; Tholth (Figs. 13,14,21,30), subdivided into

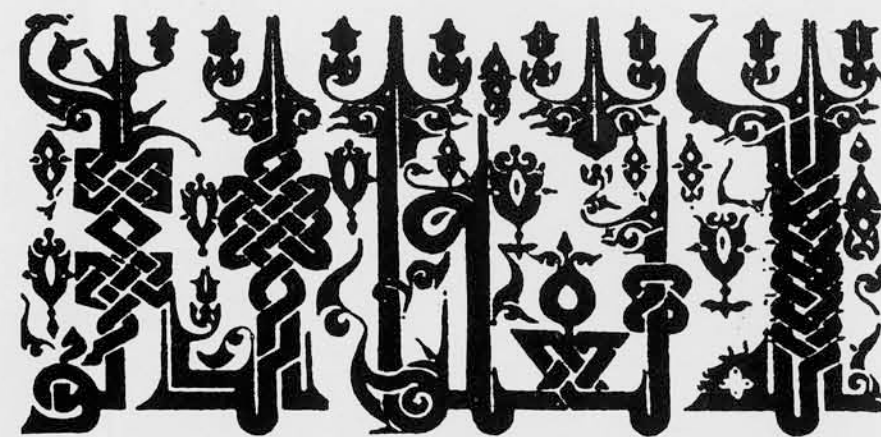


5 Sample of Plain Kufic script in the style of the 4th c. A.H./ 10th c. A.D. by the modern calligrapher Mohammad Ali Heravi. (Fazaeli 1971:152)



6 Pottery vessel from excavations at the site of Ray in central Iran, 5th-6th c. A.H./12-13th c. A.D. The Arabic inscription in Kufic script extends good wishes to the owner: "Wealth and happiness, and prosperity, and triumph, and power, and resignation (to the will of God)." (University Museum no. NE-P-103, neg. 73888; H. 16.5 cm)

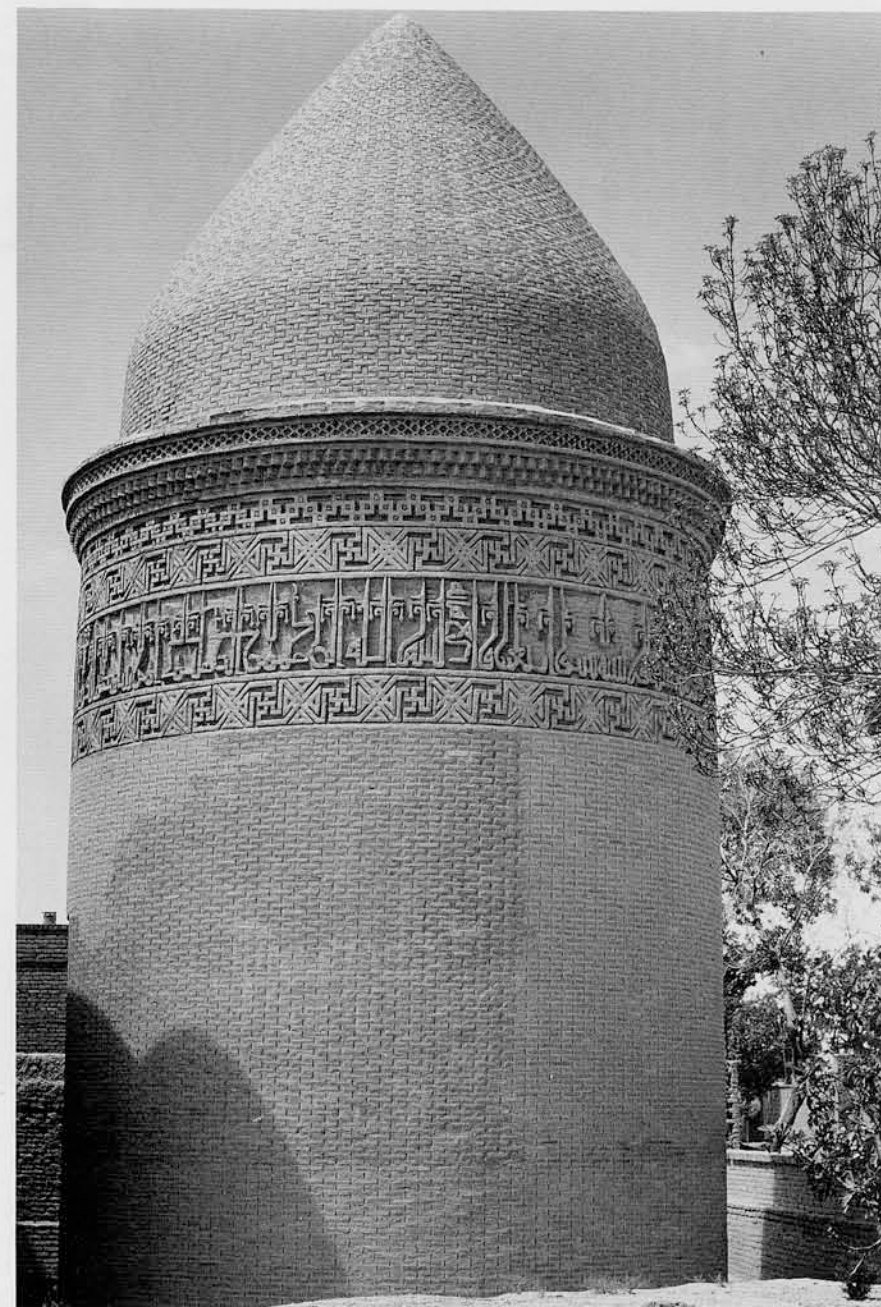
7
Inscription in Decorative Kufic style copied from a painted frieze in the tomb of Pir-i-Alamdar in Damghan, Iran, 418 A.H./1027 A.D. (Fazaeli 1971:160)



Thaghil ('Difficult') and Khafif ('Light' or 'Simple'); Toghi', between Naskh and Tholth, with rules similar to Tholth but written deeper and rounder (Fig. 23); and Rogha', similar to Tholth and Toghi' but more more elaborate and finer. Shirazi introduced rules and regulations in twelve original patterns that standardized the different styles of writing and initiated a new era in Persian calligraphy.

About a century later Hassan-i-Farsi introduced a new script known as Ta'ligh (Fig. 15), which was mainly developed from the already established styles of Naskh and Rogha'. In Ta'ligh the characters were more connected, leading to greater ease and fluency, so that it soon became the preferred script in which to write letters. For this reason it was called Tarassol or "Letter Writing" script. Later Ta'ligh was made much more balanced and fluent through the rich contributions of Khajeh Abdolhay Monshi Asterabadi (907 A.H.), who added new rules for writing the script. Mir Ali Tabrizi (about 850 A.H.) introduced, or perhaps only codified, a style of writing derived from Naskh and Ta'ligh. This warmly welcomed script became known as Nasta'ligh. Nasta'ligh developed into such a beautiful

8
Tombs of the early Seljuk period are richly decorated with designs created in brick and stucco. This example (Borji-Chehel Dokhtarran or the Forty Girls Tower) from Damghan, Iran, dates to 466 A.H./1087 A.D. An inscription in Decorative Kufic script forms the central element in the banded frieze. (Photo courtesy of M.M. Voigt)

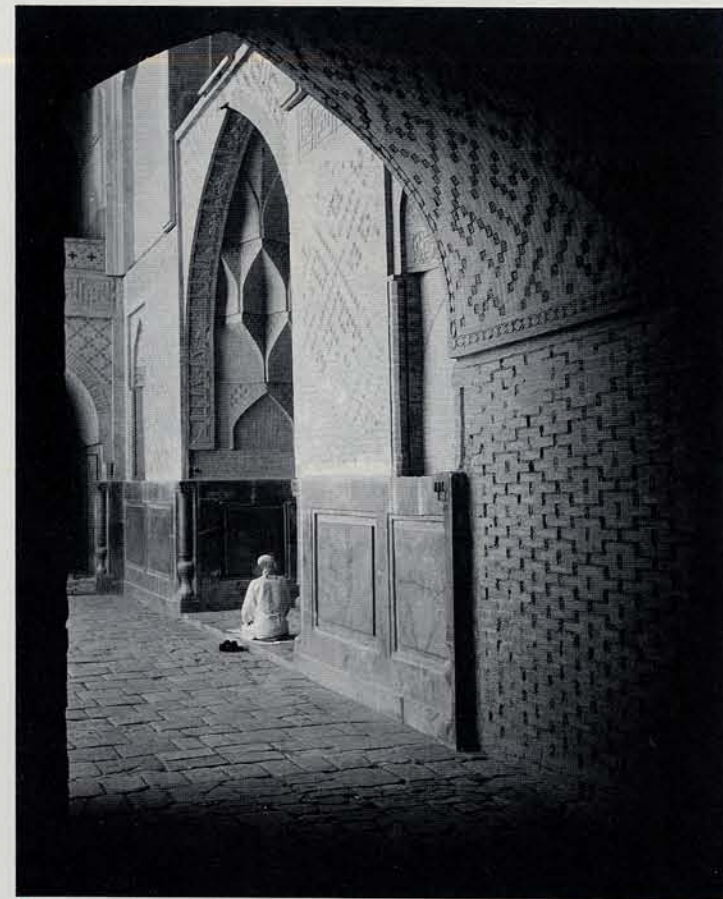


Shekasteh-Nasta'liqh	Nasta'liqh	Rogh'eh	Divani	Ta'liqh	Toghi'	Tholth	Mohaghhegh	Naskh	Kufic	
ا	ا	ا	ا	ا	ا	ا	ا	ا	ا	aleph a
ب	ب	ب	ب	ب	ب	ب	ب	ب	ب	be b
ل	ل	ل	ل	ل	ل	ل	ل	ل	ل	lam l
ن	ن	ن	ن	ن	ن	ن	ن	ن	ن	noon n

9
The Persian alphabet as it changed from Kufic script to Shekasteh Nasta'liqh.



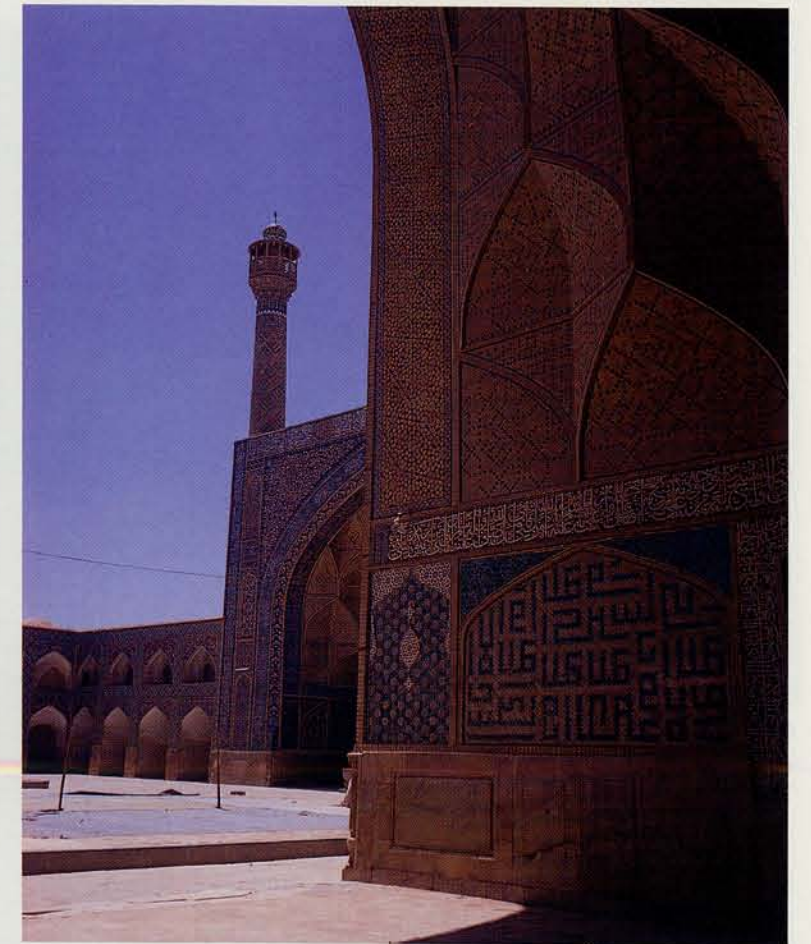
10
Naskh script was used for this Koran, dated to 559 A.H./1164 A.D., from Hamadan, Iran. The Koran text is written in black, with Arabic commentary in red. Another page from the manuscript is shown on the cover of this issue. (University Museum no. NE-P-27, neg. T4-188; H. 34.3 cm, W. 19.7 cm)



11
The Kufic script was frequently used as a design element in the decoration of buildings. The Masjid-i Jami (Friday Mosque) in the city of Isfahan was begun in 473 A.H./1080 A.D. and completed about 1200 A.H./1800 A.D. The entire surface of the building is covered with decorative brick patterns, some of which form letters and inscriptions. The arch in the background has a Kufic frieze along its edge. (Photo courtesy of R.H. Dyson)



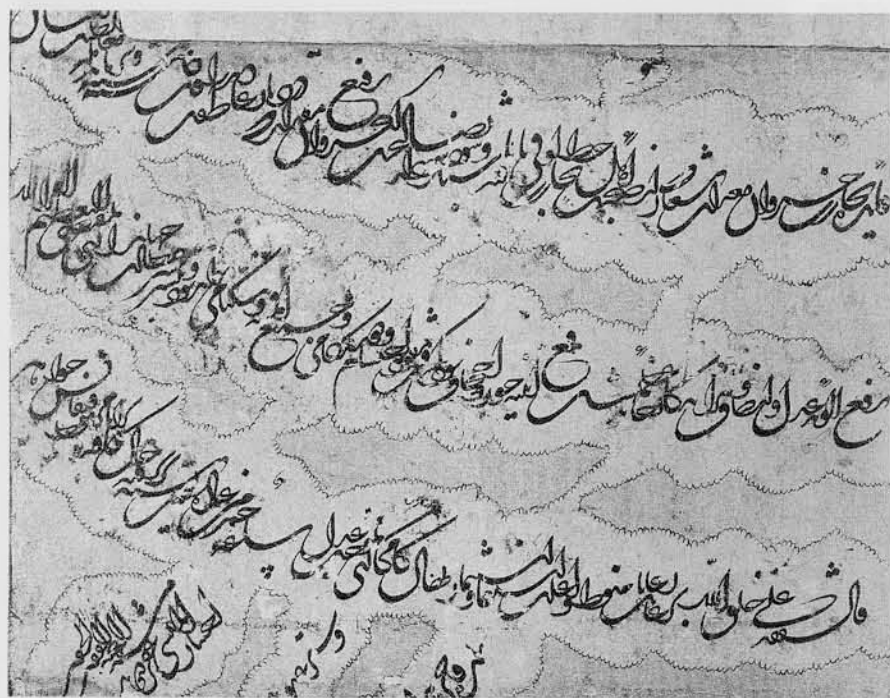
12
Detail, brass candlestick inlaid with silver made in Iran during the mid-7th century A.H./13th century A.D. The Arabic inscription in Kufic style says: "Permanent triumph, enduring happiness, and growing prosperity." (University Museum no. NE-P-12; photo by Fred Schoch; H. 35.5 cm)



13 (above right)
Another view of the Masjid-i Jami from the entranceway of the west ivan (hall), which was decorated in 1112 A.H./1733 A.D. In the foreground, the banded frieze in blue contains an inscription in Tholth script, while the one below is in Architectural Kufic. The facade of the south ivan in the background dates to 938 A.H./1531-32 A.D. (Photo courtesy of R.H. Dyson)



14
Mosaics made of brick, plaster, and glazed faience tiles began to be used in the decoration of major buildings in Iran during the 7th/13th century. The "Blue Mosque" (Masjid-i Janhanshah) in Tabriz, finished in 870 A.H./1465 A.D., provides some of the most beautiful examples of this kind of tilework, employing both Decorative Kufic and Tholth inscriptions. The building was destroyed by an earthquake which leveled the city in 1194 A.H./1780 A.D. (Photo courtesy of M. M. Voigt)



15
Example of Ta'ligh style script, by Khajeh Ekhtiar Gonabadi, 970 A.H./1591 A.D. (Iranian Society for Calligraphy 1985)

form of Persian calligraphy that it was called the Arrouss or "Bride of Writing" (Figs. 17,24,25,28,29). The script emphasizes horizontal elements, so that it "seems to hang or float across the page" (James 1989:22). One outstanding calligrapher who employed this script was Soltan Ali-i-Mashhadi (926 A.H.), who devoted most of his 85 years to the service of Nasta'liq and produced many masterpieces. He composed a poetic guide to writing Nasta'liq called the *Saratus-sotour* (*Ways of Lines of Writing*) and trained many students who went on to become master calligraphers in their own right.

In the middle of the 11th century A.H., Shekasteh Nasta'liq or Broken Nasta'liq was introduced by Morteza Gholikhan-i-Shamlou, the governor of Herat. It spread rapidly due to its fluent beauty and particularly its ease, which made it suitable for fast writing since it could be used almost as a form of shorthand (Figs. 22,28). This elaborate and complex style was particularly popular during the Qajar dynasty, when the art of calligraphy underwent a period of

revival, and several new variant scripts were developed.

In recent times calligraphy has continued to be a much revered art. Nearly 30 years ago the Society for Calligraphy (Anjoman-i-Khoshnevisan) was founded by Mr. Khosrow Zaimi, as an associate institution of the Ministry of Culture and Arts. The society has been very active and successful in keeping

"The art of calligraphy
so permeates Persian
culture that it has
become interwoven in
the daily life of the
people."

this valuable art alive in Iran. Over the last decade there has been a great and noticeable development

of interest, and many outstanding books of Persian poetry written in beautiful calligraphy have been published.

A Modern Calligrapher at Work

The art of calligraphy so permeates Persian culture that it has become interwoven in the daily life of the people. In the old traditional system of Iranian education the development and practice of a beautiful writing style was extremely important. It was a source of honor and pride to have good handwriting and to know calligraphy. Even at the beginning of the modern Westernized system of education, which was being introduced at the time I first entered school as a child, great importance was still given to the teaching of good handwriting, and teachers of these courses were highly respected. We were given patterns made with dotted lines for each character which we were supposed to complete with one movement of the reed pen (Fig. 25), and we were expected to spend many hours following these patterns of correct and beautiful writing for each character of the alphabet.

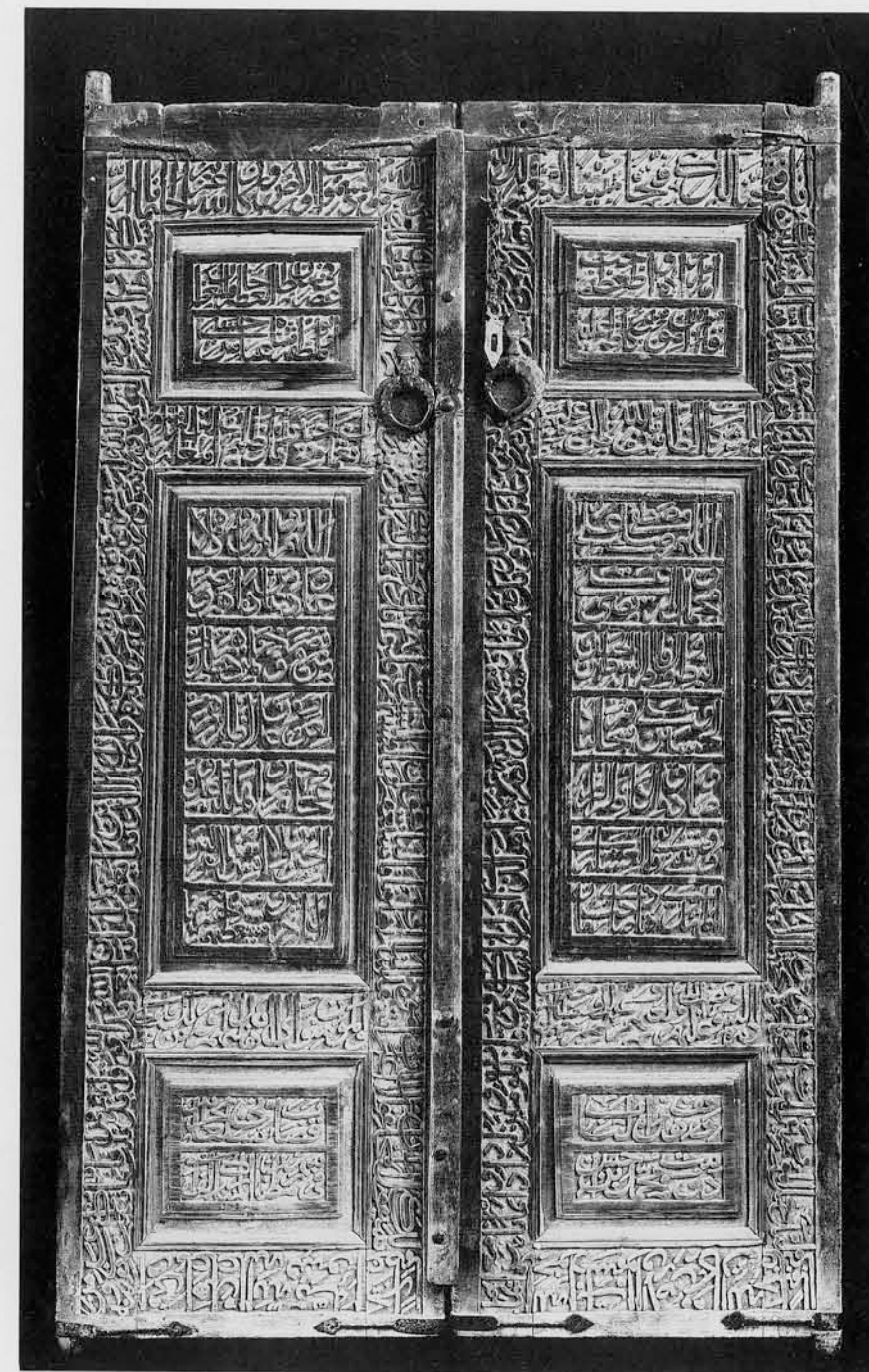
I remember vividly how seriously my father took the task of teaching me proper handwriting. He had very good handwriting himself, and to give me the feeling of the correct movements of the pen, he would place it in my fingers at the right angle, hold my fist in his hand, and guide the movements of the pen as I wrote. After his sudden and unexpected death when I was nearly ten years old, I continued my interest in developing good handwriting and in the art of calligraphy, as I knew he would have wished.

At this time the oldest and most respected member of my mother's family was an uncle, Hassan Dideban, retired from the Post and Telegraph Office, who lived in Cholhak village, halfway between Tehran and Shemran in the foothills of the Elburz mountains. This venerable old man was a broad-

minded but faithful believer who carried out his religious duties with great devotion. I liked him very much since he was kind to me and had a rather interesting wit, as well as an excellent handwriting style. He spent hours each day copying the complete text of the Holy Koran in Nasta'liq style, a work which took him several years. When it was finished, he donated the volume, bearing his name, to the Sajjad Mosque of Gholhak, where it is used to this day during the reading of prayers. Khan Amu (Sir Uncle), as he was called in the family, gave me lessons in reading the Koran, and when he realized how interested I was in calligraphy, he began to give me some models of the Nasta'liq style to copy. From him I learned that there is no end to the infinite variety and creativity in the art of calligraphy.

The Art of Calligraphy

Before one can begin a work of calligraphy, it is necessary to assemble the proper tools, including pen, ink, and paper. The pens used in Persian calligraphy are made from reeds (Fig. 26), and learning to cut them out properly is not easy. The nib is cut differently for different styles of writing, and graceful calligraphy can seem to flow almost effortlessly from the point of a properly cut pen. Reeds grown in a hot climate are preferable for pens; in Iran, the best reeds of all are thought to come from Dezful in Khuzistan. Only well-matured reeds, which are dark brownish-red with a burnished sheen, have a good shell for the cutting of the nib. These mature reeds are cut into sections at the joints. The thicker pieces from near the base of the reed are used for thicker pens (Qalam Dorosht) with a broad nib for large-scale writing (Masgh Dorosht). More slender pieces from near the middle of the reed are used for ordinary writing, while very narrow pieces from the top of the reed, if they have a strong enough shell, are cut to a fine point for slender pens (Qalam Reez) used for fine writing (Masgh Reez).



16
This pair of carved wooden doors, made for a shrine in northern Iran, is decorated with inscriptions in the Naskh script (ca. 1000 A.H./1592 A.D.). The Arabic inscriptions around the sides are verses from the Koran, while the central medallion contains a prayer and the smaller medallions name the donor. (University Museum no. NE-P-41, neg. 21774; H. 1.7 m)

To control the flow of the ink and the width of the line a small cut is made in the middle of the nib, parallel to the length of the pen. The degree of pressure on the cut nib controls the width of the line.

With more pressure the cut nib separates slightly so that the line becomes wider, while for fine lines less pressure is applied and at the same time the pen is twisted somewhat during writing.

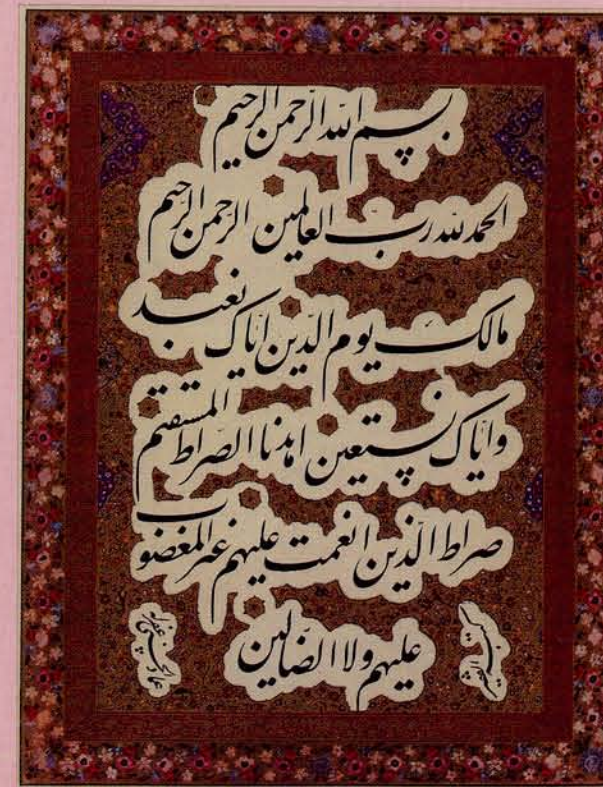


17
Nasta'liq style script from an illustrated book of Persian poems, the Khamseh of the poet Nizami. The miniature illustrated here shows the hero Bahram killing a dragon. Made in Shiraz, Iran, 992 A.H./1584 A.D. (University Museum no. NE-P-33, p. 127a; photo by Fred Schoch. H. 38 cm)

In the old days in Iran the best ink was imported from China and came in the form of small dried pieces. These pieces would be mixed with water and left to dissolve; the ink would then be diluted to the proper consistency—thin enough to flow smoothly, but not so thin as to be watery. The prepared ink would be put in a glass or ceramic inkwell whose rim turned well inward so that little ink would be lost if it overturned. This inkwell would be filled with small bits of cut rag, preferably silk, so that the pen would not pick up too

much ink. The pen would be dipped in the inkwell and the nib touched against the inward rim to remove extra ink. Some scribes would put their pen into the inkwell, touch it against the side of the inkwell, touch it against the side of the rim to remove excess ink, and then rub the nib on the top of the second knuckle of the thumb of their left hand, which would be in a horizontal position as they held the paper. When needed, more ink could be picked up from the top of the knuckle until it was gone, and then the pen would be dipped in the inkwell again.

The paper used for calligraphy should have enough of a glossy coating so that the ink does not spread out and lose the cleanness of the writing. In my youth the best paper, like the best ink, came from China, from the city we called Khan-Balik (Peking). When I was young we did not sit on chairs at tables, but rather on the floor. The best position for writing was to sit with the left leg bent and doubled under, while the right leg was bent at the knee with the right foot on the ground. The diagonal column of the right thigh thus made a



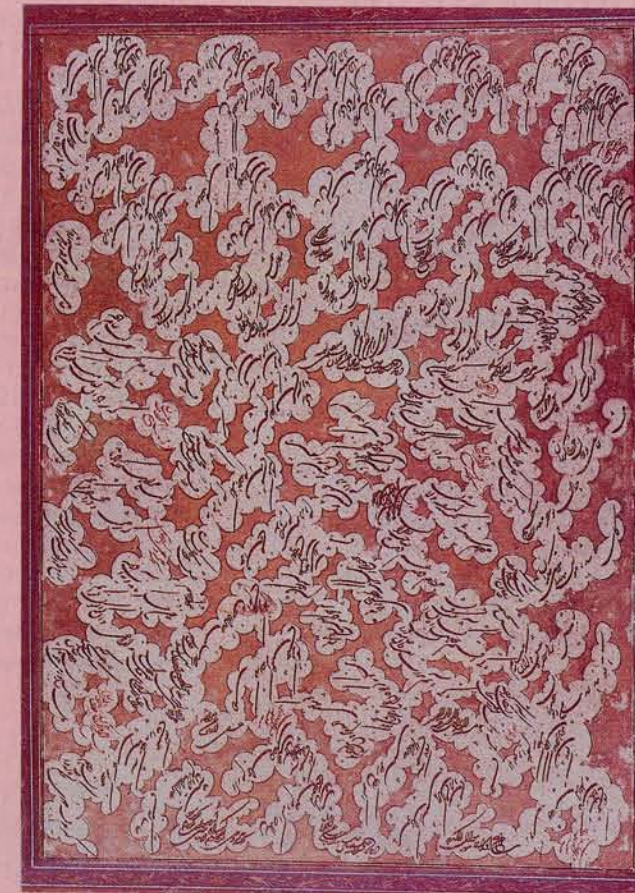
18
The opening section of the Koran written in Nasta'liq style script by Mir Emadol-Hassani, 11th c. A.H./17th c. A.D. (Copy of a manuscript page in the author's collection)



19 (left)
Naskh style script by Ahmad Neyrizi, 12th c. A.H./18th c. A.D. (Iranian Society for Calligraphy 1985)

Masters of Calligraphy

Modern Iranian scholars consider the four main styles of Persian calligraphy to be Tholth, Naskh, Nasta'liq, and Shekasteh Nasta'liq. For these four styles the greatest masters, who are known as the Arkan-i-Arbaeh or Four Pillars, are: for Tholth, Jamel-ed-din Yaqut Mosta'Semi (698 A.H.); for Naskh, Mirza Ahmad Neyrizi (mid-12th c. A.H.; Fig. 19); for Nasta'liq, Mir Emadol-Hassani (1024 A.H.; Fig. 18); and for Shekasteh Nasta'liq, Darvish Abdol-Majid Taleghani (1185 A.H.; Fig. 20).



20
Shekasteh Nasta'liq script by Darvish Abdol-Majid Taleghani (12th c. A.H./18th c. A.D.), who brought rules and regulations to this new style of writing. The text on this manuscript page is made up of a collection of verses by Persian poets. (Iranian Society for Calligraphy 1985)

مَتَّ الْقَصِيدَةَ الْمُبَارَكَةَ الْمَيْمُونَةَ
 سَوْنَهَا سَوْنَهَا سَوْنَهَا سَوْنَهَا
 الْفَيْضَةَ الْبَلِيغَةَ فِي مَلْحِ النَّبِيِّ الْأَخْفَى
 بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْعَزِيَّ الْهَاشِمِيَّ الْقُرَشِيَّ الْأَنْطِقِيَّ الْمَلِكِيَّ الْمَلْدُورِيَّ
 بِمَجْدِهِ فِي دَرْجَةِ الْوَجْدِ الْوَالِدِيِّ
 صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَبَارَكَ فِيهِمْ أَجْمَعِينَ
 سَمِعْتُ أَبَا جَرْدَةَ الْعَبْدَ الْمُخَنَّاخَ إِذْ لَمْ يَتَعَاك
 فِي أَيَّامِ حَضْرَةِ الْأَضْفَهَانَزْ شَهْرَهُ
 فِي أَيَّامِ حَضْرَةِ الْأَضْفَهَانَزْ شَهْرَهُ

stable surface on which the paper could be positioned for writing.

Although I make no claim to be an expert calligrapher, I derive great pleasure and satisfaction from the hours that I am able to devote to calligraphy, writing out verses of some of our illustrious poets in Nasta'ligh and Shekasteh Nasta'ligh script (Fig. 27). I have now reached a time in my life when I can no longer comfortably sit on the floor to write, but to an Iranian of my age and background, Persian calligraphy remains an abiding interest, an interest inextricably interwoven with a love for and appreciation of our great Persian poets.

Calligraphers often combine two or more different styles of script in order to emphasize different words or different parts of the text. In Figure 28, I have used both Nasta'ligh and Shekasteh Nasta'ligh. The basic text has been composed by Fereidoun Tavalloli, a contemporary Persian poet. It describes a scene on the Karun river, the main river of Khuzistan province in southwestern Iran. A despairing lover, a riverboat man who has been rejected by his beloved, sings sorrowful verses of Baba Taher, a famous old poet of Luristan. In my rendition the verses of Tavalloli are written in fine Shekasteh Nasta'ligh style, while the verses of Baba Taher, which express the essence of the story, are



22 The elaborate Shekasteh Nasta'ligh script was used by a calligrapher for this poem "Old and Young Man" by Mirza Nasir-ed-Din Jahromi; 13th century A.H./19th c. A.D. (Jahromi n.d.)

21 This elaborate piece of calligraphy in the Tholth script pairs lines of text with the alphabet, which is used as a decorative device. The first and all odd-numbered lines are the Arabic text; the even lines consist of reversed letters. Written in Isphahan by an unknown scribe, 1134 A.H./1755 A.D. (Fazaeli 1971:245)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 قَالَ مِيرُ الْمَوْمِنِينَ عَلِيُّ السَّلَامِ إلهي كُنْ فِي عِزِّي
 لَأَكُونَ لَكَ عَبْدًا ، وَكُنْ فِي فِخْرِي أَنْ تَكُونَ لِي رَبًّا ، أَنْتَ

23 Toghi' style script was used by a modern calligrapher, Habibollah Fazaeli, for this religious text relating the words of Ali, son of the Prophet Mohammad. (Fazaeli 1971:273)



24 A modern example of Nasta'ligh (Tchalipa) style, used for a poem from the Rubaiyat of Omar Kayam, was written by the calligrapher Keikhosro Koroush in 1362 A.H./1983 A.D. (1983:1).

مشق چهارم کرم بر زو کاغذ از خنک و وسط طور کشید شد معلوم میگردد کلاس پنجم
 سبک وسط کا ، بجهت ابوشبه است
 ز اوراق در پس کاخ شرف آوری بدست
 ز اوراق در سر کاخ شرف آوری بدست
 مشق پنجم (ناسله حروف و کلمات را باید با اندازه گرفت) کلاس پنجم
 التماسی که اینها مستند (قول اول اول اول اول) در حال ترکیب مایل طرف کله باشد
 دل زان سر طر حص بدلم ار کنی بدست مستم

25 A calligrapher's practice sheet for the Nasta'ligh style script, by Habibollah Fazaeli (1984:282).

written with a larger pen in Nasta'ligh style.

The lampshade shown in Figure 29a,b, which was created by Bahman Negahban, illustrates the richness and creativity still to be found in the art of Persian calligraphy. This eight-sided shade has an interlocking hexagonal structure, both of the shade and of the poetry written on it. A six-word verse (four repeating, two changing, AABBA), written in Persian Nasta'ligh style, is arranged within a honeycomb lattice, verse overlapping verse interconnected by shared words. Each of the six triangular panels contains a complete verse arranged so that it can be read in a meaningful way from any direction. When the lamp is turned on, direct light shines through the central grid of each unit, which carries the name of God (Fig. 29b).

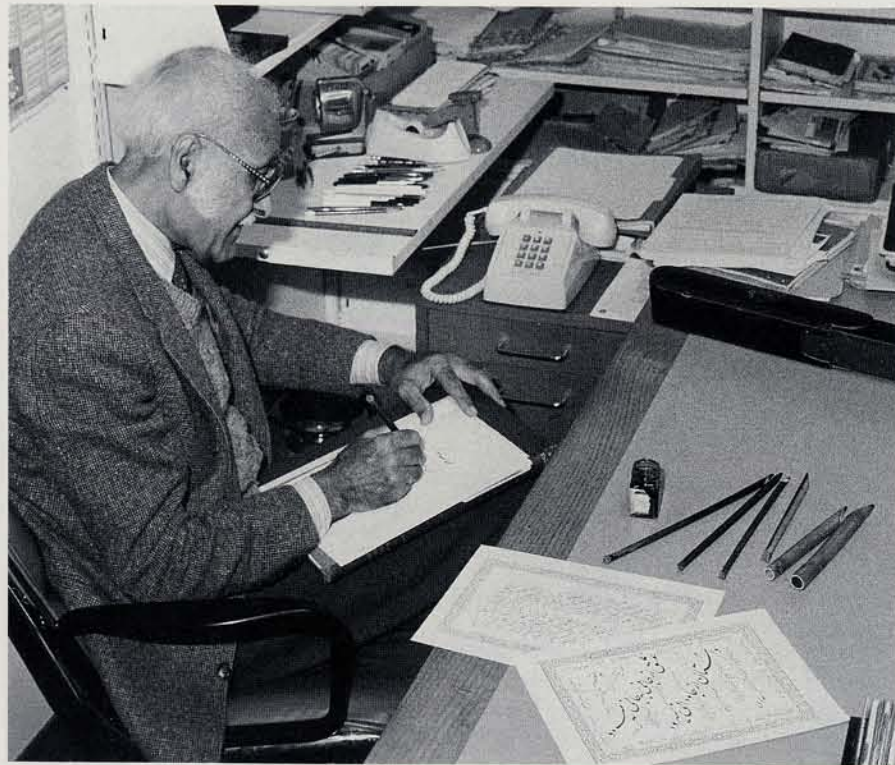
The poetry written on this lampshade, about love and care ("Moheb-

bat"), is one of the masterpieces of Molavi (Moulana Jalal-ed-Din). (Molavi was the foremost teacher and poet of Sufiism—Islamic Mys-

ticism—and the notions of rhythm and repetition found in his poetry are central to the practice of Sufiism.)



26 Lacquered paper pen box with metal inkwell and reed pen. Iran, 13th c. A.H./mid-19th c. A.D. (University Museum no. 20095, photo by Fred Schoch; L. 22 cm, W. 3.5 cm, H. 3.9 cm)

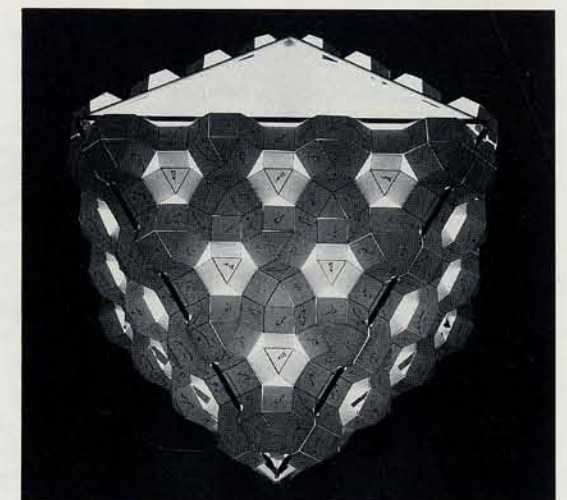
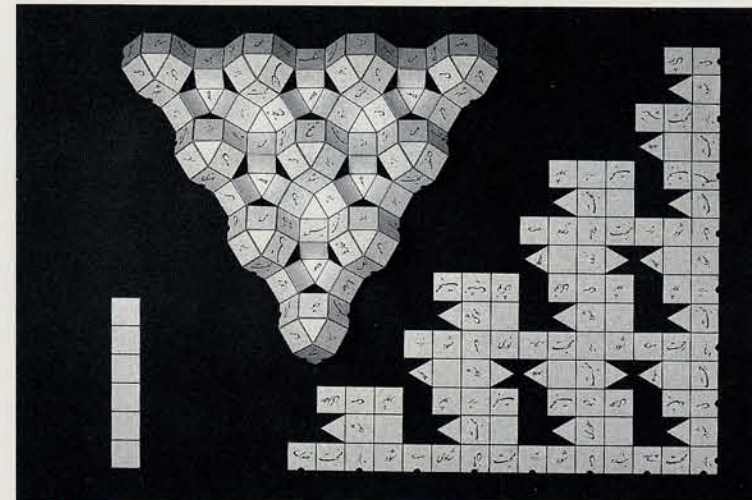
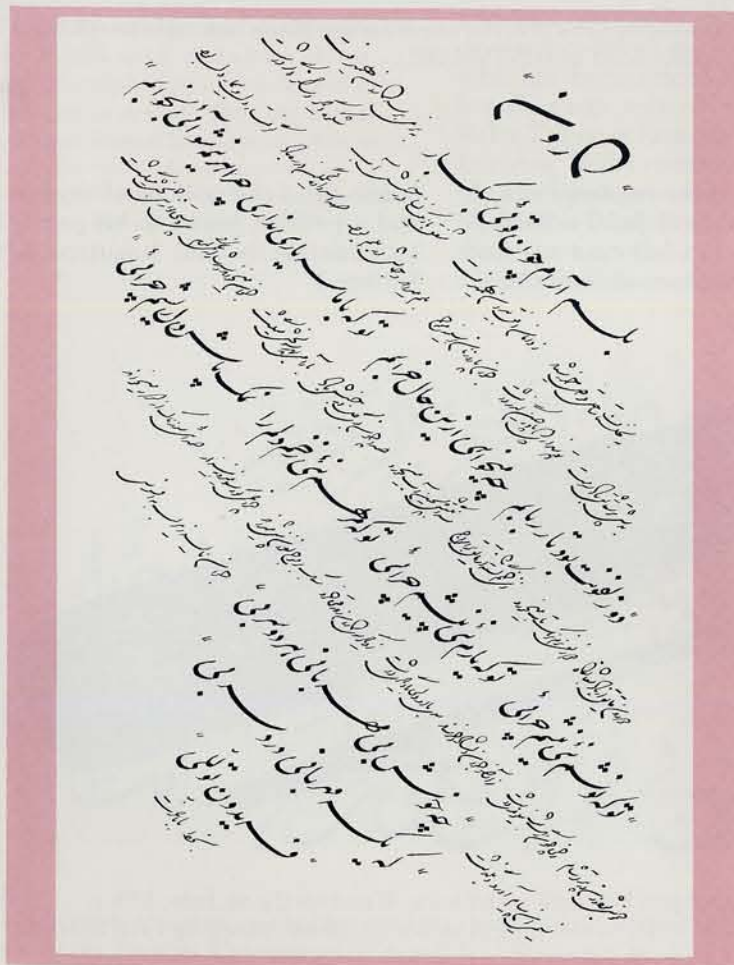


27 The author/calligrapher at work. (Photo by Bill Clough)

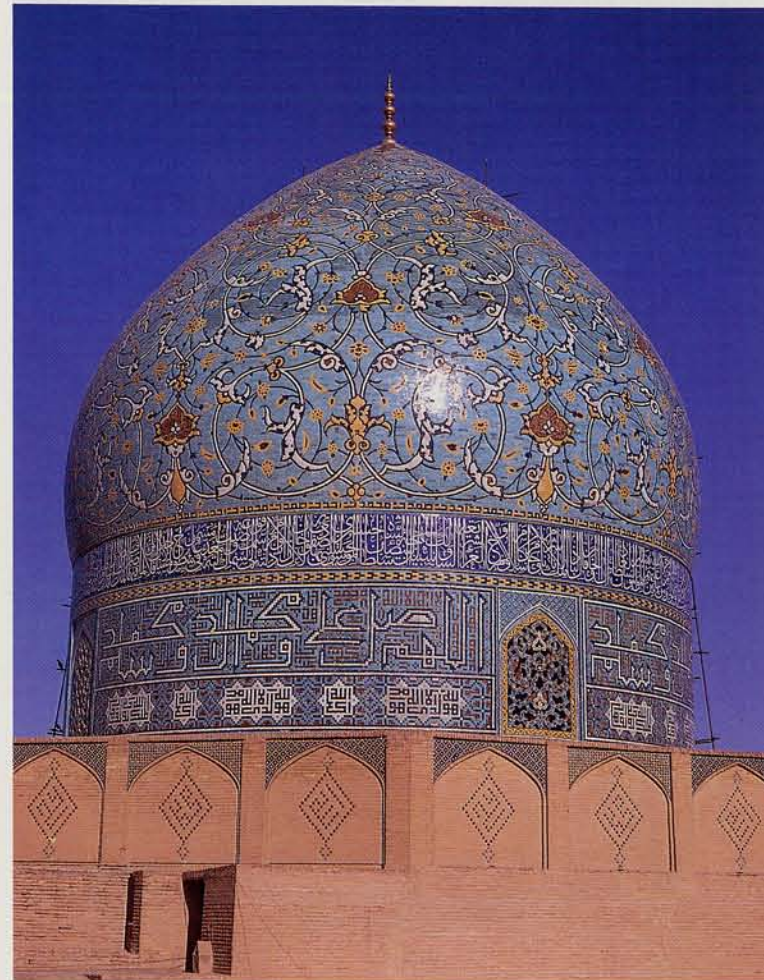
Through love bitter things (are made) sweet
 Through love bits of copper are made gold
 Through love pains (are turned to) healing
 Through love the dead (are made) living
 Through love the king (is as) a slave
 Through love thorns become (flowers)
 Through love vinegar (is made) sweet wine
 Through love (a branch is made) a throne
 Through love (a burden is made) a blessing.
 Through love a prison (is made) a rose bower
 (Through love a house is made enlightened)
 (Through love a thorn becomes a rose)
 Without love soft wax becomes iron
 Through love fire (becomes light)
 Through love the Devil (is made) an Hour
 Through love stone (is made) soft as butter
 Without love a garden (is as) a grate of ashes
 Through love grief is made joy
 Through love (a) ghoul (is made an) angel
 Through love (a) sting is as honey
 Through love (a) lion is as harmless as a mouse
 Through love (wrong is made right)
 Through love wrath (becomes) mercy.

(Translation of the Persian original by E.H. Whinfield, Octagon Press, London, date, with revisions contained in parentheses by Bahman Neghaban.)

28 Two styles of script were combined on this page of calligraphy by the author. The heavier Nasta'liq script was used for a poem by Baba Taher, while Shekasteh Nasta'liq was used for a poem by Fereidoun Tavalloli.



29a,b Honeycomb latticework lampshade designed by Bahman Neghaban, with verses from the Masnavi of Molavi written in Nasta'liq script by the author, 1983 A.D. When the lamp is turned on, the light shines through each central unit, illuminating the name of God. (Photography by Bahman Neghaban)



30 Tiled dome of the Madar-i Shah theological school in Isphahan, completed in 1126 A.H./1714 A.D. The inscription in the dark blue frieze is in the Tholth style. The turquoise frieze below contains inscriptions in two types of Kufic script. (Photo courtesy of Mary Virginia Harris)

Bibliography

Akhavain, Abbas
1985
Yek Omr Nastaligh.
Tehran: Tarsim Press.

Bayani, Mehdi
n.d.
Ahval va Athar-i-Khoshnevisan. Vol. I-IV.

Bowman, R.A.
1970
Aramaic Ritual Texts from Persepolis.
Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fazaeli, Habibollah
1971
Atlas-i-Khat. Isfahan: Ziba Press.

1984
Ta'lim Khat. Tehran: Offset Press.

Jahromi, Nasireddin Mohammad
n.d.
Masnavi-i-Pir Va Javan Baharieh. Ministry of Culture and Art Press.

James, David
1989
"The Geometry of the Spirit." *Aramco World* 40(5):16-27.

Iranian Society for Calligraphy
1985
Morrhaghah' Rangin. Tehran: Offset Press.

Ezat O. Neghaban was born in Ahwaz, Iran. Prior to his retirement he was Professor and Head of the Department of Archaeology and History of Art, as well as Dean of the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences of the University of Tehran. He directed the Marlik Excavations in 1961-62, the Haft Tepe Excavations from 1965-78, and the Qazvin Plain Archaeological Expedition, which included excavation of Sagzabad, Qabrestan and Zaghe, from 1970-78. He has published a number of books and articles on his excavations and on the archaeology of Iran. He is currently Visiting Curator and Research Associate at The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania.