

Original Research Article

A Historical Research to Retrieve Iranian Cultural Identity in Creating and Expanding Nastaliq Calligraphy

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Abstract

Problem statement: This article aims to review the creating background of the Nastaliq calligraphy, an identity for Iranian art and culture during the Timurid era, and also a proper context for Iranian poetry and literature. The development of calligraphy represents the Iranian identity and culture like a mirror and has the potential to lead and impress other arts through its literature-based discourse. The Iranian calligraphers have always been able to achieve a kind of proportion and stability by inventing various scripts like Nastaliq a brilliant master handwriting that can create distinctive attention compared to the other Islamic hand scripts. This study attempts to answer the following questions: a) how has the Iranian cultural identity emerged in Persian literature during the invention, development, and expansion of the Nastaliq script, b) how has the visual interpretation of Iranian culture been represented in the form of calligraphy?, c) What historical eras can be considered for addressing the development and evolution of the Nastaliq script when represented in Persian literature?

Research objective: This article examines and explains the reasons for the adherence of Iran's cultural identity to the art of calligraphy, which has been of great importance in Persian poetry and literature, as the main reason for its growth and expansion.

Research Method: This study used a qualitative research method. Data was gathered by the library method and reviewing the specific works of calligraphy in the mentioned eras.

Conclusion: The result of this article addresses the seven historical eras of this prosperity and development of Iranian calligraphy. In other words, the findings of this research include the growth and expansion of Persian literature, in light of the flourishing art of calligraphy, as a progressive art. Finally, at the end of this evolution, calligraphy is considered the most significant component to represent Persian literature and establish Iranian cultural identity.

Keyword: *Calligraphy, Nastaliq script, Persian literature, Iranian cultural identity.*

Introduction

One of the most prominent Iranian cultural features is the rich and distinguished literature

of the Persian language. Finding cultural identity in literary, verbal, and rhetorical productions of language which is generally known as literature is one of the cultural characteristics of Iranians

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with frequent implications. Based on the historical resources, the achievement of this cultural challenge has resulted in the emergence of hundreds of literary books by Iranian scholars and mystics, which have impressed a wide range of orientalists and intellectuals around the world to admire it. The Iranian national identity has grown in the context of its rich literature and culture, which has been preserved by the eloquence and influence of the prose and poetry of this language, “which has been rooted in the hearts of Iranian culture and civilization” (Tarafdari, 2006, 123). Among the scholars of this era, Abulqasem Ferdowsi played a prominent role in the retrieval and renewal of the Iranian language and gave a new life to it. According to him to rebuild the Iranian culture by retrieving the Persian language, a palace of wise words and culture created by him that cannot be damaged over time:

The flourished monuments will be destroyed
by rain and sun
[but]I established a tall palace of order (Poetry)
which will not be damaged by wind and rain
The years will pass by this written text,
[as finally] The one who has wisdom will read it
(Ferdowsi, 2012, 788).

‘... considering the Iranian culture, I suppose it can be mentioned that its main characteristic or identity, which has remained constant for ages, has been [its mission to] preserve the essence of its culture and to reduce the alien element. In other words, the essence of Iranian culture never given in to humiliation and disgrace, despite apparently accepting the domination of foreign countries (Arabs, Seljuk Turks, and Mongols), gradually has decreased from inside, as by this ‘accommodation’ and ‘assimilation’ a kind of integration has been created between the past and the present subjects, as it would not be possible to distinguish them at first sight’ (Satari, 2001, 110). One of the reasons caused the greatness of Iranian literature has been the developments in the field of book design, including calligraphy, which has propagated Persian culture, language, and literature as a mediator.

The calligraphers in the art schools of Herat, Shiraz, Jalayerian, Tabriz, Isfahan, and other related handwriting styles could professionally write all six major scripts of calligraphy, as they could produce many artworks in magnificent literary books to be culturally superior to their opponents. Ibn Muqla Baizawi Shirazi, the master of calligraphers, with his great effort showed that the Abbasid government in Cairo could not stop him from writing. Ibn al-Bawwab devoted himself to the art of calligraphy as he could prescribe numerous copies of the Qur’an. The artists were preparing a number of book layouts, architectural inscriptions, and other related arts by applying the six major scripts of calligraphy in art schools and courses in goodness and simplicity. Since the art of calligraphy has a great place in Islamic art and culture, its influence on other art forms is obvious due to its cultural hegemony and spiritual domination. Moreover, the art of calligraphy was greatly preferred by artists, due to its valuable place among the Iranian people before Islam, according to historical evidence. “... the calligraphy script and the nice handwriting that remained there (East) is specifically dedicated to the Iranian people” (Ibn Khaldun, 2003, V. 2, 844). Among the proofs of Iranians’ tendency towards calligraphy is the presence of Iranian students in the educational school of Yaqut al-Musta’simi, as this precious legacy in Iran has become a means for preserving their cultural identity. Contrary to the Iranian miniature artists who avoided signing their works until the end of the Herat school (9th century AH) and by the initiation of the Safavid Isfahan school (10th and 11th centuries AH), the calligraphers used to put their names in their works from the very beginning, which shows that artistic personality and dignity was accustomed among calligraphers, however not in its modern sense. If an artistic signature is considered as self-knowledge and self-confidence of an artist and represents his identity in the artistic society, the calligraphers were superior to the other arts, according to the art history of Iran. In this article, the evolution of the Nastaliq script in the context of Iranian art and literature to its

modern manifestation is discussed and reviewed. The main focus of this article is the national identity that is manifested in the cultural identity, which in turn emerged in the flourishing talent of Iranians in their rich and great literature. The art of calligraphy could express the Iranian great literature in the minds of the audience, which is considered the most significant art in book design and inscription of scientific and literary books. The main question that arises here is how Iranian cultural identity has remained stable in calligraphy, as a fundamental art in Iranian literature and eloquence? What are the main stages of growth and evolution of calligraphy in Iranian culture which are evident in the development of Nastaliq script?

Research Background

There are few pieces of research in the field of Persian literature, national identity, and calligraphy altogether. Of course, in this subject, more emphasis is placed on finding Iran's national and cultural identity in light of the historical developments of the Nastaliq script from its invention until now. Therefore, in addition to the investigation of Iranian cultural identity in the process of the history of the evolution of Nastaliq calligraphy, attention has also been paid to their diversity and classification. Therefore, along with the investigation of Iranian cultural identity in the development process of Nastaliq calligraphy, the diversity and classification of this handwriting have also been considered.

Mayel Heravi in the book: "Book Design in Islamic Civilization" (1993) compiled all opinions on the techniques of book design, the manners of practicing calligraphy, dissolving and diluting calligraphy ink, miniature painting, gilding, binding and making book covers by collecting the written sources of these precious artworks, as he could provide valuable resources for research in this field.

Azhand (2013) in an article entitled, 'Calligraphy in the territory of Herat School: the previous era (emphasis on Nastaliq script)' briefly reviewed the development and growth of the Nastaliq script during the existence of the Herat school. The author has evaluated the historical evolution of the Nastaliq script

from the pre-era of the Herat school, and believes that calligraphy exceeded painting, as the invention of the Nastaliq script in the 8th century of Hijri is evidence for this claim; he also has studied the development of calligraphy in the 6th and 7th centuries of Hijri, and addressed the continuation of the royal libraries, especially the library of Baysunghur Mirza, in the previous times of the Herat school, headed by Jafar Baysunghur. The author also pointed to the 'master-apprentice' system of this time, which caused the continuity of artistic traditions, and historically showed the circle of master-apprenticeship of Nastaliq calligraphers within this era. The author concludes that the Nastaliq script originated from the mind and consciousness of the Iranian people and developed in line with the expansion and richness of Persian literature to create the most gorgeous calligraphy in the Islamic world, as it was a manifestation of Iranian national art.

Jabari (2008) in his article entitled 'Development and evolution of Nastaliq script in the seventh and ninth centuries AH' believes that despite traditional narratives, which consider Mir Ali Tabrizi as the founder of the Nastaliq script of the Herat school during the Timurids, this handwriting was formed several decades ago prior to him, based on the historical documents. The Nastaliq script had gone through various writing evolutions, from its foundation in the second half of the 8th century of Hijri, in Iran and other countries such as India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Turkey. According to the research background, it can be said that the most prominent school in this area belonged to Mir Emad Hassani, the great calligrapher of the Safavid era. Rovanjoo (2014) in an article entitled 'instruction of calligraphy as a complete version of traditional instruction of (visual) art' states that the traditional education of calligraphy, with almost intact educational texts, has been established based on the teacher-apprentice model. This teaching method includes various exercises and teachers' instructions. The author of this study has attempted to explain calligraphy education as a complete model of

traditional (visual) art education. In this method, each of the theoretical, written, and imaginary practices covers some of the student's educational needs, and the word "exercise"/drill (Mashgh/Mashq) refers to the experience and educational level of the student in a spiritual manner (Seir-o Solook).

Golestan and Hoshyar (2019) by addressing the structural changes of the Nastaliq script with the arrival of the lithography industry in the Qajar era (with emphasis on two prominent works by Mohammad Reza Kalhor and Mohammad Hossein Shirazi), state that calligraphers [of that time] made variations in the form of letters of Nastaliq script to prevent them from reducing legibility and damage by the arrival and spread of lithography in Iran. Mohammad Reza Kalhor, as an artist by changing his writing style to be aligned with modern technology, provided the condition for the emergence of another style of calligraphy during the third Qajar era. Based on the literature review, he inscribed the version of "Khorasan Travelogue" by using a pen with a writing angle of 64 degrees, allocating more lines per page, considering the whole concept, legibility and readability of the text, and kind of punctuation/marking at the beginning of sentences and on specific letters.

Among the characteristics of the 3rd course, bold writing of letters and words, the stronger performance of teeth, and making connections are considerable. However, condensed writing in the form of letters and words is one of the innovations of the master calligrapher, Kalhur, arising from the appearance of the lithography industry.

Davari Ardakani (2007) in an article titled: 'Symbols of Iranian Identity and Persian Language', reports research on planning for language and language consciousness in Iran, and considers many effective components of the formation of symbols of Iranian national identity, among them Persian language is one of the most significant element. The achievements of this study represent the components of Iranian national identity such as 1. Culture (customs/rituals, clothes, behavior, food, beliefs, and other similar

matters), 2. Moral characteristics (whether positive or negative), 3. Iranian birth certificate, 4. Ancient monuments, 5. Iranian myths, 6. Ancient sports, and 7. Contemporary national sports, 8. Religion, ethnicity, and national anthem, 9. Geographical and specific architectural places 10. Economy, 11. Art, 12. Persian language and literature, 13. Science and industry, 14. History and civilization, 15. Iranian personalities, 16. Politics and 17. National flag. Of all those, the Persian language is one of the most imperative symbols of Iranian national identity.

Pat, Khezri, and Mazaheri (2011) in their article entitled 'Calligraphy in the Early Safavid Period: Evolutions, Functions, Patrons and Artists' believe that the evolution of calligraphy in Iran coincided with the beginning of Safavid rule. In this era, this art has gone through three nearly equal phases or epochs. The first epoch was considered a transition era by passing through prior traditions, especially the Timurid era to the Safavids of Tabriz; The second epoch coincided with the first years of Tahmasab's reign and his attention to the art of book design. In the third epoch, which was initiated with Tahmasab's repentance and his refusal to support artists, contrary to the unproductivity of some arts, the arts of painting and calligraphy were protected.

Calligraphy had two distinct functions at this time. First, the artistic function which used to be widely organized in the form of an inscription of literary books and preparing Katibeh inscriptions (a piece of inscriptions used as architectural decoration) for palaces, mosques, and other buildings; the second was the administrative function in which calligraphy was used to write ruling letters, government letters and making seals. In the first half of the Safavid era, these authors addressed the role of the supporters of calligraphy, the prominent calligraphers of Nastaliq, and the factors that were influencing their living.

In a study entitled, 'The role of Timurid rulers in the evolution of Islamic calligraphy' the authors explain that in Islamic culture, calligraphy is an art that takes its sanctity and necessity from the inscription of the Holy Quran (Abbaszadeh & Mandali, 2014);

accordingly, calligraphy became very popular among the Islamic societies. It is also a kind of art that represents purity, tenderness of the soul, and inner discipline; it has a high position in book design and architecture among the Islamic arts. Due to the support of rulers and leading figures, various beautiful calligraphy scripts were invented during the Timurid era. Studying the role of Timurid rulers and their supporters in the prosperity of calligraphy is of great importance.

Fallah (2007) in an article titled 'The role of Persian language in the national unity of Iran' explains that cultural and national identity are the most reasons for keeping the country stable against the attacks of nations and invader powers; the identity that has prospered and remained persistent relying on literature in the form of the Persian language. The Persian language was used as an expressive element during the Achaemenid ruling when they wrote their agreement letters and government orders, the language applied by great poets like Abul Qasim Ferdowsi also for writing his great epic poem to shape his national and cultural interests and identity, and to bring self-knowledge and self-belief to the Iranians people.

It is also the language, Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī used to write his mystical literary works and to create a spiritual discourse based on literature, and Hafez and Saadi wrote their literary and lyrical works, as this ancient language has always played a main and specific role in the stability, national unity, and life of Iranian people. In fact, the Persian language has always united the cultural and national identity of Iranian people and the related ethnic groups, like a protector, whether visibly or invisibly. Allahyari and Abedinpoor (2010) in an article titled, "The reason for the evolution of calligraphy and its connection with Iranian identity in the Safavid era", point out that calligraphy was among the arts that flourished in the Timurid area, and its evolutions in method and approach were due to several following factors including, 1. the support and interest of the Timurid government, 2. The support of the aristocratic class,

and 3. Using the scientific, artistic, cultural, and social experiences of calligraphers. Due to this reason, the teaching of calligraphy become a kind of culture; its association with Iranian identity and its fundamental elements was among the valuable achievements of this art in the 9th century AD. The expansion of Persian literature during the 7th to 9th centuries AD. was a motivation for Iranian people to have their special handwriting styles.

The invention and evolution of Iranian calligraphy scripts such as Taliq, Shekasteh-Taliq, Taliq-Nastaliq, and especially Nastaliq between the 8th and 9th centuries A.H. and their relationship and connection with Iranian cultural characteristics including Persian poetry, language and literature placed them as one of the main components of Iranian identity during that time and played a significant role in its prosperity.

The book "Contemporary Iranian Art: New Perspectives", covers the analytical history of the last 150 years of Iranian art in the transition from tradition to modernity (Keshmirshakan, 2014); it is an analytical research approach, different from other art history books. The author has prepared a special chapter and expressed the historical sequence of events, including the role of modern calligraphy in the modern art of Iran. The book "Pioneers of Iran's Modern Art, Hossein Zenderoudi " Through the efforts of Pakbaz and Emdadian (2011) discusses the expert's opinions about the description and analysis of Hossein Zenderudi's works and deals with the role of calligraphic elements in the Saghakhaneh movement. In this book, the authors point to the identity-based approach in addressing the neo-traditionalist works of Zenderoudi and explain the formation process of Iranian Lettrism and the retrieval of Iranian identity with the cultural support of the governments of the time in the works of Saghakhaneh artists, especially Hossein Zenderoudi. Based on the literature review of this study, it can be interpreted that the cultural identity of Iran has been manifested in Persian literature and the art of book design, including calligraphy, inscriptions, painting, and other related art fields. These arts affirmatively

reflect Iranian cultural characteristics and elements, and dissuasively separate their inner culture from other cultures, as consider these dissimilarities as distinctive characteristics, and a unique dignity. Emphasis on Iranian cultural elements, including the rich and lyrical Persian literature, Iranian calligraphy, and techniques applied in book design is a kind of confirmation on Iranian cultural and national identity.

The Prolific Persian Literature, as a Mysterious Iranian Identity

Based on the historical documents, Iranian people have established their own literature and cultural-awareness roots during the long years they have settled in this land. Since they were the pioneer in the sciences of the Islamic world, and their scholars ahead of other Muslim nations in all fields, Persian literature similarly grew and developed in the light of Iranian knowledge and awareness. "One of the surprising facts about the scholars of the Islamic nation is that they are mostly non-Arab scholars, whether in Islamic or intellectual field of sciences, except in a number of cases, that they are originally Arabs, but belong to Persian land in terms of language, place of education and professors, and having the Arabic Shia religion" (Ibn Khaldun, 2003, V. 3, 311). Persian literature has always been an intrinsic art for Iranians, as they always appreciated their teachings and wise advice, representing their cultural essence within centuries of the life of a land, full of events that they have experienced frequently to reach maturity and supreme wisdom. The Poems full of rich meanings, with appealing expressions, have been the secret of the permanency of Iranian poets and writers. So it can be interpreted that the most significant causes of ethnic and cultural continuity in Iran are the attribute of rationality and mature literature of the Persian language. Ehsan Yarshater writes from the words of the Russian orientalist, Vasily Bartold in the book "Mussulman Culture": However, according to Muslim opinion, eloquence remained the main characteristic of Arab literature and "Thought & Concept" a distinct class of Persian literature (Yarshater, 2001, 50). The

great concepts, intact perceptions, and original stories have been the secret of the durability and attraction of Persian literature; this lyrical literature with a mystical approach, and presenting epic and wisely tender stories for the listeners, has always captured and elevated the souls of foreigners, even the invaders of this land. From the Samanid Empire time onwards, when the tradition of writing Shahnameh books and praising the kings and rulers of that time became common, by narrating the history and telling the conquests and greatness of the Pishdadian dynasty and Sassanid Empire, a seedling of cultural and nationalistic motivations in the Persian language found an opportunity to emerge. The tradition of writing Shahnameh, which was a conscious effort to preserve native heritage, developed during the Samanid era by scholars such as Daghighi Toosi. He composed his book when the Turks started to threaten the Samanid government; the context of the mythical wars, between the Iranians and the Turanians on the banks of the Jeyhoon, was created when the Turks threatened the Samanid government from the same horizons with a serious threat; it seems Daghighi was trying to depict the events of his time" (Tarafdari, 2006, 131).

The Persian scholars and poets used to point to the expression and explanation of mystical and moral implications and issues in their works to express their interpretation of the surrounding world and emphasize it, as retrieval of the cultural identity of the Iranian society was one of their most significant missions."Shahnameh clearly expressed the implication of a specific manner of humanity [Iranian national traditions and myths] that was deeply rooted in Iranian cultures and represented the national expressions that strongly remained in the commune. Over time, Shahnameh turned to become an archetype of patriotism, and the main origin of Persian national identity. Iranians, by adopting the new religion and the emerged social arrangement, grew up from the ashes of their past life to the new life and stage of their cultural history" (Yarshater, 2001, 140). Relying on the element of imagination, Persian poetry creates

an ideal world, which astonishes its listeners so much that cultural arrays and artistic signs are imprinted and revitalized in their minds and souls. Persian literature and poetry have an everlasting strong connection with cultural identity, as it has attracted passionate readers with the most influential cultural and artistic characteristics. Some of the most factors that affect the mind of the audience are makings space, imaginary elements, the Utopia of the Iranian-Islamic world, softness and magnificence of verses along with appropriate musical rhythm and lyrical arrays. This wonderful intrinsic essence has been set in Persian poetry since the pre-Islamic era. “Neo-poetry, which is arising from Sassanid traditions, with Arabic ‘rhythm and rhyme’ [prosodic weights], started to flourish. Contrary to the dry street scenes, the environment of the glorious courtyards of the palaces became the focus of attention. The main characteristics of this poem were the gentle satisfaction of the tender manifestations of Nature: the flowers, trees, clouds, rain, and snow, and the transformation of colors and figures with the change of seasons. Apart from this, a concept of beauty that originated from a perfect mature woman or even a young person who was a professional musician and skilled in the art of confrontation, together with pleasant descriptions of wine (in Persian literature: Bاده) and its magical redemptive impression, were among the unique characteristics of this poem. The hymns and chants were choruses along with the sound of harp (Chang), Tanbur, and other instruments. Customarily, these elements were the prelude for the ballades that were written in admiration of gorgeous people to describe and admire their bravery, generosity, gallantry, and victories in battle, to present their grandness. The legendary epics were also composed about ancient warriors in the form of mythological history and Iranian legends” (ibid., 140). The Iranian utopia, which is recreated and represented in mystical and lyrical poems with original implications, creates a heavenly world; an imaginary world created by Iranian poets such as Ferdowsi, Molavi, Attar, Saadi, Hafez, Nezami Ganjavi, and other scholars.

“This imaginative world that used to create poetry and an unreal world, full of the feeling of pleasure and joyfulness, and the common worldly desires, which was prevalent in the poetry of this time [of prosperity in Persian literature], gradually evolved in contemplation and self-indulgent or even a state of melancholy” (ibid., 141).

Calligraphy, A Distinguished Outfit on the Figure of Persian Literature

As stated earlier, the art of calligraphy has a consecrated character, which represents a high value and significant place in the traditional culture. “Given the art of calligraphy is measured as prominent art in a society in which iconography was prohibited, the progressive and transcendental aspects of this art have been emphasized a lot. The art of calligraphy has been recognized as a means to interpret divine revelation and a dominant custom for writing manuscripts of Quran, due to its ability for transmitting and recording knowledge, wisdom and inscription” (Aghdashloo, 2006, 50). The holiness of this art arising from the inscription of this divine word, as the scribes of the Qur’an were determined faithful people and dedicated themselves to writing this sacred text in calligraphy. «It is due to the divine word, that the gleam of holiness descends on [the papers on which the divine revelation was written, calligraphy paper] and the original [essence] emerges as an “eloquent (Mobin)” book, as opening and reading it has special duties and conditions. [And so] calligraphers who preferred to write the Quran or other religious texts in calligraphy as their specialty, were more respected (ibid., 51-52).

They considered their master instructors full of spiritual qualities and sincere art, and they trained their students according to the same ethics and faith. The glory of calligraphy was entangled with the inscription of honorable Iranian literature in society and had a high status in the imperial libraries. “A significant point that can be perceived from the document known as [Manshoor-e Kalantari-ye Khajeh Nasir Mozaheb] is the appointment of one of the calligraphers, scribes, and gilders (for gilding papers) as the head of this

library. It is obvious that the arts of inscription, calligraphy, and gilding were used to be superior to painting and miniature painting, as the art of painting had not yet regained its current position and dignity, and was not able to compete with the art of calligraphy and gilding. Although Nasir al-Din al-Tusi was proficient in painting, his ability in the art of calligraphy and inscription was more in focus (Azhand, 2011, 47).

The reason for the spread of this brilliant literature and achievements of Iranian poets and litterateurs as the representative of the vision hidden in the Persian language and literature, was the presence of calligraphers who gave an artistic aspect to Persian poetry, with meaningful and passionate poems, to satisfy the audience and let them benefit from this rich source. The calligraphers were decorating poems for the audience with the beautiful cloth of calligraphic handwriting. Even if the visual aspect and the perceptual foundations of literature are not addressed, the most imperative way for literature to emerge is the form of calligraphy, and it is the formal and figurative aspect of letters that manifests itself in the aesthetic compositions of calligraphers, which as a visual work, attracts the enthusiasts.

Based on these meaningful concepts of Iranian literature, which have regenerated in the form of poetry and prose, the Iranians were able to defeat the Arabs' power and their verbal skills, which they used to dominate other nations; what remained as the prominent element of this cultural language against the invading culture was the art of calligraphy. Although according to the history of calligraphy evolution, the creation of the main six hand-scripts was attributed to the Iranian artists, because of the visual space of calligraphy of that time, an Arabic atmosphere mostly prevailed. However, the schools of Herat and Shiraz had artists, who by expanding their experiences in developing calligraphic hand scripts and creative artistic activity, achieved hand scripts that represented more proficiently and elegantly the spirit of Iranian literature.

The Persian calligraphic scripts reflect the artistic

atmosphere of Persian literature more exquisitely and expertly in coordination with sounds, syllables, and phonemes. Persian calligraphy was the consequence of the mastermind and collective effort of Iranian artists, which was inspired by the experiences in the field of inscription that could manifest the tender spirit of the Iranian poets. Accordingly, the identity and individuality of the Iranian soul were manifested in this innovative artistic function, as the scripts of Nastaliq, Taliq, Shekasteh-nastaliq, became the representative of the identity of Iranian culture.

Calligraphy Developments in Iran

Calligraphy has a long history in Iran with rising and falling which adopts its value and dignity from the inscription of the religious texts of Avesta and other holy pre-Islamic texts and continued by passing through the post-Islamic era, as it could acquire a high position in art. By inscription of the divine word of the Quran, this art was more blessed, and its significance increased by following the command of prohibition of iconography by the Prophet of Islam (PBUH), as there was no concrete image of this holy word to appear except calligraphy. One of the official calligraphers of the Abbasid, Ibn Muqla Shirazi organized the chaotic condition of calligraphy by using geometric forms and established twelve principles for it. His efforts can be categorized into three principles 1. establishing the seat (Korsi) line 2. creating a geometric form for the letters, and 3. defining a standard for the proportions of the letters, according to the pen size used for calligraphy.

In this research, to study the art of calligraphy, which its progress is highly dependent on the efforts of Iranian calligraphers, seven historical eras have been determined, as this art has always been a part of establishing its self-culture and preserving Iranian identity as a structure for the distinct Iranian literature. It should be noticed that in this article, calligraphy refers to all hand-writing scripts, but while studying the classified eras, the Nastaliq script is highly focused, compared to others due to its application in writing the prominent texts of the

Persian literature, as the most significant elements of cultural identity.

The development and expansion of Nastaliq calligraphy are classified into some specific courses: 1. the creation and expansion of Nastaliq script, 2. Writing and spreading of Aadab al-Mashgh, a calligraphy instruction written by Babashah Esfahani, 3. The emergence of Mir Emad Hassani Seifi Qazvini and 4. The emergence of Mirza Mohammad Reza Kalhor with the structural evolutions he created in the Nastaliq script to prepare it for lithography, 5. inventing a kind of hand-writing style called Siah-mashgh as an independent and creative artwork, 6. creating an educational institution known as "Iran Calligraphers Association" during the Pahlavi II, and 7. the role of calligraphy in contemporary Iranian art resembles the use of calligraphy in painting (calligram).

• The first course, inventing the Nastaliq/ Nasta'liq script

The Nastaliq script was invented by Mir Ali Heravi/Tabrizi, a prominent Persian calligrapher; However, prior to his creative invention, the instructions and writing style of Nastaliq were common among the scribes. The invention of Nastaliq is one of the central artistic events that altered the artistic currents of book layout in the Timurid era according to the Iranians' priorities and artistic manners, and also established the hand-writing of Nastaliq, which previously had an unimproved writing form, as later presented the strong and stunning instructions based on the aesthetic rules of Iranian culture. "The Nastaliq script initially was created by Mir Ali Tabrizi from the combination of two scripts of Naskh and Taliq (Ghazi Ahmad, 1987, 57; Doost Mohammad, 1993, 265; Ali Afandi, 1990, 59).

The invention of this calligraphic script could change the cultural identity of Iranian people in their official communication and book layout, and converted the social spaces into an "Iranization" one, completely according to the Iranian identity. The altered characteristic was that the Nastaliq script was completely in accordance with the tender

manner of Iranian people in performing circles & seat lines and calligraphic details, as became a sign of the elegant and discerning Iranian favorites. This script is completely related to the mood and atmosphere of the Iranian poem and poetic elements. The sounds, phonemes, meters (rhythmic structure of a verse), and musical spaces of Persian poetry are all in accordance with the form of Nastaliq calligraphy, known as "the bride of Islamic scripts" (Bayani, 1984, 442), to the extent that the Iranian poetic and cultural atmosphere has a significant impact on the audience. Along with the prosperity



Fig. 1. A composed verse by Mir Ali Tabrizi.
Source: www.artworkshop.blogfa.com.

of the work of scribes and calligraphers, this art reached its highest level to organize the techniques applied in book design.

• **The second course, writing of Adab-al Mashq/Mashgh (the instruction of practicing calligraphy) by Bābā-Shāh Esfahāni**

In the pre-Safawi era, Adaab al-Khat (the instruction of writing calligraphy) or Adab al-Mashgh was inscribed by calligraphy masters which were for calligraphy education, especially teaching Nastaliq handwriting. These instructions included composition and formation in the best way, which were based on the experiences and essential teachings of Ibn Muqla. In this regard, Baba-Shah Esfahani composed the last and most complete manner of writing Nastaliq calligraphy. This book includes the main structure and instruction about

the principles and rules of calligraphy (beautiful handwriting), observance of ethical values, and the attractive aspects of calligraphy.

These teachings were written based on the traditional educational system of instructors-student. In this practice, the writer recommends the learning of calligraphy based on three types of exercises, step-by-step, and instructor-based to improve students' level of education: 1. Theoretical exercise in which students try to learn hand-writing by following the hand movements of the instructor and observing the hand-writing of great masters. 2. Pen-based exercise, in which the student inscribes according to the inscription of masters and tries to exercise with the calligraphic pen, 3. Memory-based exercise that develops the student's imagination to inscribe the correct writing style of letters and words and also



Fig. 2. Chalipa (four diagonal hemistichs of a poem) in the handwriting of Sultan Ali Mashhadi. Source: www.jtpva.alzahra.ac.ir



Fig. 3. Chalipa, A handwriting by Mir Ali Heravi. Source: www.artworkshop.blogfa.com/

the correct combination of them. In this book, he characterized the instructors-student teaching method in seven steps, in order to 1. avoid unapproved habits, which resemble kind of unbalanced, and 2. acquire approved characteristics. 3. Obtain educational skills about composition of letters, seat line, proportion of letters, weakness, strength, area, circles, virtual ascent, principles, dignity and purity. 4. notice that the non-educational characteristics are achieved after acquiring academic ones. (Non-educational characteristics include Positive/Negative ratio (Savad & Bayaz) (See: Isfahani, 1992), round letters up (Tashmir), real ascension and real descent), Shaan (Pleasure): it is a quality of calligraphy that when it appears, the calligrapher is fascinated by looking at the hand-writing and does not feel tired and Safa (reaching a state in calligraphy that causes joyful sense in audience). 5. honoring and respecting the position of the instructor 6. let student follows the tutor to perform the three main practices. 7. obtain a "permission" from the instructor, after acquiring all the skills. Baba-Shah Esfahani prefers morality over artistic skills in order to attract the audience with the grace of calligraphy. "... prior to starting technical lessons, [tutor] should see ability to grow and improve in his student from mental and spiritual dimension, to make an effort to develop them as a tutor, and subsequently, the student who take a [calligraphic] pen to gain beautiful hand-writing style and make a design, he/she should be a truthful person and show high personal qualities, like his calligraphy work. Baba-Shah Esfahani, in his book (Adab Al-Mashgh), believes balance only comes from the fingers of a calligrapher, who is personally free from mistakes, as the outcome of this moral balance brings tenderness and proportion in the handwriting written by his/her hand. He believed an illegible handwriting is the result of mental intemperance and unapproved moral qualities, as the spiritual and transcendental aspect of calligraphy helps the apprentice to attain purity and spiritual dignity. Purity and dignity are the last spiritual characteristic of art which are not classified as technical skill, rather they give calligrapher a manner and quality that amazes the viewer who cannot stop looking at the artwork. It should

be mentioned that Baba-Shah Esfahani is one of the pioneer calligraphers who considered the characteristics of spirituality, mental equilibrium, good morals, and self-purification as significant factors for the legibility and the attractiveness of a calligraphic script (Ravanjoo, 2014, 58).

• The third course: flourishing of Nastaliq script by advent of Mir Emad

According to the majority of experts, Mir Emad Hassani Saifi Qazvini certainly brought the Nastaliq calligraphy to its highest level of stability, articulacy, and beauty. According to the opinion of the prominent calligraphy researcher, Dr. Mehdi Bayani, "Mir [Emad] had a 'white hand' due to his nice pen and the strength of his handwriting, which was firm and well-shaped without any correction. He used to write the thin fonts (Khafi) so cutely and the thick fonts or palpable letters (Jali) so strong and sweet. The prettiness of his handwriting became widespread". Mir Emad created artworks in all calligraphy styles, as the most masterful calligrapher during the Safavid era. "At this time, Mir Emad Hassani Qazvini was known as the best calligrapher of the Nastaliq style in Iran, who made Shah Abbas Safavi honored to the extent that he expressed his desire for the inscription of the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi in the Nastaliq script; it is a very famous historical event, mentioned in different narrations" (Abdullah-Joghtaei, 2004, 239).

Mir Emad, who was more tending to piece writing, as the aesthetic aspect of calligraphy, reached the art of cruciform writing /Chalipa and piece writing to its highest level (Figs. 4 & 5). He removed many restrictions in the calligraphy of letters, connections, words, and unclear rules in Nastaliq script in his specific manner. He studied thoroughly the previous hand-writing styles, and expanded the reputation of Nastaliq in other territories including the Indian subcontinent, Asia Minor (Anatolia, Ottoman empire), and other countries, relying on his valuable experience in writing hand scripts and making creative combinations, as Museums were honorable to have his hand script. "Mir Emad bin Ibrahim Hassani Saifi Qazvini (1615),

one of the prominent artists of Shah Abbas Safavi era, was well-known during his lifetime as his artworks were exchanged word by word and line by line like a gold sheet, as the kings of Iran, Hindustan and Ottoman were proud to have a piece of his works in their library” (Bayani, 1984, 768). There are opinions on the pen’s slant angle and establishing the golden ratio about the letters, and stretched or solid characters of the Nastaliq script; surprisingly, Mir Emad was applying these proportion rules in his works professionally. The students under his training developed the calligraphy style of their master with great accuracy and presented them to the next generation. Mir Emad trained many students in Isfahan city, like Abu Torab Esfahani, Abdul Jabbar Esfahani, Mohammad Saleh Khatoonabadi, Nuruddin Mohammad Lahiji, Abdul Rashid, and Goharshad Khatoon (his daughter).

• The fourth course: the masterpiece of Mohammadreza Kalhor and preparation of Nastaliq Script for Lithography

To bring calligraphy from the traditional world to the modern world of publishing and press as a powerful media, some prerequisites were required; Mirza Mohammadreza Kalhor (1966). accomplished this significant responsibility in Nastaliq calligraphy. As one of the most prominent calligraphers of the Qajar era, he could create a new style in Nastaliq calligraphy, that caused many enthusiasts to follow him and his name was recognized as the one who made “the Nastaliq script to be consistent with the industry of lithography”. The motivation and eagerness of the young artist, Kalhor, led him to the cities of Qazvin and Isfahan to study the masterworks of the experts such as Mir Emad Seifi Qazvini and to see the calligraphy inscriptions, according to the opinion of Abbas Iqbal. His affection and passion for the art of Nastaliq calligraphy were accompanied by perseverance, patience, and continuous effort. He inscribed the travel stories of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar with high accuracy and special skill in calligraphy script. He was such a hard worker and diligent artist that could re-write and publish the

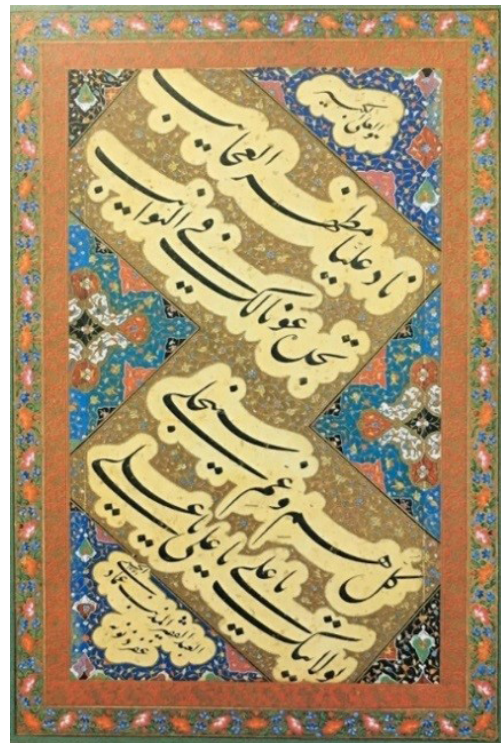


Fig. 4. Chalipay-e Nadeh-Ali (in praise of Imam Ali A.S), Source: By Mir Emad Al-Hassani. Source: pinterest.org/



Fig. 5. Inscription of Surah Hamd by Mir Emad. Al-Hassani. Source: calligraphers.ir/

following exquisite works professionally in Nastaliq calligraphy: 1. Twelve issues of the newspaper of Urdu-ye Humayuni (Royal Travel), which was covering the travel of Naser al-Din Shah to Khorasan state, 2. parts of Sharaf newspaper, 3. The book of Faiz al-DoMou (Life of Imam Hussein), 4. Resaleh-ye Ghadirieh (describes the Immamat of Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (A.S.)), 5. Makhzan al-Ensha (Elements and techniques of letter writing in 1528), 6. The book of Montakhab- al-Sultan (the selected Poems of two prominent poets, Saadi and Hafez by Naser-al-din Shah), 7. The Poems of Mirza Habib Qhaani, 8. The complete poems (Diwan) of Abbas Foroughi Bastami and many other related works. He tried hard to make the Nastaliq script compatible with lithography works, to verify that this specific hand-writing would not be scratched in the process of lithography and its readability would be preserved (Figs. 6 & 7). He altered the angle of the pen sharpening and pen-writing to 64 degrees; He used to follow a modern style of diacritical marks at the beginning of sentences and on specific letters for publishing press works, travelogues, and other books. The characteristics of his writing style followed in lithography, such as writing bold letters and words, clear and stronger writing of serrated letters and joining them; He shortened circles and curves about by 1/6 dot/ pen width (Dang), and also characterized the formation of words and letters as one of his innovations, and made them compatible with lithography.

• **The fifth course: Mirza Gholam Reza Esfahani, the creator of artistic calligraphy practicing (Siah-Mashgh)**

Mirza Gholam Reza Esfahani was an artist in Nastaliq calligraphy with high proficiency and self-confidence. He invented a kind of artistic practice in calligraphy as a new style, in addition to his ability in writing all the conventional forms of handwriting in the Nastaliq script and other styles such as shekasteh. Relying on his artistic experiences, he could create new combinations of positive and negative spaces in calligraphy to make structural

diversity in handwriting. Through his magical hands, the practiced calligraphy, which used to be simply a practice for the preparation and matching pen with ink, and paper, then became a unique artistic work at that time. A kind of artwork consisting of graphic effects with proper composition and formation, the proportionality of dispersion and compression, positive and negative spaces, framework, direction, and angle of writing, all have made the work attractive to the viewer. "Kalhar has this fundamental difference with Mirza Gholam Reza that some of Kalhar's exercises are exercises, but I have seen few examples of Mirza Gholam Reza's exercises. The main difference between Kalhor and Mirza Gholam Reza is that some of the exercises provided by Kalhor are practical ones, but there are very few examples of practices proposed by Mirza Gholam Reza. This was perhaps arising from his high self-confidence that he was able to set up the first page as the final page. The aesthetic aspect of his manner was so dominant that in some cases the written text was almost unreadable, so the visual element was very strong in these inscriptions" (Aghdashloo, 2011, 122).

Whether intentionally or unintentionally, Mirza Ghalamreza made the literary aspect of calligraphy less effective but instead emphasized the visual aspects of calligraphy by applying amazing techniques and proficiency in this field. This kind

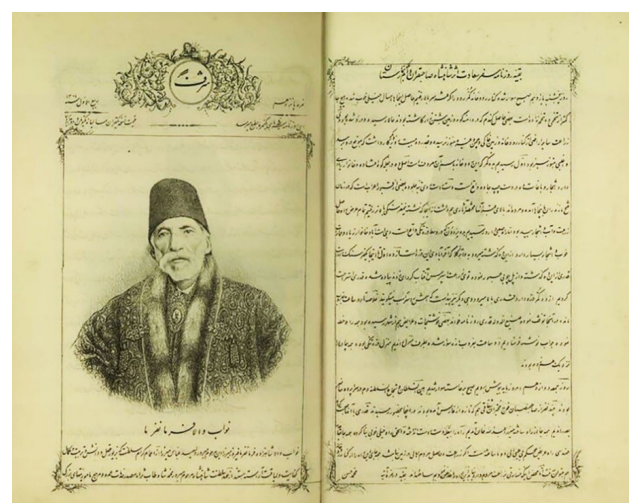


Fig. 6. The calligraphy handwriting of Mohammad Reza Kalhor; A page from Sharaf newspaper, Qajar Era, lithography. Source: www.irna.ir/

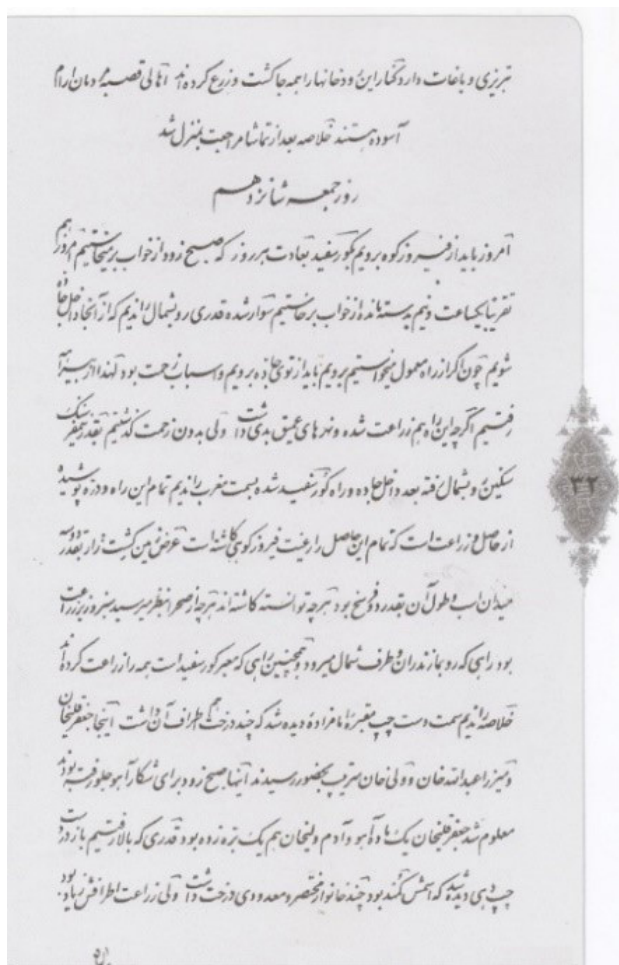


Fig. 7. The calligraphy handwriting of Mohammad Reza Kalhor in Nastaliq script; A page from Khorasan travelogue, Qajar era, lithography. Source: rasanews.ir/

of confrontation with traditional art, especially the art that initially acquired its holiness from inscribing the divine word (Quran) and addressing the principle of a conventional culture that the word contains conception, reflect a great and influential innovation. “However, this method [of calligraphy] has been recognized and experienced before Mirza, from the time of Mir Emad, to practice words to know the best way of penning and the technique to achieve the best ratio and composition of words. There are such examples of practicing calligraphy (Siah-Mashgh) by the great master of Nastaliq script, Mir Emad; But Mirza Gholam Reza gave it a specific personality and characterized it, in such a way that his attempts in this regard in case of using variety and number of small and large pens are enough to place an expert calligrapher at the level

of high ranking masters, as it can be said that “Siah-Mashq, which is in a high place among the works of contemporary writers, as an independent calligraphy style, owes to the exercises [of Mirza Gholamreza], as by this outstanding imitation these great works appeared (Teymouri, 2011, 37), (Figs. 8 & 9).

Mirza Gholam Reza Esfahani due to having a professional hand-writing in the kind of Nastaliq calligraphy known as Katibeh which is very similar in composition and details to his brilliant works of Siah-Mashgh could develop this style in the Qajar era, which was initiated in Safavid era (Yamani & Shariat Panahi, 2015, 29). The writing style of Mirza Gholam Reza in Nastaliq calligraphy was also highly influenced Shekasteh script due to the presentation of elegant details and accurate performance of his experiences in Nastaliq. He could make the following changes, “decreasing the size of the circles, especially in the letter (ی), a charmed manner in twisting, turning and bending letters, the unusually prolonged tail of (ا), the appropriate use of small letters and words (in practicing Siah-Mashgh), the use of half-stretches used in Shekasteh script, considering the proportions of positive and negative spaces of Shekasteh script in Nastaliq composition, especially while practicing Siah-Mashgh, and the use of Ersal (freely movement of the pen: the features of Shekasteh script) in Siah-Mashgh of Nastaliq script, and generally, the swift movements of hand and pen are more noticeable” in his writing style (Fazayeli, 1983, 573-575). He had special innovation and creativity in writing his signature, as he used to write his name in the same script as the original text, which was a kind of attenuation of the literary text that was written in calligraphy. “He said that he writes masterfully in the Nastaliq script, from the pen of Katibeh to small scripts of Khafi and Ghoobar (a specific calligraphy script in 1x1 cm, which consists of small letters and a circular structure). His works are signed under the name of Gholam Reza, Ali Madad, and are available in the museums of Iran. For instance, a volume of the book Tohfah-al Vozara (Ethics and politics of ministers) is available in [...] Golestan



Fig. 8. Practicing of Siah-Mashq written by Mirza Ghalamreza Esfahani. Source: www.honaronline.ir/

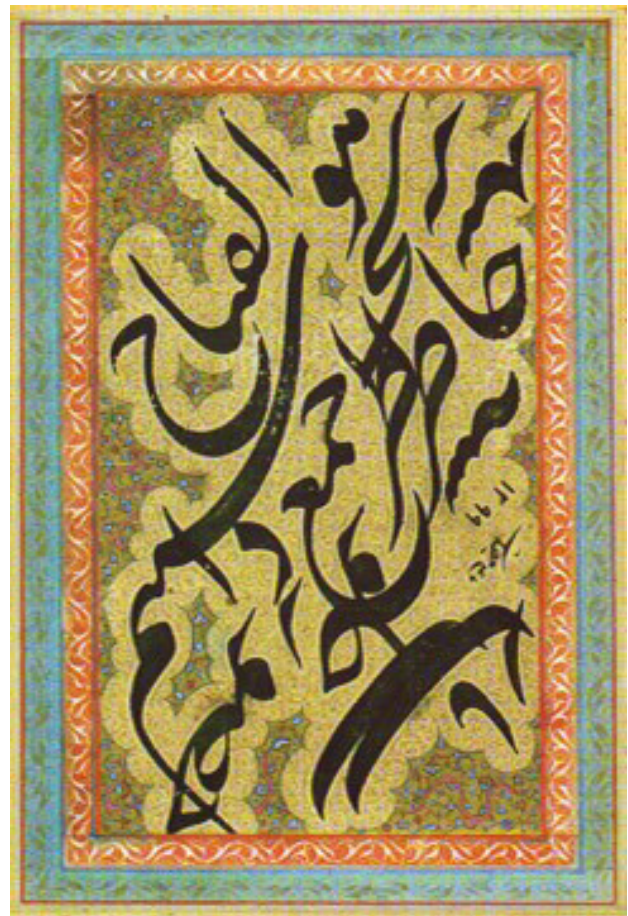


Fig. 9. Practicing of Siah-Mashq written by Mirza Ghalam Reza Esfahani, collection of Talibyan. Source: www.honaronline.ir/

Palace. There is a piece of separate works (Ghateh) that has remained from him as well; in the field of Nastaliq, he was a professional tutor, and his works are models for many instructors today (Bayani, 1984, 554).

• **The sixth course, the establishment of the “Iran Calligraphers’ association”**

The foundation of the “Iran Calligraphers’ Association” was the most significant non-governmental traditional art education organization during modern discourse in the contemporary history of Iran, which has instructed calligraphers based on the traditional methods of this art since the 40s solar calendar. Therefore, the formation of this association can be considered a specific time in the history of calligraphy in the case of education and publication in Iran. In other words, the establishment of such a traditional institute can be in line with the development and renewal of Iranian calligraphy with the identity-based opinion of returning to oneself. The

association was established in 1950 with the efforts of Ebrahim Bouzari, Ali Akbar Kaveh, Seyed Hossein, and Seyed Hassan Mirkhani, and with the efforts of Dr. Mehdi Bayani, an academy professor in the bureaucratic structure of the Ministry of Culture and Arts of that time.

The foundation was officially established on 19 September 1967 and started its activity with educational and training classes. “Iran Calligraphers’ Association” gradually trained talented young students from the beginning of its activity, by mostly focusing on Nastaliq and Shekasteh scripts, and later added other calligraphy scripts to develop and expand calligraphy and other related education. This public institution with a long history was a non-governmental organization. Its policy, statute, and educational plans were all approved by its representatives and tutors. Its branches whether

inside or outside the country are continuously managed by tutors and selected members of the association.

“Iranian Calligraphers Association” has played a significant role in developing the traditional art of Iran by establishing a traditional community of calligraphy. In addition to publishing prominent artistic works, other artworks such as Moragha (a collection of artistic pieces of calligraphers, which are connected in the form of a book), Jong (a series of programs on a specific topic), Ketabat (writing books in calligraphy), Katibeh (inscriptions), writing a piece of calligraphy works, holding exhibitions, seasonal gatherings, and biennale, and dealing with other activities of book layout designs such as papermaking, binding, making calligraphy ink, Miniature painting, Gilding, sharpening calligraphy pen, and other related arts. In this regard, “Iran Calligraphers’ Association”, can be considered an organization established in the modern era, which has dealt with writing and publishing a number of calligraphy instructions and valuable books written in calligraphy scripts on literary, spiritual, and moral topics, to confirm and expand the Iranian cultural identity through promoting the traditional arts.

• The seventh course, the entry of calligraphy and its elements into modern art, and the School of sagha-khaneh

The seventh format in which calligraphy emerged was the calligraphy-painting or calligram. “The movement of calligraphy-painting, which was initially influenced by the western letterism (formed in the 20th century, based on the use of elements, signs, and symbols of typography and calligraphy), later captured by the Iranian artistic nature. The use of calligraphic fonts to make a combination of the graphic form of letters and words initiated seriously from the advent of masterworks of Mirza Gholam Reza Esfahani; Therefore, it has continued to create a new style of art by using traditional common elements” (Ravanjoo, 2022, 64).

The movement of calligraphy in the context of Iranian culture within the modern era reflected in new style of calligraphy. “... modern calligraphy originated from the Sagha-khaneh movement and

quickly resulted in two main tendencies: 1. Sagha-khaneh artists who used to apply calligraphy forms as the main material for making images from primary sources; 2. “painting-calligraphy” movement consisting a group of professional calligraphers who were interested in using calligraphy different from mere classical and traditional works. These two emerging styles of calligraphy were developed with distinct formal expressions; The artists of Saqha-khaneh movement and their followers moved towards a type of “Letterism”, as the works of calligraphy-painting artists were distinct from the first group by presenting different forms” (Keshmirshekan, 2014, 72).

By addressing the latest presence of calligraphy in the modern art of Iran, it can be said that calligraphy was presented as a conventional element in the use of artwork. The calligraphy artists are divided into two main trends: the first trend, which comprises most of the artists, are often calligraphers for whom the literary aspect and the rules of calligraphy are of vital importance and their artworks are formed based on the characteristics of traditional concepts of calligraphy without any modification. In other words, they use calligraphic elements according to traditional rules, by applying the visual features of color, form, frame, harmony, composition, and all other modern painting techniques. Among the pioneers of the first category, the following masters can be mentioned: Mohammad Ehsai (1939-), Reza Mafi (1943-1982), Jalil Rasouli (1947-), Ali Shirazi (1960), and Amir Sadegh Tehrani (1959). The working method of these artists in creating calligraphy-painting was based on the background rules and principles of calligraphy presented in the relevant educational texts which are mostly focusing on the historical background of calligraphy (Figs. 10 & 11).

The second groups of artists are those painters who are not calligraphers and prefer the technical principles of painting, in its modern manifestation to the traditional rules and basics of calligraphy. They belong to the modern movement of the Saqha-

khaneh who exploit conventional elements and symbols of 'pop art' including curses, prayers, and amulets. Therefore, all efforts of contemporary art are concentrated on establishing cultural identity. The approach of the second movement to calligraphy is a secular and material approach, which grows by eliminating literary aspects and focusing on the forms and shapes of letters and words. Hossein Zendehtoudi, Faramarz Pilaram, and Sadegh Tabrizi are among the artists who followed the second movement (Figs. 12 & 13).

Conclusion

The cultural identity of the Iranian people, as the main characteristic of national identity, survived the invasion of foreigners. The importance of cultural identity is so great that national identity can be considered a function of it. Although the borders of Iran are geographically clear, the influence of the cultural territory of the country, as a sign of its cultural identity, is much higher than its geographical borders. To address the main following questions of this study: 1. 'how has Iranian cultural identity established in calligraphy, as the foundation of Iranian literature and rhetoric?' 2. what are the main stages of growth and development of calligraphy in Iranian culture that are reflected in the historical development of Nastaliq script? It can be mentioned that one of the most significant cultural components of Iran is its great literature, which influences elegantly and appealingly the audience with its pure concepts. Among the great works of Persian literature, the following can be mentioned: The epic poems of Hakim Abul Qasim Ferdowsi (Shahnameh), the lyrical poems of Khwāje Shams-od-Dīn Moḥammad Ḥāfeẓ-e Shīrāzī, Saadi Shīrāzī, Nizami Ganjavi and the Mystical poems of Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī and many other famous litterateurs strongly confirms that Iran has been the land of great poets and litterateurs. In this regard, the most important structure to visualize the great Persian literature by the artists of the Shiraz and Herat schools was the Nastaliq script, invented by Mir Ali Tabrizi from the combination of two scripts



Fig. 10. Oil paint and gold leaf on canvas, 163 x 210 cm, date of work: 2008. Source: tehranauction.com



Fig. 11. Reza Mafi, untitled, oil paint and ionolite on fiber, 50x100 cm, date of work: around 1971s. Source: tehranauction.com/

of Naskh and Taliq. This emerging script is the most important display and cultural identity that dominate the Iranian space in Persian literature and book design.

The development and formation of the Nastaliq script have experienced many fluctuations. Therefore, in this study, the effect of the development and expansion stages of Nastaliq script on art and cultural identity has been studied in seven courses or stages. The first stage was initiated with the creation by Mir Ali Tabrizi and developed by the skilled hands of masters influenced by the Herat school such as Mir Ali Heravi, Sultan Ali Mashhadi, Jafar Tabrizi (Baysanguri), Shah Mahmoud Neishabouri.

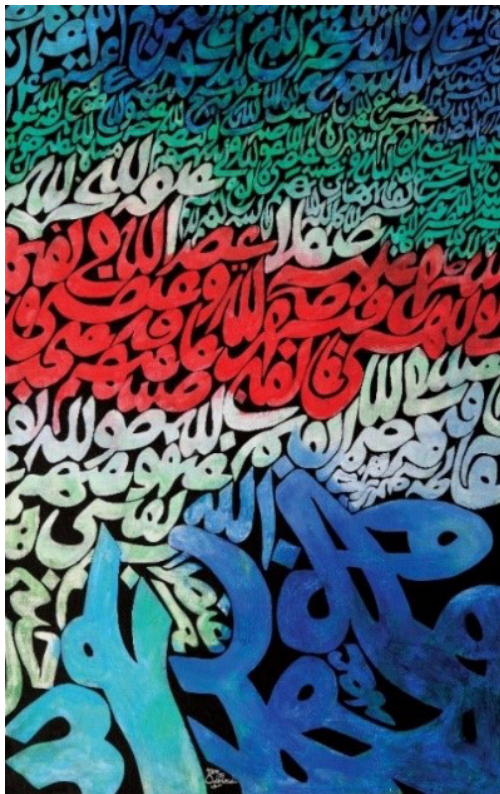


Fig. 12. Hossein Zendehroudi, title: ص + و + ض (Three letters from Farsi Alphabet), acrylic & mineral pigment, on canvas, 142x212 cm, date of work: 1973. Source: tehranauction.com



Fig. 13. Faramarz Pilaram, untitled, oil on canvas, 70x100 cm, date of work: 1998. Source: tehranauction.com.

Then, in the second stage, during the Safavid era, the script of Nastaliq reached its highest level of tenderness and strength with the professional hands of Mir Emad Hasani Qazvini, and in the third stage, Babashah Esfahani by writing the book of Adab-al Mashq completed the manner of practicing calligraphy. In the fourth stage, during the Qajar era, the development and growth of Nastaliq script highly manifested in the

work of two persistent and creative masters among the other diligent artists. In this stage, Mohammad Reza Kalhor, made the magnificent Nastaliq script appropriate for lithography, to minimize damage to the letters.

In the fifth stage, Mirza Gholam Reza Esfahani developed the practice of calligraphy or Siah-Mashq, which calligraphers used to do for checking 'pen & paper' as a kind of warming up, into a distinct artwork, and with his proficiency and intelligence took advantage of the negative spaces in contrast with the dense positive spaces, and by applying other possibilities of calligraphy script and Siah-Mashq script made a constant evolution in a calligraphy artwork. An influence that removed or faded the literary aspect of calligraphy from concepts behind words and facilitated its entry into the space of modern art. Then, in the sixth stage, in the modern era in the 40s S.H., the "Iranian Calligraphers' Association" was formed, which caused the expansion of calligraphy and its related culture. The calligraphy enthusiasts got access to the educational facilities of traditional arts and Nastaliq script by attending the "Iranian Calligraphers' Association", thereafter, the culture of calligraphy and the art of beautiful handwriting quickly expanded. During the seventh and last stage of the growth and development of calligraphy, the related elements were adopted by calligraphic artists of Sagha-Khane movement in contemporary art of Iran, as the most Iranian traditional element allocated to the calligraphic elements. According to this movement, artistic action happens based on the application methods of artwork, including art materials, the dimension of the work, the concept, the subject, and the form in a modern style.

Calligraphers and non-calligraphers both have created artworks by applying distinct creativity. The first group are those calligraphers who expertly make calligraphy-painting work by using all the possibilities of form and color in painting. They also follow the rules and principles of traditional calligraphy, in accordance with the literary concepts and meanings of the words that appear in an artwork. Among these artists, the following masters can be mentioned: Mohammad Ehsai, Reza Mafi, and Jalil Rasouli. The second group refers to

those artists who are not calligraphers but adopt a kind of calligraphic elements in their works. Their tendency to paint features is manifested by using the elements of traditional art. The following masters can be mentioned in the second group: Hossein Zenderoudi, Faramarz Pilaram, Jazeh Tabatabai, and Sadegh Tabrizi. The art of calligraphy and the resulting artistic movements will bring alterations in the future that will cause continuity and extensiveness of Iran's cultural identity (Table 1). The most significant point of this article is its focus on Iran's cultural components, which strongly constitute the Iranian identity. To expand the Iranian discourse, which is entangled with its prominent and powerful literature, calligraphy is considered the most significant form and visual element of it, as its development has led to the establishment and support of the Iranian identity until today.

Endnotes

1. Abu 'Ali Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn al Hussian, known as Ibn Muqlah Shirazi (328-272 A.H ~ 886-940 AD), was a calligrapher, creator of various handwriting

scripts, and an Iranian minister of the Abbasids.

2. Ali ibn-Hilal, Abu'l-Hasan known as Ibn al-Bawwāb, also recognized as Qibla al-Kitab/Treatise on the Qibla in his time, was one of the calligraphers of the early 5th AH/11th century during the time of the Abbasid and Al Boia caliphs. Developing the final form of Naskh Script is attributed to him.

3. Yaqut al-Musta'simi: Jamal al-Din Abuldar Yaqut al-Musta'simi Baghdadi, a famous calligrapher in the 7th century AH was known as Qibla al-Kitab in his time.

4. A book about the regulation of social relations according to the opinion of Khwaja Nasir Toosi

5. a hand-wrting style in which the width of the pen's tip is 6 mm-2 cm

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Table 1. The courses of development and expansion of Nastaliq script in the manifestation of Iranian identity and culture. Source: Author.

| The seven courses of calligraphy | Development and Expansion of Nastaliq Script | Era | Artists | Application | Influence on visual Arts |
|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| First course | Invention, Establishment and Expansion of Nastaliq Script | Herat school, 9th century S.H. | Creator: Mir Ali Tabrizi, and expanded by: Mir Ali Heravi, Sultan Ali Mashhadi, Jafar Tabrizi (baysangur) | Inscription and publishing from book layout techniques | Preparing conditions for spreading the cultural identity of Iran in terms of writing literature |
| Second course | Inscription of the most comprehensive practice of calligraphy | Safavid Dynasty | Babashah Esfahani | Education of Calligraphy | Determining the policy in the education of calligraphy |
| Third course | Acquiring the highest level of Development | Safavid Dynasty | Mir Emad Hassani Seifi Qazvini | The highest level of proficiency in techniques and training of students | Strengthening the specific styles of each calligraphy manner to provide a continuation of traditional calligraphy |
| Fourth course | Consistent with the lithography industry | Qajar | Mirza Mohammad Reza Kalhor | Consistency with the publishing and lithography industry | Enabling calligraphy to design letters and typefaces (Typography) |
| Fifth Course | Creating Siah-Mashgh as an independent artwork | Qajar | Mirza Gholam Reza Esfahani | Making independent work in calligraphy | Finding a solution to overcome the limitation of traditional art |
| Sixth Course | Establishment of "Iran Calligraphers Association" | Pahlavi II | Seyed Hasan and Seyed Hossein Mirkhani, Kaveh, Bouzari and Dr. Mehdi Bayani | Establishing a center for calligraphy representing national identity | Spreading calligraphy as national art and identity |
| Seventh Course | The entry of calligraphy into Sagha-Khaneh school of contemporary art | Pahlavi II | Traditional Movement: Mohammad Ehsai, Jalil Rasouli, Reza Mafi, Nasrollah Afjei Secular Movement: Hossein Zenderoudi, Faramarz Pilaram, Mir Ali Tabrizi and Jazeh Tabatabai | Accurately finding the elements of calligraphy with contemporary Iranian art | Applying calligraphy in a manner to represent cultural identity and comprehending its characteristics in Modern Art |

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