

Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization (JITC)

Volume 12 Issue 2, Fall 2022

ISSN(P): 2075-0943 ISSN(E): 2520-0313

Homepage: <https://journals.umt.edu.pk/index.php/JITC>



Article QR



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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.122.17>

History: Received: June 04, 2022, Revised: November 20, 2022, Accepted: November 26, 2022, Available Online: December 25, 2022

Citation: Alashari, Duaa Mohammed. "The Role of Arabic calligraphy in displaying the aesthetics of linear configurations in the *Kiswah* of Kaaba." *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 12, no. 2 (2022): 242–254. <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.122.17>

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Conflict of Interest: Author(s) declared no conflict of interest



A publication of

Department of Islamic Thought and Civilization, School of Social Science and Humanities,
University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

The Role of Arabic Calligraphy in Displaying the Aesthetics of Linear Configurations in the *Kiswah* of *Kaaba*

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Abstract

The *Kiswah* of the *Kaaba*, in the Saudi era, is adorned with Arabic calligraphy, executed in the complex *Thuluth* calligraphy. These calligraphic formations are compatible with the aesthetic and spiritual function of the *Kiswah* of *Kaaba*. In addition, the contribution of these formations and Arabic calligraphy creates formative elements of a distinctive aesthetic nature that glorifies the *kiswah* with a special kind of spiritual beauty associated with the writing of Qur'ānic verses. Arabic calligraphy, especially the *Thuluth* script, is one of the essential Arabic fonts that express the aesthetic values of Arabic calligraphy in the covering of the *Kaaba*. Therefore, this study aims to reveal the role of Arabic calligraphy and the characteristics of the *Thuluth* line, which have enhanced in highlighting the aesthetics of the linear formations of the *Kiswah*. The study also aims to discuss the aesthetic features and patterns that characterize the linear formations. The method used in this study is the content analysis method, bearing in mind that the primary tool used is inference based on observation. The study concluded that the *Thuluth* font possesses several aesthetic and technical characteristics compared to the rest of the other Arabic fonts. Moreover, these technical characteristics gave this line an evident prominence in decorating and beautifying the covering of the *Kaaba* with the appearance of the single letter in several bodies through the morphological diversity of the character drawing.

Keywords: Arabic calligraphy, aesthetics, *Kiswah* of *Kaaba*, linear configurations, *Thuluth* script.

Introduction

The art of Arabic calligraphy has been closely linked to the codification of Qur'ānic texts; and the expressions of monotheism in linear formations and compositions decorated with the covering of the Holy *Kaaba* further adds an aesthetic and spiritual character to it. The main role played by the calligraphic formations in the *Kiswah* is to enhance the sense of Arabic calligraphy's aesthetic, artistic, plastic and spiritual values through the diversity of patterns and styles of the formations. In the covering of the *Kaaba*, the forms of linear formations and compositions carried out with the complex *Thuluth* line were varied.

The *Thuluth* calligraphy, in general, is considered one of the most beautiful Arabic calligraphies that have emerged in the field of creativity and artistic formation because of its characteristics and features that distinguish it from the rest of the other Arabic calligraphy. Yet on the other hand, it is considered one of the most attractive in terms of beauty and perfection in its linear structure formations.¹ Its output bodies have multiplied and varied through distinctive design structures in the treatment of spaces within the bodies prepared for the covering of the Holy *Kaaba*. All these calligraphic formations executed in the complex *Thuluth Al-Jali* (الجلي) script are considered a prominent sign and symbol in the aesthetic and uniqueness of the *Kaaba's* covering; and considered

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¹Jarmat Hussein, "Adapting Textual Structure to Visual Rhetoric in Arabic Calligraphy Formations," *Journal of the College of Basic Education* 92, (2016).

as a qualitative shift in the development of the art of Arabic calligraphy throughout the Islamic ages.

Thuluth calligraphy is described as “the master of Arabic calligraphy,” as a calligrapher is not considered skilled unless he controls and masters this type. Moreover, it is the sole calligraphy book that calligraphers are held accountable far more than others. The *Thuluth* script was written in the ancient Qur'an and was derived from the *Kufic* script at the end of the Umayyad era and the beginning of the Abbasid era. However, the calligraphers of the Abbasid era excelled in this line and added some formations to it that gave it a kind of beauty.²

Thuluth calligraphy is known as one of the soft Arabic scripts, and it is called a *Thuluth* because the width of the pen with which it writes is equal to one-third of the width of the pen. Ahmed Benin says, “It is a line invented by the Abbasid calligrapher, Minister Ibn Al-Muqla (ابن المقلّة). This line is characterized by flexibility, elasticity, durability, ingenuity in composition, and good distribution within the space of the linear composition structure.”³ The *Thuluth* pen has two types: the heavy third pen, which is estimated to have an area of eight hairs and is erect and spread to the extent of seven points, and the third light pen, which writes in half pieces and a shape that tends to the heavy third shape, but is more accurate and gentler than it, and is five points. The Abbasid calligrapher, Al-Wazir Ibn Muqla, set the rules for this calligraphy and was the first to engineer its letters and perfect their forms. Ibn Al-Bawab followed him, then Yaqut Al-Mustasimi, and they were the ones who actively contributed to the development and stability of the forms of its letters.⁴

The *Thuluth* calligraphy was widely used in the past, so the surahs of the Qur'an and the facades of mosques, *mihirabs* and domes were written with it. The *Thuluth* calligraphy went through several stages, including the *Muhaqqaq* and *Al-Rihani* (المحقق والريحاني) calligraphy, the clear third, the knitted third, the geometric third, and corresponding to the currently known *Thuluth* calligraphy.⁵ As Abd al-Jabbar Hamidi explained:

The length of the *Alif* (حرف الألف أ) varies in this type depending on the nature of the design needed for writing, which results in wonderful artistic formations that lie in the ways of installing its letters. There is a simple structure in which the length of the *Alif* is between six and seven points; as for the heavy installation, the length of the *Alif* (أ) ranges between nine and twelve points, and the purpose of that is to meet the design requirements of the linear painting.⁶

Arabic calligraphy has a rich vocabulary and can be enriched indefinitely because interlocking and elegant derivations provide new ancient roots. Furthermore, it is known as one of the fine arts of Arabic writing, whose alphabetical structure and its flexibility, voluntariness, rotation, parity, entanglement, overlap, and composition helped to flow gracefully and aesthetically, making its place among the fine arts. Hussein Iyad Hussein also described Arabic calligraphy as “an art of painting alphabets and expressing the form and content of decorative geometric origins and bases specific to its books.”⁷ The artistic features of Arabic calligraphy have enabled the calligraphers to form

²Ibid., 13.

³Ahmed Shawky Benin, and Mustafa Toby, *Dictionary of Arabic Manuscript Terms* (Rabat: Al-Hussainiya Treasury, 2005), 34.

⁴Abdul Jabbar Hamidi, *Arabic Calligraphy and Arabic Islamic Decoration* (House of Affairs, Kingdom of Jordan, 2005).

⁵Nahed Abdel-Razzaq al-Qaisi, *History of Arabic Calligraphy* (Cairo: Curriculum House, 2008).

⁶Abdul Jabbar Hamidi, *Arabic Calligraphy and Arabic Islamic Decoration*.

⁷Hussein Iyad Hussein Abdullah, *Technical Composition of Arabic Calligraphy according to the Design Principles* (Baghdad: House of General Cultural Affairs, Baghdad, 2003).

decorative aesthetic compositions.⁸

The inherited aesthetic and artistic characteristics of Arabic calligraphy has virtuous basic proportions and rules that helped this art to obtain the highest aesthetic values; in addition to the obedience of Arabic letters and their ability to extend and rotate, these characteristics gave calligraphy vitality and gave it a great deal of beauty and elegance. The art of Arabic calligraphy defines as the art of drawing Arabic letters, whether complex or individual and re-installing them based on well-established foundations to show the aesthetic and artistic aspect of the Arabic character. Each Arabic letter possesses its length, shortness, capacity, narrowness, and space, which creates a sound law that regulates its forms and adjusts the style of its vocabulary. This contributes in adding elegance and charm to it in order to become a tall building with its splendor and moderation of letters, a breathtaking beauty to judge the composition and the consistency of the ratio of the measures adopted in Arabic calligraphy.⁹

The researcher believes that Arabic letters have artistic characteristics and aesthetic dimensions formed as formal systems to highlight Arabic calligraphy's intellectual and expressive aspects through texts employed within linear compositions of functional and aesthetic dimensions embodied in the *Kaaba* dress. The aesthetic qualities of Arabic letters lie in the consistency, proportionality, extensions, and erections manifested in the drawing of vertical letters; and rotation and agility in the picture of letters. Arabic lines of all types have a high ability to flat, wrought, tide, lie down, and curvature. In addition, they have an increased ability to overlap, entangle, and rotate. All these elements are unique to the art of Arabic calligraphy from the rest of the calligraphy lines.

The Arabic calligraphy used in the *Kaaba* dress is the *Thuluth* font. Fitouni says,

The importance of the *Thuluth* line in the history of calligraphy as it is the first clear image we received of these fonts, as it is technically the essence of the theory of the art form of the Arabic letters attributed, including the proportionality of their parts in terms of between them and their pen.¹⁰

From this point of view, the researcher explains that the manifestation of the *Thuluth* line on the *Kiswah* of the *Kaaba* as the most suitable Arabic lines, especially in terms, because it carries values and aesthetic, artistic and morphological dimensions with it. This line is characterized by the large letters and its ability to obey and overlap. The proportions of its letters located between large, medium and small, which occupy a space in the written tapes, linear formations and compositions. In addition, the areas within the vacant spaces were treated with expressive and decorative marks marked by the *Thuluth* line to give a dimension, and aesthetic touch manifested on the gown of the *Kaaba*.¹¹

Moreover, the *Thuluth* line is characterized by an aesthetic presence based on its structural elements and movements. In addition to its ability to create a literal momentum that reduces space and strengthens the weight of the letters and their control in the linear work and the combination of letters, they're creative. This study aims to reveal the aesthetic qualities of linear formations of Arabic calligraphy in the *Kiswah* of *Kaaba*.

⁸Farman Uday, "Technical Characteristics of Thuluth Calligraphy in Al-Baghdadi School of Calligrapher Hashem Al-Baghdadi," Master's Thesis (Baghdad: Department of Arabic Calligraphy and Decoration, College of Fine Arts, University of Baghdad, 2004), 27.

⁹Thanoun Bassem, *Creative Calligraphers* (Baghdad: National Library, Baghdad, Iraq, 1986), 54.

¹⁰ Fitouni Mohsen, *Encyclopedia of Arabic Calligraphy and Islamic Decoration* (Beirut: Publications Company for Publishing and Distribution, 2002), 22.

¹¹Ibid

2. Materials and Methods

The analysis phase of the study is a major focus through which the applied aspect of the study is accomplished, and through it, the information required to analyze the *Kaaba* gown's virtual content is obtained. To reach the results that are interpreted in the light of the study literature related to the current research topic, and thus achieve the goals that the researcher seeks to achieve through the study. The content analysis method is used in this study to accurately describe the Arabic calligraphy and the characteristics of the *Thuluth* line, which enhanced in highlighting the aesthetic of the linear formations of the *Kiswah*. The researcher used the (virtual) content analysis approach because the results presented by this approach are related to the apparent form. This approach is based on accurate description, and one of its main objectives is to study and analyze from the perspective of form. Berelson defines it as "one of the research methods used to describe the apparent or explicit content in an objective, regular and ambush description."¹² Al-Azzawi defines the content analysis approach as "a research method used by the researcher in various research fields to describe the material to be analyzed in terms of form and content."¹³

The researcher has relied on the observation tool as a key tool in her current study. The observation tool is one of the most important research tools used by the researcher to obtain information and facts related to the case of the study to be observed. Through this tool, the researcher could determine what is required to focus on, analyze and records it. For the accuracy of the observation, the information must be accurately recorded in addition to photographing it. For the observation to be done correctly, the researcher must specify what she wants to observe and write down the information accurately. One of the most important advantages of this tool is the accuracy of the data and the lack of cost and effort, but the accuracy of the observation requires attention to the minute details to convert the descriptive observations into information and facts about the phenomenon studied.¹⁴ Based on the aforementioned facts, the methodology adopted by the researcher to study the role of the art of Arabic calligraphy inherent in the Holy *Kaaba* dress can reveal the aesthetic, spiritual, cultural and historical values and dimensions of the *kiswah* (fabric) of the Holy *Kaaba*.

3. Results and Discussion

The diversity of images of single letter forms in the *Thuluth* line and the flexibility of its rules led to the formation of its textual construction according to the language's grammar; and the role played by the expressive and formative movements in supporting this structure of linear formations. This role is considered to be of great importance. According to the researcher, the linear formations written in the *Thuluth* line in the *Kiswah* of the *Kaaba* were characterized by qualities built on symmetry, exchange, and balance. Through the manipulation of the linear mass and the repetition of letters, their interlacing, the intersection among them, and shorthand.¹⁵

The *Thuluth* line is characterized by aesthetic characteristics unique to the other Arabic lines; its aesthetic rules and laws determine the possibility of formation, which has crystallized over hundreds of years. Furthermore, it represents a slow and sober accumulation simultaneously.¹⁶ The

¹²Nael Al-Awamla, *Scientific Research Methods: Theoretical Foundations and their Applications in Management* (Jubaiha: Ahmed Yassin Al-Ghani Center, 1995), 32.

¹³Rahim Al-Azzawi, *Introduction to Scientific Research Methodology* (Amman: Al-Manhal Series in Educational Sciences, Dar Jallah, 2008), 21.

¹⁴Nael Al-Awamla, *Scientific Research Methods: Theoretical Foundations and their Applications in Management*.

¹⁵Daoud Abd al-Ridha Bahja, "Building Rules for Content Semantics in Linear Formations," PhD Thesis, (Department of Design, College of Fine Arts, University of Baghdad, Iraq, 1997).

¹⁶Ibid.

researcher notes that this line's aesthetic and artistic values manifest through the compound *Thuluth* line as an essential element in decorating the honorable *Kiswah* because it is characterized by high technical specifications and has unparalleled linear possibilities, as well as its acceptance of the appearance of the formation by its literal form.

4. The Characteristics of the *Thuluth* Line

The researcher will briefly review the cognitive and conceptual aspects of the essential characteristics of the *Thuluth* line. The elements are represented in several points, including flexibility and obedience, multiple character drawing form, intersection and overlay, and reductionism. The totality of these technical characteristics of the *Thuluth* line has manifested effectively in the design of the lines and linear formations embodied in the *Kiswah*.

4.1. Flexibility and Obedience to *Thuluth* Font Characters

Flexibility means the ability of the letters to shorten, lengthen and bend at a different angle, with the preservation of the rules and proportions of the line and the aesthetic of the letters, the property of flexibility and obedience. The stretches of the letters of the *Thuluth* line are essential qualities that distinguish this line from the rest of the other Arabic.¹⁷ An example of this is evident from model no. (1) of the *Kaaba*, which includes a Qur'anic verse¹⁸ م ذَلِكَ وَمَنْ يُعْظِمُ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ Through this linear configuration it is shown that flexibility have been employed in the stretches, pulls and curving of the *Thuluth* line letters. In particular, the plastic art qualities of the *Thuluth* calligraphy lie in flexibility and elasticity, and its ability to extend, return, rotate, intertwine, overlap, and its potential for separation and connection, which are called the plastic components of the Arabic calligraphy, which is specialized in and unique to its letters in Arabic calligraphy, especially the *Thuluth* line.¹⁹



Figure. 1 Image of a geometric linear composition of the Kaabas livery showing the flexibility and obedience of the letters of the *Thuluth* line, modified by the researcher <http://www.emadphoto.com/#!/makkah>

¹⁷Farman Uday, "Technical Characteristics of Thuluth Calligraphy in Al-Baghdadi School of Calligrapher Hashem Al-Baghdadi," Master's Thesis (Department of Arabic Calligraphy and Decoration, College of Fine Arts, University of Baghdad, 2004).

¹⁸Al Hajj 22:32.

¹⁹Khalil Hatem Abdel Hamid, "Structural Values of Kufic Script and the Possibility of Employing it in Decorative Paintings," Master's Thesis (Faculty of Art Education, Helwan University, Cairo, 1987).

4.2. Multiple One-letter Drawing Format for *Thuluth* Line Characters

One of the advantages of this characteristic is the appearance of the single letter in several bodies through the morphological diversity of the character drawing. Whether it is connected or alone within the structure of the linear composition with multiple aesthetic shapes. Moreover, this characteristic provides many alternatives to the shape of the single letter and facilitates the problem of the spatial organization of the letters. This characteristic has also allowed calligraphers freedom of action and given them many opportunities to choose the shape of the letter suitable for designs with distinct linear structures that accept overlap among them.²⁰ An example of this can be seen from the form number (2) of the curtain of the door of the *Kaaba*, which includes a written composition in which a Koranic verse²¹ is written *لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ رَسُولَهُ الرُّؤْيَا بِالْحَقِّ لَتَدْخُلُنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ آمِينَ* Through this composition, the diversity of the output body of the letter (حرف ح وحرف خ) is evident in several different forms and bodies. Also, the calligrapher of the *Kiswah* mentioned in the interview conducted by the researcher that his opinions about Arabic calligraphy, especially the *Thuluth* calligraphy, means that

...this calligraphy is characterized by high aesthetic values and the possibility of adapting it in different places. One of the best Arabic fonts for making calligraphic compositions due to its special aesthetic. Because *Thuluth* calligraphy is one of the most beautiful Arabic fonts and has a high ability to adapt letters and words within the specified space, whether it is square, circular, oval, or free shapes; in addition to that, *Thuluth* calligraphy has many forms of letters, as the single letter of this line has more than six shapes, which gives a great opportunity to twist the line.²²

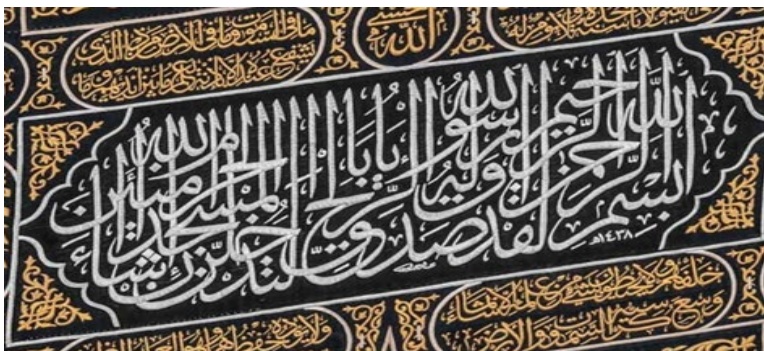


Figure. 2 A picture of a geometric linear composition from the curtain of the door of the *Kaaba* showing the diversity of the output body of the letter ح and خ <http://www.madphoto.com/#/Makkah/> Photo edited by the researcher

4.3. Intersection and Overlay of the *Thuluth* Line Letters

The intersection of letters and their overlap is one of the critical characteristics of the *Thuluth* line in particular; and added to this line a unique aesthetic character through which the aesthetic style of the linear structure is manifested. There are several types of overlay, including the whole overlay on the letter or the partial overlay of the letter, which is based on covering part of the letter at the expense of the other note, or the intersection in the same or opposite direction to draw the letter,

²⁰Daoud Abd al-Ridha Bahia, "Building Rules for Content Semantics in Linear Formations."

²¹Al Fatah 48:27.

²²Duaa Muhammad Alashari, "A Personal Interview Conducted with the Calligrapher of the Covering of the Holy Kaaba" Mr. Mukhtar Alam, on 1/23/2020

where horizontal letters intersect with vertical letters or vertical letters with oblique letters to create the kinetic tension. And at the same time to make sense of two-dimensional space depth in the structure of the linear formation.²³ An example of this can be seen in the form number (3) of the curtain of the door of the *Kaaba*, which includes a Qura'nic verse²⁴ لِيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْلُومَاتٍ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُم مِّنَ بَرِّمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا

The extent to which the letters intersect in the same direction, and also shows the intersection of the letters. And that the superposition and intersection between the elements of the formation contributed to the events of compaction and unity and the generation of formal attraction within the formation to reach the expression of the intellectual content written within the linear formation. And that the property of reproduction and overlapping of the Arabic letters in the *Thuluth* script led to the abbreviation of the letters in words. The composition was organized in a state of overlapping, entanglement, and extension between the letters, despite the abundance of words. The words appeared balanced while preserving the rules of the *Thuluth* line. Through the linear composition, the aesthetic and semantic value was achieved through the clarity of the words and the aesthetics of the composition.

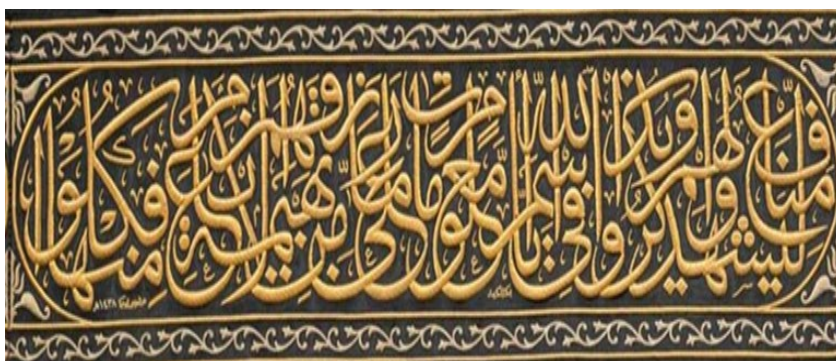


Figure 3 A picture of a geometric linear composition from the start of the *Kaaba* door showing the intersection and overlay of the letters of the *Thuluth* line.

<http://www.emadphoto.com/#/makkah/>

4.4. Reductionism (Breeding of Letters for the *Thuluth* Line)

The reduction property is also one of the critical characteristics of the *Thuluth* line. This property is done by interlacing some parts of the letters with the other and merging the letter with the other letter.²⁵ By reducing the letter with characteristics similar to it in shape, such as the head of (و) (ف) and (ق) provide. An example of this is evident from model no. (4) of the curtain of the door of the *Kaaba*, where this model includes a Qur'anic verse²⁶ applied to it the property of shorthand to accommodate the entire Qur'anic text, written within the composition [لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ رَسُولَهُ الرُّؤْيَا بِالْحَقِّ لَتَدْخُلُنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ آمِينَ]

And about the similar linear formations in the body of the written strips (the belt) that surrounded the *Kaaba* from the four sides. Through the formal analysis, it became clear to the researcher that the reading sequence, intertwining, reproduction and reduction, and

²³Farman Uday, "Technical Characteristics of Thuluth Calligraphy in Al-Baghdadi School of Calligrapher Hashem Al-Baghdadi," Master's Thesis (Baghdad: Department of Arabic Calligraphy and Decoration, College of Fine Arts, University of Baghdad, 2004).

²⁴Al-Haj 22:27.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Al-Fatah 48:27.

inspired movement in different directions characterized the totality of these linear formations. In addition, these written tapes suggest the power of dignity, poise, richness, and diversity of lines superimposed on each other in an engineering manner to be a structural and architectural structure that extends over the horizon.²⁷



Figure 4. A picture of a geometric linear composition from the start of the *Kaaba* door showing the reductive property (the reproduction of letters of the *Thuluth* line) <http://www.emadphoto.com/#/makkah/>, the photo edited by the researcher

4.5. Decorative units for *Thuluth* Line Letters

A large number of letters of the *Thuluth* line, the many lengths obtained in the structure of its notes, and its flexibility gave a wide field to accept the decorative units and expressive movements within the design of the compositions and linear formations. This characteristic is considered as one of the unique traits of the *Thuluth* line. In addition to occupying the space surrounding the composition, it develops a state of equalization and balance between the textual structure; this, in turn, excites the mind of the viewer and generates an attraction based on the morphological diversity between the forms of Arabic letters and the expressive and decorative movements at the same time.²⁸ An example of this can be seen from the model number (5) of the *Kaaba*, which includes a Qur'anic verse وَإِنِّي لَغَفَّارٌ لِّمَن تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ثُمَّ اهْتَدَى ²⁹

This model shows the extent of the aesthetic role played by expressive and decorative movements within the structure of the linear composition. The Arabic calligraphy is described with quality and beauty; if its fringes, its limbs turn around, and it seems to you that it is moving while it is, in fact, static, but by its roundness, softness and curvature, it suggests movement. The researcher notes that the graceful formations accompanied the Arabic fonts within the structure of the formations. Which were written with a pen smaller than the width of the pen with which the Arabic fonts were written within the structure of the calligraphic formations, which added an aesthetic aspect in terms of the variation in the sizes of the fonts and formations.

²⁷Iyad Hussein Abdullah, *Technical Composition of Arabic Calligraphy according to the Design Principles*, (Baghdad: House of General Cultural Affairs, 2003).

²⁸Riad Abdel-Fattah, *Training in the Fine Arts*, (Cairo: Arab Renaissance House, 1974).

²⁹Taha 20:82.



Figure. 5 A picture of a geometric linear composition from the *Kaaba* shows the role of expressive and decorative movements within the structure of the linear composition.

<http://www.emadphoto.com/#/makkah/> the photo edited by the researcher

Ibrahim says,

The importance of the *Thuluth* lies in the history of calligraphy, as it is the first clear image that reached us of these Arabic scripts, and it is also technically the essence of the theory of the art form of the attributed Arabic letters. Including the proportionality of its parts in terms of between it and the pen with which it is written; That is why it was the most important line, functionally and technically.³⁰

From this point of view, the researcher explains that the calligraphy of *Thuluth* appears on the *Kiswah* of the Holy *Kaaba* as the most suitable Arabic calligraphy in that it carries with it aesthetic, artistic and formative values and dimensions. To be brief this calligraphy is characterized by the large letters and its ability to obey, overlap and intertwine, which is not acceptable in other Arabic calligraphies. This increases the aesthetics of the *Kiswah* and gives it a unique aesthetic appearance, and it is possible to notice the proportions of its letters that are between large, medium and small, which occupy space in the written tapes, calligraphic formations and various compositions. In addition, the voids within the vacant spaces have been treated with the Arabic and decorative signs that characterize the *Thuluth* line to add dimension and aesthetic touch reflected in the total linear formations in the garment of the *Kaaba*.

Uday Farman confirms what it means: that the formations of *Thuluth* calligraphy have several variables. In addition, what is unique to *Thuluth* calligraphy on its high ability to be ductile in periods and long withdrawals for some of its straight. And lying letters and the letters' ability to curvature and bend according to design necessities while preserving. The aesthetics of the letter and its basic rules as the extended feature is one of the important artistic phenomena that characterize the letters of the *Thuluth* script. It is evident in the letter *Alif* (حرف الألف أ) because of its ability to be longer than its normal size. In addition to the transmission characteristic that characterizes the *Thuluth* letters, which is embodied through the oblique directional structure, which is represented in the letters "و", "ر", "ز" and "م". Moreover, to the characteristic of the formal closing of the letters of the *Thuluth* line, it is intended to link the fragmented details by establishing a perceptual and visual relationship between the vocabulary of the linear composition in a way that suggests a single mass.³¹ The circumference feature is also considered one of the important characteristics of the *Thuluth* letters, and the contour circumference is achieved through the convergence of the elements of the linear

³⁰Ibrahim Juma, *The Story of Arabic Writing* (Cairo: Dar al-Maarif, 1968).

³¹Daoud Abd al-Ridha Bahia, "Building Rules for Content Semantics in Linear Formations."

composition and its distribution in filling the linear spaces between the elements of the formation. The *Thuluth* letters highlight the aesthetic aspect of the calligraphic formations embodied on the *Kaaba* cover.³²

In the same interview conducted by the researcher with the calligrapher of the *Kaaba Kiswah*, Mukhtar Alam (مختار عالم) about the role of Arabic calligraphy in the aesthetics of the *Kaaba Kiswah*, he indicated that: the line embodied on the *Kiswah* of the Holy *Kaaba* is sophisticated and beautiful. It is the *Thuluth* line, which is characterized by elements and artistic characteristics. Artistic aesthetics, as well as decorative formation. These linear compositions embodied on the covering of the Holy *Kaaba* are beautiful compositions and selected verses, and they include some elements of plastic art. In terms of the quality of *Thuluth* calligraphy and its calligraphic formations, they were characterized by coherence, unity, and rhythm. Suhaila al-Jubouri confirmed that,

Fonts in our time, with the development and proficiency introduced into it. From this point of view, that is clear that *Thuluth* calligraphy was employed in all calligraphic formations and compositions without evading any letters. Through it, the textual meaning (النصوص القرآنية) of the noble verses was evoked to reflect the extent of the aesthetic and spirituality of the calligraphic formations.³³

Through the analysis process, the researcher believes that the calligrapher invested some letters, especially *Alif* (حرف الألف أ), and made the latest transformations in its design structure. We find it difficult to read the text in an analytical reading of some formations on the *Kiswah* of *Kaaba*. There is a diversity in drawing letters through the exchange of accuracy and thickness, as well as the curves, extensions and swaying of letters. It radiates a sense of stability, constancy, stillness, and movement at the same time; and defines the aesthetics of the covering of the *Kaaba* through the superimposed Arabic lines that were drawn with one type of calligraphy, which is the clear *Thuluth* line. Since it resulted in the transformations of not only the design structure formations but it also provides functional and aesthetic dimensions with deep meaning and sacredness. Employing the elongation and curvature feature led to the creation of formations with a cohesive and homogeneous texture, in addition to the decorating signs that permeates the space of the formations, which perform an inflectional and aesthetic function simultaneously. Thus, enhancing the structure of the linear formations and the cohesion of their parts until they appear as one block, which gave an aesthetic sense to the embodied Arabic calligraphy. On the *Kiswah* of the *Kaaba*, which is the realization of the golden ratio, that is, the virtuous ratio (النسبة الفاضلة), "the ratio of one-third to two-thirds," between the syllables of a single letter, word, and line.

5. Conclusion

Based on the previous inferences, the researcher summarises that the *Thuluth* line has several aesthetic and artistic characteristics as compared to the rest of the other Arabic lines. These technical characteristics gave this line an evident prominence in the decoration and beautification of the *Kiswah* of the *Kaaba* with the appearance of the single letter in several bodies through the morphological diversity of the character drawing. In addition to the ability of high notes needs to be flexible, overlap; and intersection and acceptance of decorative units as well as the property of shorthand radiates sheer spirituality of the Qura'nic verses.

Arabic calligraphy is characterized by aesthetic characteristics that make it a decorative element, as it contains both spatial and aesthetic values, specifically in the complex *Thuluth Al-Jali* (الجلي) calligraphy. The *Thuluth* calligraphy was employed in all calligraphic formations and compositions

³²Ibid.

³³Suhaila al-Jubouri, *Arabic Calligraphy and its Development during the Abbasid Era in Iraq* (Baghdad: Al-Adeeb Press, Baghdad, 1962).

without evading any letters. Through it, the textual meaning of the noble verses was interrogated to reflect the extent of the aesthetics and spirituality of the calligraphic formations. Based on those observations that has been previously mentioned, the researcher evaluates the totality of the Arabic calligraphy art drawn in the complex *Thuluth* calligraphy, as it produced decorative linear formations with a harmonious rhythm.

The complex *Thuluth* calligraphy is characterized by the aesthetic and creative values in the art of Arabic calligraphy, in general, and in the calligraphic composition in particular. In addition to the diversity of the forms of one letter of the *Thuluth* calligraphy in the total compositions and calligraphic structures in the *Kiswah* of the Holy *Kaaba*, which gave the *Thuluth* calligraphy a great presence compared to the rest of the other Arabic calligraphies.

Finally, this study has shown the importance of Arabic calligraphy in forming calligraphic formations in the *Kiswah* of the Holy *Kaaba*. The compound glaze gave the covering of the Holy *Kaaba* a special and unique imprint; thus, making it a piece of art with an unparalleled Islamic artistic style. The art of Arabic calligraphy, represented through calligraphic formations, had a distinct role in rooting Islamic art, aesthetics and spiritual values in the covering of the Holy *Kaaba*.

Conflict of Interest

Author(s) declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Funding Details

This research did not receive grant from any funding source or agency.

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