

The Inscriptions of the Damascene Ottoman Residences

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The extensive use of inscriptions characterizes Islamic art and architecture. In fact, calligraphy is one of the most characteristic features distinguishing the Islamic civilization among the other cultures. Islamic buildings generally, and the residential ones in particular, have an abundant number of inscriptions. These inscriptions have, in addition to their ornamental role, an important significance represented in the meaning of their contents. This paper will shed light on the Arabic inscriptions of the Damascene Ottoman residences in order to discuss the inscription styles of script, as well as the meaning of their contents. The inscription styles of script include square geometric Kufi, Naskh and Thuluth.

The most significant item is the inscription content, it is noteworthy that a few examples represent unread inscriptions, in other words, just an ornamental figure composed of Arabic letters with no meaning. The meanings of the inscriptions of the Damascene Ottoman residences could be categorized according to their purpose, position, and context; in this regard, the inscriptions are classified into commemorative, Quranic, the Prophet's sayings, poetic inscriptions. On the other hand, the meanings of the inscriptions reflect the beliefs and the culture of the residences.