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## **Voices from the Walls: Contextualization of Hispano-Moroccan Calligraphic Inscriptions**

Western art historians have often interpreted calligraphic inscriptions within Islamic architecture as being purely decorative in nature. At first glance, these inscriptions appear to tie neatly into the complex weave of arabesque design. In fact, calligraphic inscriptions have long played a very important and fundamental role in Islam. The Qur'an itself is believed to be the voice of God and Qur'anic inscriptions often have similar importance. But selection of the text used in architectural design was closely related to the historical and political context of the day.

This paper explores calligraphic texts used in religious, educational, and civic buildings in medieval Andalusia (Spain) and Morocco. Through an examination of sites such as the Great Mosque of Córdoba and the Merinid medersas (Qur'anic schools) and necropolis of Morocco, this paper provides possible new directions for understanding the importance and selection of calligraphic inscriptions. It also examines the design style and materials used for the inscriptions themselves and concludes that their design and selection, whether suras from the Qur'an, poetry, or self-praising political messages, were directly related the historical context of their period.