

Going beyond the European Borders: How to incorporate Eastern Fonts into your Scroll

Presented by: Zosia Kowalewska
Mka: Melissa Hannon
Melblackrose@gmail.com

Why?

Why not! There are tons of beautiful examples of artwork from China, Japan and the Middle East. As artisans, we should be open to learning new techniques and styles... and you never know when we'll have Royalty or personas from those areas (hey, wait.. didn't we...?).

Where do I begin?

At the beginning of course.

- 1) **Pick your image** – lets go with a Mongol Arabic [\[1\]](#)



13th century: **Temujin Proclaimed Chinggis Khan with Sons Ogedei and Jochi on His Right**

An important thing to remember about the Mongolian Empire– the area was from Vienna to the South China Sea – 12,741,000 square miles! [\[2\]](#) That's a lot of room for a scribe to play in!

Since the image I found didn't have any text with it, I need to do some research as to what text was likely used.

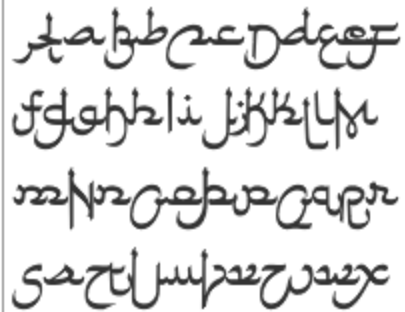
- 2) **Research** – if you have a Scribal Guild Library or one of your own, many of the compilation books have examples from Roman to 17th Century. Start

cross-checking resources for more information and examples.

3) **Cheat a little** – The Internet and Books are your friend and so are PC Fonts.

a. Search using words like “faux” – i.e. faux Arabic font.

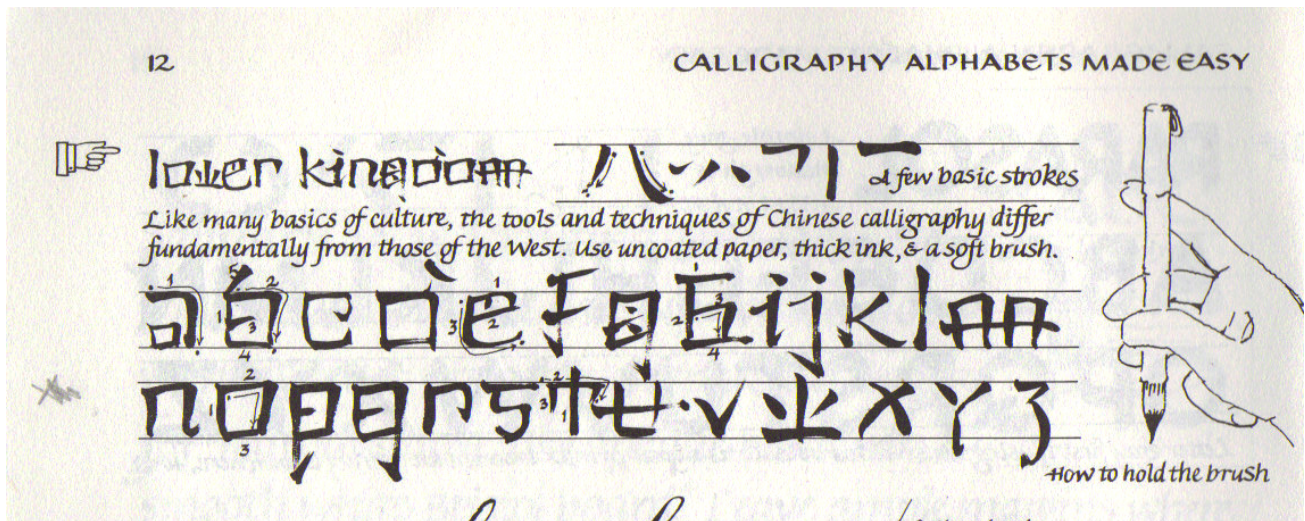
<http://www.myfonts.com/fonts/pixymbols/faux-arabic/> has a great example of the Style I needed



b. Calligraphy Alphabets Made Easy by Margaret Shepherd has some wonderful eastern fonts

Find a style you like and resembles the time period you are working in and get to work.

Here is a Chinese example:



4) **Practice** – The key to a faux font, regardless of region, is to become familiar with it as you would Gothic or Blackhand.

a. **Flourish** – some letters may need more attention than others so add some stylized flourishes based on your base examples.

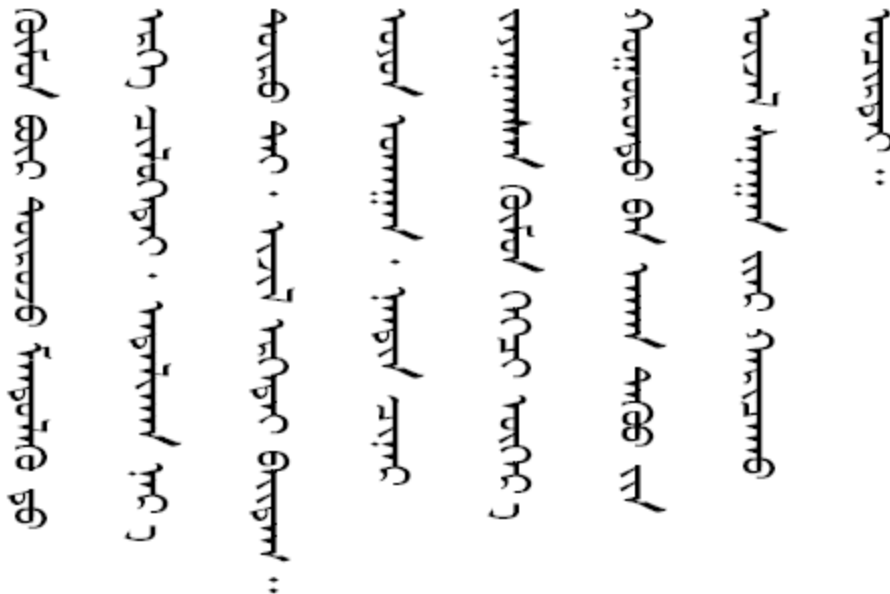
b. **Pen Position** – this was the hardest thing to determine. The angle

of the pen is key as with any calligraphy style. Try a few different angles to see which works best.

c. Pen or Brush or Quill? - Some styles may be better using a brush instead of a pen. These calligraphy brushes can be easily found in many Art Supply stores. Quill pens may also provide a different look and feel as well. Experiment!

d. Right to left or left to right? - Arabic is written right to left. Give it a try! This will certainly make the scroll look more "authentic" but harder to read. To give that right to left feel, have your margin be at the right instead of the left but keep your text in the standard left to right.

e. Up and down? Some Mongol text is written starting at the top of the page going from left to right. The letters have different shapes depending on the placement in the word. So for example, your letter C will have 3 different styles. Here is a beautiful sample text using the traditional alphabet^[3]:



5) Committing - Once you have practiced your new font and have tried a few trail runs (using the same paper, blocking out the Illumination so you have the exact placement of the text kind of trial.) it's time to commit the font to the paper. BE BRAVE! Take a deep breath and just do it.

Now what?

Be sure to take some notes as to what did or didn't work. What angle did you use? Nib size? Also, please please please have readable copy for the Herald and the recipient.

Take a photo and share! I would love to see more examples of Chinese, Japanese, Russian and Arabic out in court to get the well deserved oooohh and ahhhhs.

This was my attempt:



Lastly – HAVE FUN!!

[1] <http://mongolianhistory.blogspot.com/2007/07/mongolia-history-in-brief.html>

- [2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mongol_Empire
- [3] <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/mongolian.htm>