



The natural setting of the element:

The Musnad script, its practices, and its arts hold immense historical and cultural significance in Yemeni societies. This script originated in southern Arabia, particularly in Yemen, in ancient civilizations such as the kingdoms of Saba, Qataban, and Himyar. Over time, it began to spread northward, and it is currently practiced in various Yemeni governorates, with a greater concentration in Marib Governorate. It is also clearly evident in the city of Taiz and some neighboring villages. Over time, the arts and practices of the Musnad script have spread beyond their original region, reaching major urban

centers. In addition to other cities and towns, researchers and specialists in the Musnad script are located both within Yemen and abroad (in Arab countries, Europe, and America), while the craftsmen and artists practicing it are primarily concentrated within Yemen. The Musnad script is widespread throughout the Yemeni governorates, with a particular focus in Ma'rib Governorate. It is also clearly visible in the city of Taiz and some surrounding villages. The script is practiced in diverse environments, including streets and public walls, shop fronts and public and private buildings, archaeological sites and surrounding villages, and craft and architectural workshops.

A Brief Description of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Element

The Musnad script is one of the oldest writing systems in the world, originating in southern Arabia in the second millennium BCE. It is associated with ancient Yemeni civilizations such as Saba, Qataban, and Himyar. Over time, the script has evolved beyond mere documentation and writing, becoming a vibrant cultural practice within Yemeni society. It reflects cultural identity and national pride, ensuring the continuity of historical and cultural ties across generations. The Musnad script is widely practiced in Yemen, particularly in the governorate of Ma'rib, the city of Taiz, and some villages surrounding archaeological sites. However, its influence extends throughout all governorates, with researchers and enthusiasts both within Yemen and abroad. Craftsmen and artists are concentrated in Yemen itself.





The arts and practices of the Musnad script represent an integrated system encompassing handwriting and reading, engraving on stone, wood, and metal, embroidery on fabrics and furnishings, and its modern use in graphic design and the visual identities of national institutions. Handwriting is the foundation of the practice, where children and students learn to read and write letters and understand their historical and linguistic significance, whether in schools, universities, or through informal education workshops. Engraving, on the other hand, involves artisans who carve letters into wood to create furniture or into stone to decorate the facades of houses, shops, and public halls, giving them an aesthetic and cultural dimension that transcends their utilitarian function. In metalwork, calligraphy is used in engravings on sculptures, signs, and commemorative pieces to affirm the symbolic presence of Yemeni identity.

These arts are intertwined with the daily life of Yemeni society. Calligraphy appears on traditional and modern clothing, such as shirts, abayas, and sports team jerseys, as well as in home furnishings, from curtains to cushion covers, becoming an integral part of the living space. Designers and architects also use calligraphy in visual and architectural projects, while academics and researchers study it, developing digital programs and passing on this knowledge to new generations, ensuring the practice remains continuous and innovative. This integration of education, artistic application, and community practice ensures that the Musnad script remains a living element reflecting heritage and identity, not merely a historical relic.

The script is transmitted within the community through diverse methods, ranging from formal education in schools and universities to community workshops and cultural events such as the annual Musnad Day on February 21st. This day brings together practitioners from various backgrounds to learn the script, practice its patterns, and participate in exhibitions and competitions, thus strengthening intergenerational connections. The script is also practiced through observation and hands-on experience, with children and students learning from artisans and artists as they work, observing its application on furniture, buildings, and clothing. Modern technology, from font design software to digital printing, facilitates the transfer of knowledge among those interested both within and outside Yemen, expanding the base of practitioners and reinforcing the continuity of this heritage.



The practice of Musnad script plays clear social and cultural roles; it is a symbol of identity and cultural belonging, a tool for education and crafts, a means of artistic and creative expression, and a unifying social framework that brings together academics, artists, artisans, and the local community. Its role also extends to the economic sphere, providing a source of income for artisans and artists who sell their products adorned with Musnad script. These products are popular among Yemenis interested in acquiring items that reflect their cultural identity. Musnad art also appears as a widespread social symbol, appearing on the jerseys of Yemeni national sports teams and on the designs of Yemen Airways aircraft. This blends national identity with cultural pride and reinforces its presence in daily life and in both public and private spheres. Through these practices, the script remains alive in Yemen, reflecting its history and culture, and ensuring its transmission to future generations as an element of intangible cultural heritage capable of continuity and renewal.

Practitioners Directly Involved in the Art of Musnad

Practitioners directly involved in the art and practice of Musnad script fall into categories that actively practice, produce, and utilize the script in daily life. Among the most prominent are:

- Yemeni artisans and artists, particularly architectural craftsmen who decorate the facades of houses, halls, and public buildings using Musnad script symbols and letters.
- Craftsmen of various kinds, such as those working in:
 - Leather goods
 - Metalwork
 - Cotton and textilesWho employ Musnad script motifs and symbols in their products to highlight ancient Yemeni cultural identity.
- Calligraphers and sculptors who engrave Musnad letters on stone, wood, sculptures, and plaster.
- Graphic designers and digital designers who use Musnad script art and motifs in the design of logos, posters, visual products, and computer programs specializing in the script.
- Researchers and academics specializing in calligraphy, through its study, reading, writing, teaching, and the design of computer programs, contribute to its continued practice and development.



These activities are undertaken as a source of pride and an expression of Yemeni cultural identity, and contribute directly to revitalizing and preserving the Musnad script as a living heritage and an element of intangible cultural heritage.

A segment of the local community involved in the art form, though less so than the previous group, contributes to its practice, facilitation, and transmission (such as those who prepare the performance space, like the theater or costumes, or those who provide training or supervision). This segment comprises individuals and entities within the local community who do not directly practice Musnad script but play a vital role in creating a supportive environment for its practice and transmission. Among the most prominent are:

- Teachers and educational supervisors who oversee the teaching of Musnad script to children and students within school or extracurricular activities, contributing to the simplification of the letters and their writing methods.
- Trainers and organizers of workshops and cultural events, particularly those responsible for organizing Musnad Day, who train participants, coordinate activities, and provide tools and educational materials.
- Designers and supervisors of artistic and architectural works who plan and guide the use of Musnad script symbols in decorative and architectural projects, even if they do not execute the work themselves.
- Owners of craft workshops (such as plaster, iron, and carpentry workshops) who provide workspaces and supervise the work.
- Training workers and trainees to incorporate the Musnad script into decorative elements and products.
- Cultural and media activists who promote the Musnad script through media outlets and social media, contributing to raising public awareness of its importance.

This group plays a complementary and essential role in ensuring the continued practice of the Musnad script through preparation, organization, moral support, and the transmission of knowledge between generations, thus strengthening its presence as an element of intangible cultural heritage.

The language or languages of the relevant record: Arabic, specifically the Yemeni dialect.



Material elements associated with the practice or transmission of the script (such as tools and equipment, specific clothing, the location or locations, and ritual objects, if any)

The practice and transmission of the Musnad script are linked to a range of traditional and modern material elements that contribute to its implementation, teaching, and continuity. Among the most prominent are:

- Traditional tools:

These include chisels and hammers used for carving letters on stone and wood. The chisel is known locally in some regions as "al-firas." Hand engraving and carving tools are also used, reflecting the skills of the craftsmen and the precision of traditional practice.

- Modern tools and methods:

These include computers, font design software, digital Musnad script writing software, printers, graphic design tools, the internet, and electronic media used for teaching, publishing, and documentation.

- Materials and tools for artistic execution:

These include wood, stone, plaster, metal, paper, and sculptures, along with simple tools such as cardboard cutouts in the shape of letters, and spray paints used for printing letters on walls and various surfaces.

- Places and environments for practice:

These include craft workshops, design studios, schools and universities, heritage and archaeological sites, as well as public spaces such as streets and walls, wedding halls, and public and private buildings decorated with Musnad script.

- Traditional clothing and products:

These include clothing decorated with Musnad script letters and symbols, and jewelry and handicrafts that incorporate Musnad script motifs as an aesthetic and cultural element.



While the practice of Musnad script is not associated with specific ritual tools, these material elements collectively form the medium through which the knowledge and skills associated with it are transmitted, contributing to its preservation and the transmission of its art as a living element of intangible cultural heritage.

Other intangible elements (if any) associated with the practice and transmission of intangible cultural heritage:

The practice and transmission of the Musnad script are linked to a number of intangible elements that constitute the cognitive, emotional, and social framework of this heritage. Among the most prominent of these are:

- Inherited knowledge and skills related to reading and writing Musnad script letters, understanding their linguistic and historical significance, and knowledge of its developmental stages and formatting methods, which are transmitted through education, practice, and personal experience.
- Historical memory and cultural identity, as the Musnad script holds profound connotations in the collective consciousness, linked to the history of the ancient Yemeni kingdoms. It is viewed as a symbol of authenticity and pride in Yemeni cultural heritage.
- Symbolic values and meanings associated with documentation and writing. It is believed that some terms used in the Yemeni dialect, such as "sanad" meaning document or writing, have their roots in the Musnad script, reflecting its presence in popular linguistic memory.
- The personal motivations and feelings of practitioners, such as a sense of accomplishment, challenge, responsibility towards preserving heritage, and a desire to serve the scientific and cultural community, are elements that contribute to the continuity and development of the practice.
- Methods of teaching and intangible transmission, including observational learning, direct experience, informal education through workshops, community gatherings, traditional meeting places, and volunteer initiatives, in addition to knowledge transfer via digital platforms and social media.





- The cultural and media discourse that accompanies the revival of the Musnad script, through television programs, documentaries, and public discussions that enhance its place in public consciousness.

These intangible elements collectively contribute to supporting the continuity of the Musnad script and transforming it from a historical artifact into a living cultural practice capable of renewal and transmission across generations as an element of intangible cultural heritage.

Customary practices, if any, that govern the use of an element of intangible cultural heritage or aspects thereof do not exist.

Methods of Transmission to Others in the Local Community

The Musnad script is transmitted to others through a range of formal and informal educational methods, including:

1. Informal and Traditional Education:

- **Workshops and Cultural Events:** Such as "Musnad Day," which allows interested individuals to learn and practice directly.
- **Daily Practice and Direct Observation:** Individuals learn from older calligraphers and practitioners through hands-on experience.
- **Observation and Experimentation at Archaeological Sites:** Examining ancient inscriptions in the local environment and using them to decorate homes helps solidify knowledge of the script.
- **Learning by Doing:** Craftsmen teach workers and apprentices during actual work, which promotes practical learning.

2. Formal Education:

- **Schools and Universities:** Integrating the Musnad script into school curricula or specialized academic programs.
- **History Courses in Early Stages:** Some interested individuals are introduced to the script as early as elementary school through history classes, which forms a foundation for future learning.



3. Learning through courses and training workshops:

- **Free courses and individual initiatives:** such as Khalil Al-Nahawi's courses on WhatsApp groups, which target people from various disciplines, artisans, and graduates, thus contributing to the revival of calligraphy and making it accessible to everyone.
- **Organized workshops and training courses:** These provide beginners and practitioners with the opportunity to learn skills systematically and interactively.

4. Digital education and knowledge transfer through technology:

- **Digital calligraphy programs:** such as the program made available for free online by a designer to Arab and foreign researchers, with the ability to type on both Arabic and English keyboards.
- **Participation and technical support:** The designer expressed his willingness to help those who wish to design similar programs, which contributes to knowledge transfer and expanding the base of those interested.

5. Independent reading and research:

- **History books and specialized references:** Consulting historical texts and ancient inscriptions enables new generations to understand the development of calligraphy and its uses.
- **Personal research and careful observation:** Following and studying inscriptions independently enhances a deep understanding of calligraphy.

Relevant Organizations (Local Community Organizations, NGOs, etc.) (if any)

There are currently no specialized institutions or institutes that teach the Musnad script. If any exist, their teaching is limited to what is taught in primary schools and some university courses.

- Ma'ad Karb Cultural Foundation
- Sarwah Foundation
- Sanabel Dam Ma'rib Association



- Marib Cultural Development Association
- Saba Center for Historical Studies and Research
- Marib Cultural Association
- Al-Waha Cultural Foundation – Taiz
- Association for the Preservation of Yemeni Heritage – Ma'rib
- Hadramout Center for Historical Studies and Research
- Bur Cultural Association – Aden
- Bar'an Media Foundation
- Al-Mahra Center for Languages

Threats (if any) to the practice of intangible cultural heritage within the community or communities concerned:

Despite the growing interest in the Musnad script, there are a number of challenges and threats that may affect its continuity and dissemination:

1. Weak public awareness:

- The public has little understanding of the importance of the script as an element of Yemeni cultural identity.
- Society appreciates the script as a testament to ancient civilization, but there is no will to revive it practically or officially.

2. Limited government support:

- The state has little interest in documenting and promoting the script.
- There is a lack of official awareness campaigns, cultural courses, or specialized forums.
- There is insufficient support provided to researchers and those interested, even by official bodies such as the Ministry of Culture.





3. Technical challenges related to publishing and sharing: • The difficulty of sharing digital programs for the Musnad script due to outdated methods of transmission (from floppy disks to email to internet links).

- Although there are no legal issues, technical challenges affect the speed of access for those interested.
4. Practical and Applied Challenges:
- Lack of consistent learning or practice of the script hinders its dissemination.

5. Environmental and Physical Threats:

- Sites containing original inscriptions are subject to war and destruction, threatening their very existence.

6. Lack of Cultural and Educational Awareness:

- The absence of educational courses and workshops that enhance the practical skills and artistry of those interested in the Musnad script.
- Limited early knowledge among younger generations, leading to a break in the chain of learning between generations.

Safeguarding or other measures (if applicable) to address any of these threats, and to encourage the practice and transmission of the intangible heritage element to future generations.

1. Community Awareness and Knowledge Dissemination: (These items require review to determine what is currently being done for the preservation process. Suggestions for preservation can be found here.)

- **Organizing specialized events and workshops to teach the Musnad script**, such as the annual Musnad Day, which includes exhibitions, workshops, and various educational activities.
- **Distributing educational booklets and promotional materials**, such as magazines and brochures printed in Musnad script, to introduce the script and encourage community participation.
- **Utilizing media and social media to promote the script**, such as television programs, short videos, films, and interactive educational games to teach the script in an enjoyable way.
- **Engaging the local community in educational activities within villages and communities**, such as funeral halls and wedding halls, to promote the spread and practice of the script.



2. Formal Education and Academic Training

- Integrating the Musnad script **into school curricula**, starting from the primary level with social studies or history subjects, continuing in secondary school, and studying the script within history departments in faculties of education and arts.
- **Holding workshops and training sessions in universities and open courses for individuals** from various disciplines to enhance knowledge of the script and its design skills.
- **Establishing institutes** Specialized training courses lasting one or two months will be offered to teach calligraphy and its application in design and art.

3. Encouraging Practitioners and Supporting Creativity

- **Supporting graphic designers, architects, interior designers, and artisans** to incorporate the Musnad script into their artistic and creative works, ensuring its continued practice and transmission to future generations.
- **Organizing youth competitions** for the best Musnad script writing or design, with prizes and incentives to attract young people and motivate them to learn and practice.
- **Using the script in visual identity and national products**, such as writing the names of ancient Yemeni kings on Yemen Airways planes and designing national football team jerseys adorned with Musnad script.

4. Official and Institutional Support

- Providing official and institutional support for cultural and educational initiatives related to the Musnad script.
- Encouraging cooperation between government agencies and cultural institutions to ensure the continuity of educational programs and projects.

5. Digital Documentation and Scientific Research

- **Creating a digital database or website containing images and information about all discovered Musnad inscriptions**, to serve as an accessible resource for researchers and those interested in the subject.



Comprehensive documentation of the inscriptions The technical practices of calligraphy to ensure the preservation and transmission of knowledge to future generations.

Consent of the local community or communities concerned to data collection and participation in its collection:

Attached.

Restrictions, if any, regarding the use and benefit of the collected data:

None.

Information Source(s): Name and Position or Affiliation

Salah Sultan Al-Hassani

Academic researcher and designer of a computer-based Musnad script writing program. Mansour Abdullah Saleh Al-Hazzaz (Interested)

Name: Ali Mubarak Saleh Taiman

Area: Ma'rib Governorate / Sirwah District

Position: Academic

Name: Dhaif Allah Ahmed Hazza Al-Kindi

Area: Taiz Governorate / Sabr

Position: Interested in the field of education, involved in teaching Musnad script to children aged 13 to 15.

Dates and Locations of Data Collection

November 2, 2025, remotely

October 28, 2025 – Ma'rib – Al-Abd – Al-Wadi

Literature (if available)

- Due to the abundance of literature on the subject, the following are some of the most important:
- Ibrahim Muhammad al-Salawi: Grammar of the Musnad and Zabur Inscriptions (Sabaean, Minaean, Qatabanian, Hadhramautic, Awsanian).
- Ibrahim Muhammad al-Salawi: Lessons in the Grammar of Ancient Yemeni Inscriptions.



- Ibrahim Muhammad al-Salawi: Musnad and Zabur Writings in Ancient Yemen.
- Ibrahim Muhammad al-Salawi: Linguistic Phenomena in the Dialects of Ancient Yemen – A Study Based on Inscriptions and Arabic Sources.
- Alfred F. L. Beeston: Grammar of South Arabian Inscriptions – Musnad Writings.
- Farouk Ismail: The Ancient Yemeni Language.
- Muhammad Abdul Qadir Ba Faqih et al.: Selections from Ancient Yemeni Inscriptions.
- Mutahhar al-Iryani: Musnad Inscriptions and Commentaries.
- Ismail, Farouk (2000): The Ancient Yemeni Language, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, Taiz.
- Al-Iryani, Mutahhar (1996): The Yemeni Dictionary of Language and Heritage, Scientific Edition, Damascus.
- Special Yemeni Terms – A Comparative Linguistic and Semantic Study, Journal of the Faculty of Arts, Sana'a University.
- The Musnad Script and Ancient Yemeni Inscriptions: A Study of an Ancient Yemeni Writing Inscribed on Wood, Dr. Yusuf Abdullah (1986), Al-Yaman Al-Jadeed Journal.
- Selections from Ancient Yemeni Inscriptions (Muhammad Abdul Qadir Ba Faqih – Alfred Beeston – Christian Robin – Mahmoud Al-Ghul) (1985), Tunis – Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization.
- The Rules of South Arabian Inscriptions – The Musnad Book: Alfred Beeston, translated by Rifaat Hazm (1995), Irbid, Jordan.
- Yemeni Inscription Records: Yusuf Abdullah, Yemeni Studies Journal (1979).
- The Sabaean Dictionary (Alfred Beeston – Jacques Rickmans – Mahmoud Al-Ghul – Walter Müller) (1982), Sana'a University. • Publishing and Explaining Ancient Semitic Inscriptions from Southern Arabia: Khalil Yahya Nami (1943), Cairo.
- Stone Inscriptions in Barash, in Light of the Muhammad Tawfiq Collection: Khalil Nami (1954), Cairo University Press.
- Ancient Wood Inscriptions from Yemen (Jacques Rickmans – Walter Muller – Yusuf Abdullah) (1994), University of Leuven.





- South Arabian Inscriptions (First Collection: 1947): Khalil Nami, Journal of the Faculty of Arts, Vol. 1, pp. 9–3, Fuad I University.
- South Arabian Inscriptions (Second Collection: 1954): Khalil Nami, Journal of the Faculty of Arts, Vol. 2, pp. 16–3, Cairo University.
- South Arabian Inscriptions (Third Collection: 1958): Khalil Nami, Journal of the Faculty of Arts, Vol. 2, pp. 35–63, Cairo University. • South Arabian Inscriptions (Fourth Collection: 1960): Khalil Nami, Journal of the Faculty of Arts, Vol. 1/2/2: 1–96, Cairo University.
- South Arabian Inscriptions (Fifth Collection: 1961): Khalil Nami, Journal of the Faculty of Arts, Vol. 3/1: 1–80, Cairo University.
- South Arabian Inscriptions (Sixth Collection: 1962): Khalil Nami, Journal of the Faculty of Arts, Vol. 3/1: 119–129, Cairo University.

Musnad Inscriptions and Commentaries: Mutahhar al-Iryani (1990), Sana'a – Yemeni Center for Studies and Research – 2nd ed.

Audiovisual materials and recordings should be submitted to archives, museums, and private collections (if available).

- Musnad Script Course, Khalil bin Dawood al-Nahwi, 2024, YouTube.
- What if Musnad Script were the official Arabic script? A television program, Ain Shabab Channel, 2022.
- Musnad Script: Identity and Existence, a television episode, Suhail Satellite Channel, 2024.
- Secrets of the Musnad Script and Some Important Linguistic Features of the Ancient Yemeni Language, Ancient Yemeni Antiquities Channel, 2022.
- The Yemeni Mother Tongue, a television episode, Karb Cultural Institute Foundation, 2022.

The Musnad Script: A Study by the Pen, Institute of Writing, a documentary film, Al-Hawiya Channel, 2021.



Documentary materials and tools in archives, museums, and private collections (if available).

The Corpus of Ancient Yemeni Inscriptions: Containing 3,500 inscriptions collected from national museums and inscriptions outside Yemen.

The person or persons who classified, collected, and included information in the inventory:

1. Salem Abdulghani Muqbil Hashim
2. Hadeel Yousef Mohammed Al-Salawi
3. Huda Ahmed Aboud
4. Ghadeer Abdulkhaliq Ali Al-Hijazi
5. Ali Ahmed Abdullah Al-Huwaisek

Proof of consent from the relevant local community or communities to (a) the inventory of the item and (b) the provision of the information to be included in the inventory

Attached

Date of data entry into the inventory

