

Arts of Asia Lecture Series Fall 2011  
The Arts of South Asia & the Islamic World: Beliefs Made Visible  
*Sponsored by The Society for Asian Art*

Content and Context the Visual Arts in the Islamic World

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**Dynasties mentioned in the lecture:**

622: beginning of a new era marking the Hegira or Emigration of the Prophet Muhammad and his Followers from Mekka to Medina, the expansion of Islam is launched from Medina.

685-705: Reign of Abd al-Malik the Umayyad- establishment of Arabic as an official language, first monumental architecture

749-1258: Abbasid Dynasty rules from Baghdad: expansion of Islam continues to expand both east and west, by land and by sea.

819-1005: The Samanids rule in eastern Iran and Afghanistan including the city of Nishapur.

977-1186: The Ghaznavids rule from Lashkari Bazaar and Ghazna in Afghanistan.

1258-1349: The Mongol Ilkhans remove the last Abbasid Caliph and establish their own dynasty that is linked to the Mongol rulers of China (The Yuan Dynasty: 1260-1350's)

1232-1492: The Nasrids of Spain

1501-1722: The Safavids of Iran

Major Topics of the Lecture

1. Historical introduction about the spread of Islam across the Asian Continent
2. Remembering the Holy Cities of Arabia: Mecca and Medina through pilgrimage manuals
3. Objects as Bearers of Meaning:
  - a. Ceramics and their context in eastern Iran and Afghanistan : 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries  
the importance of Nisapur as a ceramic production center  
objects at the AAM from the region: ceramics: B 68P7, B60P1862, B60P64. B60P2142,

b. The Palaces of Afghanistan in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century: the case of Lashkari Bazaar:11<sup>th</sup>-12 century  
and the Palace of Mas'ud at Ghazna, dated to 1111

stone relief from the Palace of Mas'ud at Ghazna: B87S3

c. Ceramics and their context in Western Iran during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries: the importance of  
Kashan and the Mongol Palace at Takht-i Sulaiman

Objects at the AAM from the region: B65P58, B60P2148, B 60P2024 B60P2145 and P2146, B60P2034,  
B60P1950. B60P2134a, b., B65P58

#### 4. The Qur'an as the Embodiment of Beliefs

a. Pages from early Qur'ans at the AAM: Early Copies of the Qur'an: AAM: 2004: 60.61

b. Regional variants in Spain and North Africa in the presentation of the Qur'an: AAM: 2004: 59 a-b

c. The Multiple Roles of the Qur'an as Object: the Safavid Qur'an at the AAM: B75D12

d. Qur'anic inscriptions from China: the Incense Burners B62B31 and B62B32 and the hanging scroll  
2005.94

#### Suggested Readings:

Aimee Froom: *Persian Ceramics from the Collections of the Asian Art Museum*, 2008.

Fred Leemhuis, "From Palm Leaves to the Internet," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an*, ed.  
Jane D. McAuliffe, 2006, pp.145-161.

Tomoko Masuya, "Ilkhanid Courtly Life," in *The Legacy of Genghis Khan*, New York, 2002, pp. 74-103.

Ingrid Mattson, *The Story of the Qur'an: Its History and Place in Muslim Life*, Blackwell, 2008, pp. 76-136,  
137-174.