

Arts of Asia Lecture Series Fall 2014
The Arts of the Islamic World
Sponsored by The Society for Asian Art

Qamar Adamjee, Introduction to Islamic Art

August 22, 2014

Key Events in Early Islamic History

570	Birth of Prophet Muhammad in Mecca
610	Muhammad begins to receive revelations of the Qur'an at Mecca (at age of 40)
622	Muhammad and his followers migrate to Medina (<i>hijri</i> Islamic calendar begins)
632	Death of Muhammad in Medina

Principal Islamic Dynasties

632–661	“Rightly Guided” caliphs Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Egypt
661–750	Umayyads Capital at Damascus; Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Egypt, North Africa, Central Asia
750–1258	Abbasids Capitals at Baghdad, Samarra; Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Egypt, No. Africa, Central Asia
819–1005	Samanids Capital at Nishapur; Khorasan (Eastern Iran) and Transoxiana
909–1171	Fatimids Capital at Cairo; North Africa, Egypt, Syria
1038–1194	Seljuqs Iraq, Iran, Central Asia Syria; Anatolia (1194–1308)
1169–1260	Ayyubids Capital at Damascus; Egypt, Syria, south-eastern Anatolia, Yemen
1250–1517	Mamluks Capital at Cairo; Egypt, Syria, Arabia

1256–1353

Ilkhanids (Mongols)

Various capitals, including Tabriz; Iran

1370–1506

Timurids

Main capitals at Samarqand and Herat; Transoxiana, Iran

1501–1732

Safavids

Main capitals at Qazvin and Isfahan; Iran and Afghanistan

1526–1858

Mughals

Main capitals at Delhi, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Lahore; India

1281–1924

Ottomans

Capital at Istanbul; Anatolia, Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Egypt, No. Africa, the Balkans

1779–1924

Qajars

Capital at Tehran; Iran



(Image source: Barbara Brend, *Islamic Art*, 1991)

Selected suggested readings (available in AAM library)

Bloom, Jonathan & Sheila Blair. *Islamic Arts*. London : Phaidon Press, 1997

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Ettinghausen, Richard, Oleg Grabar, Marilyn Jenkins-Madina. *Islamic Art and Architecture, 650-1250*. New Haven & London : Yale University Press, 2001

Blair, Sheila S. and Jonathan M. Bloom. *The Art and Architecture of Islam, 1250-1800*. New Haven & London : Yale University Press, 1994

Masterpieces from the Department of Islamic Art in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Edited by Maryam D. Ekhtiar, Priscilla P. Soucek, Sheila R. Canby and Navina Najat Haidar. New York, New Haven & London : The Metropolitan Museum of Art, distributed by Yale University Press, 2011

Irwin, Robert. *Islamic Art in Context: Art, Architecture and the Literary World*. New York: H. N. Abrams, 1997

Other useful sources

Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/>

John L. Esposito, *Oxford Dictionary of Islam* (New York, 2013)

Encyclopedia of Islam (5 volumes; available in AAM library)

Lecture Outline

- I. Introduction
- II. Islam and the Prophet Muhammad
- III. Outward spread: Umayyads and Abbasids (650–1258)
- IV. The Arab world: Fatimids, Ayyubids, Mamluks (11th–12th centuries)
- V. Rise of Persian dominance: Seljuqs and regional dynasties (12th–13th centuries)
- VI. Persian dominance: Ilkhanids and Timurids (13th–15th centuries)
- VII. The age of Great Empires: Ottomans, Safavids, Mughals (16th–19th centuries)
- VIII. Modern world: Ottomans, Qajars, European imperialism (19th century–WWI)