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 (hijri 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)


Other useful sources

Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/)


*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)