

13 Islamic Art

text: Art Through the Ages
Art Past / Art Present

Pages 357 - 378
Pages 174 - 177 / 350 - 351
Pages 322 - 3231

Context:

History: Muhammed born c. 570 CE in Mecca - at age of 40, receives calling as a prophet of a new religion. Died: 632 CE
Recognized Christians, Jews and Arabs as descendants of Abraham recognized Jesus, but not as divine)
Only Muhammed's teachings preserve God's (Allah) true message. Muhammed was not divine - a prophet.
Koran Islamic holy book (*The Word of God*), collection of moral laws as revealed to Muhammed and written down after Muhammed's death by the caliph Uthman (644-656). The Koran is supplemented by the Sunna (moral saying of Muhammed and anecdotes of his exemplary deeds) (Caliphs descendants of families of the Prophet)
Islam spread rapidly - by the 8th cent. conquered North Africa and Spain (785 CE). Constantinople fell in 1453 CE
Islam (caliphs) established new social order and took complete charge of temporal as well as spiritual affairs.
Islam sponsored advanced scholarship and the translation of Greco-Roman texts from all areas of learning.

Islamic Beliefs and Ritual**Five Pillars of Faith:**

Mohammed did not set up any priesthood or church, but the Koran's "Five Pillars" is guide of duties for all life's endeavors
1: reciting the creed: "There is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God" 2: daily prayer (3 - 5 times) facing Mecca and Fridays in a Mosque 3: abstinence of food, drink and sexual activity during the daylight hours of Ramadan (9th lunar-holy- month), 4: the duty of almsgiving 5: pilgrimage to Mecca at least once before death.
The reward for observing the above is Paradise

Ritual centered around daily prayer and pilgrimage, without other rituals or hierarchical spiritually privileged priesthood.

Mosques places of daily prayer: The faithful would be called to prayer from a crier in the mosques minaret, enter enclosed courtyard, engaged in ritual washing, enter mosque and begin individual prayer on their knees facing Mecca.

The direction of Mecca was marked by a sacred niche, or mihrab, in the qibla wall (opposite to the entrance). In front of the mihrab was an elaborately decorated dome marking the exclusive enclosure for the caliph - called a madksourah

No images of anything living were allowed in Islamic mosques - only elaborate interweaving designs called arabesques, and calligraphic passages of text. Surfaces covered with rich, flat, linear patterns of geometric and organic design.

Art Works:

Dome of the Rock	691	★
The Great Mosque in Damascus	c. 700	
The Great Mosque in Tunisia	c. 875	
Mosque at Cordova, Spain	c. 800 - 1000	★
Alhambra Palaces, Spain	c. 1350	
The Mosque of Selim II, Turkey	c. 1575	★
<i>Sinan, architect</i>		
various illuminated manuscripts and carpets		

Vocabulary:	Allah calligraphic	caliph arabesque	Koran Sunna	Mecca
Techniques:	mosque madksourah voussoirs	mihrab minaret	qibla wall horseshoe arch maqarnas	maqsurah

Homework Reading Chapter 13: In Praise of Allah
The Art of the Islamic World

Pages 358 - 378

Answer the following questions in point form:

Due: Wednesday Nov. 14, 2007

- 1: What does the world *Islam* mean?
- 2: What two great forces ruled the eastern Mediterranean before Islam took hold in the 8th Century?
- 3: When were the Muslims finally driven from Spain?
- 4: List 3 contributions to the western tradition of Islam and Islamic scholars?
- 5: What is the most famous Islamic tomb in India (and perhaps the world)?
- 6: What is a *caliph*?
- 7: What is considered the first great architectural structure of Islamic art? Under what dynasty was it constructed? What is the religious significance of this building to all three religions that share the site?
- 8: What is notable about Islamic approaches to building mosques such as the Great Mosque at Damascus?
- 9: What is the subject matter of most Islamic mosaics (such as the ones in the Great Mosque at Damascus)?
- 10: What is the significance/importance of the Abbasid Kingdom centered in Baghdad in the 8th Century?
- 11: What is the organization of a *hypostyle* mosque as seen in the Great Mosque in Tunisa? Name and briefly define/describe the various areas in a mosque.
- 12: Make brief notes on the history of the Umayyad dynasty in Spain which lasted 300 years (from c. 750 - c. 1150)
- 13: What is the plan/organization of the Great Mosque at Cordoba, Spain? What were the major structural elements used in the mosque?
- 14: What is a *maqsurah*? How is it different from the rest of the mosque?
- 15: What was the role of calligraphy in the Islamic world? Describe its importance to religious belief? What is *kufic* script?
- 16: What is the symbolic or metaphorical significance of the Palaces of Granada?
- 17: What is a *maqarnas* and what is the symbolism of their use?
- 18: Who were the Ottomans? When was the Ottoman Empire at its peak? What were their rules especially known for?
- 19: Who was the architect Sinan? Make notes on Sinan's Mosque of Selmin II in Edrine, Turkey, including information on plan, layout, engineering, function(s).

