

Age of Empire: Islamic Art and Culture 1600-1900

Objects in MIA Collection

Architectural Elements

India, Agra-Mathura region, *Relief with floral decoration*, about 1700, mottled red sandstone, 2000.65

India, Agra region, *Jali* (perforated stone screen), about 1610, pink sandstone, 2000.78

Pakistan, Mughal dynasty, *Tiled arch*, 18th c., earthenware with underglaze blue and turquoise décor, 2006.35

Decorative Arts

Iran (Persia), Safavid dynasty, *Plate*, 17th c., ceramic with blue underglaze, 86.44

Turkey, Ottoman period, *Iznik ware: vase, plate, pitcher*, 16th c., glazed earthenware, 28.24.184, 17.54, 17.52

Turkey, Ottoman period, *Storage chest*, 17th c., wood with mother-of-pearl, tortoiseshell and ivory veneer with silver inlay, 2004.54

India, *Huqqa Base and Tray*, 18th c., Bidri ware (zinc alloy with silver inlay), 82.10.1, 82.10.3

India, *Vase/Huqqa Base*, 17th-18th c., Bidri ware (zinc alloy with silver and brass inlay), 93.48.1

India, *Rosewater Sprinkler and Ewer*, 17th-18th c., Bidri ware (zinc alloy with silver or brass inlay), 82.10.2, 82.10.4

India, Mughal dynasty, all 17th-18th c.:

Antelope jade vessel, 2004.29.5

Flower vase, 82.10.5

Powder flask, 70.43

Decorative button, 89.35.3

Miniature Painting

Iran (Persia), Safavid dynasty, *Alexander the Great Battling the Zangi*, about 1550, ink, colors, and gold on paper, 51.37.29

Iran (Persia), Safavid dynasty, *A King Picnicking in the Mountains*, about 1560, ink, colors, and gold on paper, 43.31.2

India (Bhora), *The Armies of Timur Combat the Forces of Nasir*, 1595-1600, opaque colors and gold on paper, 2014.101

India, Mughal/Deccan, *Raja Bikram Collecting the Clothes of the Bathing Fairies*, about 1710, opaque watercolors and gold on paper, 95.4.2

India, Mughal dynasty, *Portrait of Shah Jahan*, 1700-20, opaque watercolors and gold on paper, 84.118.3

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Key ideas

- Art for the wealthy courts of the Islamic world tells a story of elitism and prestige
- Art for the mosque recreates “heaven on earth”
- Figural imagery at times prohibited; other times allowed (secular vs. religious use)
- Three great powers emerge: Ottoman Turks, Safavids of Persia, and Mughals of India
- Eventual decline occurs with rising economic power of Europe and shift from resources of Mediterranean world to Americas and Far East

Three great ruling powers:

Ottoman Turks (1281-1924)

Descendents of Turkish rulers

Mehmed II (1451-81) regains Constantinople in 1453 (capital of Byzantine Empire for about 1000 years) and renames it Istanbul

Hagia Sophia/Aya Sofia (Holy Wisdom) – great Byzantine (6th c.) church of Justinian is transformed into an Islamic mosque in 1453

Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520-66)

madrassa – theological college

Safavids of Persia (1501-1736)

Descendents of Ali ibn Abi Talib, son-in-law and successor to Muhammad, who claim semi-divine status as reincarnations of the Shi'ite (Shi'a) Imams

(Sunni Muslims claim the first four caliphs are the rightful successors of Muhammad)

Isfahan – capital of Safavid empire, ruled by Abbas I (r. 1558-1629)

maidan – walled open area within a complex of shops, mosques, and other buildings

iwan – barrel-vaulted entrance portal

Mughals of India (1526-1857)

Descendents of Timur/Timurids and Genghis Khan/Mongols

Six great Mughal rulers:

Babur (r. 1526-30)

Humayun (r. 1530-56)

Akbar (r. 1556-1605)

Jahangir, means “World-Grasper” (r. 1605-27)

Shah Jahan, means “King of the World” (r. 1627-58)

Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707)

Fatehpur Sikri – “City of Victory” founded by Akbar as his capital

Taj Mahal – monumental tomb set in a vast garden overlooking the Yamuna/Jumna River; built by Shah Jahan for his favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal

pietra dura – style of semi-precious stone inlay first developed in Italy and used by Mughals on buildings such as the Taj Mahal