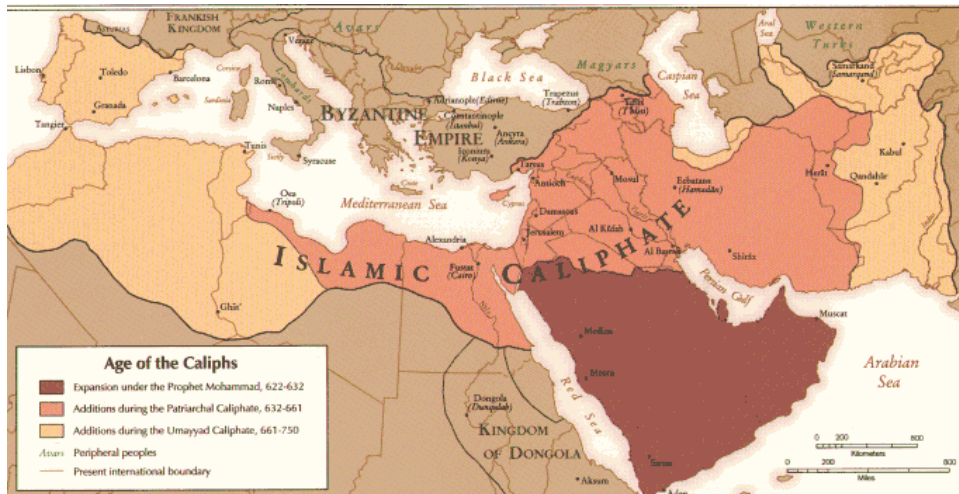


Bard Graduate Center Research Guide:
Early Islamic World



This guide is intended to help you jump start your research on the early Islamic world, with an emphasis on decorative arts and architecture. If you need additional assistance with in-depth research in this area, feel free to stop by the Reference Desk at any time or make an appointment with the Reader Services Librarian. The BGC Librarians are here to help you!

The early Islamic world includes the geographic areas of the Middle East, Turkey and the Ottoman Empire, Egypt and North Africa, and extends into Spain and Central Asia. Ranging from the 5th to the 19th centuries, the Rashidun, Umayyad, Abbasid, Fatimid, Mamluk, and Ottoman Caliphates are covered.

This guide was compiled by Erin Elzi at the Bard Graduate Center Library.

Image above: Niche tile, Ilkhanid period (1206-1353), image © [The Metropolitan Museum of Art](#)

Reference Sources for Early Islamic World

Grove Encyclopedia of Islamic Art and Architecture *BGC Reference - N6260 .G75 2009*

Encyclopedia of Islam *BGC Reference - DS37 .E523 2007*

Medieval Islamic Civilization : An Encyclopedia *BGC Reference - DS36.85 .M434 2006*

An Historical Atlas of Islam *BGC Oversize Reference - G5681 .S1 2002*

- [Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History](#)

Includes a wide range of West Asia timelines, covering arts Iran, Iraq, the Eastern Mediterranean, Anatolia, and the Arabian Peninsula, from 8000 B.C.-1900 A.D. Also includes nearly 100 thematic essays on Islamic Art. Hosted by the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

- [Oxford Art Online -](#)

Includes selected articles from the Dictionary of Islamic Art and Architecture.

- [Encyclopedia Iranica](#)

A comprehensive research tool dedicated to the study of Iranian civilization in the Middle East, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Indian subcontinent.

- [Cambridge History of Islam](#)

2 volume e-book. Requires log-in via Bard College

- [New Cambridge History of Islam](#)

6 volume e-book. Requires log-in via Bard College.

Great Mosque, Spiral Minaret



Great Mosque, Spiral Minaret

848-852

(c) 2006, SCALA, Florence / ART RESOURCE, N.Y

Books on the Early Islamic World

The following are books held at the BGC that are broad in their coverage of Early Islamic art and architecture. There are many more specific topics held by the library (Islamic ceramics, arts of Al-Andalus, etc.). To find general titles in the catalog, try searching for subjects such as **Islamic Art** ; **Art, Islamic** ; **Islamic Decorative Arts** ; **Islamic Architecture** ; or **Decoration and ornament, Islamic**. For more specific topics, try **Pottery, Islamic** ; **Textile fabrics, Islamic** ; etc.

Islam: A Thousand Years of Faith and Power [BGC Monographs - BP55 .B57 2002](#)

Islamic Art and Architecture 650-1250 [BGC Monographs - N6260 .E79 2001](#)

The Art and Architecture of Islam 1250-1800 [BGC Monographs - N6260 .B56 1994](#)

Islamic Art: Architecture, Painting, Calligraphy, Ceramics, Glass, Carpets [BGC Oversized Monographs - N6260 .M6913 2010](#)

Islamic Designs [BGC Monographs - NK1270 .W54 1988](#)

Islamic Art and Architecture [BGC Monographs - N6260 .H55 1990](#)

Islamic art and Beyond [BGC Monographs - N6260 .G6915 2006](#)

Early Islamic Art and Architecture [BGC Monographs - N6260 .E18 2000](#)

The Iconography of Islamic Art [BGC Monographs - N6260 .I32 2005](#)

Architecture of the Islamic World: Its History and Social Meaning, with a Complete Survey of Key Monuments [BGC Monographs - NA380 .A78](#)

Islam: Art and Architecture [BGC Monographs - N6260 .I72513 2004](#)

Islamic Architecture: Form, Function and Meaning [BGC Monographs - NA380 .H52 1994](#)

Islamic Arts *BGC Monographs* - N6260 .B57I82 1997

Islamic Arts *BGC Monographs* - N6260 .I86 2003

Splendors of Islam *BGC Monographs* - NA380 .C5713 2000

Islamic Aesthetics: an Introduction *BGC Monographs* - NX688 .A4 L43 2004

Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices



Illustrated manuscript, *Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices*, by al-Jazari

Mamluk period (1250-1517)

Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Important Periodicals for the Early Islamic World

- [Muqarnas](#)

Available at the BGC and via JSTOR. Covers Islamic art and architecture.

- [Ars Islamica/Ars Orientalis](#)

Available at the BGC and via JSTOR. Covers Islamic art.

- [Hali](#)

Available at the BGC. Covers Asian textiles and carpets, including Islamic.

- [Comparative Islamic Studies](#)

Available via Academic Search Premier. Covers Islamic history and civilization.

- [Domes](#)

Available via Academic Search Premier. Reviews books covering Islamic and Middle Eastern topics.

- [The Muslim World](#)

Available via Academic Search Premier and EBSCO. Covers Islamic history.

- [Studia Islamica](#)

Available via JSTOR. Covers Islamic religion and philosophy.

Brass Bucket



Brass bucket

Seljuk dynasty (12th century)

Image Resources for Early Islamic World

- [ArchNet](#)

An international online community for architects, planners, urban designers, landscape architects, conservationists, and scholars, with a focus on Muslim cultures and civilizations.

- [Saudi Aramco World Digital Image Archive](#)

Provides free access, for educational purposes, to more than 40,000 historic and current images of the Middle East and the Islamic world. The website requires registration (no charge).

- [ARTstor](#)

Includes 1000s of art, architecture and decorative arts images from Western Asia. The website requires registration.

Folio from the Blue Qur'an



Folio from the "Blue Qur'an"

Fatimid Period (909-1171)

Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Important Databases for the Early Islamic World

- [International Medieval Bibliography](#) -

A multidisciplinary bibliography of Europe, North Africa and the Near East (300-1500), including over 4,500 journals, conference proceedings and exhibition catalogs.

- [Art Abstracts](#)

Indexes a number of journals that cover Islamic art and architecture, including: Arts & the Islamic World, ARS Islamica, and the Journal of Near Eastern Studies.

- [Art Index Retrospective](#) -

Indexes a number of journals that cover Islamic art and architecture, including: Arts & the Islamic World, ARS Islamica, and the Journal of Near Eastern Studies.

- [Avery Index](#) -

Indexes a number of journals that cover Islamic art and architecture, including: ARS Islamica, Arts & The Islamic World, Islamic Art and Studies in Islamic architecture .

Capital, Madīnat al-Zahrâ



Capital, Madīnat al-Zahrâ

953-957

Image © Alec and/or Marlene Hartill

Primary Sources for the Early Islamic World

- [Islamic Manuscripts from the Princeton Digital Library](#)

Over 200 manuscripts, chiefly in Arabic but also include Persian, Ottoman Turkish, and other languages of the Islamic world. They date from the early centuries of Islam through the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

- [Islamic Heritage Project](#)

Harvard University has cataloged, conserved, and digitized hundreds of Islamic manuscripts, maps, and published texts from Harvard's renowned library and museum collections.

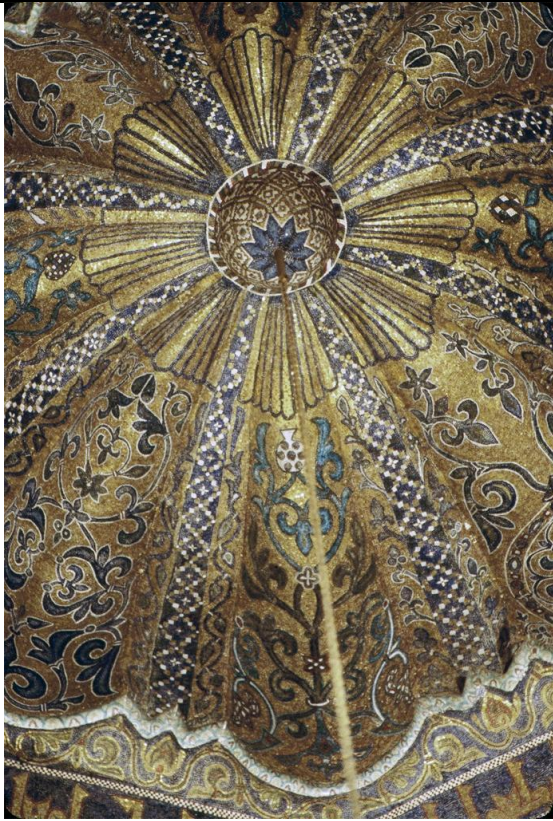
- [Islamic Manuscripts at University of Michigan](#)

The University of Michigan has digitized over 900 Islamic manuscripts in their collection, and made them available to the public via Hathi Trust.

- [Digital Library of Jerusalem Arabic Manuscripts](#)

A collaborative project between the main libraries of East Jerusalem, with over 1,000 heritage documents digitized.

Great Mosque



Mosaic interior dome, Great Mosque

784-86

Important Institutions and Repositories for the Early Islamic World

- [Metropolitan Museum of Art: Islamic Department](#)

The Museum's collection of Islamic art ranges in date from the seventh to the nineteenth century. Its nearly twelve thousand objects reflect the great diversity and range of the cultural traditions of Islam, with works from as far westward as Spain and Morocco and as far eastward as Central Asia and India.

- [The David Collection: Islamic Art](#)

This collection covers virtually the entire classical Islamic world, from Spain in the west to India in the east, and spans the period from the 8th to the 19th century, with all artistic media represented.

- [State Hermitage Museum: Islamic Art of the Countries of the Near East](#)

An excellent collection covering the 7th to 19th centuries.

Fritware Bowl



Fritware Bowl

Late 12th-early 13th century

Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Other Websites and Blogs for the Early Islamic World

- [Archaeological Ensemble of Madinat Al-Zahra](#)

Archaeological site in Córdoba, Spain. The site is also home to a museum and library, and produces a number of publications.

- [Historians of Islamic Art Association](#)

Here you can join the HIAA listserv and learn about their events and publications.

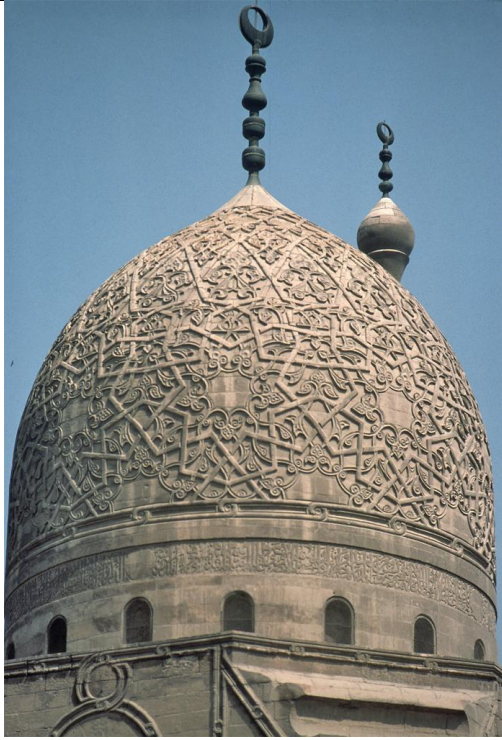
- [Explore Islamic Art Museums](#)

While intended as a resource for travelers, this Museum With No Frontiers site offers a useful list of museums with notable Islamic art collections, and a list of Islamic cultural heritage monuments and institutions in the Mediterranean.

- [Discover Islamic Art](#)

Another project of Museum With No Frontiers, this is a virtual collection that includes Islamic art and artifacts from museums in 14 countries in Europe, Africa and Western Asia.

Complex of Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay



Complex of Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay

1472-74