



THE TIMELINE OF ISLAMIC CIVILISATIONS

Featuring the collection of the
Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia

Bay of
Bengal

South
China
Sea

INDIAN
OCEAN



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Content

PREFACE

INTRODUCTION 10

 **THE UMAYYAD DYNASTY**
(661-750 AD / 41-132 AH) 14

 **THE ABBASID DYNASTY**
(750-1258 AD / 132-656 AH) 16




 **THE FATIMID (909-1171 AD / 297-567 AH)
& AYYUBID DYNASTIES (1169-1250 AD / 564-647 AH)** 18

 **THE SELJUK DYNASTY**
(1038-1194 AD / 429-590 AH) 20

 **THE ALMORAVID, ALMOHAD & NASRID DYNASTIES**
(11th-15th centuries AD / 5th-9th centuries AH) 22

 **THE MAMLUK DYNASTY**
(1250-1517 AD / 648-922 AH) 24

 **THE ILKHANID DYNASTY**
(1256-1353 AD / 654-754 AH) 26

	THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE (1281-1924 AD / 680-1342 AH)	28
	THE TIMURID DYNASTY (1370-1506 AD / 771-912 AH)	30
	THE SAFAVID DYNASTY (1501-1732 AD / 907-1145 AH)	32
	THE MUGHAL EMPIRE (1526-1858 AD / 932-1275 AH)	34
	THE QAJAR DYNASTY (1779-1924 AD / 1193-1342 AH)	36
	THE SULTANATES OF THE MALAY WORLD (15th-20th centuries AD / 9th-14th centuries AH)	38
	ISLAM IN CHINA	40

THE GOLDEN AGE OF ISLAMIC CIVILISATIONS	43
MAP	44
MUSEUM GUIDE	48
GLOSSARY	52
BIBLIOGRAPHY	59



PREFACE

Celebrating the rise and fall of major Islamic dynasties, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) is pleased to present 'The Timeline of Islamic Civilisations', a publication that presents the major Islamic eras in a chronological manner. This pocket-sized booklet briefly presents the history of major Islamic dynasties and highlights their key dates and events. Complementing the historical data are around 70 artefacts from the museum's collection. They are featured to visually enhance the publication and to present IAMM's collection in their ideal context, but most importantly, to celebrate human creativity and ingenuity.

The timeline is accordingly a chronological, geographical, and regional approach to Islamic civilisations aimed to guide students and enthusiasts of history and art in understanding and appreciating Islamic civilisation.

The publication also draws attention to key Islamic scholars in its section 'The Golden Age of Islamic Civilisations'; honouring their innovation and accomplishment in various fields.

Furthermore, the publication presents readers with an insert depicting the timeline of 'Palestine: The Forgotten History and Culture', an endeavour undertaken by the museum.

We invite you to explore and discover IAMM's treasures throughout 'The Timeline of Islamic Civilisations', which we trust will become a valuable source of information and also a worthwhile journey in time.

AN INTRODUCTION

The *Hijrah*, or migration of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ from Mecca to Al-Medina, marked the beginning of the Muslim calendar, but more importantly, it marked the birth of a Muslim community. It is a community that established a unique bond, the brotherhood, between the migrants and the inhabitants; and a community that has inspired the world with its dazzling civilisation.

Twelve years prior to this migration, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ had started receiving the divine revelations through Archangel Gabriel. The first words revealed by Gabriel ordered the Prophet ﷺ to “Recite: in the name of thy Lord, who created, created man from a clot of blood, recite, and thy Lord is the Most Bountiful” – (Surah al-Alaq).

From 610-622 AD, the Prophet ﷺ preached Islam, a monotheistic religion to his people in Mecca. Stressing the importance on the unity and oneness of Allah ﷻ (God), the Shahadah and the rejection of polytheism, was considered to be the first pillar of Islam. The first person to believe in Allah ﷻ and His messenger Muhammad ﷺ was the Prophet’s ﷺ wife Khadijah; however Islam was viewed by others as a threat to their power and authority in the region. In Mecca, the Prophet ﷺ and his followers became increasingly insecure due to escalating threats, abuse, and harassment, which eventually led to their migration to Yathrib, Al-Medina.

In Al-Medina, the Prophet ﷺ drafted the Constitution of Al-Medina, which marked the emergence of the first Islamic community. In 630 AD, the Muslims started an expansion plan, marched towards Mecca, destroyed all the pagan statues, and secured it for future pilgrimage. Mecca was an important trade and pilgrimage route for centuries and has been the direction to which Muslim prayers faced since 624 AD.

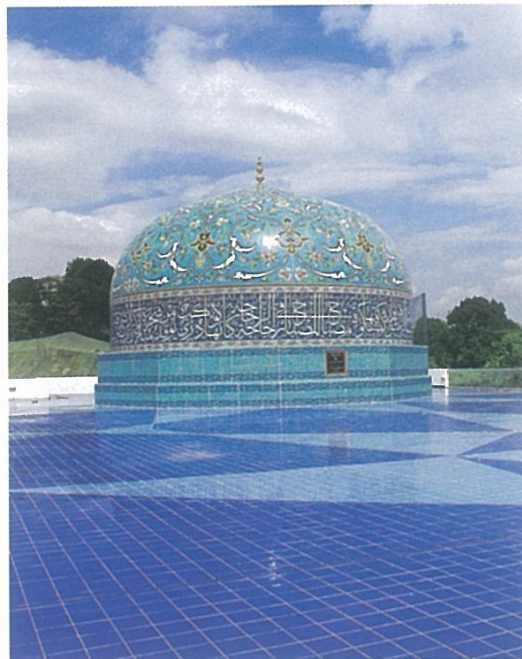
In the same year, the Prophet ﷺ performed the Hajj or pilgrimage, the fifth pillar of Islam. Upon completion of the Hajj rituals, the Prophet ﷺ gave a farewell sermon, a famous speech, which sets guidelines and advice to his followers. A few months later, in 632

AD, the Prophet ﷺ passed away at his home in Al-Medina, at the age of 63.

For 23 years, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ received and delivered the Qur'an revelations.

Ever since the first revelation, the Prophet ﷺ had memorised the verses of the Qur'an and later recited it to his followers, dictated it to the scribes, and requested them to read it back to ensure its accuracy. The sequence of the Surahs (chapters) was later ordered, and during the month of Ramadan the Prophet ﷺ would recite the Qur'an in order.

During the reign of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, the Qur'an was collected and inscribed, and four copies were produced. These copies became the standard *Mushaf* known as the Uthman copies. As a result, they became the authority copies which were made and sent to the new settlements for the past 1400 years. Although the Prophet ﷺ had sent letters to rulers and leaders of established empires inviting them to Islam, the large-scale expansion of the Muslim empire came in the subsequent years to his death. The rapid expansion set the rules and guidelines of the cultural forms and artistic expressions. It encouraged the selection and absorption of diverse cultural traditions; their development and integration into a united Islamic civilisation. Thus, throughout this abridged timeline of major dynasties, the cultures of North Africa, Arabia, Anatolia, Persia, the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, and China are presented as an integral part of the Islamic civilisations.

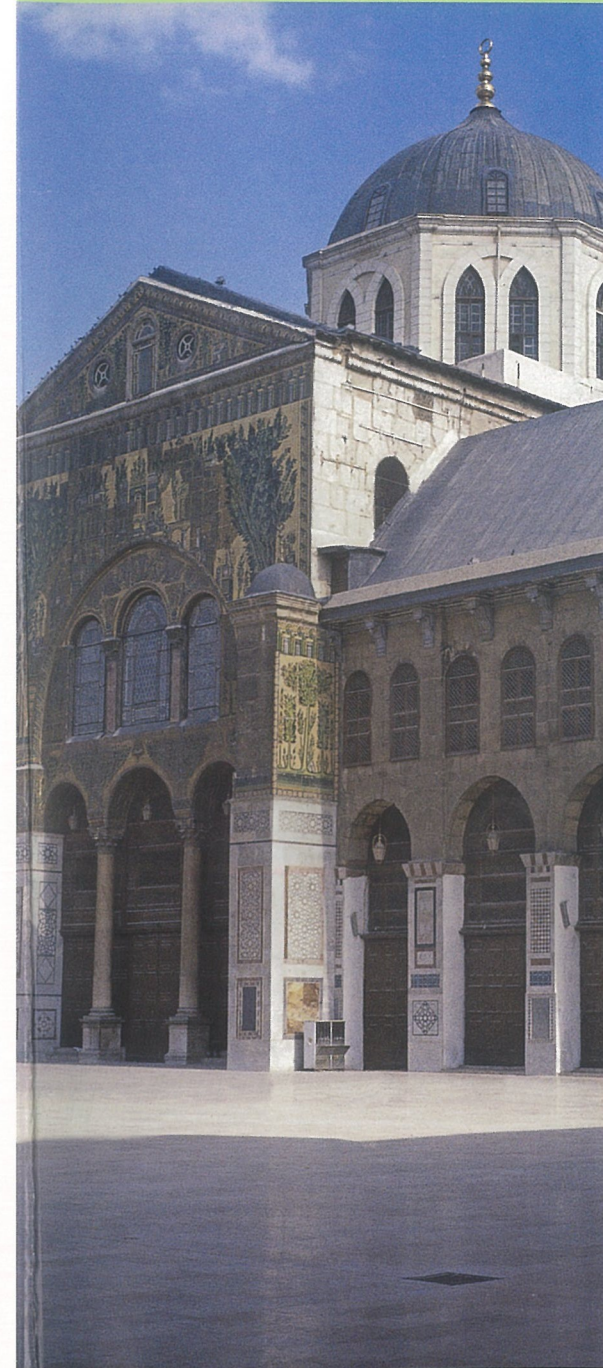


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THE UMAYYAD DYNASTY



THE UMAYYAD DYNASTY (61-750 AD / 41-132 AH)

The governor of Syria, Mu'awiya ibn Abi Sufyan, seized power after the assassination of Ali ibn Abi Talib, who is Prophet Muhammad's cousin, son-in-law, and the fourth Rightly Guided Caliph. Mu'awiya established the first dynasty to rule over the entire Arab-Islamic territories. The Umayyad caliphs moved power to Syria, making Damascus their capital city and the centre of the dynasty. Gradually, Arabic was embraced as the official language. Coins were minted bearing a message of Islamic monotheism. In time, the Umayyad craftsmen moved away from the artistic influence of the Byzantines, Sassanids, and the eastern shores of the Mediterranean cultures, establishing the foundation of Islamic art and architecture. In architecture, existing designs and decorative techniques were modified to meet the new religious requirements.

◀ **The Great Umayyad Mosque**
Damascus, Syria
706 AD / 87 AH

The hypostyle plan soon developed to accommodate the monumental structure of mosques in the Islamic lands while local crafts such as stone carving and tilework were used for architectural decoration.

Among the oldest surviving buildings in Islam is the Dome of the Rock, situated next to Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem (Al-Quds), the third holy city of Islam. It was built in 691 AD by the order of Caliph Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan as an octagonal structure surrounding a rock. The rock, or *Sakhra*, is commemorated as the spot where Prophet Muhammad visited during his Night Journey (*Al-Isra' wa al-Mi'raj*) when it is believed that he ascended to heaven. The mosaics within the structure reflect scenes of Paradise as described in the Qur'an. Al-Quds city was the first site which Muslims face towards during prayer.



661 AD / 41 AH

The assassination of the fourth Rightly Guided Caliph, Ali ibn Abi Talib. Mu'awiya ibn Abi Sufyan, governor of Syria, becomes the caliph and makes Damascus the capital of the Muslim world (*Ummah*).

670 AD / 49 AH

Uqba ibn Nafi conquers northwest Africa and places the foundation stones of the Kairouan Mosque.



◀ **Coin**
Wasit.
738 AD / 120 AH
This dirham features the Shahadah and Quranic verses in Kufic script.

680 AD / 60 AH

The Battle of Karbala in which Husayn ibn Ali, grandson of the Prophet, is killed.

691-2 AD / 71-2 AH

The Dome of the Rock is built in Al-Quds by Caliph Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan.

◀ **The Dome of the Rock**

Jerusalem. 691 AD / 71 AH
This octagonal structure, the oldest surviving Islamic monument, surrounds a rock that commemorates the spot from which Prophet Muhammad ascended on his Night Journey to heaven (*Al-Isra' wa al-Mi'raj*). The interior is decorated with floral patterns in mosaic representing the Gardens of Paradise.

690 AD / 70 AH

Caliph Abd al-Malik reforms the administration and mints coins with Arabic inscriptions.

706-15 AD / 86-95 AH

The Great Mosque of Damascus is built.



▲ The Great Umayyad Mosque

Damascus, Syria. 661 AD / 40 AH
Built by Mu'awiya ibn Abi Sufyan, the founder of the Umayyad caliphate, the mosque was formerly the Church of St. John the Baptist. From 706-715 AD / 87-96 AH, it underwent renovations and a distinctive form of Umayyad architecture was developed, as seen from the great triple-arcade.

711 AD / 92 AH

The Umayyad governor, Musa ibn Nusair, begins the conquest of Spain and Transoxiana.



▲ Coin

Damasyik. 708 AD / 89 AH
This dirham features the Kufic script on both sides, surrounded by a circular band around the rim.

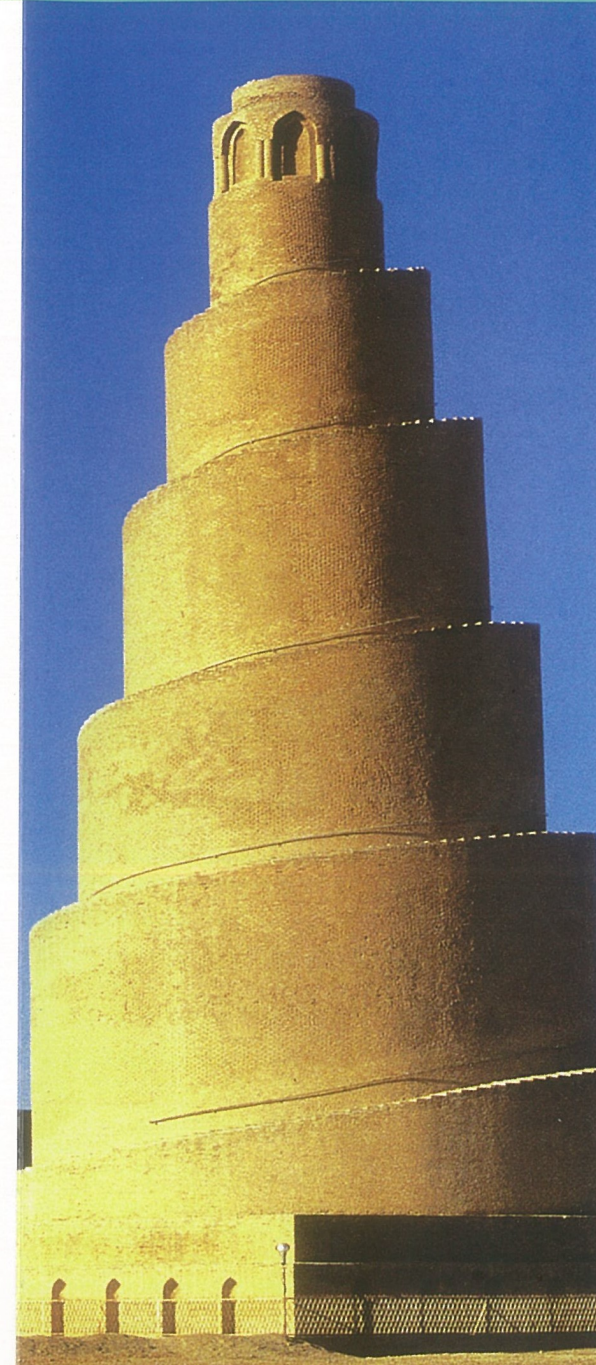
749-50 AH / 129-32 AH

The rule of the Umayyads ends with the Abbasid revolution; Abd al-Rahman flees to Spain, where he establishes the emirate of Cordoba in 756 AD.



▲ Qur'an Leaf

Near East or North Africa
8th-9th century AD / 2nd-3rd century AH
Written in Kufic script, this folio features ink, pigments, and gold on parchment. A stylised winged palmette is placed in the margin.



THE ABBASID DYNASTY (750-1258 AD / 132-656 AH)

The Abbasid era has been regarded as the 'Golden Age' of Islamic civilisations. It transferred the seat of government from Syria to Iraq, where Caliph al-Mansur (754-75 AD) ordered the construction of the round city of Baghdad, with a mosque and palace at its centre, and four equidistant boulevards leading to the major cities of Kufah, Basra, Damascus, and Herat. Baghdad soon flourished and became not only the cultural and commercial capital of the Islamic world, but also an intellectual centre, giving rise to institutions such as the 'House of Wisdom'.

The reign of Caliph Harun al-Rashid (786-808 AD) was marked by intellectual, artistic, and architectural achievements, as well as the advancement of Muslim scholarship. Trade also developed and the Abbasid silver dirham and gold dinars were in use all around the world in China, India, East Africa, and Europe. Silk, armour, lustre pottery, and sugarcane were among the famous commodities found in the export market.

◀ Minaret of the Mosque of Samarra

Samarra, Iraq
9th century AD /
3rd century AH

Caliph al-Mutawakkil (847 AD) ordered the construction of an immense mosque at the newly established city of Samarra to stand as testimony to the grandeur of the Abbasid dynasty. The mosque consisted of a series of arcades surrounding an open courtyard, surrounded by an additional tract of space called the *ziyada* and a freestanding spiral minaret. This huge brick mosque became the model for future significant architectural constructions in the Islamic world. Artistically, its walls were lined with carved stucco in bevelled style. This repetition of ambiguous or abstract geometric and vegetal forms became the fashion, and it spread to other media such as wood and metalware.

When the dynasty grew in size, the caliphs sent governors to rule parts of the empire, collect and send back taxes, and pledge allegiance to the caliph in each Friday prayer's *khutbah* (sermon). In time, the governors became more independent and soon established semi-autonomous local dynasties. The Abbasid dynasty also suffered major drawbacks with the Buyid (932-1062 AD) and Seljuk (1040-1194 AD) invasions. In 1258 AD, the Abbasid dynasty came to an end with the arrival of the Mongols and the destruction of their cities.

750 AD / 132 AH

Abul Abbas al-Saffah is made caliph in Kufah.

751 AD / 133 AH

Muslims force capture Chinese paper-makers and introduce paper technology the Muslim world.

► Coin

Kufah

749 AD / 132 AH

The inscriptions on Abbasid silver dirham followed its predecessor. This particular coin was minted during the reign of Caliph al-Saffah.

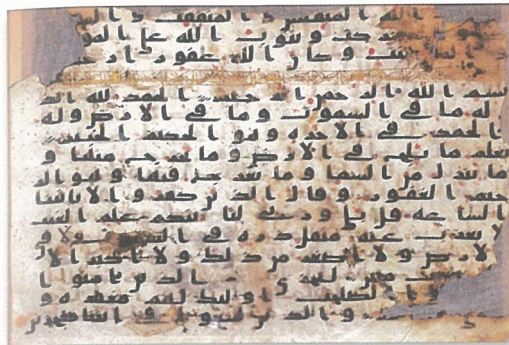


762-3 AD / 144-5 AH

The city of Baghdad is founded.



THE FATIMID AND AYYUBID DYNASTIES



▲ Qur'an Leaf

Possibly Mecca or Medina

8th-9th century AD / 2nd-3rd century AH

This Qur'an leaf contains 16 lines of Kufic script with diacritical marks in red ink and a cluster of brown strokes as verse markers. The surah heading is written in gold on a panel decorated with gilt rosettes.

786-809 AD / 169-93 AH

Caliphate of Harun al-Rashid and the 'Golden Age'.

836 AD / 221 AH

The city of Samarra is founded.

◀ Bowl

Syria

12th-13th century AD / 6th-7th century AH

Adorned with the decorative technique known as sgraffito, this bowl was lightly incised through the thin clay slip ground to reveal the earthenware body underneath. The design appears to have been drawn free-hand and features splashes of iron and copper glazes.

1242-58 AD / 639-56 AH

Al-Musta'sim is the last Abbasid caliph in Baghdad.



◀ Coin

Egypt

866 AD / 252 AH

Besides the Shahadah and Qur'anic verses, the gold dinar bears the name and title of Caliph al-Mu'tazzu billah Amir al-Mu'minin at the centre of the reverse side.

1258 AD / 656 AH

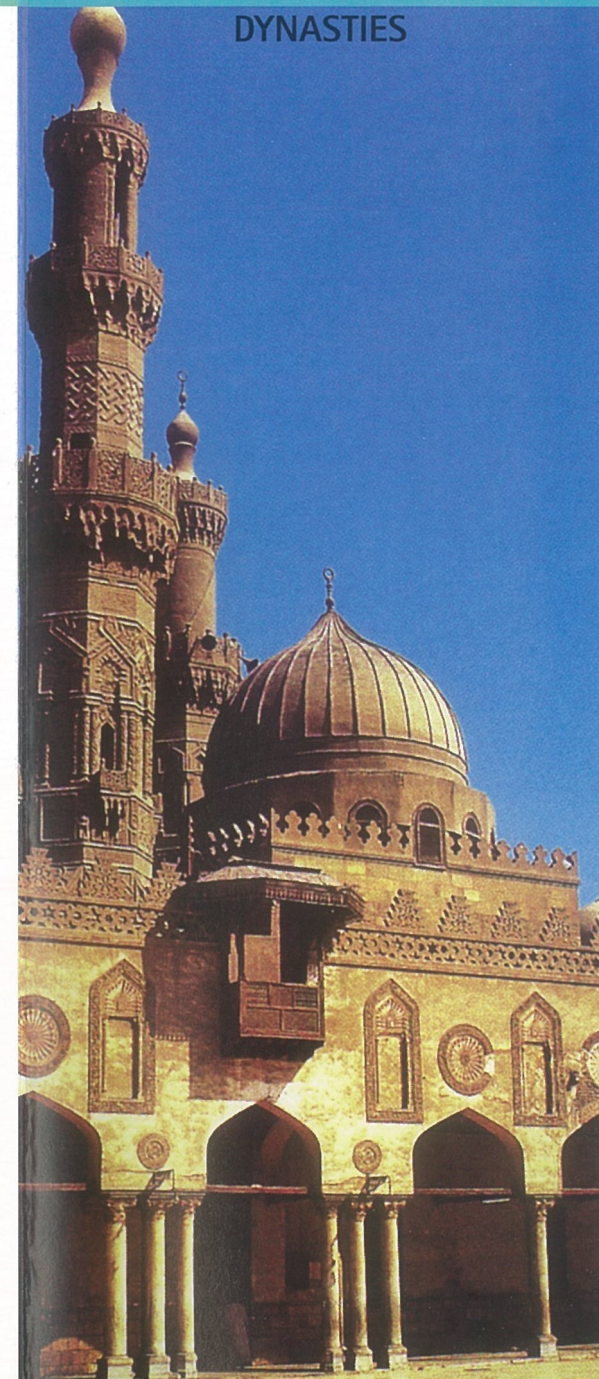
Mongol invasion ends the Abbasid rule.

▼ Qur'an Leaf

North Africa

9th-10th century AD / 3rd-4th century AH

Written in Kufic script on vellum, this Qur'an leaf contains Surah Ali 'Imran, Verses 190-192.



The Fatimid dynasty emerged in North Africa as an independent caliphate that claimed descent from Fatima, the daughter of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. In 969 AD, the Fatimid General Gawhar al-Siqili conquered Egypt and laid the foundation for the royal city of Al-Qahira (Cairo). The palatial city had two intersecting streets called Al-Qasaba, which divides it into four quarters. At the intersection, the first theological college in Islam, Al-Azhar, was established (973-85 AD) and soon the city flourished as the commercial and cultural centre in the Islamic world.

The Fatimid caliphs were patrons of the arts, and new factories with novel designs flourished in textile, pottery, rock-crystal ware, and metalwork. The decorative vocabulary widened, and zoomorphic stylised representations were even seen topping calligraphic phrases in textile, particularly on *tiraz* bands. Lustre glaze was skillfully used on pottery, and gold jewellery gained fame around the world.

◀ **Mosque of al-Azhar**
Cairo, Egypt
10th century AD /
4th century AH

Architecturally, the fortified walls of the city were rebuilt by the Vizier Badr al-Jamali in the 11th century AD with the aid of Armenian architects. The new wall incorporated the Mosque of al-Hakim (r. 996-1013 AD), which marked the prevailing architectural style of the Fatimids.

In 1169 AD, Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi (Saladin) arrived in Cairo to help defend the city against the threat of the Crusaders. Soon after, he established the Ayyubid dynasty in Egypt and Syria. Salah al-Din captured Jerusalem in 1187 AD and became a legendary figure in Islamic history. In Egypt and Syria, the Ayyubids excelled in building fortresses. They also introduced new educational and religious structures such as the *iwan madrassa* (school) and *khanqahs* (monasteries) to further promote Sunni Islam.

The Ayyubids inherited the opulence of the Fatimid caliphate, becoming the patron of inlaid metalwork, ceramics, and enamelled glassware. Their territory soon incorporated the Fertile Crescent, the holy cities of Mecca and Medina reaching up to Yemen. However, as they relied largely on slave soldiers for military operations, the soldiers soon overthrew the dynasty and established the Mamluk Sultanate (1250-1517 AD).

909 AD / 297 AH

The Shiite Fatimid dynasty emerges in North Africa.

936 AD / 324 AH

The city of Mahdiya is established as a palace city.

969 AD / 358 AH

The Fatimids conquer Egypt and found the city of Al-Qahira (Cairo)

970 AD / 359 AH

The Mosque of al-Azhar is constructed.

1073-94 AD / 465-86 AH

Emir and Vizier Badr al-Jamali reformatory gates of Al-Qahira.

▼ Jar Stand

Egypt. 14th century AD / 8th century AH
Made of marble, this jar stand or *kilga* was designed to hold a large unglazed earthenware jar or *zir*, which allowed water to filter through its porous body into the stone receptacle beneath.



THE SELJUK DYNASTY



▲ Textile Fragment

Egypt. 10th-11th century AD
/ 4th-5th century AH

This undyed linen fragment bears a calligraphic band with a Kufic inscription that reads: 'May God prolong his existence.'

1099 AD / 492 AH

Fatimid armies are defeated by the Crusaders at Acre.

1171 AD / 566 AH

Saladin ends the Fatimid caliphate and becomes the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty in Egypt and Syria.



▲ Earrings

Egypt or Syria
10th-11th century AD / 4th-5th century AH
These crescentic sheet gold earrings are adorned with simple wirework trim and miniature bosses crowned with gilt granulation.

1174 AD / 569 AH

Saladin conquers Damascus.

1187 AD / 582 AH

Saladin defeats the Crusaders at Hittin.

1187 AD / 582 AH

The fortification walls of the Citadel of Cairo are built.



◀ Water Filter

Egypt.
10th-11th
century AD
/ 4th-5th century
AH

This unglazed earthenware water filter adorned with openwork belonged to the interior neck of an ewer.

1192 AD / 587 AH

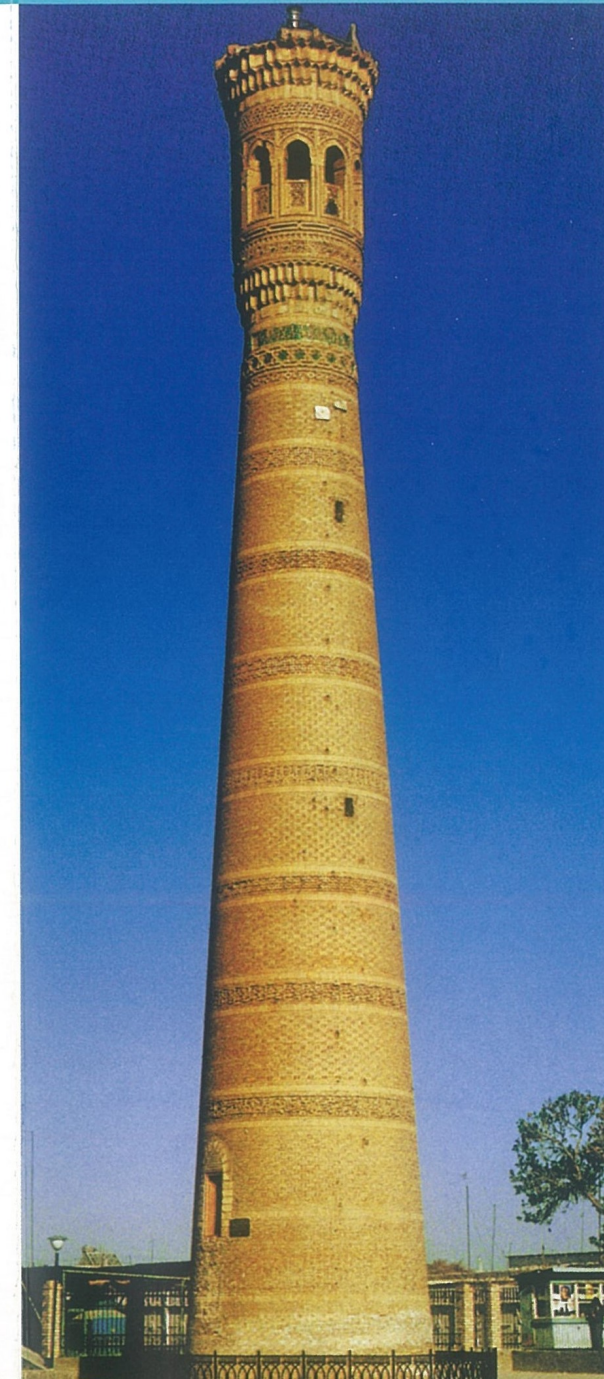
Peace treaty between the Ayyubids and Crusaders.

1211 AD / 607 AH

The construction of the Mausoleum of Imam al-Shafi'i in Cairo.

1250 AD / 647 AH

The Mamluks rule Egypt.



In Central Asia, nomadic Turkic tribes known as the Seljuk converted to Islam. They took control of the eastern Islamic lands, captured Baghdad, and became the protectors of the Abbasid caliphate. The Seljuk sultanate grew fast and by the end of the 11th century AD, it encompassed Iran, Iraq, and Anatolia. The house of Seljuk was soon divided into the Seljuks of Rum and the Great Seljuk Sultanates.

In 1038 AD, the Great Seljuks captured Nishapur, a strategic commercial centre along the Silk Road, which soon developed as a key intellectual centre in the Islamic world. During this period, Khurasan became a prominent centre of metal production while Kashan became a centre of pottery producing lustre and *mina'i* wares. Royal patronage was also extended to architecture, and notable *madrassas* were founded in Baghdad. Under Sultan Malik Shah (r.1073-92 AD), the Great Mosque of

Isfahan was enlarged and embellished with its outstanding carved stucco *mihrab* niche.

In 1071 AD, following the battle of Manzikert in eastern Turkey, Seljuk's expansion into Anatolia was secured. These tribes known as the Seljuks of Rum became a powerful sultanate, which flourished during the 13th century AD. In the arts, they incorporated elements from Persia, as well as Byzantine and Armenian heritage. This synthesis produced outstanding new Islamic decorative vocabulary, which was reflected by the stone carved facades found in the Gok Madrassa (1271 AD) in Sivas and the Divrigi complex in Erzurum (1228-29 AD). The sultanate came to an end with the Mongol Ilkhanids at the battle of Kose Dag in 1243 AD.



◀ **Minaret of Kaylan**
Bukhara, Uzbekistan
12th century AD /
6th century AH

1036-37 AD / 427-28 AH

The Great Seljuks, under Tughril Beg and Chaghri Beg, capture Khurasan (Nishapur).



▲ **Architectural Fragment**
Iran. 12th century AD / 6th century AH

1055 AD / 446 AH

The Seljuks become the guardians of the caliphate of Baghdad.

1071 AD / 463 AH

Sultan Alp Arslan defeats the Byzantines at Manzikert.

◀ **Bowl**
Central Iran
13th century AD / 7th century AH
This bowl features a central roundel containing two figures crouching on either side of a cypress tree and a small stream. It is further adorned with geometric bands, endless knots, and pseudo calligraphy.



▲ Mirror

Central Asia

12th century AD / 6th century AH

The back of this mirror is decorated with two winged sphinxes amidst foliage bordered by a benedictory inscription in Kufic and apotropaic symbols.

1081 AD / 473 AH

The Seljuks of Rum establish their capital at Konya and become known as the Seljuks of Rum.

1080 AD / 472 AH

The Book of Government, the Siyasatnameh, is composed by Vizier Nizam al-Mulk and ruler Malih Shah.

1156-72 AD / 550-67 AH

Rule of Khwarazm Shah II Arslan.

1190 AD / 585 AH

Emperor Frederick Barbarossa of Germany conquers Konya.

1212 AD / 608 AH

Samarqand is destroyed by Khwarazmis.

1258 AD / 656 AH

Mongols end the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad.

1279 AD / 677 AH 656 AH

Mongol Ilkhanids end Seljuks rule.



▲ Bowl

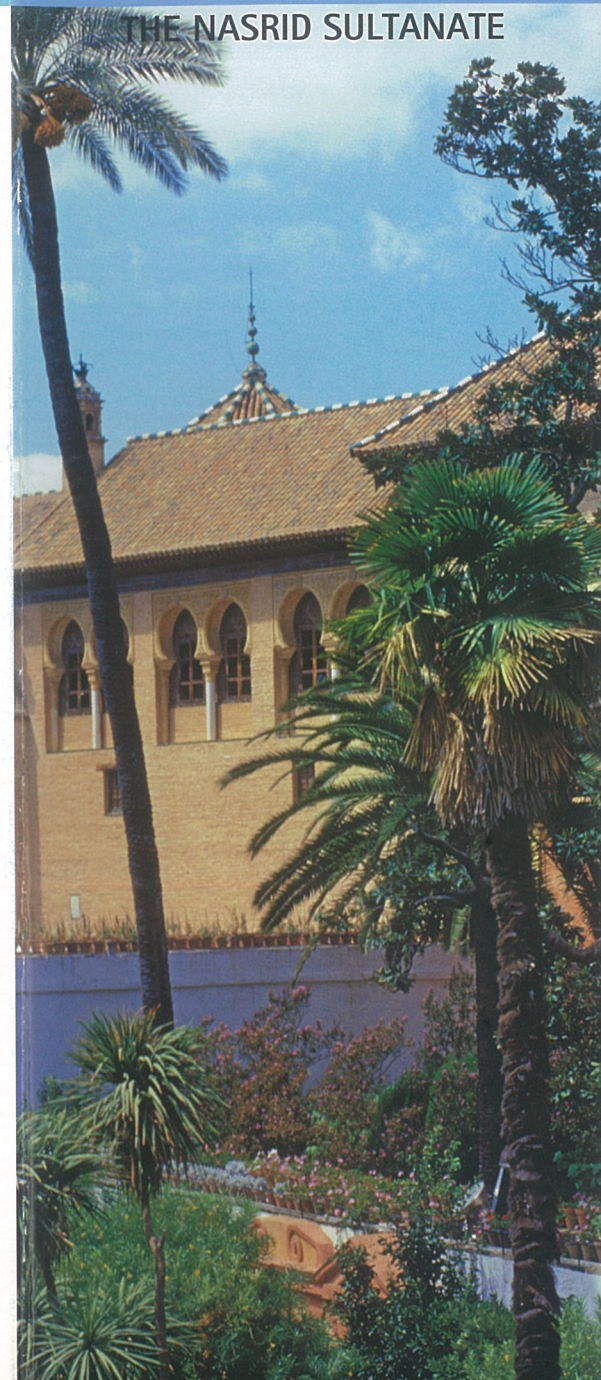
Central Iran

13th century AD / 7th century AH

The inscription around the rim of this dish reads:

'Perpetual glory and increasing fortune, glory and fortune and long life and perpetual long life and wealth and happiness, and wealth and happiness.'

THE ALMORAVID, ALMOHAD AND THE NASRID SULTANATE



THE ALMORAVID, ALMOHAD AND NASRID SULTANATE (11th-15th century AD / 5th-9th century AH)

Although Spain and North Africa were conquered by Tarq ibn Ziyad in 711 AD, as part of the Muslim expansion to the West, it was not until Governor Yusuf al-Fihri (747-56 AD) that Al-Andalus became united under Muslim rule. In 750 AD, the Umayyad dynasty collapsed. Prince Abd al-Rahman I successfully reached Spain, defeated Governor Yusuf, and established an independent Umayyad emirate. The rule of the Umayyads in Spain was marked by a highly cultured court life with artists, musicians, and poets flourishing within newly-constructed, richly-decorated, and lavish architectural edifices. By 929 AD, Abd al-Rahman III proclaimed himself caliph and in 1031 AD, under the reign of Hisham III, the Umayyad rule in Spain came to an end with Al-Andalus being divided into minor kingdoms known as *taifas*. In the 11th and 12th centuries AD, the Almoravid (1056-1247 AD) and Almohad (1130-1269 AD) became the main Muslim rulers of Al-Andalus.

◀ **General view of Alhambra**
Granada, Spain
10th century AD /
4th century AH

The Almoravid dynasty (al-Murabitun), which emerged in North Africa, founded Marrakesh as its capital in 1062 AD. They then took control of Al-Andalus in 1090 AD and enjoyed the luxurious cultural life it had to offer. The last Almoravid sultan, Ali ibn Yusuf (1106-42 AD), was an avid builder and patron of the arts. In 1150 AD, a new Berber power emerged in North Africa called the Almohads (al-Muwahhidun 1150-1269 AD). They conquered Morocco, reached Seville and Cordoba, and made Seville their capital while Marrakesh was made their political centre. By 1212 AD, the Almohads were defeated at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa and the Iberian Peninsula became predominantly Christian except for a small region in the southeast, which was founded in 1232 AD and was known as the Nasrid Sultanate (1232-1492 AD). Establishing their capital in Granada, it became one of the most renowned cultural centres in the Islamic world. During this period, the Alhambra Palace city was constructed. Lustre-decorated ceramics reached its peak while textile, as well as inlaid tilework, flourished.



1031-90 AD / 422-82 AH

Emergence of the *taifas*; minor dynasties in the Iberian Peninsula.

1030-59 AD / 420-50 AH

Almoravid movement in Maghrib.



◀ **Lustre Hispano - Moresque Vase**
Alhambra, Spain
19th century AD /
13th century AH
Lustre is a glaze technique that had been evolving as early as the 8th century AD among the Islamic potters. In Spain, the first centre that produced high quality lustreware was at Malaga.

1062-70 AD / 453-62 AH

Foundation of the city of Marrakesh.

◀ **Wooden Panel**

Nasrid, Spain
15th century AD / 9th century AH
A wood panel that once adorned architectural monument in Spain during the Nasrid era. It was engraved with the word 'Allah' and floral design.

1090-4 AD / 482-6 AH

Al-Andalus becomes an Almoravid province.

1134 AD / 528 AH

The Almoravids defeat Alfonso I of Aragon and Navarre at Fraga.

1145-6 AD / 539-40 AH

The Almohads replace the Almoravids and begin the conquest of Al-Andalus.



▲ **A Revival Parquetry Wood Cabinet Stand**

New Nasrid, Spain.

19th century AD / 13th century AH

Adorned with micromosaic geometric pattern and foliate motifs, this cabinet bears the motto of the Nasrid dynasty that reads: 'There is no Conquerer except Allah.'

1237 AD / 634 AH

Granada becomes the capital of the Nasrid kingdom.

1269 AD / 667 AH

End of Almoravid rule.



▲ **Qur'an Leaves**

Al-Andalus, Spain

13th century AD / 7th century AH

This is a vellum bi-folio, a part of an Andalusian Qur'an that was written in dark brown Maghribi script style with diacritical marks in green, yellow, red and blue.

1157 AD / 551 AH

The Almohads conquer Granada.

1325-33 AD / 725-33 AH

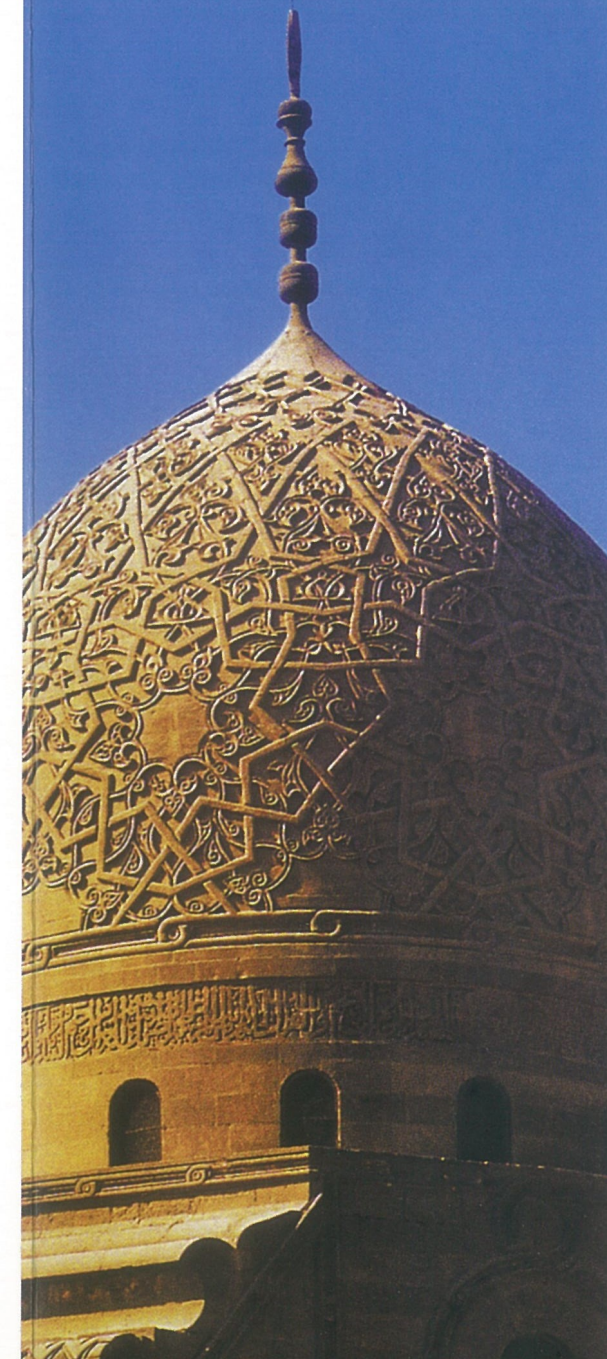
Reign of Muhammad IV.

1483 AD / 887 AH

The Nasrid Sultan Muhammad XII is defeated and taken as prisoner.

1492 AD / 897 AH

Granada is handed to the Christian kings.



THE MAMLUK DYNASTY (1250-1517 AD / 648-922 AH)

The Mamluk dynasty was divided into two periods; the Bahri Mamluks (1250-1382 AD) and the Burji Mamluks (1382-1517 AD). The Mamluks were originally slave soldiers who took over power from the Ayyubids in Egypt and Syria. They became famous as defenders of the faith, stopping the advancement of the Mongols and consolidating their power to incorporate Sudan, Libya, and parts of Anatolia and Arabia. Among the earliest and most powerful of the rulers was Sultan Qalawun, a patron of the arts, who constructed the *mausoleum-madrasa* and hospital of Qalawun (1284-5 AD), one of the most outstanding monuments in the heart of Al-Qahira. The façade of the complex displays carved inscription bands and elegant fenestration known as the Qalawun set.

◀ **Dome of Qaitbay**
Cairo, Egypt
15th century AD /
9th century AH

The Burji Mamluks mastered the art of stone carving. Carved stone domes became the characteristic feature of their architecture. Domes were initially ribbed, zigzagged, and embellished with intertwined geometric star patterns and arabesque scrolls. A distinctive decorative feature in all Mamluk buildings and objects of art was the use of heraldic blazons; an emblem that complemented the title of the sultan on calligraphic bands. Enamelled and gilded glass, metal, and wood inlays, as well as textile weavings and carpets were among the outstanding contributions of the Mamluk decorative arts.



1250 M / 648 H

Queen Shajar el-Dur rules Egypt.

1260 AD / 658 AH

Sultan Baybars' reign defeats and stops advancement of the Mongols at Ayn Jalut (Goliath's Spring).



▶ **Tray**

Egypt or Syria
14th century AD
/ 8th century AH
Features
incised and
inlaid decorations
composed of a
central roundel
containing figural
representations of the six planets
around the sun.

1279 AD / 677 AH

Under Sultan Qalawun's family rule, building activities flourishes in Cairo.

1291 AD / 689 AH

Sultan al-Ashraf Khalil conquers Acre and drives the Crusaders out.

◀ **Beaker**

Syria. 13th century AD / 7th century AH
This cylindrical glass beaker is adorned with two white and blue enamelled quatrefoil medallions linked by a band of gold in Naskh inscription which reads: 'Glory to our Lord the King.'