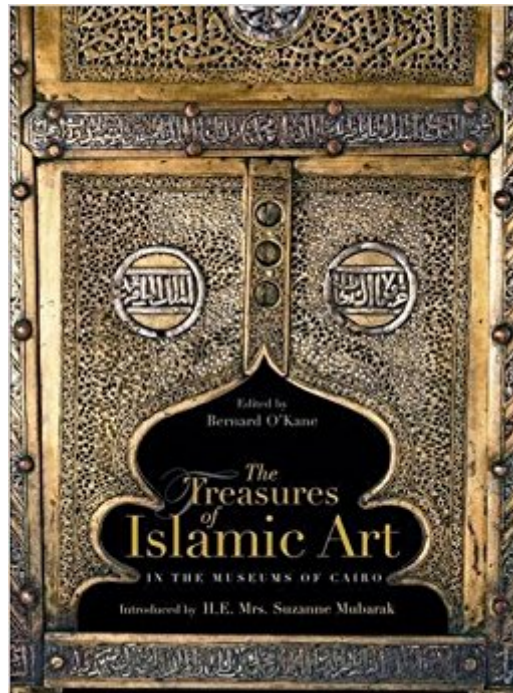


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# The Treasures Of Islamic Art In The Museums Of Cairo



## Synopsis

Cairo's museums are home to some of the richest collections of Islamic art in the world. Long the seat of great dynasties, whose rulers and descendants both amassed and patronized works of art, Cairo's status as one of the wealthiest and most populous cities of the medieval world is reflected in the exquisite arts and crafts that make up its collections, which expanded in the twentieth century through the purchase of private collections so that they now include not just the arts of the dynasties that made Cairo their capital, such as the Fatimids, Ayyubids, and Mamluks, but material from other important areas of the Islamic world, such as Iran and Turkey. Masterpieces of every medium are represented, including the decorative arts of ceramics, metalwork, textiles, woodwork, glass, carved stone and ivory, and the art of the book. The objects vary from pieces made for purely secular purposes, many of them with blazons showing that they were the property of the great amirs of the time, to some of the choicest examples recovered from the architectural masterpieces that permeate Cairo's landscape. An introductory chapter guides the reader into the world of Islam and its art, while subsequent chapters unfold and describe the riches of the works of art that were crafted and amassed throughout the ages. The book is lavishly illustrated throughout with specially commissioned color photographs. Contributors: Mohamed Abbas, Noha Abou-Khatwa, Farouk Askar, Mohamed Hamza, Bernard O'Kane.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Bernard O'Kane is professor of Islamic art and architecture at the American University in Cairo. He is the author of *Studies in Persian Art and Architecture* (AUC Press, 1995) and *Early Persian*

Painting: Kalila and Dimna Manuscripts of the Late 14th Century (AUC Press, 2003).

I bought this for my husband as a birthday gift and he loves it.

I am no expert on Islamic Art. I live in New Zealand at the bottom of the world. I worked in the UK for 3 years. I visited the British Museum and National Gallery frequently, the Victoria and Albert Museum less often. (both have important collections of Islamic art. I visited as many Museums as I could around Britain. Now that I am retired I have more time to deepen my knowledge in various fields in the arts that I am interested in. There are a number of excellent works on Islamic art that are well written, user friendly and with excellent colour photos. This is one such volume-- I hope to review several more. Note one reviewer comment on the binding-- I will be taking good care of this book as it is a gem and I want to reread it for time to time as I rework through my books on Islamic Arts. You can get some idea of the book's structure by seeing its table of contents

Table of contents  
Chronology  
The Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo  
Introduction to Islamic Art  
The Umayyads and Abbasids. 658--1258  
The Fatimids. 969--1171  
The Ayyubids and Early Mamluks. 1171--1382  
The Burgi Mamluks. 1382--1517  
Ottoman Art. 1517--19th century.  
Iranian Art  
glossary -- brief  
Bibliography -- 1. Page.  
Index-- this is excellent. It is just over 6 pages and gives quick access to the riches in the book

Each section noted above has an introduction and a selection of objects  
This work gives a good coverage of Islamic Art. Some objects I have arranged these by type. I think this gives a better view than trying to pick out several objects from each section  
Which Museum MIA -- Museum of Islamic Art, The Qur'an and related objects.  
Textiles  
There is a wide range of excellent objects that could be mentioned\*\*\*  
Item 28. Details of textile fragment. Linen and silk tapestry weave Umayyad, 8th century. The background colour is a beautiful red, the pattern a meandering stem from which branch flowers and grapes. Full page colour illustration showing two portions from this item that is 172 cm long. A gem of preservation.

The woodworks, ivory carvings, metalwork, ceramics, manuscripts paintings, sculptures, glass, and other art works, despite their variety, different ages, and countries, all "bear something of the essence of the Islamic faith: divine unity, balance, and peace." Unlike much Western art, Islamic art is not meant to be provocative or idiosyncratic. Their are works from Turkey, Iran, and other places in the Muslim world. But most are from Egypt arranged according to different ruling dynasties starting about 600AD. Fine color photographs catch the details of designs, the textures, and the workmanship of the varied pieces. General text gives historical and cultural background of the

different historical periods, and there's an informative, concise annotation with each art work pictured. The variety of the art works, the specifics of the annotations, and the text sections giving background convey the bounty of the world of Islamic art.

This is a visually stunning book that covers an array of islamic art pieces from the Museums of Islamic Art in Ciaro. The annotations and essays are just as rich. An excellent book for students, academics and collectors of Islamic Art. My only reservation is that despite the fact that this book has been published in hard back, the binding is extremely poor. My copy simply fell apart within 24 hours of it arriving. I had viewed the pages of the book about three times - just amazed by the photographs. However, during the fourth viewing of the book, as I started to engage in reading through the text, the pages had become detached from the stitched spine. I had to have my book repaired at the cost of what the book cost me in the first place. I was told by the book repairer that the glue used by the publisher/printing firm was of very poor quality and had become very brittle rather than form a flexible adhesive. Overall though the book is a fabulous reference book.

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