

In ancient times, art was the expression of the religious feeling of a people. When therefore new religion happened to be introduced, the development of art went on upon new lines. When Christianity became predominant, ancient classic art was put aside, and a new style of art, the early Christian and Byzantine, took its place. When Islamism spread abroad, Islam art sprung into existence, and following the wonderful conquests of the Moors, quickly advanced to a high state of development.

This does not mean, however that a specific Islam style formed. The rapidity with which Islam spread, left it no time to develop a peculiar art of its own, and the conquerors found it easier and more convenient to make use of artists and material, and whatever else already existed in the conquered countries, for the construction and decoration of their own beautiful buildings.



The appearance of Mohammed in Arabia in the year 610 had no effect whatever on art in Arabia and no common single homogenous Islamic style is to be found from India to the Straits of Gibraltar. All kinds of influences, in accordance with local conditions, are evident such as for example, Antique, Early Christian, Byzantine, Phoenician, Hebraic, Babylonian, Assyrian, Persian, Egyptian, and even Indian influences. These together with what remained of Arabian art, combined with their own original contributions, were all formed into one whole one single new style.

As the pictorial reproduction of men and animals was forbidden by the Islamic religion, Islam art was obliged to confine itself to geometric and vegetable Ornament. This command however appear to have been promulgated in the later periods of Islamism and to have originated in the fanaticism of the Islamic priesthood, for animal ornaments have been found which date from more ancient times. There is a general absence of plastic work in Islam art, the muslims appearing to have had no understanding for this class of work

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