

# Art of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Empires

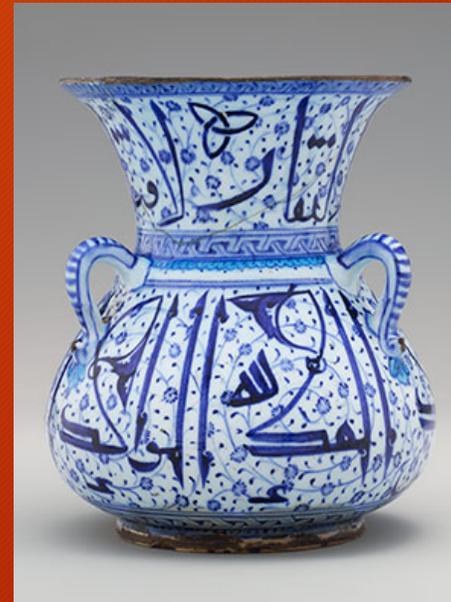
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the Central Asia in World History NEH  
Summer Institute  
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## Discussion Question:

- Why might calligraphy be an important and popular aspect of art in Islam?

# Calligraphy in Art

- Calligraphy is the most highly regarded and most fundamental element of Islamic art.
- The Qur'an was transmitted in Arabic, and the Arabic script has the potential for developing a variety of ornamental forms.
- Calligraphy is principally a means to transmit a text, albeit in a decorative form.



# Art of the Ottoman Empire

## Discussion Question:

- Drawing upon your knowledge of geography and history, what empires/cultures might have influenced the art of the Ottoman Empire?

# Mehmed II

- Mehmed II conquered Constantinople and envisioned the city as the center of his growing world empire
- He drew from Turkic, Perso-Islamic, and Byzantine artistic styles.
- Ottoman, Iranian, and European artists and scholars flocked to Mehmed's court



<http://www.theottomans.org>

# Ottoman Additions to the Hagia Sophia

- Mehmed II converted the Hagia Sophia into a mosque.
- Succeeding sultans added to the building.
  - Minarets and mausoleums were added.
  - In 1739, during the reign of Mahmud I, a madrasa, a library, and a kitchen to serve the poor were built.
  - In 1740 a fountain for ritual ablutions were built.



[http://istanbulvisions.com/hagia\\_sophia.htm](http://istanbulvisions.com/hagia_sophia.htm)

# Topkapi Palace

- Mehmed also commissioned the construction of Topkapi Palace, which was completed in 1478.
- It served as the administrative, educational and art center of the Empire for nearly four hundred years.



<http://www.onewayturkey.com/marmara-region-turkey/istanbul/topkapi-palace/>

# Süleyman I (r. 1520-66)

- The age of Süleyman (r. 1520-66) witnessed the pinnacle of Ottoman art and culture.
- Hundreds of public buildings were designed and constructed throughout the Ottoman empire.
- He commissioned mosques, schools, hospices, and soup kitchens
- He also commissioned repairs and additions to major historical monuments.



<http://www.theottomans.org>

# Late 15th & 16th Centuries

- Significant gains in architecture, calligraphy, manuscript painting, textiles, and ceramics occurred.
- There were major artistic and commercial centers outside of the capital.
  - Iznik was renowned for ceramics
  - Bursa for silks and textiles
  - Cairo for the production of carpets
  - Baghdad for manuscripts
  - Ottoman artistic tradition from this time can still be seen in monuments from the Balkans to the Caucasus, from Algeria to Baghdad, and from Crimea to Yemen.

## Discussion Question:

- Nature motifs were an important part of art in the Gunpowder Empires. What aspects of nature might be found in Ottoman art?

# Saz Style

- In the second half of the sixteenth century, saz style of painting developed.
- Named after the reed pen used to create the patterns.
- Known for feathery leaf patterns
- Characterized Ottoman art for many years, and is found in textiles, illumination, and architectural ornament.



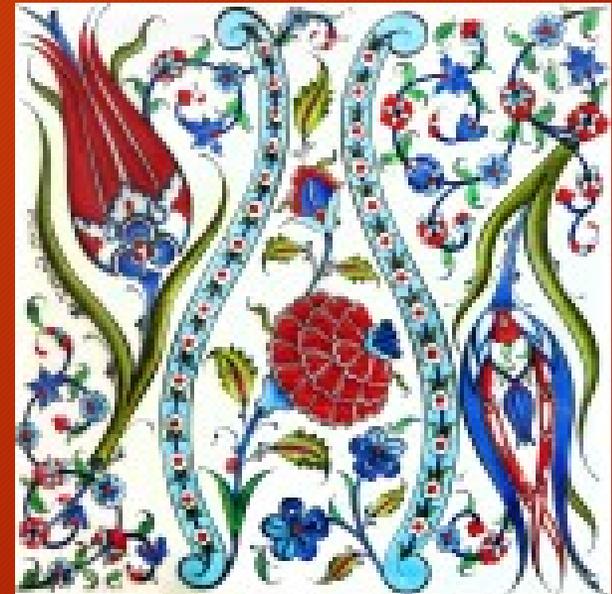
# Blue Mosque

- The Sultan Ahmet Mosque, popularly known as the Blue Mosque, was completed in 1617 in Istanbul.
- Created by Sultan Ahmet I.
- Considered one of the last classical Ottoman structures.
- Traditional motifs on the tiles include cypress trees, tulips, roses, and fruits.
- The lavish use of tile decoration on the interior was a first in Imperial Ottoman mosque architecture.



# Ahmed III (r. 1703–30)

- Under Ahmed III the arts revived.
- Ahmed's reign is also known as the Tulip Period.
  - This flower is reflected in a new style of floral decoration.
  - Replaced the *saz* style



<http://www.theottomans.org/> <http://www.ottomanempire1453.com/>

# Ottoman Silk

- Ottoman silk textiles are among the most elegant textiles produced in the Islamic world.
- They are characterized by large-scale stylized motifs often highlighted by shimmering metallic threads.
- They are created from a range of woven techniques including satin and velvet.
- They were created for use inside the empire, as well as export to Europe and the Middle East.

# Ottoman Textiles

**Date: mid-16th century**

**Medium: Silk, metal wrapped thread**



**Date: second half 15th century**

**Medium: Silk, metal wrapped thread; cut and voided velvet, brocaded**



# Ottoman Textiles

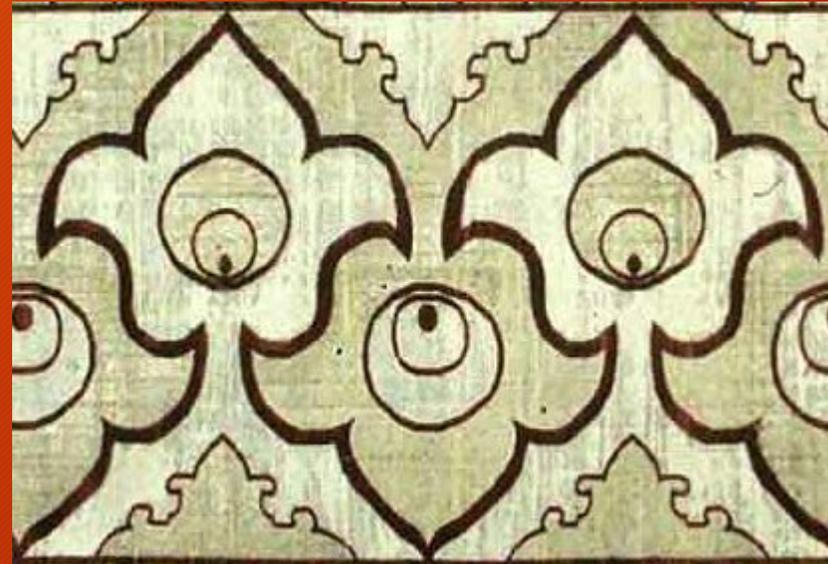
**Date: ca. 1565–80**

**Medium: Silk, metal wrapped thread**



[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/tott/hd\\_tott.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/tott/hd_tott.htm)

**Velvet panel, Turkey 17th century.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, no.  
15-1300**



<http://www.tcoletribalrugs.com/article59Silk&Wool.html>