

Preface to the Second Edition

However much admiration can and should be legitimately bestowed upon the many volumes of the *Pelican History of Art* inspired by the late Sir Nikolaus Pevsner since the foundation of the series in 1953, readers' expectations regarding the appearance of books dealing with the arts have greatly changed during the last decades. When the series was taken over by Yale University Press in 1992, a new format was introduced, colour illustrations were added, and, without loss in seriousness of content, something of the stodginess of the earlier tomes disappeared. The volume on Islamic art and architecture after 1250, by Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom (1994), shone by comparison with its predecessor and, prompted by John Nicoll, the director of Yale University Press in London, a new version of the Ettinghausen–Grabar volume seemed in order. Marilyn Jenkins-Madina, Research Curator of Islamic Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, a former student as well as long-time colleague of Richard Ettinghausen, was invited to revise and expand the sections dealing with the decorative arts and with the arts of the book which had initially been written by Ettinghausen. Dr Jenkins-Madina would like to thank Philippe deMontebello, Director, Metropolitan Museum of Art, for lending his personal support and that of the Museum to this project. Oleg Grabar undertook to review, rewrite, and occasionally expand the sections on architecture which he had authored in the first edition.

As we began to plan our work, we realized that much concerning our knowledge and understanding of early Islamic art had changed since 1983–85, the years when the first edition was finally put together, and even more so since 1959, when the structure and plan of the book were set out. Explorations, excavations (published or not), doctoral dissertations all over the world, and exhibitions with learned catalogues have multiplied. Some thirty Departments of Antiquities and academic institutions of different sorts put together newsletters, bulletins, checklists, occasionally even longer studies which contain much information about known, unknown, or obscure remains. Thematic, regional, or temporal monographs have introduced new definitions of periods or proposed new groupings of objects and made it unnecessary to argue anew reasonable, if not always accepted, conclusions in otherwise accessible books. Even though different in scope and expression, several good, succinct books now exist which can introduce any reader to the study of Islamic art. All these achievements of a generation of active scholarship in the history of the field compelled us to review the special needs of a volume which was to cover large areas and periods of time and yet was not meant to be simply an introduction.

In doing so, we took into account the fact that the fields of political, social, and cultural studies have been affected by an even more spectacular number of publications of hitherto unknown written sources, new interpretations, debates with or without generally accepted conclusions, and new sensitivities to cultural explanations and judgments. It became

clear to us that it would be impossible to become aware of and responsive to all these conclusions and to the discussions which led to them. If a scholarly consensus exists today on the formation and growth of Islamic civilization during the first six centuries of its existence, it is not the same consensus as was operative thirty years ago. Thus it became evident that the very sequence of the first edition's table of contents – The Caliphate, The Breakdown of the Caliphate, The Eleventh to Thirteenth Centuries – reflected an understanding of the first six centuries of Islamic art and history in terms which may have been justified a generation ago, but which no longer corresponds to contemporary views of these centuries. Some regions, such as the Arabian peninsula or Yemen, were neglected in the first version, while some periods, like the complicated time of feudal rule in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Syria, Iraq, Anatolia, and the Muslim West had not received sufficient attention.

A special problem was posed with respect to surveys and excavations and to the information that new archeological methods like photogrammetry, statistics, or spectrophotographic analyses provide. These have brought to light, especially for the earlier centuries of our survey, many traces of hitherto unknown Islamic settlements, Islamic levels at long-lived sites of habitation, thousands of ceramic types and sequences essential for reconstructing or, at least, imagining the material culture of the time. It was not possible to include all this information, and we chose our examples, for the most part, from among works of some aesthetic or historical merit, leaving to others or to other occasions the task of assessing the immense documentation provided by archeology. Another difficulty was raised by the many repairs and restorations which have affected buildings nearly everywhere. The result was often that the present appearance of a building does not correspond to whatever description and photographs we provided. Many of the repairs were basically maintenance work connected with excellent archeological investigations; often, as in Isfahan or Jerusalem, the original state of a building was revealed. But, in other instances such as the rehabilitation of Fatimid buildings in Cairo, major overhauls took place which provided some buildings with a truly 'new' look. Our illustrations and comments do not necessarily prepare the reader for the present state of some monuments. In spite of many efforts by architects and restorers to use care in their work, local needs, means and ambitions are sometimes out of tune with historical accuracy.

Three major changes have been introduced. The first one involves the overall plan and organization of the book. Without altering the principle of a *history*, i.e. a chronological development, of the arts in lands dominated by Islam and by Muslim power, we have divided these six centuries into two broad chronological categories: Early Islamic (roughly 650 to 1000) and Medieval Islamic (roughly 1000 to 1250). The justifications for the divisions and some elaboration of their historical and cultural characteristics are provided in the prologue to each section. We realized the difficulties

involved in using dynasties as the primary criterion of periodization within each category, because too many among them overlapped geographically and also because they often shared the same general culture as well as artistic taste. We have, therefore, organized the monuments according to regions and divided the Muslim world into three areas: western (from the Atlantic to Libya), central (Egypt through the Mesopotamian valley), and eastern (from the Zagros and eastern Anatolian mountains to the Indus and the Tarim basin in Central Asia). We recognize that, like all divisions of cultural zones, this one is in part arbitrary, but it seemed to us better suited than political ones and more manageable than if we had sliced time periods across the entire Muslim world. At the end of each chapter we have provided a summary of such art historical, stylistic, or expressive categories as seemed applicable to a given area at a given time; occasionally, we have suggested avenues for further research.

The wealth of available information and the first steps toward a critical discourse on Islamic art make it possible to handle its history with a greater theoretical sophistication than was possible only a couple of decades ago. To these organizational divisions we made one partial exception. The rich and brilliant period of the Fatimids (909–1171) could not, we felt, be cut into separate temporal or regional components in order to fit into our broad order of Islamic history. It belongs to the Muslim west as well as to the area of central lands and it flourished during a period covered by both of our broad categories. We ended by putting most of its art in the Medieval Islamic section and in the central lands for reasons that will be explained in due course, but some early Fatimid objects are discussed under western Islamic lands in the earlier period. This is, no doubt, a shaky accommodation to a reluctant history.

Second, we modified the presentation of the arts in two significant ways. One was to give up the Vasarian notion of painting as a separate and idiosyncratic genre and, instead, to integrate mural painting with architectural decoration and to consider manuscript illuminations and illustrations, as well as calligraphy, within the wider category of the art of the book. We also introduce the category of 'art of the object', rather than 'decorative arts', in order to reflect a reality of early and medieval Islamic art rather than a hierarchy of techniques developed for western Europe. Except for Chapter 7, the presentation of the art of objects is arranged by media. The other modification is the inclusion of a new section devoted to the impact of Islamic art on the creativity of non-Muslims within the Muslim realm and especially on the artistic output of the neighbours of the Muslim world or on that of those, often remote, areas which were attracted by certain features of Islamic art. It seemed to us that such particular aspects of Armenian art or of the art of Norman Sicily which are, quite correctly, associated with Islamic art are better understood first within the context of their own culture rather than as occasional instances of 'floating' or 'marauding' influences. A major feature of medieval culture in general would be missing if the impact, however strong or weak, of forms and ideas issuing from the Muslim world were either ignored or separated from their non-Muslim setting.

Third, in an attempt to broaden the picture of the artistic production of each major area, objects representing as many media as possible have been discussed and illustrated. In addition to providing a wider scope, an endeavour has also been made here to incorporate as many dated and datable objects as possible as well as those with an intrinsic provenance in order to establish secure foundations around which other, similar but less well documented, objects can be grouped. This has entailed eliminating certain illustrations from the earlier edition and adding many others, a number of which are now in colour. The captions for these illustrations reflect only what is unequivocally known about the work depicted, e.g. materials, technique, intrinsic date or firmly datable time of execution, and specific place of manufacture. The notes refer to most of the immediately pertinent literature and occasionally include alternative views and opinions or discussions of technical issues. The bibliography is an attempt to make a truly useful instrument for further work. After much hesitation, we decided that, since the text is primarily chronological and geographical, the bibliography should be thematic according to media. A glossary picks up and defines all words which are not common in English or which are particularly important to Islamic practices.

Thus, even though in practice many paragraphs and pages of the first edition have been preserved, the changes we have introduced in the presentation of the monuments are major indeed. Even if inspired and affected by the first edition of this book, this is in fact a new book. The present work illustrates an approach to Islamic art which focuses on the cultural and artistic evolution of numerous regional centers from the great hubs in the central Islamic lands in the seminal early Islamic period and on the wealth of ways of creating a beautiful environment rather than on the assumption of a single visual ideal which would have found different local expressions. The tension between these two approaches should be a creative one. A later edition, by new writers, may indeed return to a greater dose of pan-Islamic unity or, in all likelihood, will require separate volumes to treat the ever expanding knowledge we have of the arts of Muslim peoples. In the meantime we do acknowledge the presence of an occasional awkwardness in the contrast between different styles of writing.

For transliterations from Arabic and Persian, we have omitted all diacritical marks in the text except for direct quotations from the original language. Full transliterations appear in the glossary. Most of the time proper names of people or of places or words like *mihrab* which are in most dictionaries are spelled according to their common English usage. We have made an exception for the book of Muslim Revelation and written Qur'an instead of the Webster-accepted Koran. We have tried to eliminate all references to the 'Near or Middle East', to the 'Orient', or to the 'Levant'. We sought to identify regional spaces in their own terms rather than from an external, western European, point of view. The noun 'Islam' is used to mean either a faith and its doctrine or, more rarely, the whole culture covered in this book. The adjectives 'Islamic' and 'Muslim' are used interchangeably. We limited the use of the word 'Turkish' to matters pertinent to the contemporary land and people of Turkey; 'Turkic' is applied to all other appro-

priate instances. All dates are given according to the Common Era (or *A.D.* as it used to be); where there are two dates separated by a slash, the first is the *hijra* date according to the Muslim lunar calendar which begins in 622 *C.E.*

The two living authors want to acknowledge, first of all, their debt to the third, Richard Ettinghausen, who was their teacher, mentor, colleague, and friend. Dr Elizabeth Ettinghausen continued to help in the making of this book, as she had done with the first version; the suggestions resulting from the astute care with which she read most of the drafts helped to improve them and her interest in all aspects of this publication is gratefully acknowledged. Several colleagues – Renata Holod, Linda Komaroff, Maan Z. Madina, Larry Nees, Megan Reed – read whole chapters and made useful comments for which we are truly grateful. Others – James Allan, Sumer Atasoy, Naci Bakirci, Michael Bates, Sheila Blair, Jonathan Bloom, Linda Fritzinger, Abdallah Ghouchani, Rosalind Haddon, Rachel Hasson, Nobuko Kajitani, Charles Little, Louise Mackie, Abd al-Razzaq Moaz, Gönül Öney, Nasser Rabbat, Scott Redford, D. Fairchild Ruggles, George Scanlon, Priscilla Soucek, Yassir Tabbaa, Antonio Vallejo Triano, Oliver Watson, Donald Whitcomb, Aysin Yoltar, – sent comments or answered queries with a sense that this book will also become theirs, as they had been influenced by their own use of the first edition.

Without two young scholars, the work simply could not have been completed. Dr Cynthia Robinson, Oleg Grabar's assistant during the years of writing this book, put on diskettes the original text which had been published in the pre-computer age, searched libraries for accurate references, helped edit whole sections by cutting up long sentences, prepared the initial bibliographical survey which we eventually simplified, and supported Marilyn Jenkins-Madina with vigour and enthusiasm in her argument for the

independence of western Islamic culture. Jaclynne Kerner was first given the difficult task of co-ordinating and numbering illustrations gathered by three authors; she accomplished this task with true brilliance. She was then responsible for the making of the glossary, the collation of data for the maps, the maintenance of consistency in spelling, and the final bibliography. Finally, we would like to acknowledge the hard-working, creative, friendly, and co-operative spirit with which we operated together and surmounted occasional disagreements. Different from each other in knowledge, temperament, and professional experience, we enriched each other when trying to amalgamate into a single text statements written at different times and involving different attitudes towards the history of art.

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