

ISLAMIC

the 30-second architecture

Islamic architecture was born

out of the rapid spread of Islam that followed the death of the Prophet Mohammed in 632.

Initially, the architectural forms were influenced by regional precedents such as Byzantine architecture and often concentrated on religious structures, including mosques, shrines and tombs. One of the earliest and most significant Islamic buildings is the Dome of the Rock (691) in Jerusalem. The central plan – defined by the octagonal exterior, concentric aisles and central wooden dome – mirrors the contemporaneous centrally planned Byzantine churches. However, with the rapid spread of Islam throughout North Africa, southern Europe and Central Asia, the architecture, like the Islamic religion and culture, became more assured and assumed distinctive characteristics, while also assimilating indigenous customs and traditions and accommodating local construction techniques. Islam's propagation also saw architecture being employed in secular buildings, such as palaces, civic structures and the home. Despite Islam's extreme cultural, artistic and regional diversity, common architectural features and principles include the precedence of geometry, the primacy of enclosed space and privacy (in the courtyard) and the abundant use of interior decoration to conceal the structural elements and convey weightlessness, magnificence and beauty.

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page 20

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page 22

ROMANESQUE

page 24

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page 28

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page 38

3-SECOND BIOGRAPHIES

MINAR SINAN

1489–1588

Architect and civil engineer of the Ottoman Empire

USTAD AHMAD LAHAURI

d. 1649

Indian architect of Persian origin, associated with the design of the Taj Mahal

30-SECOND TEXT

Edward Denison

Islamic architecture often adopted local building precedents across Europe, Africa and Asia.

3-SECOND FOUNDATION
Islamic architecture originated in Arabia and spread with Islam from southern Spain across North Africa and the Middle East to Asia.

3-MINUTE ELEVATION
Islamic architecture is often referred to as the 'architecture of the veil', suggesting that it is an art form devoted to concealment, a hidden architecture. This is apparent both in the design of a building and its place within a group of buildings or city. The exterior of Islamic buildings seldom reveal their function or the layout of the space within, and are often designed to blend in with their surroundings, rather than stand out.

