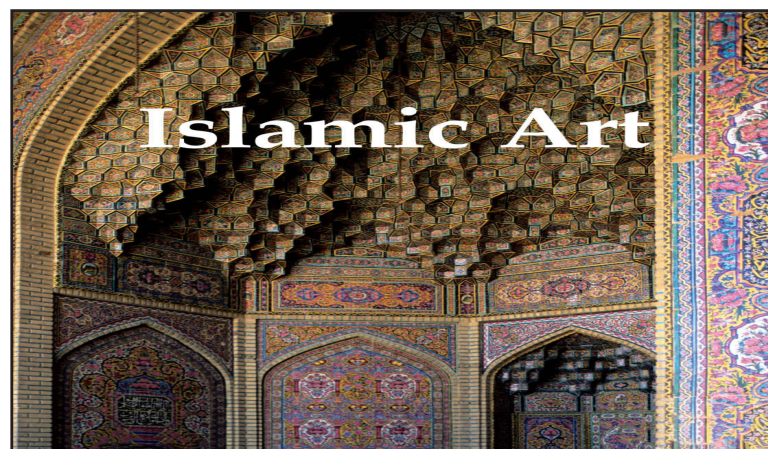


# Cosmopolitan Role and Influence of Islam



LONDON (Cosmopolis) -- Some people living today assume that the West has always been leading the world. However, in 2004, John M. Hobson noted in *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilizations* (Cambridge, p. 272; Amazon.com, Amazon.co.uk, Amazon.de), in the year 900, the Islamic Middle East/North Africa was the cradle of civilization, the most advanced region in the world economically, standing at the centre of the global economy, enjoying considerable economic growth and even per capita income growth.

John M. Hobson mentioned the following reasons: it was a pacified region in which towns sprang up and capitalists engaged in long-distance global trade; Muslim merchants were not only traders but rational capitalist investors who traded, invested and speculated in global capitalist activities for profit-maximizing ends; a sufficiently rational set of institutions was created including a clearing system, banks engaged in currency exchange, deposits and lending at interest, a special type of double-entry bookkeeping, partnerships and contract law, all of which presupposed a strong element of trust; scientific thought had developed rapidly after 800; Islam was important in stimulating capitalism on a global scale.

In *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilizations* (Cambridge, p. 272; Amazon.com, Amazon.co.uk, Amazon.de), John M. Hobson noted that, back then, a book title such as *The Islamic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* would have been appropriate. An author would have demonstrated why only Islam was capable of significant economic progress and why Christian Europe would be mired forever in agrarian stagnation. John M. Hobson mentions the 11th century judge, scientist and historian Said al-Andalusi from Toledo in Spain — followed by Ibn Khaldun in the 14th c. — who, indeed, wrote back then that Europe's occupation of a cold temperate zone meant that its people were ignorant, lacked scientific curiosity and would remain backward.

All of this can be discovered in the introduction of Luca Mozzati's richly illustrated book *Islamic Art* (Prestel, hardcover, 2019, 320 pages, 27,0 x 28,7 cm, 414 color illustrations; Amazon.com, Amazon.co.uk, Amazon.de, Amazon.fr). From its birth in the seventh century through modern times, the Islamic religion has inspired outstanding works of art. Luca Mozzati's survey includes over four hundred reproductions of treasures of Islamic art that span the world: from southern Europe, along the entire Mediterranean basin to sub-Saharan Africa through the Middle East, India, and Central Asia. Arranged geographically, the objects include paintings, miniatures, ceramics, calligraphy, textiles, carpets and metal works. Each region is given a thorough introduction that offers historical context and extensive descriptions of its artifacts. Accompanying essays offer guidance in interpreting the many themes that tie these works together, including typology, calligraphy, and religious beliefs. Despite its wide-ranging history and origins, Islamic art is unified by its devotion to faith and beauty.

Luca Mozzati explains that Islam (from Islām, an Arabic word mean-

ing 'abandonment', 'submission' to God) is a religion characterized by absolute and uncompromising monotheism, a radical and unitary view of the world, indifferent to the historical, social, cultural and racial particularities of its adherents. Luca Mozzati underlines that Islam disseminated with breathtaking speed and facility throughout a world exhausted by the constant state of belligerence between the Byzantine and Persian empires and the inevitable consequences in terms of economic, social and religious upheaval.

Within decades, Islam managed to invade and conquer Spain and part of Southern Italy; traverse the Sahara desert and convert populations in black Africa where it overlaid their local cults; and expand to the borders of Asia, encountering Vedic religions and Buddhism. To the north, Islam flooded into Oxiana (today Uzbekistan), venturing farther even than the conquering armies of Alexander the Great, until it ran up against the frontiers of China.

Luca Mozzati writes that the territory over which Islam held sway had already witnessed the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian civilizations in the West, followed by Greek Orthodoxy. In ancient times, the East had seen the dominance of Persian and Zoroastrian cultures. It was this joint legacy that laid the foundations of Islamic artistic experience. In the domain

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## Qur'an Exhibition in Tehran a Glorious Event



Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Muhammad Mehdi Esmaeili visits the International Exhibition of the Holy Qur'an in Tehran on Monday.

TEHRAN — Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Muhammad Mehdi Esmaeili has termed the Tehran-hosted International Exhibition of the Holy Qur'an a glorious event in the Islamic world.

Esmaeili made the remarks in a session named reverence of the Holy Qur'an and holy books from the perspective of divine religions and international law held on the sidelines of the 30th International Exhibition of the Holy Qur'an.

He described the Tehran-hosted exhibition as the largest and most magnificent Qur'anic exhibition in the Muslim world.

Currently, hundreds of thousands of Qur'an memorizers and millions of Qur'anic activists are active in Iran, he noted.

Qur'anic sessions are underway in numerous mosques during the blessed month of Ramadan in the country, he further noted.

Touching on the participation of male and female attendees from 21 states at the event, the official said that the ongoing event will help bring together the Islamic elites to safeguard the Qur'anic teachings and culture.

He called for unity among the

Islamic states to promote the Qur'anic culture in a bid to confront the anti-Qur'an measures.

Separately, Esmaeili said Iran seeks to bolster cultural ties with Muslim countries.

He made the remarks in a meeting with Niger's Minister of Culture, Tourism and Crafts Muhammad Hamid here on the sidelines of 30th International Exhibition of the Holy Qur'an in Tehran.

He hailed the exhibition as a good opportunity for expanding cooperation between Muslim countries.

The event could lay a proper ground for promoting joint interactions in other cultural and artistic spheres, he further noted.

The official expressed hope that Niger's participation in the international section of the Holy Qur'an exhibition will be the beginning of a new round of cultural communication between the two countries.

Fortunately, there are broad grounds for mutual cooperation between Iran and Niger, Esmaeili noted.

He voiced hope that promoting the interactions would lead to holding joint cultural weeks in the capitals of the two countries.

## Croatian Festival Praises 'Dream Gate'

TEHRAN -- The ZagrebDox in Croatia has praised 'Dream's Gate' by Iranian filmmaker Negin Ahmadi.

The international documentary film festival in the Croatian capital of Zagreb presented an honorable mention to Ahmadi's work which is a co-production from Iran, France and Norway.

In 'Dream's Gate', Ahmadi starts a personal journey into the combat zone of north Syria to question what it means to be a woman.

Alone with her camera, she decides to look for an answer to her questions by encountering the women who embody the strongest contemporary myth of female strength and freedom: Kurdish female fighters.

The personal search and internal struggles turn into an intimate women's diary written in the first person.

Following, sharing and witnessing the life of these and other Kurdish women put into question the image that the director has of

herself and of the cost of equality and freedom in this difficult region.

In their comment, the jury praised the courage and commitment of Ahmadi and considered the topic timely, important, and uniquely relevant.

The winners of the festival were announced on Saturday. The audience had an opportunity to see more than 110 documentaries in 12 program sections at the ZagrebDox.

Twenty films competed for the official festival award The Big Stamp in the international documentary film category, and the same number of titles was running in the regional competition.

Launched in 2005, the festival is intended to provide audiences and experts insight into recent documentary films, stimulate national documentary production and boost international and regional cooperation in co-productions.

The 2023 edition of the event was held on March 26-April 2.

## 'Motherless' Wins Best Film Award in India

TEHRAN — Directed by Iranian filmmaker Morteza Fatemi, the movie "Motherless" won the Best Film Award at the 2023 edition of the Bengaluru International Film Festival in India.

Motherless won the Best Film Award jointly with the Silver Bear Award-winning Indonesian film, Kamila Andini's *Before, Now & Then*.

Amir Aghaei, Mitra Hajjar,

Pejman Jamshidi, Pardis Pour-Abedini, Ali Owji, Bita Aziz, Sara Mohammadi, and Fatemeh Mirzaei are the cast of Fatemi's film.

The Bengaluru International Film Festival is an annual film festival held in Bengaluru, the capital of the Indian state of Karnataka, which previews films of all genres including documentaries from around the world.



## Iranian Violinist Ranks First in Japan



TEHRAN -- Amin Ghaffari from Iran has ranked first at a violin contest held in Japan.

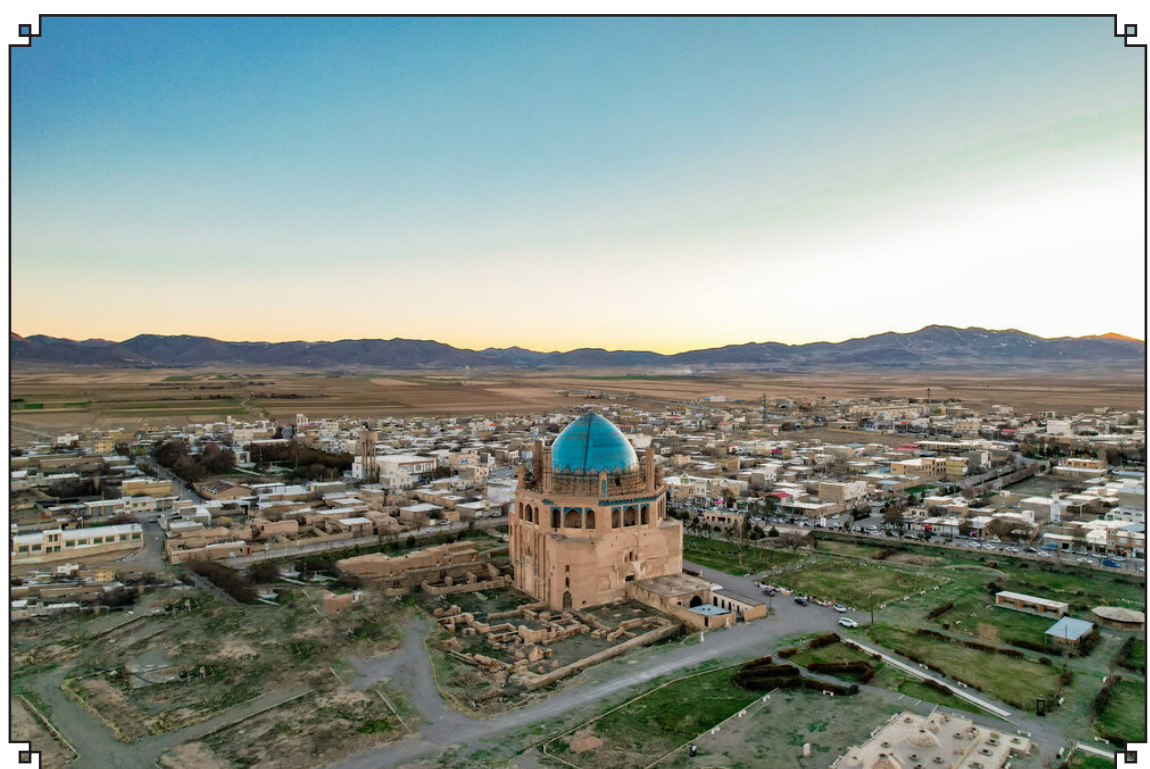
The Iranian artist was awarded at the 22nd edition of the "Competition Osaka International Music".

Also, the company named Henle Verlag presented the special award of the competition to the Iranian musician.

He competed with musicians from various countries such as Austria, the U.S., the UK, Turkey, Japan, China, and France.

The event is a comprehensive music competition that started in Osaka in 2000.

## Picture of the Day



The Global Heritage site of Gonbad-e-Sultaniyeh has been recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2005. The dome in Soltaniyeh in Iran's Zanjan province is a complex of ruins centering on the mausoleum of the Mongol ruler Muhammad Khodabandeh. Photo by ISNA