

# The Ottomans | The Palace and the Arts

'The centralised system provided a uniform decorative style throughout the vast Ottoman lands.'

The Ottoman Empire was a centralised state run by officials who were specially educated at the court. This system had a profound affect on Ottoman art by providing a uniform decorative style throughout the vast Ottoman lands. The architects and craftsmen who ornamented the Topkap# Palace, and who also worked in Istanbul and in the rest of the empire, were under the control of the Imperial Head Architect. Artist's workshops (ateliers) were first established in Edirne then, following the conquest of Istanbul, were set up in the Topkap# Palace. But the systematic organisation of craftsmen began in the early 9th / 15th century. Sometimes craftsmen from the guilds in Istanbul, or an artisan from another part of the empire, would opt to work within a particular workshop on invitation.



**Name:**  
Topkap# Palace

**Dynasty:**  
Construction began in hegira 9th century / AD 15th century, during the reign of Sultan Mehmed II (his second reign: AH 855–86 / AD 1451–81); the last addition was made under Sultan Abdülmecid ['Abd al-Majid] (r. AH 1255–77 / AD 1839–61) in hegira 13th century / AD 19th century Ottoman

**Details:**  
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

**Justification:**  
Both empire and arts were directed from the Topkap# Palace where the palace ateliers were housed and numerous designers employed.



**Name:**  
Zubdat al-Tawarikh ('Cream of Histories')

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 993 / AD 1583 Ottoman

**Details:**  
Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts  
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

**Justification:**  
A book on the universe, signs of the zodiac and the history of the monotheist religions, the Islamic dynasties, and the Ottoman state. This miniature depicts the Ascension of Jesus Christ to Heaven.



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Zubdat al-Tawarikh ('Cream of Histories')

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 993 / AD 1583 Ottoman

**Details:**  
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Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

**Justification:**  
This manuscript was prepared for Sultan Murad III, depicted in this miniature.



**Name:**  
Selimiye Mosque

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 982 / AD 1574 Classical Ottoman

**Details:**  
Edirne, Türkiye

**Justification:**  
The mosque was built by Sinan, Chief Ottoman Architect and one of the greatest architects in World history.

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**Name:**  
Takiyya al-Sulaymaniyya

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 962–74 / AD 1554/5–1566/7 Ottoman

**Details:**  
Damascus, Syria

**Justification:**  
An example of classical Ottoman architecture in an important city of the empire, it was commissioned by Süleyman the Magnificent.

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**Name:**  
Qur'an cabinet

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 911 / AD 1505 Ottoman

**Details:**  
Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts  
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

**Justification:**  
A Qur'an box which is characteristic of the period with mosaic inlay; it was made by Ahmet bin Hasan for Sultan Bayezid II.

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