



Detail from Qarawiyyin Mosque, Fez (Old Town), Morocco

The new MWNF online exhibition

WATER IN ISLAM
**'And We Made from Water Every
Living Thing'**

https://exhibitions.museumwnf.org/water_in_islam/en/

Will go live on

Wednesday, 25 March at 00.00 CET

This online exhibition brings together objects, monuments and stories from multiple countries to explore shared heritage across regions and cultures, and to highlight how exchange, mobility and knowledge have shaped societies over time. Through a series of interconnected themes, the exhibition offers an accessible and engaging narrative that connects historical experiences with contemporary concerns such as identity, sustainability and coexistence.

The exhibition will be presented within an
International Online Press Conference
on
Wednesday 25 March 2025 at 4:30 PM CET
(London 3:30 PM, Doha/Istanbul 6:30 PM, Oman 7:30 PM)

We invite you to join on PC, Mac, iPad or Android via this link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89230164241>

No registration is needed!

Speakers

Laura GIULIANO, *Curator of South and South-East Asian collections*, Museum of Civilisations, Rome (Welcome)

Eva SCHUBERT, *Chair and CEO* Museum With No Frontiers

Dina TURKIEH (*Independent Researcher, Abu Dhabi*), Curator 'Water In Islam'

Amr HAMDY (*Independent Researcher, Cairo*), Curator 'Water In Islam'

Ercan TOPÇU (*Founder Istanbul Water Museum*), 'Water in Islam' Partner and 'Global Water Museum Network' Member &
Bariş TOPÇU, Project Coordinator, Istanbul Water Museum

Final Greetings by **Ambassador Wafaa BASSIM** on behalf of the [MWNF Honorary Committee](#)

Moderator: **Nael CHAMI** (*La Sapienza University, Rome*)

The press conference will be video recorded; **by requesting to speak you give your consent to the recording. Most statements will be in English.** An AI-generated Translated Captions function will be available.

We thank the **Museum of Civilisations in Rome**, one of our co-founding Partners, for hosting the panel.

MWNF online exhibition

WATER IN ISLAM

“And We made from water every living thing” (21:30)

THE PROJECT

This exhibition by Museum With No Frontiers explores the central role of water in Islamic civilisation, offering a holistic understanding of its material, spiritual, artistic and ethical dimensions. The exhibition takes as its point of departure the Qur’anic affirmation of water as the origin of life and a sign of divine mercy. Emerging in the arid landscapes of Arabia, Islam framed water not only as a natural necessity but as a sacred trust and shared responsibility, reflected in the Prophetic teaching: “People are partners in three: water, pasture, and fire.”

Water shaped Islamic civilisation at every level. It structured agricultural production, urban development, religious practice, and technological innovation. It defined ritual purification and sacred and profane spaces. It inspired poetry, cosmology, navigation, and scientific advancement.

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What makes this exhibition unique is that MWNF’s multicultural vision is reflected not only in the diversity of its content but also in the global community behind its creation. Curators, researchers and volunteers from around the world have come together, united by a shared commitment to MWNF’s mission of connecting people through heritage and knowledge. This collective endeavour is made possible through the active engagement of partner institutions who open their collections to the public, affirming the values of inclusivity, cultural diversity and the right of everyone to access knowledge. Together, MWNF, its volunteers and partners build bridges across cultures and contribute to breaking down barriers through dialogue and shared heritage.

The exhibition is structured around five main themes, each illuminating a different dimension of water in Islamic civilisation.

Theme I: Water and Agriculture in Islamic Civilisation examines irrigation systems, qanats, legal regulations, and agricultural innovation that transformed landscapes and enabled economic and urban growth across diverse climates.

Theme II: Domestic and Urban Spheres explores water's role in shaping cities, mosques, gardens, hammams and daily ritual life, highlighting purification practices and communal ethics of equitable distribution.

Theme III: Religion and Spirituality focuses on water as purification, charity and sacred presence, from wells and sabils to ritual objects and devotional spaces.

Theme IV: Water in Sacred and Secular Literature investigates water's symbolic power in the Qur'an, prophetic narratives, poetry, cosmology, maritime travel and scientific knowledge.

Theme V: Contemporary Context addresses water in the Islamic world today, examining environmental ethics, stewardship, climate change, scarcity and ongoing social and political challenges.

By connecting past and present, belief and practice, science and symbolism, Water in Islam invites audiences to reconsider water not only as a resource, but as a shared heritage and enduring moral responsibility in an age of global environmental urgency.

Participating institutions: 68 from 33 countries in 5 continents.

Artefacts on display: approximately 450 including items contributed by museums and libraries as well as monuments and sites from the MWNF database.

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THE TEAM

Curatorial Team

Further details will be available on the exhibition Credits page.

Overall Curatorial Concept, About the Exhibition and Press Texts

Dina TURKIEH, Abu Dhabi

Theme I | ***Water and Agriculture in Islamic Civilisation***

Curators: Amr HAMDY, Cairo; Ceren SOYDAN KATRUFF, Munich

Theme II | ***Domestic and Urban Spheres***

Curators: Iman R. ABDULFATTAH, New York; Stylianos MARATHEFTIS, Nicosia

Theme III | ***Religion and Spirituality***

Curator: Irem GÜLTEPE, Rome; Hasti SHOKRZADEH YEKAN, Rome; with the contribution of Nael CHAMI, Rome

Theme IV | ***The Symbolism and Representation of Water in sacred Texts, secular Writings, and Geography***

Curator: Dina TURKIEH, Abu Dhabi; Curatorial Assistant: Nandi I. FURLANI, Luxembourg

Theme V | ***Contemporary Context: Water in the Islamic World Today***

Curator: Yelyzaveta BASYSTA, Lisbon; Research Assistant and Co-Author: Fiza ISHAQ, Bangalore;
Curatorial Strategy Advisor: Alexandra CURVELO DA SILVA CAMPOS, Lisbon.

We thank Alaa EL-DIN DAOUD, Cairo, for his scientific and curatorial contributions and advice.

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Online Press Conference

Hosted at the Museum of Civilisations (MUCIV – Museo delle Civiltà), a MWNF Partner Museum and co-founding museum of the 'Discover Islamic Art' platform.

Webinar hosting and technical coordination: Seidl+Seidl OG, Pottendorf, Austria

Overall Coordination

Eva SCHUBERT, MWNF Chair and CEO