

Bridging cultures, sharing experiences

An evaluation of *Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam* at the British Museum

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Bridging cultures, sharing experiences: An evaluation of Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam at the British Museum

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50 Copperas Street, Manchester, UK M4 1HS
Telephone 0161 839 3311
Fax 0161 839 3377
Email inray@lateralthinkers.com
www.lateralthinkers.com

The exhibition attracted a significant number of **new visitors, Muslims and families** as well as Reading Room regulars.

A **spiritual atmosphere,** combination of historic and contemporary perspectives and **compelling personal stories** led to a highly engaging experience.

Visitors felt the exhibition had encouraged **understanding and respect** for Islam, by bringing visitors together for a powerful, shared experience.

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1

Executive Summary

Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam was the final exhibition covering spiritual journeys held in the Museum's Reading Room. This exhibition was successful in engaging both traditional British Museum special exhibition attenders, and making in-roads into a significant new audience, with both visitor groups experiencing high levels of emotional and spiritual outcomes, and excellent satisfaction ratings.

A unique audience profile

The exhibition attracted a distinctive audience when compared both to previous Reading Room exhibitions, and to the Museum audience overall.

Muslim and BAME visits

The exhibition successfully attracted a significant Muslim audience – 47% of visitors were Muslim, with the majority of these – 39% of all visitors – describing themselves as Sunni Muslims. This is significantly higher than the Museum and Galleries audience identified in the 2010/11 Taking Part dataset, where 3% of respondents were Muslim.

The exhibition attracted a very different audiences to previous exhibitions, and the British Museum as a whole. 66% of all visits to the exhibition were made by BAME visitors. Visits to the exhibition were significantly more likely to be made by Asian visitors – 40% compared to 8% at the British Museum overall during the exhibition period. In addition to 40% Asian visits, a further 5% of visits were made by visitors of Arab origin. As the remainder of the executive summary and report will show, Muslim visitors were in many ways distinct from their non-Muslim counterparts; but despite their differing profile and motivations, they had equally fulfilling experiences.

A younger, more local audience

Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam attracted a larger proportion of local visitors than previous exhibitions, with over half of all visits from within London. The audience was young, with 18% aged under 16 (4% at *Treasures of Heaven: saints, relics and devotion in medieval Europe*, and 8% at *Journey through the afterlife: ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*) and only 9% aged 65 and over (22% at *Treasures of Heaven: saints, relics and devotion in medieval Europe*, and 18% at *Journey through the afterlife: ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*). Similarly, the exhibition attracted a larger proportion of families than all previous Reading Room exhibitions – 20% of groups included at least one

visitor under 16 compared to 5% at *Treasures of Heaven: saints, relics and devotion in medieval Europe* and 7% at *Journey through the afterlife: ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*. The large Muslim audience attracted to the exhibition contributed to the rise in family visits; 36% of such visits were in a family group.

Driving new visits

Muslim visitors were significantly more likely to be on their first ever visit to the British Museum (38% compared to 16% of non-Muslims).

The success of the exhibition in developing a new audience is clear in the proportion of 'New Intenders' within the audience (21% of visits were made by first-time visitors coming specifically to see the exhibition).

A spiritual atmosphere

The exhibition successfully created a powerful, immersive atmosphere, 81% felt it enhanced their visit. The subdued lighting, inclusion of the Adhan and a striking tapestry in the entrance combined to create a calm, spiritual ambience in the exhibition space.

Interestingly, many respondents commented that the large number of visitors in the exhibition actually added to their experience, giving them a sense of togetherness and a shared experience.

The challenge of multi-layering interpretation

With the exception of *Treasures of Heaven: saints, relics and devotion in medieval Europe*, the exhibition attracted a higher proportion of visitors with specialist knowledge than previously. The majority, however, had general knowledge of the topic of Hajj (65%). This distinction is perhaps magnified by those with a personal connection to Islam and those without this connection. Effectively the exhibition interpretation had to cater to two very different audiences. Overall visitors appreciated the narrative structure of the exhibition which emulated the pilgrimage's structure, and intuitively guided visitors through the content.

Whilst 90% of visitors were satisfied with the amount of information available, the experience could have been enhanced through providing more of a basic introduction to Islam for those with more general / no knowledge, and more options for further discovery for those with a high level of background knowledge. Subjects that some visitors would have liked more information about included the role of women in Hajj, the political and economical impacts of the pilgrimage and more information on the practical arrangements for modern-day Hajj. Nevertheless, visitors left the exhibition highly motivated to explore topics further, and it is likely that many did so and independently addressed the questions that they were left with.

Mid-point film

The film explaining the rituals of Hajj was received very positively. It marked the mid-point of the exhibition and provided visitors a chance to rest and contemplate what they had seen so far. The step-by-step explanation of the stages and rituals of Hajj gave less knowledgeable visitors the information they needed; while the footage gave all visitors an insight into the experience of making the pilgrimage. Some visitors wanted more detail, but most recognised that the length gave visitors the information they needed without causing unnecessary crowding in that part of the exhibition.

Strong personal narratives

Visitors connected to the personal stories told in the exhibition. They liked the inclusion of photographs and footage of Hajjis, and recognised the importance of including a range of different routes and voices to tell the story of Hajj through the centuries.

Unexpected benefits of contemporary art

Many visitors were surprised to see objects like Ahmed Mater al Aiad's 'Magnetism' in the exhibition. Both Muslims and non-Muslim visitors appreciated the contemporary interpretations of Hajj, with many citing them as a highlight. Visitors also felt it was important to set the history of Hajj in a modern context, and the contemporary art in the exhibition helped to achieve this.

Leading the way in diversity and understanding

In many ways the outcomes delivered by *Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam* were profoundly different to those delivered in – for example – the *Journey through the afterlife: ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* exhibition due to the wider topic of Islam being a current and highly relevant topic in society. There was a greater emphasis on understanding diversity and sharing a sometimes divisive topic in a respectful and harmonious way.

Many visitors commented on the diverse nature of the audience, and both Muslims and non-Muslims were impressed that the Museum had successfully brought sometimes disparate groups together. Non-Muslims felt greater understanding of and empathy for Islam, and Muslims felt the exhibition had treated their religion with great respect and helped promote understanding amongst non-Muslims.

Muslim visitors described leaving the exhibition being more proud of their faith, and non-Muslims described now having the ability and confidence to discuss Islam with others, something they might have been reluctant to do previously.

Strong emotional and spiritual outcomes

The majority of visitors experienced emotional or spiritual outcomes (89%); significantly more than had expected to do so. Both Muslims and non-Muslims were moved by the objects and stories on display, many were prompted to reflect on their own faiths, and even in some cases, their own humanity. Overall visitors responded very positively to the exhibition, and a significant number, both seasoned Reading Room exhibition attenders and New Intenders reported an intention to visit future British Museum special exhibitions and the Museum in general.

The Museum has clearly achieved a lasting legacy through the exhibition, repositioning the institution for many as a forward-thinking organisation that can tackle complex topics in a respectful and progressive way, achieving wider societal impacts.

2

Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam

One of the five pillars of Islam central to Muslim belief, Hajj is the pilgrimage to Mecca that every Muslim must make at least once in their lifetime if they are able. This major exhibition charts the history of this deeply personal journey.

Examining the extraordinary travel logistics involved and how the wider operation of the event has changed over time, the exhibition compares how pilgrims over the centuries negotiated this often monumental undertaking and how it continues to be experienced by people from all corners of the globe today.

Beautiful objects, including historical and contemporary art, textiles and manuscripts, bring to life the profound spiritual significance of the sacred rituals that have remained unchanged since the Prophet Muhammad's time in the 7th century AD.

Running from 26th January to 15th April 2012 the exhibition was held in the Museum's Reading Room.

3

Research methodology

3.1 Aims and objectives

The aims of this research were to provide an objective evaluation of the exhibition, comparative data across other British Museum Reading Room exhibitions – *Treasures of Heaven: saints, relics and devotion in medieval Europe*, *Journey through the afterlife: ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings*; *Moctezuma: Aztec Ruler*; *Shah ‘Abbas: The remaking of Iran*; *Hadrian: Empire and Conflict*; *The First Emperor: China’s Terracotta Army*, – and specific findings relating to the Museum’s high level research agenda of Attract -> Engage -> Outcome.

Specific areas to be covered in the evaluation were:

- Visitor profile
- Visitor behaviour
- Interpretation awareness and usage
- Accompanying programme awareness and usage
- Motivations, expectations and outcomes (including comparative work on outcomes against other exhibitions)
- Segmentation
- Access provision usage
- Website usage

3.2 Our approach

In order to carry out the evaluation of *Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam* we used the following research techniques:

Audience focus groups

Exhibition attenders were invited to the British Museum to take part in a focus group. All of the attenders had previously visited *Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam* and they were divided into two groups:

- Exhibition attenders who described themselves as Muslim
- Exhibition attenders who described themselves as non-Muslim

Participants took part in an accompanied visit to the *Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam* exhibition to refresh their memories, before taking part in an in-depth group discussion. The discussions explored their expectations of the exhibition, aspects of the exhibition design and overall visitor experience.

In total 10 visitors participated in the focus group discussions: 6 non-Muslim and 4 Muslim visitors.

Depth interviews

In order to deliver robust qualitative data on this aspect of the research, Morris Hargreaves McIntyre supplemented the Muslim focus group with two telephone interviews with Muslim exhibition attenders.

Exit survey¹

Surveys were conducted with visitors who had just finished their visit to the exhibition to ascertain a basic visitor profile, awareness of marketing and publicity, motivation for visiting the exhibition, behaviour within the room and the impacts and outcomes of the exhibition.

Quota surveying and weighting

Quota surveys were introduced to ensure a robust sample of Muslim respondents for cross analysis. However these shifts did not reach their quotas. This means that respondents were not excluded from the research because of quotas, and as such these shifts still represent random sampling.

¹ Please note the research excluded schools and those visiting as part of an organised group.

Our typical weighting procedure accounts for visit flow across weekdays and weekends and family/non family groups. However the unique visitor profile of this exhibition meant that different weighting procedures were required. This data has been weighted for the following factors:

- Was the visit made on a Friday or another day?
- Was the respondent Muslim or non-Muslim?
- Was the visit made as part of a family or adult group?

301 exit surveys were completed during shifts from 27 February – 12 April 2012.

Rolling research

Questions were added to the on-going rolling research at the Museum to ascertain awareness and attendance of *Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam* amongst general Museum visitors.

Observations

In addition to the research conducted by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, the British Museum's Interpretation Team also completed its own observations of 3 of the digital media displays – the introductory media display, mid-point film and Hajj stories at the close of the exhibition.

A total of 300 observations were completed (100 per display).

Vox pop interviews

Vox pop interviews were carried out at various points throughout the exhibition in order to test visitors' responses to different elements including the multimedia guides and the overall exhibition design and interpretation. One shift of vox pops was allocated to investigating visitors' motivations for attending the exhibition, in order to inform the development of a related question on the quantitative survey.

61 visitor vox pops were carried out.

Personal Meaning Maps

Personal Meaning Maps are a very detailed research methodology that involved exploring visitors' understanding and opinions on the topic of Hajj ahead of a visit, and then measuring the amount and way in which their opinions might have changed having been to the exhibition.

Visitors took part in a phone interview before their visit exploring their existing knowledge and perceptions, and a face-to-face interview after their

visit considering how knowledge and perceptions had changed. Both respondent and interviewer took notes on a 'personal meaning map' and conversations were also recorded.

5 personal meaning maps were completed.

4

Key findings

The table below shows the dwell time from the *Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam* exhibition, and compares them with 7 previous exhibitions held in the Reading Room since September 2007.

	Hajj: Journey to the heart of Islam	Treasures of Heaven	Book of the Dead	Italian Renaissance Drawings	Moctezuma	Shah 'Abbas	Hadrian	The First Emperor
Exhibition dates	26/01/12 – 15/04/12	23/06/11 – 09/10/11	04/11/10 – 06/03/11	22/04/10 – 25/07/10	24/09/09 – 24/01/10	19/02/09 – 14/06/09	24/07/08 – 26/10/08	13/09/07 – 06/04/08
Average length of visit	88 mins	90 mins	116 mins	91 mins	79 mins	75 mins	100 mins	75 mins
Free exhibition guide use	37%	26%	37%	53%	69%	53%	45%	19% ²

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Visitor profile

Where appropriate, and where comparative data is available, this report compares the findings from the *Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam* evaluation alongside those from the 7 previous major exhibitions to have taken place within the Reading Room.

It also compares the exhibition profile with the general Museum-visiting audience during the part of the exhibition period which fell within quarter 4 of 2011/12 (26 January - 31 March 2012).

Visitor profile

	Hajj: Journey to the heart of Islam	Treasures of Heaven	Book of the Dead	Italian Renaissance Drawings	Moctezuma: Aztec Ruler	Shah 'Abbas	Hadrian: Empire & Conflict	The First Emperor	BM Overall ³
Base	301	149	259	171	164	135	146	215	394
Knowledge of subject areas covered									
Specialist	25%	27%	8%	8%	9%	8%	8%	5%	9%
General	65%	64%	69%	77%	69%	56%	76%	61%	76%
Little/ none	10%	9%	23%	15%	22%	37%	16%	34%	14%
Origin									
London	54%	43%	33%	38%	27%	38%	29%	20%	23%
Elsewhere in UK	30%	40%	45%	31%	32%	23%	42%	42%	16%
Overseas	16%	17%	22%	31%	41%	40%	29%	38%	61%

³ For the period 26 January to 31 March 2012.

Visitor origin

When the audience profile for *Hajj: Journey to the heart of Islam* is compared to previous Reading Room exhibitions we can see the exhibition attracted the highest proportion of visitors from London (54%). There has been a corresponding decrease in the proportion of visits made by overseas visitors (16%) compared to earlier Reading Room exhibitions. One notable exception to this was *Treasures of Heaven: saints, relics and devotion in medieval Europe* which attracted a similar proportion of overseas visits to *Hajj: Journey to the heart of Islam* (17%) despite the fact that the exhibition ran during the summer months when overseas visitors are typically at their peak.

Ethnic origin

The exhibition attracted very different audiences to previous exhibitions, and the British Museum as a whole. 66% of all visits to the exhibition were made by BAME visitors.

Unsurprisingly given the exhibition theme and content, it attracted a larger proportion of Asian visits compared to the Museum overall, both for all visitors and UK only visitors.

Group age

The age profile of *Hajj: Journey to the heart of Islam* shows a larger proportion of visits by those aged 16 and under compared to previous Reading Room exhibitions. This is the largest proportion of visits by under 16s in recent years - more than twice as many as the Museum as a whole during the same time period and more than 4 times as many as *Treasures of Heaven: saints, relics and devotion in medieval Europe*.

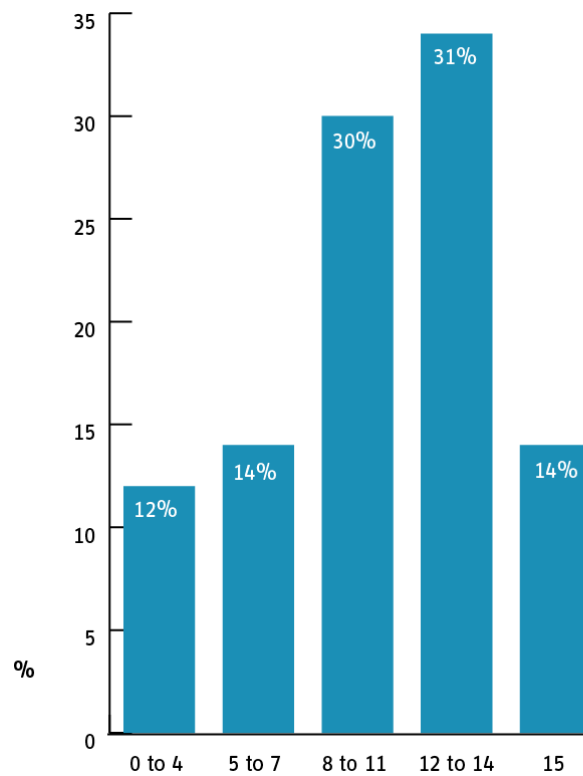
Family visiting and group size

The age profile of visitors to *Hajj: Journey to the heart of Islam* is caused by the large proportion of visits made by families - 20% of visits were made by families compared to 5% for *Treasures of Heaven: saints, relics and devotion* and 7% for *Book of the Dead*. This rose to 35% among first time visits and 36% among Muslim visits.

Related to this is an increase in the mean group size for *Hajj: Journey to the heart of Islam* of 2.4 visitors- rising to 3.3 among Muslim visits - compared with 1.8 for *Treasures of Heaven: saints, relics and devotion* and 1.87 for *Book of the Dead*.

Visits by under-16s

The model below illustrates the ages of visitors under 16. The largest age cohorts were 8 to 11 and 12 to 14.



Intentional visiting to the exhibition

The exhibition achieved a very high level of pre-visit awareness – equalled only by *The First Emperor: China's Terracotta Army*. 98% were aware of the exhibition before visiting. 88% of visits were made by those for whom the exhibition was one of the reasons or the main reason for visiting the Museum.

Visit history

Comparing the audience profile of *Hajj: Journey to the heart of Islam* to previous Reading Room exhibitions we can see that this exhibition attracted a significantly larger proportion of first time visits (25% of visits being first visits to the British Museum compared to 11% for *Treasures of Heaven: saints, relics and devotion in medieval Europe*).

The percentage of visits made by visitors who are regular (41%) or lapsed (34%) was more evenly spread than for previous exhibitions, showing an increase in lapsed visitors attending this exhibition.

This exhibition also attracted a large proportion of New Intenders – 21% of all visits were made by visitors who were on their first visit to the Museum, and were driven by the exhibition.

Knowledge base

Knowledge of the subjects covered in *Haji: Journey to the heart of Islam* was markedly different between Muslim and non-Muslim visitors.

32% of Muslim visitors claimed high levels of specialist knowledge in the subject compared with 18% of non-Muslim visitors.

'I will be a teacher in Muslim history, so it is one of my subjects, first. Secondly I am a Muslim so for me it was very important and I have never been to Mecca' Muslim vox pop

'I like travelling a lot and there's a lot in the exhibition that I could relate to which was quite interesting, and I've been to Umrah, fortunately five times. Unfortunately I haven't been to Hajj yet, but I'm planning to go this year' Muslim focus group

Non-Muslims tended to be less knowledgeable; and were more likely to say that they wanted to gain a general understanding of Islam as well as Hajj.

'It is a subject that we feel we are not knowledgeable enough so it is a convenient way to get knowledge.' non-Muslim vox pop

'My friend here is Muslim and I want to know more about his religion' non-Muslim vox pop

'I know a little bit about it [Hajj] but I haven't seen all of it, all the different stages... We're in east London we have a lot of Hindus, Muslims, all sorts in our church. So we have a lot of different religions coming to our fellowship, so it's finding out about where they come from, what their background is' non-Muslim vox pop

'We're members of the BM... We try to get most of the major exhibitions here. Plus I, in particular work with a lot of Muslim students. So I'm quite interested in Islam.' non-Muslim vox pop

'I spent a lot of time working with children and working with teachers who were Muslims so I have had a lot of input [on the subject] over my latter teaching career' non-Muslim vox pop

'I've done voluntary work in collaboration with Muslims and... my daughter has got a very good friend who's Muslim so I know something about Islam' non-Muslim vox pop

However the exhibition did attract non-Muslim specialists.

'I did have some background because I had taken a class at UCLA on contemporary Islamic thought that was the title of the class, but of course it went back to historical issues and the five pillars of Islam and so I had a framework when I walked in the door to the exhibition, and so it was literally that and so I thought the didactic was terrific' non-Muslim vox pop

'I'm an Arabist... I read Arabic at Oxford' non-Muslim vox pop

Religion

47% of respondents stated they were Muslim – more than twice as many as stated they were Christian (22%). Due to the subject and content of the exhibition this is unsurprisingly different to visits to *Treasures of Heaven: saints, relics and devotion in medieval Europe* which attracted 63% of visitors stating they were Christian and none stating they were Muslim.

These results are also significantly different from Taking Part data from 2010/11 relating to the UK population which identifies 62% as Christian and 3% Muslim, and within this Museum and Gallery attenders 62% Christian and 4% Muslim.

The religion of visitors was an important factor during visits to the exhibition. For Muslim visitors, their religion often was the driver behind a visit:

'I'm a Muslim myself... Hajj is like an experience I want to do Hajj at some point in my life.... I don't know much about it... I heard things second hand from people, so I just wanted to come and see' Muslim vox pop

'My Dad's performed Hajj... he didn't take many photographs... coming here you see so many different accounts of people's experiences of it' Muslim vox pop

'We are Muslim and we have never been on the Hajj so it was a good way to see what it might be [like]' Muslim vox pop

'As a Muslim I have performed Hajj twice and the memories you know sort of come back' Muslim vox pop

'I'm a Muslim. I've been on Hajj and so I was very interested to see how the exhibition reflected that' Muslim focus group

In contrast, key drivers for non-Muslim visitors were improving their knowledge and understanding and gaining an insight into a different religion.

'I have had a lot of travel in the twilight of my years in Islamic countries. I have spent a lot of time there. I almost married a Muslim and I have had

various Muslim boyfriends and I have had a lot to do with ordinary Muslims in different countries. I have never felt tempted to embrace the faith, but it interests me' non-Muslim focus group

We will explore visitor motivations further in chapter 7 of this report.

Segmentation

The table below describes the Morris Hargreaves McIntyre devised segmentation system into which the British Museum audience is currently divided for annual reporting purposes.

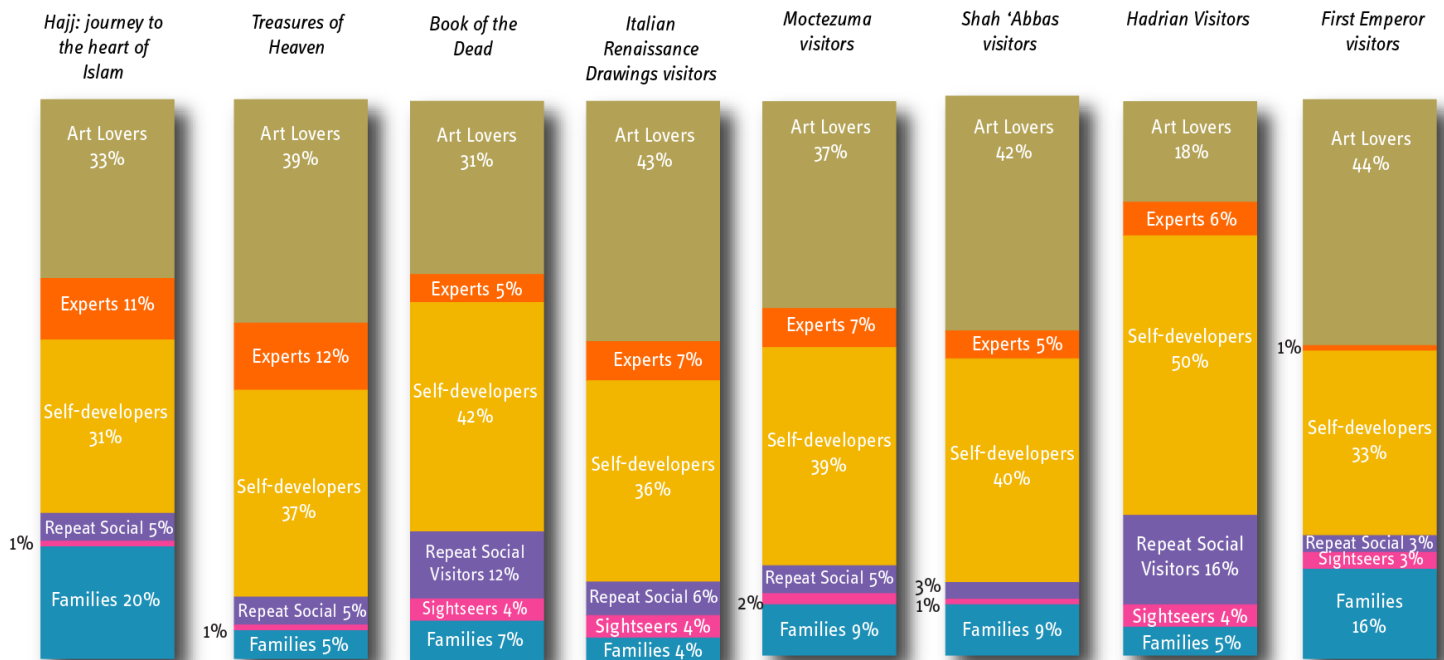
Segment table

Segment name	Description	Broad needs
Families ⁴	Mixed age groups, wanting fun and educational trip for children	Ease of access and movement, child friendly facilities and activities, different levels of service to meet diverse age needs
Sightseers	First time visitors making a general visit. Mainly tourists who want to 'do' the museum	Ease of access, comfort, orientation, good facilities
Repeat Social Visitors	Repeat visitors, meeting up with others at the museum. Use the museum as a sociable space and want to feel a sense of ownership in their surroundings	Ease of access, comfort, orientation, good facilities, warm welcome, accessible exhibitions
Self developers	Non-specialists wanting to informally improve their general knowledge about subjects covered in the museum	Journey of discovery, layered information, finding out new things
Experts	Specialists wanting to deepen their knowledge further by engaging deeply with the collection	High quality access to collections, critical engagement, access to expert staff
Art Lovers	Spiritually and emotionally motivated visitors who want to commune with objects in the collection, and use their existing knowledge as a base to go deeper	Ambience, deep sensory engagement, space for contemplation

The model below compares the proportion of visitors that fell into each segment across comparable Reading Room exhibitions.

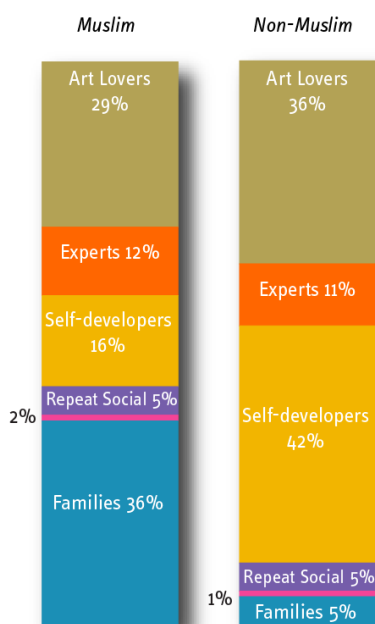
⁴ Please note that families are defined as an independent adult visitor visiting with a child aged under 16

Visitor segments



Overall, the high level of Families results in smaller proportions of Self-developers and Art Lovers to the exhibition.

Levels of Experts were similar to *Treasures of Heaven: saints, relics and devotion in medieval Europe* and higher than previous temporary exhibitions.



However the real story is illustrated by looking at the different segment distribution for this exhibition between Muslim and non-Muslim visits.

Consistent with the visitor profile, this illustrates the higher proportion of Family visits among Muslim attenders. It also illustrates a significantly higher proportion of Self-developers among the non-Muslim visits.

This is consistent with the examination of motivations for a visit in these two groups, which reveals the reasons for visiting the exhibition of the non-Muslim Self-developers. This will be explored further in the motivations section of the report.

6 Motivations for visiting

6.1 Hierarchy of motivation

We have identified four key drivers for visiting museums:

Visitors who:

See museum as a...	Have this driver...	And they seek this from a visit..
CHURCH	SPIRITUAL	Creative stimulation and quiet contemplation, they see museums as an opportunity to escape and recharge their batteries, food for the soul
SPA	EMOTIONAL	May have a personal connection to the subject matter, want to see facinating objects in an inspiring setting, seek ambience, deep sensory and intellectual experience
ARCHIVE	INTELLECTUAL	Keen to encourage their children's or their own interest and knowledge, may have professional interest in the subject, seek a journey of discovery, to find out new things
ATTRACTION	SOCIAL	See museums as an enjoyable place to spend time with friends and family, seek ease of access and orientation, good facilities and services, welcoming staff

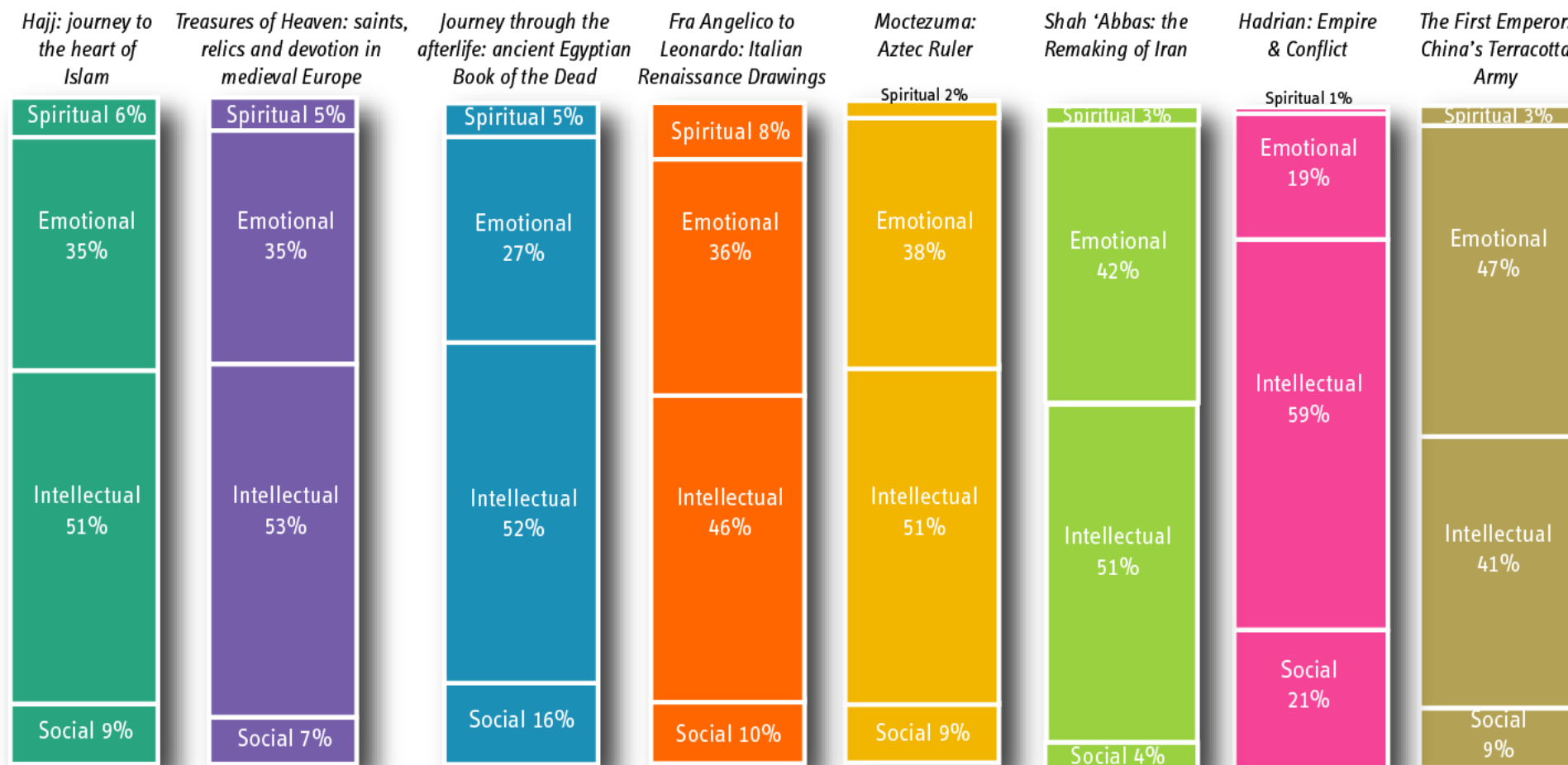
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At each level of the hierarchy visitors have different needs. The suggestion is not that visitors are forced or even led up this hierarchy, but that they get the opportunity to engage at the deepest level they wish to.

6.2 Main motivation

Using a series of statements on the exit survey we asked visitors to *Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam* to identify the main motivation for their visit to the British Museum that day. The diagram below shows the main motivation of visitors to *Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam* alongside comparable exhibitions.

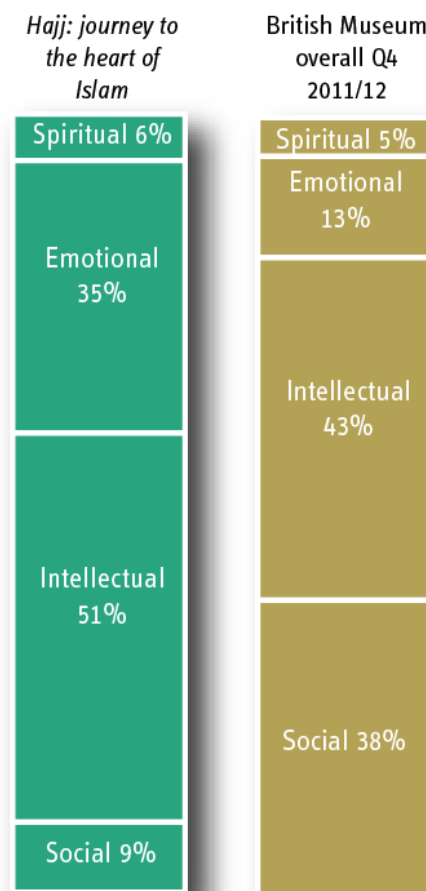
Main motivation



We can see from the graph above that with the exception of *The First Emperor: China's Terracotta Army* and *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings*, visitors to major temporary exhibitions are consistently most likely to be mainly intellectually motivated.

In terms of how main motivations break down there appears to be a relatively consistent pattern emerging amongst visitors' main motivation for visiting exhibitions in the Reading Room, the only exhibition to fall outside of this pattern is *Hadrian: Empire & Conflict*. Perhaps unsurprisingly, visits to *Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam* were more likely to be spiritually motivated than visits to the majority of comparable exhibitions. The two exceptions to this are *Journey through the afterlife: ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* and *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings*.

How did exhibition attenders compare to the Museum overall?



As can be seen through the graph to the left, visitors to *Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam* were significantly more likely to be mainly intellectually or mainly emotionally driven than visitors the British Museum overall during the time period of the exhibition.

Visitors clearly arrived at the exhibition highly motivated, with a view of what they were hoping to get out of their experience.

Specific motivations

In addition to identifying visitors' main motivation for visiting the exhibition, we were also able to look at the proportion of visitors driven by specific motivators. Visitors were asked to choose all the reasons that motivated their visit – therefore, for example, visitors can be motivated to gain a deeper insight, but also to visit the shop or restaurant on the same visit.

Specific motivators

Motivation	Statement	Total	Muslim	Non-Muslim
Spiritual	To stimulate my own creativity	21%	16%	24%
	To reflect and contemplate	40%	41%	39%
	To escape or recharge my batteries	12%	12%	12%
Emotional	To gain a deeper insight into the subject	78%	71%	83%
	To experience awe-inspiring, fascinating or beautiful things or places	38%	39%	38%
	To be moved emotionally	26%	33%	20%
	To feel a strong sense of personal connection	27%	47%	11%
	To travel back in time	15%	16%	14%
Intellectual	To improve my own knowledge and understanding	72%	62%	80%
	I have a personal / academic / professional interest in the subject	44%	44%	43%
	To encourage children's interest in history	14%	24%	5%
Social	To visit one of the major attractions in the region	23%	24%	22%
	To spend time with other people in a nice place	16%	18%	13%
	To use facilities such as shop / café / toilet / restaurant	8%	3%	13%

Overall the three most selected options were to 'gain a deeper insight into the subject' (78%), 'improve my own knowledge and understanding' (72%), and 'I have a personal / academic / professional interest in the subject' (44%).

Motivation data suggests that Muslims and non-Muslims attended the exhibition for quite distinct reasons. Non-Muslims were significantly more likely to be driven to 'gain a deeper insight into the subject' and 'to improve my own knowledge and understanding' whilst, Muslims were more likely to be driven by a desire to 'feel a strong sense of personal connection' and 'to encourage children's interest in history'.

6.3 Exhibition-specific drivers

Because of the unique nature of the Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam, we developed a bespoke motivations question, to explore what drove visits to this exhibition. One shift of vox pops was used to explore visitors' most common motivations, from which a coded list was developed, which was tested quantitatively.

	Total	Muslim	Non-Muslim
To see Islamic art or artefacts	58%	60%	56%
To find out what happens on Hajj	53%	40%	67%
To see how the British Museum tackled the topic of Hajj and Islam	49%	57%	41%
To gain an insight into the act of pilgrimage	49%	32%	66%
To learn more about Islam generally	41%	23%	60%
To get an objective view of Hajj or Islam	39%	32%	46%
To experience what it would be like to make the journey to Mecca	39%	51%	27%
To find out about a topic that is relevant to contemporary society	35%	21%	49%
To help me gain a new perspective on my own religion	21%	32%	9%
To learn about the commonalities between different faiths	18%	14%	22%
To relive / remind me of my personal experience of pilgrimage	17%	34%	1%
To have a shared experience or sense of oneness'	17%	30%	4%
To make my children more aware of the history of this important part of Islam	17%	28%	6%
Other	3%	1%	4%
I don't have a specific reason	4%	2%	5%

Non-Muslims expressed a desire to learn and understand – they were most likely to be driven to 'find out what happens on Hajj'. They frequently cited friends, family and work colleagues who were practicing Muslims as reasons for learning, both about Hajj and Islam in general. 63% of non-Muslim visitors wanted 'to learn more about Islam generally' (compared to 23% of Muslim visitors). 67% of non-Muslim visitors wanted 'To find out what happens on Hajj' (compared to 40% of Muslim visitors).

'My boyfriend is Muslim. I am agnostic and he is Muslim and so I can understand a bit more about his faith from visiting the exhibit, but I have no real interest in following his faith, but I can understand and support him in his decisions' non-Muslim focus group

'I can't go [on Hajj] because I am not a Muslim, so to get some sort of idea of what it is like I came ... just out of interest really' non-Muslim vox pop

Twice as many non-Muslim visitors (66%) as Muslim visitors (32%) wanted 'To gain an insight into the act of pilgrimage; why people do it and what it stands for'. More than twice as many non-Muslim visitors (49% compared to 21% of non-Muslim visitors) wanted 'To find out about a topic that is relevant to contemporary society'.

'I think it's important to understand what different religions mean, different cultures mean to different people so I thought this was another way of learning more about it to understand it better' non-Muslim vox pop

'To find out more about the pilgrimage and about the history of the pilgrimage because I suppose I'm a Muslim and I don't really know much about it.' Muslim vox pop

'One of my reasons for coming, apart from supporting events like this which is important, was to get ... a better understanding of what it all means, and it was very informative' Muslim focus group

'There is a large Muslim community near where we live and so it would be interesting to see it from a different perspective, rather than being just outside being allowed in to see what is going on' non-Muslim vox pop

'[I have] an interest in finding out something that I would never have known because on that subject my education was closed' non-Muslim focus group

They were also more likely to want to 'find out about a topic that is relevant to contemporary society' – with many spontaneously drawing connections between politics, current affairs and the staging of the exhibition.

'I was quite interested in finding out about... Islam because obviously it's become [a] more important part of... everybody's lives... I'm interested in finding out about many other faiths and... Islam is perhaps... the one that's in the news at the moment' non-Muslim vox pop

'The whole issue about Muslim faith is very, very important now... with increasing terrorism and fundamentalism... I always think it's quite good to try and get back to where a particular faith started from and learn something of it' non-Muslim vox pop

'I'm just a curious person, I really believe in learning about other religions and the World's changing and in my world we've dealt with stuff like 9/11 [respondent is American], it's important to know about other people. Now my work, I just started at in the last two months, is going to take me to the Middle East and Saudi Arabia so it was really important that I find my way here while I was here [in London]' non-Muslim vox pop

Non-Muslims were also more likely to be driven by a desire to explore commonalities between different faiths.

'I am a practicing Christian... I would like to find out more [about] what the common roots are between the two faiths because... we seem to concentrate a lot on differences and I think it is quite important that we celebrate commonality as well as respect the different religions' non-Muslim vox pop

In contrast, Muslims wanted to connect to the experience of Hajj, being more likely to cite 'experience what it would be like to make the journey to Mecca' and 'to have a shared experience or sense of oneness'. For 30% of Muslim visitors, the exhibition provided an opportunity to share, reminisce and connect. 30% wanted 'to have a shared experience or sense of oneness' (4% non-Muslim), 'to relive / remind me in some way of my personal experience of pilgrimage' (34% Muslim visitors, 1% non-Muslim visitors) and 'to help me gain a new perspective on my own religion' (32% Muslim visitors, 9% non-Muslim visitors).

'We've got an intention of going to Mecca for Salah and we just wanted to see how it is by pictures and messages, just to get the feel of what it is when you get there' Muslim vox pop

'For me [visiting the exhibition] gives me an insight... into the devotion of the people who go... even now it's a long journey to make. They must be determined to go [to] that' non-Muslim vox pop

'I came here to understand... what the idea of pilgrimage and spirituality actually means' Muslim vox pop

'I've worked in countries where there are Muslim people and I've been aware of this rite of passage that's involved in their faith... just a general curiosity into why' non-Muslim vox pop

They were significantly more likely to be driven by a desire to engage their children in the topic. This reflects the high proportion of family groups amongst Muslim visitors. Muslim visitors were also interested in seeing how the British Museum tackled the topic of Hajj.

'I wanted to see how it was being presented here at the British Museum. Just to know if it was being fairly portrayed. How well detailed it was. What they had to show. What relics, if any, they had. What descriptions and details they would have included for an understanding not only for myself as a Muslim but for others who may be coming who may not be Muslim or not have an understanding of Islam to see if they would have gained a fair impression.' Muslim vox pop

'I am a Muslim myself so it was out of interest to see how it was depicted, and whether it was, from my perspective, depicted the way it should be'
Muslim vox pop

Both Muslims and non-Muslim visitors saw the exhibition as an opportunity to explore non-western art and history:

'I'm particularly drawn to the visual things... I've always felt very drawn towards the Middle East... and Islamic [art].' non-Muslim vox pop

'I have some knowledge about all this stuff, but it was interesting for me to look at something actual, something real.' Muslim vox pop

'I am interested in Middle Eastern history, I am an atheist but the artwork and literature and culture is incredible and I wanted to find out more' non religious vox pop

7 The visit experience

7.1 Pre-show

Booking process and ticket collection

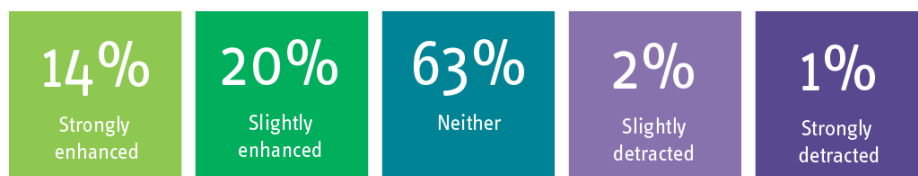
To what extent did the booking process enhance or detract from your overall visit experience?



The majority of visitors had no strong feelings about the booking process, with 74% saying it neither enhanced nor detracted from their visit (76% for *Treasure of heaven: saints, relics and devotion in medieval Europe*). 20% thought the booking process ‘slightly’ or ‘strongly’ enhanced their visit (22% for *Treasure of heaven*), with only 6% stating it detracted (2% for *Treasure of heaven*).

Queuing and staggered entry times

To what extent did the staggered entry times for the exhibition enhance or detract from your overall visit experience?



The majority of visitors (63%) felt staggered entry times had no impact on their visit, and 34% felt that it enhanced their visit. These proportions have not changed significantly since *Treasures of Heaven: saints, relics and devotion in medieval Europe* (65% and 33% respectively). The proportion of visitors who felt their experience was enhanced has increased slightly when compared to *Journey through the afterlife: ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* (29%).

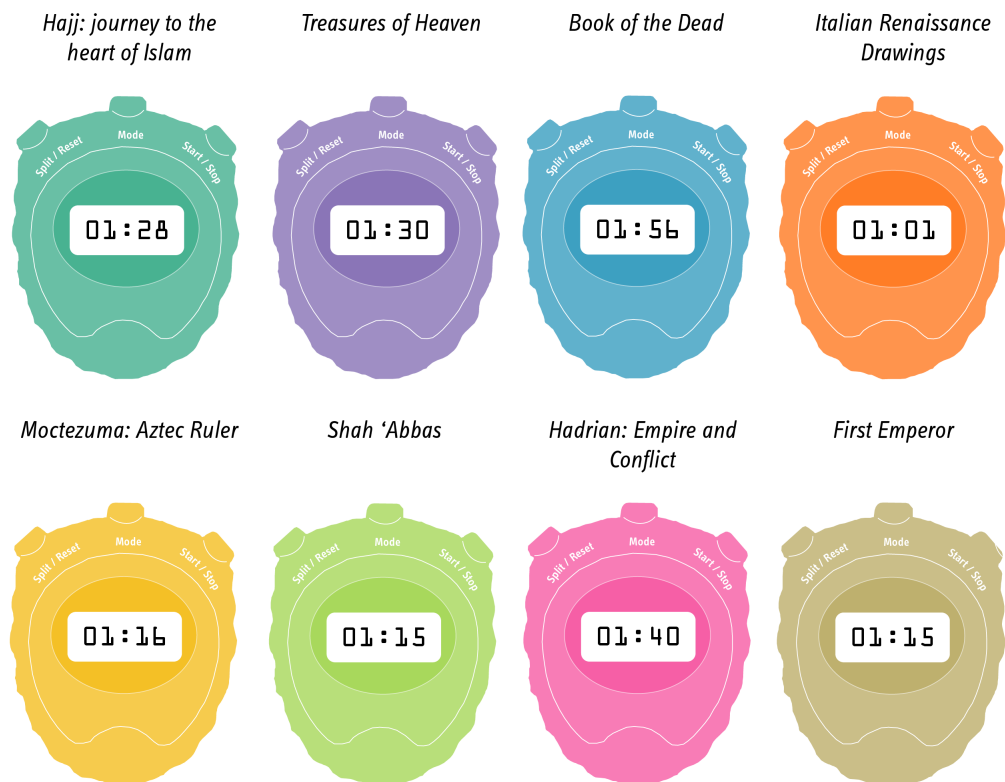
Finding the exhibition

To what extent did the ease of finding the exhibition in the British Museum enhance or detract from your overall experience?



The majority of visitors reported no problems in finding the exhibition; only 6% felt that this detracted from their experience. Given the high proportion of first time British Museum visitors this is a very encouraging finding.

7.2 Dwell time



The average dwell time for visitors was 88 minutes, exceeding many other comparable Reading Room exhibitions with the exception of *Journey through the afterlife: ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, *Treasures of Heaven: saints, relics and devotion in medieval Europe*, and *Hadrian: Empire and Conflict*.

There was no significant difference in dwell time between Muslims (87 minutes) and non-Muslims (88 minutes).

Repeat visiting to the exhibition

In addition to a relatively long dwell time, there is evidence that some visitors have made more than one visit to the exhibition, often because they wanted to make the most of the exhibition.

'I just keep coming back and back and looking at more things in more detail' non-Muslim vox pop

'I came a few days ago for a preview, this is a second visit' non-Muslim vox pop

'Yes I am teaching actually RE so yeah I will come with my students' Muslim vox pop

'This is the second time I've been to the exhibition, I've been before... because I found it very striking and I didn't have time to finish it all' non-Muslim vox pop

7.3 Size of the exhibition space

The majority of visitors had their expectations met in terms of the size of the exhibition space (57%). 24% thought the exhibition space was larger than expected and 19% thought it was smaller. The proportion of visitors who thought the exhibition was smaller than expected is higher than previous Reading Room exhibitions (6% for *Treasures of Heaven: saints, relics and devotion in medieval Europe*), reflecting the higher proportion of visitors who were new to Reading Room exhibitions.

'It's a great use of space' non-Muslim vox pop

'I have been to exhibitions in this space before and I think it is very good the way you handle it' non-Muslim vox pop

8 Supporting materials

8.1 Awareness and usage

Visitors were asked whether or not they were aware of and had used the following supporting materials:

	Awareness	Usage	Intend to use
Base	301	301	301
Free exhibition guide containing map	58%	37%	19%
Exhibition and events flyer	45%	18%	7%
Large print guide	26%	1%	1%
None of these	14%	49%	59%
Other	7%	3%	1%

86% of visitors were aware of at least one form of supporting material, in most cases this was the free exhibition guide. This was also the most widely used supporting material, by 37% of visitors. Awareness and usage levels of the free exhibition guide are similar to during the *Journey through the afterlife: ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* exhibition (59% aware, 37% used) and significantly higher than during the *Treasures of Heaven: saints, relics and devotion in medieval Europe* exhibition (48% aware, 26% used).

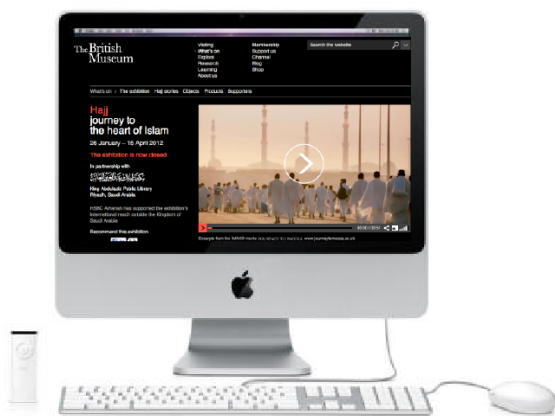
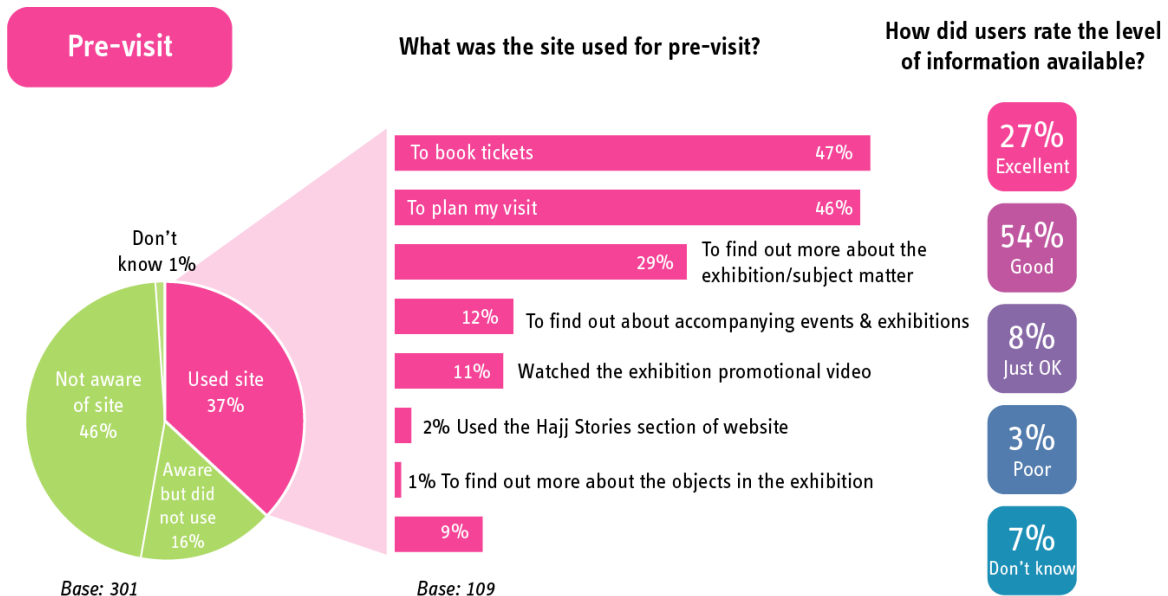
Whilst only 1% of visitors used the large print guide awareness of these supporting access materials was relatively high, in each case by just over one-quarter of visitors.

8.2 Dedicated section on the British Museum website

37% of visitors used the Hajj section on the British Museum website before visiting, most frequently for booking their tickets (47%) and planning their visit (46%). 81% of website users rated the information as 'good' or 'excellent'.

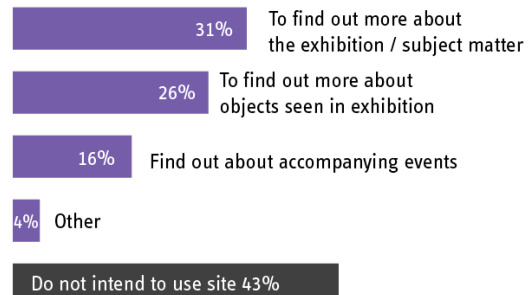
A further 16% of visitors were aware of the microsite but chose not to use it.

The majority of visitors (57%) expressed intention to use the website following their visit, and this was most frequently to explore the subject matter in further detail.



Post-visit

How did visitors intend to use the website following their visit?



Reported usage of the microsite is higher than the 23% of visitors who stated that they had used the British Museum site within the past month, suggesting that they see the *Hajj: Journey to the heart of Islam* microsite as distinct from that of the Museum's main site or that they had used the microsite further in advance of their visit.

8.3 Multimedia guide

Visitors' responses to the multimedia guides

The majority of multimedia guide users felt that they represented value for money.

Users of the multimedia guides appreciated the extra option of absorbing information through listening rather than having to rely on reading, and the visual features that picked out specific details on artefacts were popular, helping to deepen engagement:

'I really liked the fact that they showed you an image of the textile and then they highlighted it in green because you could then relate that to the real thing you were seeing. I thought that was absolutely excellent, really excellent' non-Muslim vox pop

'It was more sophisticated than I'd seen before because you could watch bits of video or you could actually see pictures brought up and that was interesting' non-Muslim vox pop

'Having these just gives ... extra information ... you get more out of it, and you go back and look at things again and you hear somebody talking about it which sort of goes in more than standing there reading it and then looking at it' non-Muslim vox pop

'The multimedia guide idea is brilliant because you can see the illustrations and the illustrations are being highlighted at various points of the narrative as you go through and so that is very, very good' non-Muslim vox pop

They were also praised as a solution to crowding in certain parts of the exhibition, allowing users to engage even if they did not have a good view of the featured artefact:

'I think it's a great idea because you can go at your own pace. You can hear what you need to hear. It's simple easy. Even when... there's people trying to look at something behind the glass I don't have to be like, am I missing something? I'm engaged anyway' American vox pop

Some visitors, however, reported problems in knowing when to use the multimedia guides and felt that the symbols indicating this in the exhibition could be made more obvious:



'I think the headphone symbols on the exhibits could be placed lower down and darker so that you can see them, because they are pale on glass and it took me five minutes to find the first one because it just wasn't obvious... that aspect of it for this exhibition has been quite poor in a way. Previous exhibitions it has been really easy to find the numbers and you can walk round, read it, and find it' non-Muslim vox pop

'It was confusing – should I be looking at the screen or should I looking at the piece... By the time I reached 'Sacred Geography' that was in the second part of the room right; I thought it was the first part of the room... I thought I'd figured it but then they said "look at the map" and I thought what map? [They need to be] better matched somehow' non-Muslim vox pop

For those who didn't use the guides the most frequent reason given – by 36% of respondents – was simply that they do not like using them. Some visitors find them too prescriptive and prefer to explore independently, at their own pace:

'Unlikely [that I'd ever use the multimedia guides]. This one seemed to hone in on certain features... I think some people might [miss out on others] because you have to look at the numbers... we just like to go at our own pace and decide what we'd like to spend more time with' non-Muslim vox pop

'I don't like having headphones on, I am happy to walk around and read. I prefer to procure my own information' Catholic vox pop

Some were put off using them as they believed that they would miss artefacts not featured on the guides:

'I always think they are very selective so you move from object to object that is in the multimedia guide, and I actually want to look at other things' non-Muslim vox pop

Others felt that there was already enough information to take in, or that they already had a good knowledge of the subject area and did not need the extra layer of information provided through the guide:

'I prefer to read and look myself... there's too many stimulus and I'd rather take it in... visually' non-Muslim vox pop

'I want to see for myself and not be guided by someone else... I didn't need the explanation for a lot of the stuff which perhaps someone else might have done' Muslim vox pop

Other explanations for not using the guides included not having enough time to dedicate to this form of interpretation, and also seeing the guides as a hindrance to interacting with others in the visiting group:

'I am happy to use them but we had a short time... you have to have a commitment I think because you want to listen to everything' non-Muslim vox pop

'We don't want to be walking round together with your headphones on... we come in groups and so we want to interact' Muslim vox pop

9 Exhibition design

9.1 Exhibition design

To what extent did the ambience of the exhibition space (lights, colours etc) enhance or detract from your overall visit experience?



The exhibition design was very well received with only 4% saying it detracted from the experience. The design successfully created a powerful atmosphere; which complemented the content of the exhibition.

'It was really nice at the entrance... what they say when performing the Hajj... It gave you the atmosphere' Muslim vox pop

'The atmosphere was nice, quite peaceful, everyone sort of looks like they want to learn about it' Muslim vox pop

The entrance was particularly compelling, it transported visitors from their day to day lives, and immersed them in the experience of making a pilgrimage.

'When you come in... it really sets the tone... it's almost like when you walk into the theatre and all the lights go down and the show begins. And as you walk through it, it gets lighter and lighter and lighter which I think is really good because by the end you understand more... it was really evocative' non-Muslim vox pop

'It is trying to simulate the atmosphere... simulating the effect... I thought the Adhan was a good touch as you went in because it sort of starts to absorb you' Muslim focus group

Use of the Adhan was very powerful, and some Muslim respondents felt it brought back memories, and gave those who hadn't yet been a taste of what it was like to go on Hajj.

'I particularly liked the beginning ... it's a little dark hallway and you're walking towards the light ... and I really like the huge imagery of the people walking alongside you so that was helpful in terms of putting everything in place and putting you in the mood of the entire exhibition ... it made you

feel if you were going on a Hajj yourself so that was great non-Muslim focus group

'From the minute I actually walked in where the entrance was of the exhibition, I was starting to feel things ... because I have been to Umrah... it just felt to me that I was there, and when I went in I could relate to it and it just felt... I was very close to Saudi Arabia as opposed to being in the British Museum' Muslim focus group

Overall the entrance contributed significantly to the emotional outcomes delivered:

'The entrance ... it was just like getting goose bumps really, and I felt that was really very emotional and I think ... the entrance that just like is the highlight of the whole exhibition' Muslim focus group

Some respondents commented on the circular organisation of the exhibition, and how this mirrors the movement around the Ka'ba:

'I thought it was very good the way it was circular' Muslim vox pop

One Muslim visitor commented that it felt counter-intuitive to walk into the exhibition in a clockwise direction.

'The pictures of the people walking in the same direction that you are going when you come in ... I thought it would have been amazing given the round circular space to have been able to go in the other way' Muslim focus group

'You come round this Ka'ba shape at the end ... they make full use of the ceiling and the backdrop. Very powerful. I thought that was the most lasting impact or impression I would take away ... the big hangings ... which I presume were meant to represent the Ka'ba, you're meant to say, right we've arrived and that was very impressive' non-Muslim focus group

Overall the exhibition design was well thought out, displaying the appropriate reverence for the subject matter and venerable objects on display

'It was professionally done... there was nothing amateurish about it... all the displays and the way they were done there was a consistency there. It was well laid out... you are not walking through a bazaar where you are just being inundated with colour and bling. It was done in a way that respect is shown, subtlety and concentration on knowledge' Muslim focus group

9.2 Audio

To what extent were you satisfied with the audio used in the exhibition?



As discussed above, the Adhan was a well-chosen start to the exhibition, a feature that immediately set the tone and immersed visitors.

'Walking in the hall, that was when it was its most powerful and strongest – before you saw anything you heard that Arab music, the Arabian music and that really sort of lifted the spirit and created good expectations' non religious vox pop

'I think it was very clever actually. As you entered they had the chanting of what's actually said in Hajj' Muslim vox pop

'[The music] in the background, it sort of adds a feeling to it but, not too intrusive' non-Muslim vox pop

'The call to prayer at the beginning was excellent. It was a nice way to come in' non-Muslim vox pop

'In the beginning when you're walking in that hallway ... there are voices of people praying and people getting into the mood so that sets the tone of the exhibit' non-Muslim focus group

In some cases the sheer volume of people in the space meant that visitors didn't hear any music, and these visitors did feel that they missed out somewhat:

'I didn't hear any music... I didn't notice any music at all' non-Muslim vox pop

'I didn't notice any music actually' non-Muslim vox pop

'I didn't hear it ... I would have liked that very much because ... they are different throughout the world and I would have liked to have heard at the different places what the call to prayer would have sounded like' non-Muslim vox pop

'I didn't really hear much of [the music]. At the very beginning with the prayers ... there could have been a lot more. It is a strong element and it is quite evocative and yeah it would be nice to have some more' non religious vox pop

'The call to prayers ... when there [was] a lot of people you couldn't hear it then, but today [during accompanied visit] I could hear it all the time ... that was great' Muslim focus group attendee

Some felt that the volume of the audio should have been raised. It is important that background sounds do not become overpowering, but it could be beneficial to link the volume of music and sounds to the volume of ambient noise in the space so that visitors who attend during the busiest periods do not miss out.

'More music would have been nice... it creates more mood and atmosphere'
non-Muslim vox pop

'...more of that multi-sensory, the sounds and especially with the chanting you'd get that feeling of a lot of people there' Muslim focus group

'British Muslims making pilgrimage, I can't hear it. It doesn't entice you in if you are struggling to listen. So headphones or something a bit louder' non-Muslim vox pop

'Before I had the headphones on I noticed there was music on the way in but it was very, very, very subtle. A little too subtle' non-Muslim vox pop

'My first time I went to the exhibition I didn't hear ... the voices ... [it was] too busy to listen to the voices' non-Muslim focus group

'I understand you don't want to annoy people who aren't ready to listen, but maybe ... find a way to emphasise the music a bit more in the first section'
non-Muslim vox pop

'Anything you could hear with sound ... played around the room I found it terribly quiet. They could have upped the volume a bit. Especially if you think fifty percent of the people had [multimedia guides] anyway, you're not disturbing them' Catholic vox pop

Others felt that the volume was just right, and that making the audio too obvious would have detracted from overall visit / engagement.

'The good thing is it wasn't too intrusive. Because I do get a bit upset when I find music is too intrusive' non-Muslim vox pop

'I did feel in certain parts you could hear the Adhan in the background, and that is just right, you don't want to make it too loud, you don't want to make it imposing itself' Muslim vox pop

9.3 Lighting

The majority of respondents were positive about the level of light in the exhibition. They generally felt that it contributed to the church-like atmosphere of the exhibition.

'I like it when it is a bit dim... none of the text was hard to read' non-Muslim vox pop

'[The lighting was] very good, that was gorgeous, but the British Museum always does very good lighting I think' non religious vox pop

'[The lighting] was very good, just enough. You don't want it too bright and the sort of seriousness of the journey as well, it highlighted that' non-Muslim vox pop

'[The lighting was] very subtle, very tasteful. Nothing harsh, nothing dramatic. Comfortable, you feel you could spend a lot of time in this room and not feel imposed upon' Catholic vox pop

'I thought it was excellent. I like low lighting and one of the things about light I thought was the didactics and labels and things, and there are enough contexts with low light that you can read ... and I could stand, even if someone was in front of me, I could still stand and read from a distance' non-Muslim vox pop

'I think with the textiles, particularly the way they were illuminated was very good' non-Muslim vox pop

'It's not like going in an art gallery where the light shines on the art work, and it's bright and like sunlight ... there was definitely some sacredness, it brought you into the darkness and quiet' non-Muslim vox pop

Some respondents felt the light levels were too low, but generally they understood the importance of low light both for atmosphere and also preserving delicate documents and textiles.

'On the one hand you are trying to create an atmosphere but often I can't quite see and wish it was a bit brighter' non-Muslim vox pop

'The lighting seemed quite dim' Muslim vox pop

Layout / flow of the exhibition

To what extent did the layout / flow of the exhibition enhance or detract from your overall visit experience?



Respondents were generally positive about the layout of the exhibition, with only 9% reporting that it detracted from their experience. They felt that the exhibition achieved a good balance between allowing free exploration and giving clear routes through the space.

'It is straightforward. You just... follow your way through' Muslim vox pop

'We were guided without having to all shuffle in the same direction, we felt free to move around' non-Muslim vox pop

'It is a good scale, both physically the way it is laid out, and I think it is not so big that you finally get tired and lose track, you know which happens to me sometimes with big exhibits... This could have, with too many more objects, kind of spun out of focus for a visitor but it didn't, it held it together' non-Muslim vox pop

A minority of visitors reported problems.

'The only time I was pretty confused was which direction I went when [I first came] into the exhibition' non-Muslim vox pop

'It is a bit of a labyrinth but it is quite nice. It is not like you usually go straight and then come out' non-Muslim vox pop

The layout of the exhibition is closely linked to the narratives it explores, and this will be discussed further in the following chapter.

9.4 Crowding

To what extent did the volume of visitors in the room enhance your overall experience?



The majority of visitors felt that the volume of visitors either enhanced or had no impact on their experience – many visitors did not feel that the exhibition was crowded when they visited, or did not feel that the crowding caused them any problems:

'We came in the morning because it wouldn't be so crowded ... I know the Museum ... avoid the weekend rush' Muslim vox pop

'It was nice, especially after the Hockney [exhibition at the Royal Academy] yesterday which was absolutely insanely packed. It was cool, it was calm, it was quiet. It wasn't too crowded ... it's a nice environment' non-Muslim vox pop

'You may have to wait a little but to see a particular piece, but that's not a problem' non-Muslim vox pop

'Most of the time [I could access the objects]. [The crowds] didn't frustrate me at all. Sometimes we had to wait or look over somebody's shoulder, but that is what I suppose you expect' non-Muslim vox pop

Some visitors felt the exhibition was too busy:

'I would have preferred it to be less crowded' Muslim vox pop

'A few of the kids running around ... they undermined that, the sort of reverence ... I was really quite shocked actually, I mean I would have expected the children to have been drilled in being much more respectful' non-Muslim vox pop

But for many the large number of people visiting the exhibition was a positive:

'It's busy but that's a good thing' non-Muslim vox pop

'I've enjoyed the little people running around, all the children from the school, which has been a pleasure seeing them enjoying it' non-Muslim vox pop

'There are lots of school kids around, and that is nice to have everyone sort of sitting down together ... I mean museums can be lonely places can't they? You sort of wander round by yourself and you learn if you can and it is nice to have that sort of interactivity between the people who are in the exhibits as well, that is really useful' non religious vox pop

As noted in the profile chapter, this exhibition attracted large numbers of families. Whilst some visitors felt this detracted from their experience, vox pop respondents also said they thought it was good to see young people at an exhibition of this type.

'It was lovely to see so many youngsters here, learning about their heritage... it certainly added to the experience' non-Muslim vox pop

'I think it's good that kids are coming' non-Muslim vox pop

10 Content

10.1 Themes and narrative

To what extent were you satisfied with the themes / storyline / narrative of the exhibition?



Structure of narrative

The structure of the narrative underpinned the way the exhibition was laid out, and visitors were very positive about this aspect of curation, with 89% of visitors being satisfied. Respondents found it easy to understand and follow the exhibition structure:

'It had a logical sequence to it' non-Muslim vox pop

'I noticed there is a little guide [map] on one of the walls that shows you where you are, and where you are going to, Mecca to Medina ... I noticed it but I didn't pay full attention' Muslim focus group

'I think it [the exhibition] links all the history of it, it links the religious side of it, it links the cultural, the travel, the commercial side of it, and it is all linked' Muslim vox pop

'It felt ... linear, it took us to pre-pilgrimage, and then the journey they make before they get to Hajj, and there was a nice video ... I think certain questions we had were addressed more than once ... what is that ... called or what is this called and why do they do that, and I felt that we saw that at the beginning and then halfway through you read a bit more about it, and so it felt like it took us through the pilgrimage' non-Muslim vox pop

Many also felt that the structure of the exhibition helped them to explore the topic of Hajj by giving them the experience of taking a journey. This was beneficial both in terms of learning, creating atmosphere and emotional engagement, and this was often an unexpected benefit.

'[I enjoyed] following the journey round... each section making the journey with the pilgrims... the narrative and the artwork and how it all joined up together' non-Muslim vox pop

'What I liked ... was it followed the route you would take on the Hajj ... so very logical' non-Muslim vox pop

'I just think the whole journey and walking through it and the whole process, and learning about it stage by stage is quite an easy sort of process' Muslim vox pop

'I think the way it was set out... first you had all the build up of the journey both in distance and also historical distance... I think that just built up a sense of anticipation' non-Muslim vox pop

'I did get the sense of the flow of the pilgrimage which I didn't expect. I thought it would be more like an exhibition where you stop and see object, object, object, but this really picked up that sense of movement towards some kind of finish ... there was a flow that was excellent. And concepts, you know you felt that you were following the concepts of the pilgrimage itself' non-Muslim vox pop

10.2 Tone and language

To what extent were you satisfied with the tone of the information and the language used?



Generally visitors were very happy with the language used in the exhibition – they described it as clear and simple without being too condescending.

'It was done in an adult way. It wasn't patronising and it wasn't condescending you know which is also important and so it was done in a mature way' Muslim focus group

For some respondents the neutral tone of interpretation failed to address the spiritual content of the exhibition, but this was a minority view:

'It's very textbook, the language. I wish it had been a bit more personal, because it's a very personal spiritual thing...' non-Muslim focus group

10.3 Objects

Having real objects in the exhibition was an important attractor for many visitors - especially those who couldn't or were unlikely to visit Mecca. Being able to see real artefacts such as sections of Kiswa was exciting and engaging.

'I really appreciated the modern art and it is very nice to find myself intrigued and I appreciate the different angles but the stuff that blows me away is the ancient stuff... the old maps, the old books ... just the physical artefacts that you are looking at from sort of 600,000 years before' non-Muslim focus group

'I think just seeing some of the art in real life, for all you can see it on television programmes you know, just to see the prayer books, the illustrations, some of the art and the amazing textiles. Incredible ... there's something about the designs, I don't know why it is, they strike you. I mean they obviously are very, very beautiful but there is something about the way they're constructed ... it's pleasing to the eye' non-Muslim vox pop

Star objects

Hangings / tapestry

The tapestries were very popular – their scale and intricacy was very compelling for visitors.

'The tapestries were magnificent and some of the art work and tiles were magnificent' non-Muslim vox pop

'The sheer size of some of the hangings and things like that which you don't get the feel of that when you see it on [a photo] necessarily... to see the actual objects' non-Muslim vox pop

'The black part of Ka'ba black and gold... because obviously that's what covers the Ka'ba at the moment, you're getting pretty close to it, you know' Muslim vox pop

'The curtain to the Ka'ba, the actual size you just got a sense of scale by looking at that' Muslim focus group

Modern art

Other visitors were particularly drawn to the modern art representations of Hajj:

'This last piece of art work here was quite striking ... when you saw it they re-created the image of everyone walking around and then when you got closer you suddenly realised it was actually writing, so there were two levels. The poem on the walls radiating out from the centre. You finish your spiritual journey by looking at this, what seems to be the Ka'ba in the middle and you go out - it's just brilliant' Vox pop

'I loved the art work, which was the Ka'ba with the magnetic filings around... I thought that was lovely' non-Muslim vox pop

Inclusion of modern art

Many respondents commented not just on the modern art itself, but the importance of including contemporary responses to an ancient ritual. They found it surprising and felt it was important to place the historical content of the exhibition in its modern context.

'I just like art and so from an artistic perspective it was really nice' Muslim vox pop

'I really enjoyed the modern art, like contemporary interpretations of the Hajj... it's a very good move for the British Museum... to [give] contemporary art a greater role in museums... museums refer to things in the past but it's important to tie things to the present and contemporary art does that well' Muslim vox pop

'I like the modern art section ... it is a nice touch ... youngsters are, shall we say, able to display or interpret their religion in a modern way' Muslim vox pop

'The thing I didn't expect was the modern art at the end and the magnets ['Magnetism'] ... because it brought it, the contemporary part that this is people's lives now, it's a long-standing thing, and the contemporary art made it more accessible ... not stand-offish' non-Muslim vox pop

'What I appreciated about the exhibit were the visual representations of the Hajj because I found that they were really helpful [in] giving you the idea of how there is a brotherhood and how the pilgrimage all comes together and everyone's drawn to the Ka'ba ... there's this one mock-up, the magnetism mock-up where the Ka'ba is in the middle and the shadings are all around it. I thought that was a really good representation of what happens' non-Muslim focus group

Respondents liked the combinations of old and new, East and West, describing it as comprehensive and distinctive:

'I liked the combinations throughout, the whole effect of the ancient and modern and the British connection' Muslim focus group

'I like the fact that you have incorporated lots of sort of present day experiences of Hajj and Islam into the exhibition to make it really relevant... it's not just western travellers to Mecca... you covered all the different routes... the different perspectives.' non-Muslim vox pop

'This is different from what I'm used to seeing' non-Muslim vox pop

10.4 Amount of information available

To what extent were you satisfied with the amount of information available?



Overall respondents were happy with the volume of information available, they generally felt their questions were answered and that the exhibition delivered strong learning outcomes.

'I expected it to be much smaller' Muslim vox pop

'There was more information. More detail than I thought and I feel I have come away understanding it better and knowing it' non-Muslim vox pop

'I think there's a lot more detail than I had expected so yeah. It's brilliant' Muslim vox pop

'In terms of the volume... there's lots to see' Muslim vox pop

Maps and photographs

Visitors liked the maps and photographs on display – they provided a personal connection to individuals who went on Hajj, delivering both intellectual and emotional outcomes.

'The map and it showed you the number of people from each part of the world ... that was very informative, as to where the bulk of the pilgrims come from globally ... really good piece of education and information which I was not aware of' Muslim focus group

'I liked the maps showing how people got to where they were going. I liked the big expanses of that ... getting a grip on ... what the journeys must have been like certainly four or five, six hundred years ago, you think how hard it must have been to get to Mecca but people did it anyway' non-Muslim vox pop

'It was nice to see that the pictures, the photographs, especially the very personal photographs. I like the ones of the people at the airports getting ready to go, I like that idea of it being very personal and individual, and you know normal ... people have to pack their bags and make sure their shirts are ironed ... all this kind of mundane ... no matter how glorious and important it is, they've still got to get there' non-Muslim vox pop

Film

The main film in the exhibition was valued by Muslims and non-Muslims alike; it was very evocative for those who have done Hajj, and very useful background information, helping those who have not been to visualise Hajj.

Data from the British Museum's observations showed that 96% of all visitors stopped to watch some or all of the film. The median⁵ dwell time at the film was 6 minutes 58 seconds.

The film was particularly successful because it 'broke down' the stages of Hajj so that visitors with very little prior knowledge could understand each of the rituals in turn. By explaining each aspect it gave a comprehensive summary of what Hajjis do during their pilgrimage.

This interpretive tool was so popular some would have liked it to be longer or for there to be more content – although it was acknowledged that 5 minutes was a useful length in terms of churn (everyone gets chance to see). Visitors also commented on the film's location within exhibition – they liked the fact that it allowed them to have a rest and take a break from reading.

'I think the film clip was really good because that just literally explained the process of the whole Hajj while you are there, what you do and what you are supposed to do' non-Muslim vox pop

'The film of doing the Hajj was wonderful, as somebody who would never get the opportunity of going there' non-Muslim vox pop

'I really liked the video... that was engaging... just the way it was all broken down. I thought that if you saw nothing else in that exhibit that would have explained a lot to you... summed everything up' non-Muslim focus group

⁵ The film lasted 7 minutes 10 seconds

'The [film] in the middle [was my highlight] because I think that just pulled it all together, in terms of what the experience is for those that haven't done it yet' Muslim focus group

As well as delivering learning outcomes, the film also connected visitors emotionally to the experience of Hajj.

'The thing I found most moving in terms of reminding me [of] when I was there, was the video... the way it was explained and the pictures and so on that were very moving' Muslim focus group

'It puts you there and brings it to life. It was a really nice, simple documentary and it didn't try to make it romantic or anything like that. It was lovely' non-Muslim vox pop

'The film about the performance of the Hajj, and some of the artefacts I found very moving... what they depict to me as a Muslim' Muslim vox pop

'I enjoyed that film... because you saw what; you actually saw the pilgrimage would be. In some ways I would have liked it almost in more detail' non-Muslim vox pop

The video's position - after the description of traditional routes and before detailed accounts of the rituals of Hajj - acted as a 'half way point' for a visit. It provided visitors an opportunity to reflect on one aspect of the exhibition before moving on to the next.

'It was at the right point... because you have done about half and you just want to have a sit down... and watch this thing for 5 minutes... everybody had a sort of opportunity to see that because of the length' Muslim focus group

'I thought the film as well was a good demarcation line... you felt you had arrived [at] an explanation' non-Muslim vox pop

Although visitors were generally positive about the film they did suggest some improvements. Some visitors struggled to hear the sound track. Although some visitors used the subtitles, others would have preferred the sound to be louder.

'I liked the subtext on it because obviously when it goes noisy it is difficult to listen so being able to read helped. I thought it was very well made... sharp graphics... it was exactly the right length as well... about 5 minutes and it covered everything in 5 minutes, which I thought was really good. You know for me that was very educational because I didn't realise that you go to Medina twice and I got that out of the video' Muslim focus group

'The sound on the film was a bit low... you really have to strain and when you stand back we didn't hear it at all and people had to stand up because there weren't enough seats...' non-Muslim vox pop

Digital media displays

In addition to the main films at the entrance and half way through the exhibition there were also smaller, digital media displays throughout the exhibition. This content was appreciated for adding an extra dimension to the information. However some visitors felt they were easy to miss and some would have liked more of this multisensory content and more personal information on narrators.

The British Museum conducted observations at the beginning and end of the exhibition.

The 'pilgrim photographs and quotes' at the beginning of the exhibition attracted slightly more attention – 75% of visitors stopped, with a median dwell time of 20 seconds⁶.

The 'voices of pilgrims' audio at the end of the exhibition attracted slightly less attention, 61% of visitors stopped, with a median dwell time of 26 seconds⁷.

'I very much liked the old films of people boarding the boats and the historical films, because not only did it show related the Hajj but it also related to a simpler way of getting around the world' non-Muslim vox pop

'I think you can miss them [the digital media displays]... but I noticed them today because there weren't that many people in there' Muslim focus group

'I watched the videos... I want to have more personal statements and to see a picture of the person who is talking' non-Muslim focus group

I would like more music and perhaps headphones to listen to more music or to be able to listen to personal accounts of the Hajj... It is always nice to hear somebody's thinking to perhaps hear the emotion... you can empathise when you see somebody talking about their experience. non-Muslim vox pop

⁶ The complete film lasted 1 minute 28 seconds

⁷ The complete audio recording lasted 15 minutes 4 seconds

10.5 Missing information / unanswered questions

It is important to note that overall visitors were very positive about their experience. As the outcomes section in the following chapter will address they reported strong learning and emotional outcomes. However, the exhibition did stimulate a number of questions that some visitors felt it could have addressed.

Basic introductory information

Some visitors, particularly non-Muslims, felt that the exhibition assumed knowledge of the basic principles of Islam. They would have preferred the exhibition to start with more introduction to Islam and the 5 pillars, which would provide context for the rest of the visit and the more focused coverage of the topic of Hajj.

'It is assuming that you understand the context and so there is a lot of detail which you can't picture so easily' non-Muslim vox pop

'I was expecting it to have a little bit more context... all the 5 rituals of being a Muslim and this is obviously the last one, maybe I expected there would be a little more before you went straight to number 5' non-Muslim vox pop

'I thought it would be nice to really get more of an understanding of the religion all together, Islam. Because coming in not knowing a thing about Islam you're just kind of thrown into, well this is a journey they go on' non-Muslim focus group

'I would have thought for the uninitiated you would want to put more simple narrative explaining things... I thought it could have been more lucid in terms of what was happening, and some basic things' non-Muslim vox pop

'The [BBC4] programme that we watched was useful because you felt at least you were coming in with something basic but without that basic knowledge it might have been difficult to work out some of the things. I think we might have been struggling sometimes to know what was going on, just the key points really.' non-Muslim vox pop

History of and reasons for undertaking Hajj

Visitors were interested in finding out more about why Muslims are required to make the pilgrimage of Hajj.

'It would be interesting to see more in-depth the reasons behind it, and I know there was a little bit but it would have been nice to have expanded on it a little more I think' non-Muslim vox pop

'I didn't find very much about Mohammed, who is he, what he did, how he became... because you are talking about one journey that you are going to do but the main reason of this journey you don't explain here' non-Muslim focus group

'One thing I think that was ... missing was the reason for the Hajj. How it came about because it marked the Islamic calendar, the journey from Mecca to Medina that the Prophet made when he was being persecuted ... in my opinion that was completely missing ... or there is not enough emphasis given to that' Muslim focus group

'There were certain things that were mentioned that I wish had been prefaced with more information. For instance [the exhibition] mentioned Abraham at the beginning, who I know he's very important, but at the end you tell me why ... had you just had a wall with important figures or important moments or important [sections] of the Qur'an and it could be a stupid dumbed down version which is great for me, or even a piece of paper, something to refer to' non-Muslim focus group

The exhibition did make reference to the history of Mecca, and its use as a religious site before the growth of Islam. However, some visitors were interested in learning more about the pre-Islamic history of Mecca:

'I think it doesn't cover so much in history... it [the exhibition] started with when the Muslims made it their own rather than anything before' non-Muslim vox pop

'There is one thing it didn't cover which I was disappointed with which was how Hajj came about, so what it was about the traditions of the people of Mecca, i.e. the pagan traditions you know the idols that used to be in the Ka'ba that were smashed, I think by Prophet Muhammad and then it was turned into an Islamic pilgrimage and so there was that pre history that was missing and that is really important. More background information on the reason for Hajj... and how it links in, you know the history of Islam with the Abrahamic traditions beforehand' Muslim vox pop

Visitors also expressed an interest in learning why specific rituals took place, and reflected on how these related to other religious traditions.

'Did it mention anywhere about the Qibla being changed? ... That is a very important feature because it was rebuilt and we always used to pray towards Jerusalem and the Prophet decided that he would always put himself in a position where the Ka'ba would be in front of him and so we changed the direction and now we all pray towards the Ka'ba. It is a very important fact that I think should have been in there' Muslim focus group

'One of the things... which they didn't explore at all, was the whole, the feast of sacrifice where so many animals are slaughtered... some of my students who have been on Hajj said it's quite frightening as a young child to see that. I mean that's hardly touched on' non-Muslim vox pop

'I still don't think they said enough about what was going on in pilgrimage ... so things like the stoning, I mean Abraham stoning, and the story of Gabriel, which are obviously Koranic rather than biblical and ... I would quite like to know a little bit more about that' non-Muslim vox pop

Some visitors were simply interested in learning more about the practicalities of Hajj – who can go, when, and how are the crowds managed on site.

'I was quite interested in logistics... the stone is in the middle and there's a huge amount of people. Do they all get that close?' non-Muslim vox pop

'The only thing I don't know still is when it happens. The last month. When is that? Is it not the same as our last month?' non-Muslim vox pop

'When is someone of an appropriate age to do [Hajj] ... can women bring their children? ... What accommodations can be made for people who cannot physically perform a Hajj? ... Certain things like that were not explained to me, or for instance who is not allowed to do a Hajj?' non-Muslim focus group

Information on the modern day Hajj

Many visitors commented on how the number of Hajjis has increased, from hundreds to millions, and this prompted questions on the implications of this in terms of the modern Hajj. They were interested in finding out more about how the huge number of prospective pilgrims is managed, and what the economic impacts of the modern Hajj is.

'I wonder how much money the Hajj makes. Like what kind of economical impact does the Hajj have on the world? Like who is literally earning millions off this and there must be someone who's getting capital gain... that kind of stuff wasn't mentioned so I think push it into the twenty-first century... give me more statistics, more figures... I would have been able to contextualise it more... facts and figures are what makes thing meaningful and that was missing' non-Muslim focus group

'Something that would have been... useful is... a feel for how the whole Mosque is organised... [to] give you a feel for the geography... and the dimensions of the Ka'ba... [there was a model of] the extension that wasn't the actual Mosque itself... just to get that feel and perspective for those that haven't been' Muslim focus group

'Did they show... about the lottery system... so many more people apply to go than there is space for... health and safety issues... maybe it is not of interest to people who aren't Muslim' Muslim focus group

'The number of pilgrims per year, I thought that was a really superb piece of information... I didn't realise how it has grown... what I was really interested in... is from 80 and 85 to 90 the figures dropped... and it would have been good to understand why... was it maybe the oil crisis?' Muslim focus group

'There are some plans that are in play at the moment about how the Mosque is going to be further developed... almost the futuristic look and feel of the Ka'ba... it would have been interesting right towards the end to just give a glimpse as to where it is going. What will it be like 5 years from now? What will it be like say 10 years from now?' Muslim focus group

Personal narratives

The personal stories included in the exhibition were very popular, and some visitors wanted even more of this type of content – in particular they wanted to explore what it feels like to go on Hajj, how they prepare mentally and how they cope with the experience when they arrive.

'I didn't think there is much in the way of personal feelings and how panicky some people must get... it is just such a huge experience I can imagine that some people fall by the wayside and actually can't cope with the enormity of it all...' non-Muslim vox pop

'More about people. What I really found interesting was the photographs of people's faces and the quotes from people' non-Muslim vox pop

'More personalised accounts from more recent times rather than all this historical stuff' Catholic vox pop

'The mindset of a person who was about to embark on a Hajj ... there was a whole section describing that they have to settle all debts and wrap up their dealings with any enemies and provide for their family ... giving more insight into that mindset would be helpful' non-Muslim focus group

Balancing the needs of competing audiences

This exhibition presented unique challenges for the British Museum, because in some senses it attracted two unique audiences: Muslims who are likely to be highly knowledgeable about Hajj and non-Muslims, many of whom will have little, if any background knowledge on Hajj. The British Museum needed to provide basic information for less confident visitors whilst keeping the most knowledgeable engaged. Visitors were aware of this and were largely very positive about the extent to which the British Museum succeeded in satisfying these two audiences.

Some Muslims felt that the exhibition was predominantly aimed at non-Muslims in terms of depth of information provided.

'I have got to think about how a non-Muslim would view the exhibition, and my perspective is very different. I think from a non Muslim's point of view who had not the knowledge of the faith it might have been an idea to give a little background of the faith, and why, the five pillars of Islam and as to how the faith drives people or the faithful to this point' Muslim vox pop

'On an exhibition basis, that was perfect... from a Muslim point of view it could have been a bit more in-depth... why certain things happen because you know there were a lot of things there that needed a bit more; for me

personally, for a non-Muslim person that was perfect because it gives them a brief description to understand' Muslim focus group

'If it was aimed at Muslims to further enhance their knowledge then... it would need more information, but I think the way that could be provided is maybe through some sort of interactive system... an iPad or some interactive devise and you go into the depth, like they do in other museums... you can dig as deep as you like, based on how much appetite you have for that information' Muslim focus group

But others felt that even though they had a significant amount of knowledge going into the exhibition, they still learned a lot as a result of their visit:

'I felt that although I had been [on Hajj] I could relate to it, but there was a lot of information there that I didn't know and I felt that I had gained a lot, lot more information and in-depth knowledge that I was quite satisfied with... a lot more than I probably would have expected... it is historical like it is going back so many hundred years and the way things were then, the way things happened and even a bit of history about certain people, and so I thought that was quite interesting ' Muslim focus group

Addressing socio-political issues

Some visitors felt that the exhibition did little to address the female experience of Hajj, and noted that this was important given the distinct roles of the two genders in Islam generally.

'They [women] don't pray together so where do they pray separately... There wasn't anything from a female point of view for me to understand how it was different between how men enjoy the Hajj and how women do.' non-Muslim vox pop

'It's like a faith... where women and men... men are always in the foreground and women are set back. So you know I didn't really see that being mentioned at all... the gender divide... where were the women? I saw images of women, but physically where would they be put?' non-Muslim focus group

However, others did notice instances where the differing experiences of men and women were drawn out through the content of the exhibition.

'Women going on Hajj I feel it's an interesting thing the fact that you can't go without a man, but that groups of women can go and there are ways around it if you are a woman who doesn't have anyone who can take you, and you can go in a group and so on' Muslim focus group

'When it showed the clothes that you wear and for the men, two very simple pieces of unstitched cloth, but for the women it did say that they could just wear modest clothes, but I was quite surprised at the amount of colour that was actually there [when I went on Hajj], not just people wearing white but wearing all kinds of ethnic dress and you really get that sense of people from all over the world' Muslim focus group

Despite the fact that the exhibition addressed the 5 historic routes used to make the pilgrimage, some visitors felt that the exhibition could have explored the international nature of Hajj more thoroughly, in particular in relation to Islam in China.

'Similarly in Nanchang how much of that area is in northern China is Muslim... Have the countries that maybe they are coming from nowadays'
non-Muslim vox pop

'[The] thing that I think was missing was the Chinese connection. You know the Far East... because there are a lot of Muslims in China' Muslim focus group

Some visitors felt that the exhibition deliberately avoided potentially controversial content by failing to address the negative ideas that can be associated with Islam. These visitors felt it was important to frame the exhibition within its socio-political context.

'...have been a hell of a lot of things happen at the Hajj, there've been riots, there's been people killed, there's been bombings, there was a bridge collapsing which you showed a picture of, but you can't ignore the bits about it that you don't like because they don't suit the touchy-feely version we want to portray about Islam against all the negativity that comes against in the media, it's still what happened, and we should talk about it and not boats going on fire a hundred years ago. What about the incidents that happened at the Hajj in the last ten years, post 9/11' Catholic vox pop

There is also evidence from the personal meaning mapping (discussed in the outcomes chapter) that visitors did consider these more negative associations before they visited the exhibition.

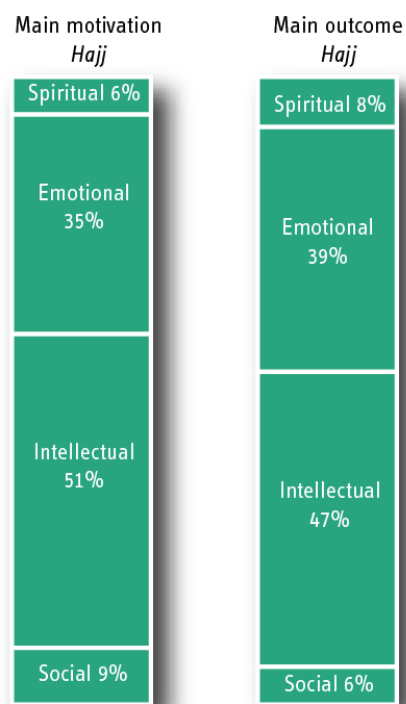
The outcomes chapter considers the positive impacts in terms of encouraging understanding and promoting diversity.

11 Outcomes

11.1 Impact

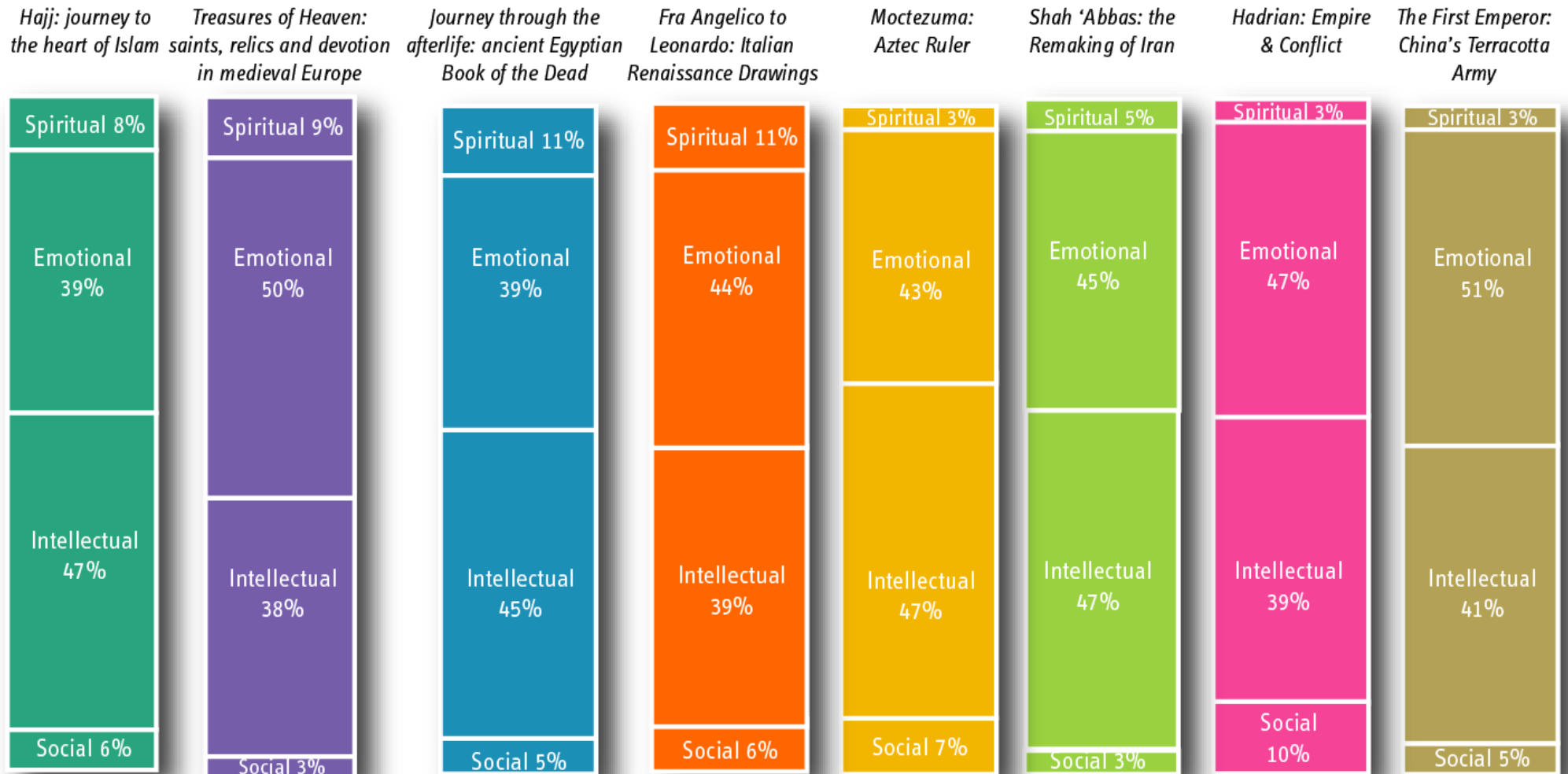
The chart below compares visitors’ main motivation for visiting against the main outcome they got from the exhibition experience.

Overall impact

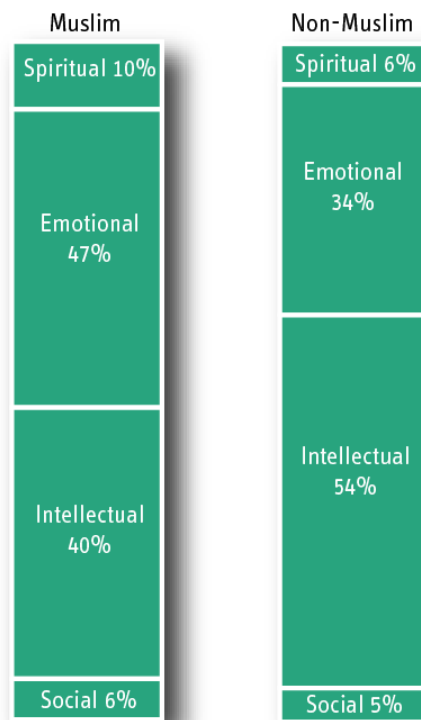


The results indicate that there has been a shift up the hierarchy, with a greater proportion citing emotional and spiritual outcomes than did main motivations for a visit.

Main outcome



Main outcome



As has been the case at all previous Reading Room exhibitions, the vast majority of visitors achieved primarily intellectual, emotional or spiritual outcomes.

The pattern of main outcomes achieved by visitors was most similar to *Journey through the afterlife: ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*. The almost half of visits (47%) were made by visitors who achieved primarily emotional or spiritual outcomes.

Muslims were significantly more likely to report primarily achieving emotional (+13 percentage points when compared to non-Muslims) and spiritual (+ 4 percentage points when compared to non-Muslims) outcomes, whilst non-Muslims were more likely to achieve primarily intellectual (+14 percentage points when compared to Muslims) outcomes. This is likely to be related to the fact that non-Muslims were more likely to be intellectually motivated, often wanting to learn about Hajj, whereas Muslims were more likely to be emotionally/spiritually motivated, wanting to connect to the experience of going on Hajj.

All outcomes

Outcome	Statement	Total	Muslim	Non-Muslim
Spiritual	Stimulated my own creativity	16%	14%	17%
	I reflected and contemplated	40%	44%	37%
	I escaped or recharged my batteries	10%	10%	9%
Emotional	I gained a deeper insight into the subject	66%	57%	74%
	I experienced awe-inspiring, fascinating or beautiful things or places	33%	44%	25%
	I was moved emotionally	26%	37%	15%
	I felt a strong sense of personal connection	20%	38%	6%
	I travelled back in time	17%	22%	12%
Intellectual	I improved my own knowledge and understanding	65%	55%	74%
	I satisfied my personal / academic / professional interest in the subject	27%	33%	22%
	I encouraged my children's interest in history	8%	16%	2%
Social	I visited one of the major attractions in the region	14%	17%	11%
	I spent time with other people in a nice place	15%	15%	15%
	I used facilities such as shop / café / toilet / restaurant	5%	2%	7%

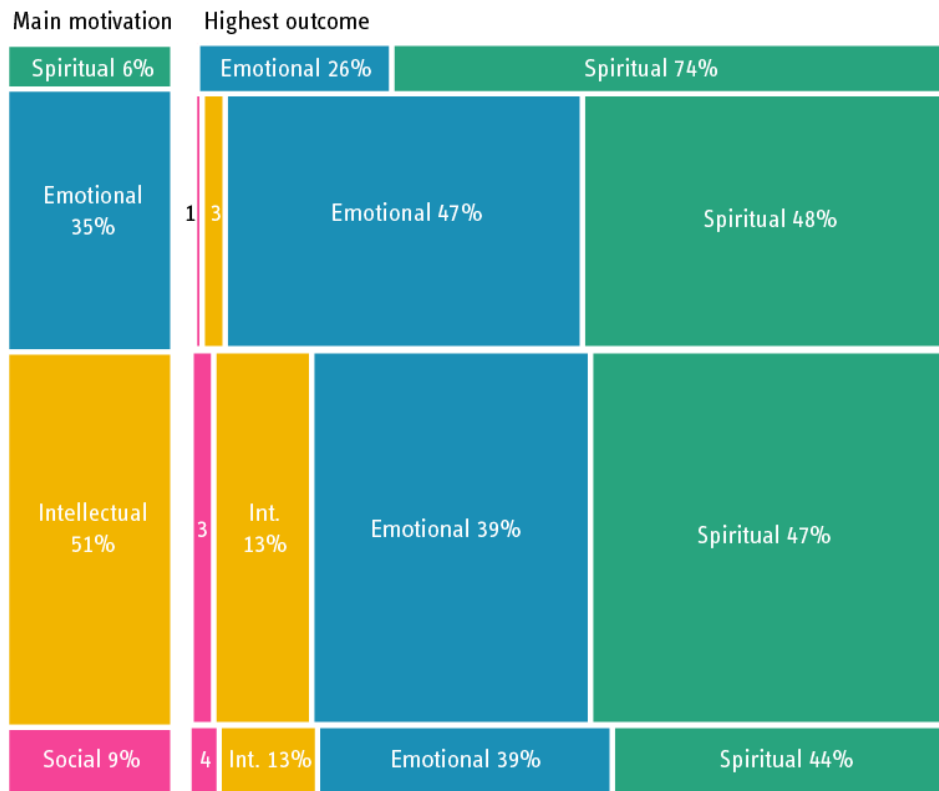
Overall visitors were most likely to report 'gaining deeper insight into the subject' and 'improved knowledge and understanding'.

Muslim visitors were significantly more likely to have achieved contemplation and reflection as part of their visit – 44% compared to 37% of non-Muslims. They were also significantly more likely to report being moved emotionally and to have experienced a sense of personal connection.

Non-Muslim visitors were more likely to report gaining a deeper insight into the subject, and to have improved their knowledge and understanding (although over half of Muslims also experienced this).

Progression

The following model illustrates the journey for visitors in terms of their main motivation and highest outcome experienced.



At the bottom of the hierarchy, most of those with mainly social motivations moved upwards, experiencing intellectual (13%), emotional (39%) and even spiritual (44%) outcomes.

Those mainly intellectually motivated also achieved their expected outcomes (13%), and the majority moved up the hierarchy to emotional (39%) and spiritual outcomes (47%). Only 3% of intellectually motivated visitors did not achieve intellectual+ outcomes.

39% of visitors were emotionally motivated – 47% achieved emotional outcomes and 48% spiritual, however 3% experienced only social or intellectual outcomes and did not experience any emotional or spiritual outcomes. Finally of the 6% of visitors mainly spiritually motivated 74% achieved a spiritual outcome as their highest, with 26% achieving an emotional outcome.

These results reflect the profound yet unexpected emotional and spiritual connections visitors had to the *Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam* exhibition – 41% of visits were primarily emotionally or spiritually motivated, but 89% experienced at least one emotional or spiritual outcome.

This shows that visitors got more than the expected from the exhibition:

'I think there is what we expected, but a lot more of it, and a lot more detail. There is sort of the breadth of it really. And also a lot of the artwork connected to it, we weren't expecting that' non-Muslim vox pop

'I suppose I was just looking for basic information and a general experience and an expectation of a feeling or a cultural experience as a whole, but I didn't expect to be; I suppose that was a bit naïve of me, but I didn't expect the historical detail, and I didn't expect the sort of span of time, the concrete links to modern day, and the effects that the pilgrimage has on people that live in Britain today. I mean I really appreciated that' non religious vox pop

Impact on future behaviour

Visitors were asked whether visiting *Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam* would affect the way they used the British Museum in the future. The table below shows the proportion (and real number) of exhibition visitors who said they would alter their behaviour.

More likely to...	% / No of visits	% Muslim	% Non-Muslim
Visiting The Islamic Gallery (room 34)	65%	76%	54%
Visiting British Museum special exhibitions	53%	65%	43%
Seeing or finding out more about Hajj events and activities	52%	72%	34%
Visiting British Museum in general	45%	64%	30%
Using the British Museum website	44%	56%	35%
Finding out more about the British Museum	43%	60%	29%
Using the British Museum's online collection	32%	39%	25%

It is clear that the exhibition encouraged visitors to explore the British Museum collections more widely, with 65% more likely to visit related galleries.

53% of visitors were also more likely to visit special exhibitions as a result of their visit, significantly higher than at *Treasures of Heaven: saints relics and devotion in medieval Europe* (41%) however this could be a result of the high proportion of first time attenders coming to this exhibition, who were previously less likely to attend exhibitions (31% of repeat Reading Room exhibition attenders, 68% of first time Reading Room exhibition attenders).

Evidence from the qualitative research suggests that visitors are going to continue to learn about Hajj independently, using both British Museum and independent resources, and 57% of all exit survey respondents reported an intention to use the Hajj section after their visit. These visitors were most likely

to report intending to use the website to find out more about the exhibition subject matter (31% of all respondents) and find out about the objects in the exhibition (26% of all respondents) with slightly smaller proportions finding out about accompanying events (16% of all respondents).

'I'm certainly going to go away and do my own personal research, and just sort of make sure I've assimilated all the information I think is necessary. Just getting the ritual of the Hajj in my mind' non-Muslim vox pop

'Something like a little potted history that you could order beforehand that you could read so you've got some basic facts that you can then elaborate on when you come to an exhibition would be quite useful' non-Muslim vox pop

'I got to the Museum an hour or so early and was wandering around the Mesopotamian bits and I think this exhibition will encourage me to go back and look at that gallery with a different view ... I definitely will [go to the Islamic Galleries]... to contextualise [what I've seen] a little bit' non religious vox pop

'When I get home now I will finish reading the catalogue' non-Muslim vox pop

'If you have got galleries related to the exhibit we tend to try and get to the galleries afterwards so that we can kind of tie the two together' non-Muslim vox pop

'[I'm left with] the desire to go [on Hajj] definitely ... just seeing the artefacts up close and the videos, I want to sort of be there' Muslim vox pop

11.2 Social outcomes

Enjoyable, social time

Visitors enjoyed their time in the exhibition, particularly seeing the different visitor groups mixing harmoniously. This will be further discussed in section 12.7.

'I have learnt some things, it is enjoyable and I feel I know a bit more about how it feels for the Muslims and it has been a nice day out ... it is nice to see people enjoying their religion' non-Muslim vox pop

11.3 Intellectual outcomes

Many visitors reported strong intellectual outcomes from their visit to the exhibition:

'It's been very enlightening and educational' non-Muslim vox pop

Improving knowledge and understanding

72% of all visitors were motivated by a desire to improve their understanding of Islam generally, and evidence from the qualitative research shows that both Muslims and non-Muslims felt the exhibition had promoted understanding of Hajj, and of Islam more generally.

'It was just sort of interesting to see how the whole thing fitted together'
non-Muslim vox pop

'I think that an exhibition like this educates not only Christians, but everyone... I came in here not knowing very much about Islam and I have learned a lot, so I have appreciated it. I am interested in religion in culture, in geography and travel. So I think that understanding Islam and understanding why certain people do certain things helps you get an understanding of the world' non-Muslim focus group

'I just knew before that it was an important religious place and you go there... I think really after this exhibition I still don't know exactly why, but I felt I have been given the kind of experience of people that do, do it and given some of the sort of raw factors or raw materials to divine myself what the reason is' non-Muslim focus group

'What the exhibition did so well was just to place the Hajj and Islam... In a more kind of wider cultural context, social context' non-Muslim focus group

'I felt like for non-Muslims there were a lot of answers there that people could actually take with them and understand Islam and also like you know the performance of the Hajj bit better and so I felt quite happy about that'

Muslim focus group

'The opportunity that the provision was there for the people who haven't been to Hajj or Umrah ... I had some knowledge before I went, but not this type of knowledge, and I think it is quite nice and fortunate for people to gain that knowledge and to be able to see everything before ... it is having the feel of it, obviously it is not the same, but it is like a sub-feeling of the actual thing' Muslim focus group

Learning about the importance of Hajj to others

49% of visitors said they visited the exhibition to gain an insight into the act of pilgrimage, and evidence from the personal meaning mapping showed that visitors wanted to learn about why Hajj is important to Muslims. It is evident that many visitors have gained this insight; and as a result have a better understanding of what it means to be a Muslim.

'I think I've realised how incredibly important the pilgrimage [is]. In terms of Islam I know much more of it than I did before' Muslim vox pop

'Understanding... it's not just a one off, it'd actually almost [be] a starting point for people through the rest of their lives' non-Muslim vox pop

'I learnt some things I didn't know before. I think just a greater appreciation for... a kind of event... a religious event that is of huge importance in the world' non-Muslim vox pop

'A deeper understanding of what it is to be a Muslim' non-Muslim vox pop

'I feel like I understand a bit more about why it is so important to Muslims and why they make the pilgrimage' non-Muslim vox pop

Acquiring the tools to engage in constructive dialogue about the content of the exhibition

Perhaps most interestingly some of the non-Muslims we spoke to felt that they had not just gained knowledge; but have also developed confidence and a vocabulary that they could use to talk to Muslims about their faith.

'A much greater knowledge, some respect, a good experience ... I sort of knew the basic principles [behind Hajj] but I never asked any questions and this has encouraged me to do so' non religious vox pop

'I think I would be able not to insult somebody of the Islamic faith and if they wanted to tell me more I could engage in a sort of understanding dialogue ... you know I feel I could have a carefully trodden dialogue with someone of the Islamic faith' non-Muslim focus group

11.4 Emotional outcomes

Visitors also experienced strong emotional outcomes.

Moving experience

Visitors were moved by the strong personal narratives in the exhibition; by the atmosphere and by the fact that people from many different backgrounds shared a quiet, contemplative experience.

'There's a girl's journal... she describes her feelings as she sees it... When I read that I welled up, that really gave me such a good insight into what it's all about' non-Muslim vox pop

'I'm just so touched that I saw so many people from different faiths... Everyone's sitting quietly listening and it shows people are tolerant of all religion which is meant to be the case' Muslim vox pop

'I think it is a profoundly moving experience this one' non-Muslim vox pop

Sense of personal connection and relevance

Some visitors felt that the exhibition connected them to the experience of Hajj, and in the case of one respondent to their own roots.

'I felt like we were on part of the journey' Muslim vox pop

'I felt it really started me to ask questions about myself and my own faith... I was always very ashamed of having this sort of Islamic root [having a Muslim grandfather and surname Mohammed] to me because of all the negative backlash that they get... it has made me start to see Islam in a very, very powerful light, in terms of it can really move and shape people and there must be something very beautiful in it if so many people are doing it. So now it has just sort of forced me to see it in a different way' non-Muslim focus group

Being given the chance to explore the ideas and practices of Islam in an impartial environment, free of myths and misconceptions, helped this participant see their heritage in a new, more positive light.

11.5 Spiritual outcomes

Both Muslim and non-Muslim, religious and non-religious visitors achieved positive spiritual outcomes.

'We're not religious, but I think there's an amazing sense of spirituality. I mean I don't know if it's to do with the number of people who go or with the beauty of the artwork, or with everything all coming together ... you can see how important it would be to have that kind of goal in your life, that it adds something. I think that sometimes we Westerners don't have that' non-Muslim vox pop

'I really enjoyed the way that everyone enjoyed it together ... there is the level of devotion, the subject that is being dealt with it is difficult to appreciate when it is totally outside your realm of experience I think, but that is where the other people come in and the fact that I could see people around being so moved really helped me to understand the impact that it can have on your life. That was a very nice thing' non religious vox pop

Reflection and contemplation

Many visitors reflected upon their religion in relation to other faiths, seeing new connections that they were unaware of before visiting. These connections took the form of rituals and practices, as well as basic moral principles and founding ideas.

'The fact that... three of the major religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam... the roots that we all share are there... There is so much conflict between people... where in fact we all come from the same origins and it is all Abraham and Adam... It just brought it back into focus again and reminded you that yes they share a common origin and yet today they seem to be going further apart' non-Muslim vox pop

'It did make me think... about... lots of the similarities between Islam, Christianity and Judaism... very similar rituals in three different faiths.' Muslim vox pop

'How similar it [Haji] is to Christian pilgrimage. What I realised was the roots ... [are] the same as Christian roots of pilgrimage. Different roads obviously, but if you go to Santiago de Compostela the routes of St James all around the country ... that idea of journeying to somewhere special is the same in Christianity as it is in Islam' non-Muslim vox pop

'That was very important the Abrahamic connection ... that piece of education that Islam is associated with Judaism and Christianity because it is effectively the same message ... about the oneness of God Almighty, albeit that we come at it in different perspectives' Muslim focus group

'It seemed that the baseline [of all religions] was the same. Be kind to other people and treat everybody as equal and we all have to take care of the poor' non-Muslim vox pop

Impact on personal faith

Muslim respondents reported profound impacts upon their own faith. Visiting the exhibition made them feel proud of their religion, and some aspects - particularly the use of the Adhan - made them feel more connected to God. Some respondents also said they felt inspired to take part in Hajj.

'It certainly has strengthened the desire for me to go to Hajj myself' Muslim vox pop

'It has come more clearly to me that... I have a clear intention to go there' Muslim vox pop

'Emotionally I was planning to go to Hajj soon and seeing all those things and artefacts and the Koran written, it definitely made me want to go and definitely go and see it for real' Muslim focus group

'The Adhan... I really liked that. It really make me feel so near to God' Muslim vox pop

'Key message for me is ... it has reaffirmed my desire to perform the Hajj myself' Muslim vox pop

'Very inspiring ... because of my faith ... I think somehow it brings out the sincerity of the faith, and the importance of Hajj to so many people around the world, and it seems to me that it is the most singular journey of any religious group that you make. And it just stands out, the whole of the exhibition brings that to life for me' Muslim vox pop

Non-Muslim visitors also reported a similar level of personal reflection – thinking about the meaning of pilgrimage for the human race over time.

'[My views have changed because] I have just that awareness of how many millions of people have done this over the centuries and how fundamental pilgrimage is for human beings. I think it is a very human thing to do to have this kind of symbolic geography that we create for ourselves and we need to seem to follow the symbols in some way. It is wonderful' non-Muslim vox pop

'It just deepens my interest in travel so now when I travel I will try and carry this sense of what travel as pilgrimage was for people of this particular faith... I guess we all generate our own kinds of pilgrimages now, but this is so historically significant and culturally significant. It is in a category of its own' non-Muslim vox pop

11.6 Other impacts of the exhibition

Changed perception of Islam

Some visitors felt that the exhibition changed their view of Islam, and the majority of these reported a positive change – a sense of greater respect, understanding and empathy.

'It's confirmed what I suspected, that the Muslim faith has excellent principles that have been [manipulated] by fundamentalist media and terrorist issue.' non-Muslim exit survey respondent

'I gained a clearer understanding and a deepening respect.' non-Muslim exit survey respondent

'Yeah definitely [I've had my views changed]. I have so much respect and so much; well it is a deepening interest and something that I will look into more' non religious vox pop

The British Museum promoting diversity and understanding

Bringing different people together

Many visitors felt the exhibition had brought visitors from a range of backgrounds together for a shared experience.

'It is good to see a lot of non-Muslims here as well because I think it is very educational from that point of view' Muslim vox pop

'It is nice to see lots of Muslims in the Museum. I don't think I have ever seen so many, and they are of all ages and it is just very pleasant that there are people who are here for different reasons that is good' non-Muslim vox pop

'It was good actually. Seeing all the different people there' non-Muslim vox pop

'I met some lovely people from all over the UK...' non-Muslim vox pop

'Seeing the vast amount of people that were there. They'd all come from different cultures... I was very impressed to see and pleased to see that there were a lot of non-Muslims [there]' Muslim focus group

'It was just incredibly inspiring... I'm always interested to see how these kinds of forms of communities, people coming together and uniting, how we can maybe do that in a non-religious way' Muslim vox pop

Promoting understanding

The exhibition also succeeded in promoting understanding in its visitors. Both Muslim and non-Muslim respondents reported that Islam was better understood as a result of their visit.

'[There are] people who divide each other and exaggerate the difference, and to paint the others as being evil or malicious or demonic... you need a museum to do the opposite, to give information to enlighten people and so to that extent it is fabulous... this is exactly the exhibition that you would want to see the British Museum doing' non-Muslim vox pop

'As a British Muslim I feel honoured this is going on in this country which has another religion, and respect for this exhibition is unbelievable... When I came here I felt myself that there was respect for my religion' Muslim vox pop

'Let everyone see what the truth is... they [the British Museum] have had the courage to put something like this on and do it in the climate that we are in. I think it is very positive...' Muslim focus group

'I think the respect that it [the faith] was shown was very important. Quite often you find that respect isn't there... it increases the respect for the Museum in the eyes of a lot of Muslims... and I think that respect that showed for the faith, and in the way it was subtly done and not ostentatiously' Muslim focus group

'It is a message to the greater audience ... which I think the Islamic world needs, a greater audience' Muslim vox pop

'It is a peaceful religion, it is not only about the violence which you hear about and the fundamentalist force and I think it is important to have an exhibition like this in the West' Muslim vox pop

11.7 Personal Meaning Mapping – tracking the visitor journey

In addition to vox pops and focus groups, a research method was designed to track visitors' experience of the exhibition – the knowledge they gained and the ideas they encountered as part of their visit. The models on the following pages track the journeys of each of the 5 participants of the meaning mapping, tracing the ideas they came with, the features of the exhibition which contributed most strongly to their experience; and the knowledge, thoughts and questions they were left with.

All of the respondents who took part reported learning new things about Hajj, and many explored new ideas relating to religion and society. This analysis provides insight into five unique and personal responses to the exhibition, and consolidate and reiterates many of the findings discussed elsewhere in this report.

Although the participants were frequently surprised by the content of the exhibition, they generally responded very positively. Personal stories were an important narrative tool; and star objects included contemporary art interpretations, textiles and photographs.

Participant profile

The table below illustrates salient features of the cultural and demographic profile of respondents in order to contextualise their responses.

Number	Demographics	Personal or professional connections to the exhibition
1	Female, 64	Practicing Christian, member of Interfaith group, former RE teacher, grew up in India
2	Female, 56	Daughter of an Imam, grew up in an interfaith household
3	Female, 52	Not religious, worked on projects based in Saudi Arabia, experienced different cultural attitudes towards women's role in society.
4	Female, 47	Christian, occasional church goer, travelled in Muslim countries
5	Male, 50	Practicing Christian, member of outreach group which works with local mosques

Personal meaning map 1

Visitor input (pre-visit)

Knowledge...

As an active member of an interfaith group and former RE teacher, this visitor had a good working knowledge of the 5 pillars of Islam.

'I know that Muslims are required to pray 5 times a day and give to charity... there are quite strict food regulations which they have to observe... Ramadan is their month of fasting... Doing Hajj is very, very important'

Questions...

She wanted to learn more about the history of Hajj, its practicalities and also the spirituality of the experience.

'What I'm interested in is trying to find out a bit more about the spirituality behind it...'

'I'm hoping to understand more of the origins of it, when it started and why it's become so important'

Ideas...

She was thinking about the impact of Muslim extremists upon wider perceptions of Islam in society.

'It's getting a very bad press. I think there's a small minority of really extreme Muslims who are making life very difficult... for more moderate Muslims who are targeted...'

British Museum input

Interpretation and narrative...

This visitor found the focus on the journey to Mecca surprising but stimulating:

'I'd read the title... and thought that would be a metaphorical journey, I hadn't realised there would be so much about the real journeys people had to make... what an effort it was for people to do that. Now they just get on a plane and go, but part of the experience, and the sacrifice... some people from Western Africa, it took them nearly a year to get there and do the journey, and so that was another whole part of the experience then.'

Star objects...

Star objects for this visitor were photographs and a young girl's diary, which allowed her to connect to the personal stories of Hajjis and Hajjahs.

'The visual picture of Hajj itself... when you see the photographs and the visuals of just how many people, how crowded it is, you realise what an immense experience it must be for people. One of the most moving things I read in there was the diary of a 10 year old... what it meant for her... what a spiritual experience it was.'

In addition to personal stories the art work and textiles on display were compelling additions to the exhibition:

'I loved the textiles, I loved them. I hadn't appreciated that they changed the fabrics on the Ka'ba every year, so that was lovely and I also enjoyed the modern art. The magnet with the iron filings... [I found it] interesting in terms of taking that one, and expressing it'

Visitor outcomes (post-visit)

New knowledge...

This visitor learned more about the history, practicalities and spirituality of Hajj.

'Hajj lasts 5 days rather than 2 weeks'

'The other thing I wasn't sure about [before] was the origins of the Ka'ba, and that was interesting'

'It's easier to understand the impact it has on them while they're there'

Questions unanswered...

This visitor wanted to know more about the tribal use of Mecca before the rituals of Hajj were established.

'Before Mohammed, the local tribe people worshipped many Gods... it didn't explain why so presumably was that because it was Christian or Jewish?'

Post-visit behaviour...

This visitor was interested in talking to people about the content of the exhibition.

'It would have been nice to talk to some of them [Muslim exhibition attendees] it's important for people to talk more...'

New ideas...

This visitor has reflected on her own religious practice, and is thinking about what it must be like to go on Hajj.

'[I've] realised how undisciplined I am'

'There was one lovely [picture] of just a man... there are so many people there, and there was this just one man doing his prayers and it looked as if he was out in the desert... that struck me. That I wouldn't like it personally... I would find it a really really difficult thing to do'

Personal meaning map 2

Visitor input (pre-visit)

Knowledge...

This visitor grew up in an interfaith household, so reported having good knowledge of the day-to-day practice of Islam.

'I know about the 5 pillars, I actually know a lot more about how it works on a day to day basis... having to pray, obviously complete the Hajj... charity, fasting... My father used to pray 5 times a day and he did try and do his best to give what little he had.'

She had some knowledge of the specifics of Hajj,

'All Muslims must make the pilgrimage in their lifetime and they have to go round, I forgot the name for the cube'

and also mentioned Sharia law.

'It's a code of Islam... the Imams ruling on people's lives and relationships, according to their strict moral code.'

Questions...

She wanted to connect to the beliefs and experiences of her father, and understand what drives Muslims to take such large risks to undertake the pilgrimage.

'I'm intrigued really... it draws people from all over the world, and I know how dangerous it is and people frequently get hurt there... It must be quite a powerful experience... [I want to get] a greater understanding... because of my background. My father never did the Hajj which desperately upset him so it's just about understanding a bit more.'

Ideas...

She was thinking about the role of women in a religion she perceived as a masculine pursuit.

'It is a sort of religion that's really overtly practiced by men. That's why I said I wasn't actually a Muslim, but I grew up in a Muslim household with those sort of rules... there's a moral code... I don't think I took anything of the religion away with me [from my own upbringing].'

British Museum input

Interpretation and narrative...

This visitor liked the inclusion of a range of different 'voices' in the exhibition, because they gave her new perspectives on a religion she had a very personal experience of.

'I think they're useful because it just opened your mind... to how the religion works for different people of different backgrounds'

Although she had a good knowledge of the practice of Hajj, this visitor appreciated the contextual information offered in the exhibition.

'Some of the interesting stuff was about some of the origins of the pilgrims... the maps. They had the numbers of pilgrims say from China or Russia... that was interesting because it added context.'

Star objects...

Reading the direct quotes from Hajjis had the most profound impact on this visitor.

'[The quotes were] one of the most interesting areas... people who had done it and talk about what a powerful experience it was for them, and how it changed them... it had impacted them when they went back to their 'normal' lives'

But she also enjoyed the contemporary art interpretations of Hajj.

'The most powerful images were the ones done by magnets'

Visitor outcomes (post-visit)

New knowledge...

The exhibition largely reminded this visitor of things she had forgotten:

'I guess the one thing I learned was about the Umrah... It's showed me that I knew a lot more than I thought I did... It sort of validated what I thought I knew.'

Questions unanswered...

This visitor did not mention having any unanswered questions as a result of her visit.

Post-visit behaviour...

Visiting the exhibition helped her to reconnect to her own past, and she reported being interested in learning more in the future.

'I do think it's prompted me to read a bit more deeply I think in the future. I was looking at some of the texts in the shop so I may go on, not immediately but at some point I might read a little more'

New ideas...

The exhibition caused this visitor to reflect on her own experience in new ways, and re-evaluate her perception of Islam as a man's religion:

'It's changed my opinion about it being a religion more practiced by men than women... the local mosque was sort of male only territory... perhaps things change.'

After visiting the exhibition the visitor was thinking about how Islamic traditions are interpreted and followed:

'It annoys me when I see little girls with their heads covered... all the Quran asks you to do is dress modestly, so why does a 6 year old have to have her head covered... That's the unacceptable face of it really in the Western society'

Personal meaning map 3

Visitor input (pre-visit)

Knowledge...

This visitor had general knowledge of the rules and practices of Hajj.

'It does take place annually... but they go on it if they can afford it at least once in their lives... they have to go round it [the Kaaba] and I don't know if they have to try and touch it... there's various things they have to achieve while they're there...'

She mentioned Ramadan, and also had some awareness of Mohammed's role in the development of Islam.

'There's the whole Ramadan thing. That's something they do as long as they can physically do it'

'Mohammed's the prophet in the same way as John the Baptist, and he wrote the Quran'

Questions...

She wanted to gain a better understanding of the religion, in order to contextualise media coverage of events related to Islam.

'[I want] to understand the religion more, and maybe to be able to place things that you hear, because you hear an awful lot in the news about it, so just to be able to place things in context a bit more... I would expect [to find out about] the history, how it spread, maybe the different aspects of it, including the artistic side'

Ideas...

She was thinking about the differing ways Islam is practiced across the Islamic world, and the extent to which these differences are due to individuals and cultures.

'It varies so dramatically from country to country... Somebody's going to get stoned in Saudi Arabia... you get extreme cases like what's happening in Afghanistan, but a lot of that is rooted in... the culture because other Islamic countries are not that severe or that draconian... It seems to be down to the individual interpretation of the politics of time.'

British Museum input

Interpretation and narrative...

This visitor liked the fact that the exhibition didn't address contemporary political issues:

'I thought it was quite good that they didn't focus at all on any kind of conflict, they just talked about the Hajj... that was quite good and quite interesting'

She found the descriptions of the practicalities of undertaking Hajj...

'It's quite interesting seeing... how different countries have taken it upon themselves to protect pilgrims... the facilities they provide for that number of people. It's quite phenomenal, and just the logistics of it, it's amazing...'

...and the need for states to support pilgrims particularly engaging.

'It was showing you the numbers that went... the way it's increased since then is phenomenal'

Star objects...

This visitor connected to the quotes used at the end of the exhibition.

'It was interesting... where they had quotes from Malcolm X and Mohammed Ali, particularly Malcolm X about one nation because he could see... all the different colours of men, all unified by one God, he found that very powerful'

She also liked the artefacts such as books and maps presented in the exhibition.

'[I liked] the beautiful Qurans and the books that they have in there'

Visitor outcomes (post-visit)

New knowledge...

This visitor learned a lot as a result of her visit. She learned about Umrah,

'I thought it was just a one off event that they could go on... I thought it [Mecca] was closed 11 months of the year'

the 5 pillars of Islam,

'You asked me about that before. I now understand what the 5 pillars are'

and history of the Ka'ba.

'I didn't realise it was a building... and it was originally built by Adam and then rebuilt later'

Questions unanswered...

Despite learning a significant amount, this visitor still had unanswered questions some due to missing information in the exhibition, others to the visitor not noticing available information.

'It was a bit vague, it didn't say where they [the rituals of Hajj] had come from, but that Mohammed had basically adopted them... so I don't know who had been practicing those before them. Whether it was Jews or Christians'

'I still don't understand why they threw the stones, but maybe I just missed that bit'

'It didn't explain why they did it [started putting cloth on the Ka'ba]'

Post-visit behaviour...

This visitor did not report any plans to act as a result of her visit to the exhibition.

New ideas...

After visiting this visitor was reflecting on the similarities between the Abrahamic religions.

'In some ways a lot is common throughout other religions as well. Maybe not the call to prayer 5 times a day, but the giving to the poor, only one God, the pilgrimage and Ramadan yeah. So it's not unique to Islam at all.'

Personal meaning map 4

Visitor input (pre-visit)

Knowledge...

This visitor recalled some of the rules and rituals associated with Hajj.

'Every Muslim should aim to undertake the pilgrimage, at least once in their life... There are sorts of rituals associated with it [Hajj]. Both in terms of what they wear and then what they do when they get there, and the number of times they circle the Ka'ba.'

She had some knowledge of the 5 pillars, but did not feel confident in articulating the core beliefs of Muslims. *'[I know about] the fasting, the pilgrimage, and the prayer 5 times a day... the ritual washing... before prayer.'*

Questions...

This visitor wanted the exhibition to add to the general knowledge she had gained at school.

'Hopefully I'm going to learn all sorts of things that will improve my knowledge.'

She hoped that the exhibition would give her an alternate perspective which could help contextualise negative media coverage of Islam.

'It is difficult to retain a sense of perspective... if you're just getting a Western interpretation... it does tend to be bad news when there's any mention of Muslims.'

She was also interested in how this exhibition would differ to local museums of art and culture she had seen in Muslim countries.

'I would expect it to a certain extent to be portrayed in a way that's accessible for people who aren't necessarily Muslims... more detailed and more encompassing than just a few local artefacts that I might have seen'

Ideas...

She was thinking about the relationship between religion and politics.

'It's hard to distinguish between the religion and politics, in terms of how women are treated.'

British Museum input

Interpretation and narrative...

The narrative of the exhibition brought together knowledge from this visitor's education, and her experiences as an adult.

'I'd seen the station in Istanbul, it kind of put that more into context for what those stations were actually for... It brought various things together, some of the things I'd actually seen in real life'

The maps and exploration of different routes gave a comprehensive picture of Hajj and Islam across the world.

'I thought what was quite interesting was to see the different routes laid out on the map... you got more of a picture I suppose of the whole Muslim world.'

Star objects...

This visitor found the film helpful and engaging.

'The main screen that showed what people do when they're there... it gave you a bit of a feel'

However, the pictures of Hajjis were more powerful for this visitor, helping her connect to the experience of going on Hajj.

'Some of the pictures... how many people there are there... it's amazing that there isn't a mass stampede at some point... it gives a really impression of like ants all over a hill, there's just people everywhere. Some [photos] were very impressive, just from the sheer scale of it'

Visitor outcomes (post-visit)

New knowledge...

This visitor's learning focused on what happened during Hajj.

'The main thing I think I learnt was... more detail about what goes on. I didn't know about the ritual stoning, and the running backwards and forwards... all the stuff to do with the wall, that was quite interesting.'

But she also learned about Mohammed.

'learning bits about the prophet Mohammed and when he was alive, and also the interaction with the prophet Abraham and things like that which I probably know a little more about now'

Questions unanswered...

This visitor felt her learning may have been enhanced if the exhibition had included more basic contextual information at an early stage.

'You had several rooms before you actually got a panel which said Prophet Mohammed, and the Ka'ba... you'd probably been through the equivalent of 4 rooms and you'd been reading and hearing stuff about the Ka'ba... Either they would assume all the way through that you knew about it, or that they would put more of an explanation at the beginning'

Post-visit behaviour...

This visitor did not report any plans to act as a result of her visit to the exhibition.

New ideas...

This visitor did not talk about any new ideas as a result of her visit to the exhibition.

Personal meaning map 5

Visitor input (pre-visit)

British Museum input

Visitor outcomes (post-visit)

Knowledge...

This visitor's outreach work in local mosques has taught him about the day-to-day running of mosques.
'How they enter into the cleanliness of it, and how they pray together, and the separation between the men and the women and how they run their lives as Muslims'

He also had some knowledge of the rules surrounding Hajj, but he didn't report any knowledge of what happened on the pilgrimage.

'I believe it's something they have to do... they should do once in their lifetime.'

Questions...

This visitor wanted to learn both about what happens on Hajj and also why it is so important for Muslims to complete the pilgrimage.

'[I'm interested in] finding about what the Hajj is, actually what elements there are to them, and also why it's so important to them'

In particular he was driven to attend in order to learn more about a religion he has worked closely with in the past.

'We thought it was something we should really go and find out about something more about it and what it actually means'

Ideas...

He was thinking about the treatment of women in Muslim society,

'We went in a couple of mosques... how they in some ways treat women as not equals... it seems a little bit harsh to me sometimes how they don't seem to have many rights'

And also reflected on the impact of media coverage on perceptions of religions.

'There are stories in the newspaper... these honour killings... but it's like everything, there's good and bad in everything.'

Interpretation and narrative...

This visitor was struck by the fact that it was possible to build an exhibition around a religious site and its pilgrimage. He felt that this would not be possible for Christianity.

'Would you ever be able to put an exhibition together for Christianity... we don't have a focal point... they have Mecca which is sacred to them, which I find really amazing. In a way we don't have that kind of pull to one place. What amazed me is how over hundreds of years people [travelled to one place].'

Star objects...

The part of the exhibition which highlighted how the number of Hajjis varies across routes and time periods was very engaging for this visitor because it made him reflect on the coming together of Muslims from around the world:

'Islam does have certain branches but they all come together to go to Hajj. Because of the maps they follow, the old trade routes and the amount of people. And what surprised me as well is how the numbers are building up every year... from a few hundred, 10,000 or whatever, right up to the modern day.'

New knowledge...

This visitor learned about the rituals of Hajj, and got a sense of its importance.

'It is kind of structured... the rituals they observe there and what they do... I think I got a sense of the respect they have for it.'

Questions unanswered...

This visitor did not report having any unanswered questions.

Post-visit behaviour...

This visitor did not report any intentions to act as a result of their visit.

New ideas...

For this visitor, the exhibition was a powerful stimulus to reflect on his own faith, and Muslims' practice. He reflected on the value of adhering strictly to traditions.

'One of the things I do admire about them, how committed they are and structured... in a way it's a good thing... it orders your life.'

However, the exhibition also highlighted the importance, within his own religion, of the ability to challenge and question.

'There's no room for discussion [in Islam]... within Christianity you are told to challenge things and think your way through. Whereas with Islam it seems to be laid down as law and they do not deviate from that at all.'

He also considered the importance of inclusivity in his own practice, and how this is tackled within Islam.

'We wouldn't close our church doors to anyone who came, religions are supposed to be all welcoming and supposed to spread the word'



Morris Hargreaves McIntyre is a creative and intelligent arts management consultancy working in the interests of audience and organisational development.

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