

# The Abbasids | Abbasid Ceramics

'Regional ceramics industries were influenced by techniques, designs and motifs from other parts of the empire.'

As the Abbasid Empire expanded from Afghanistan to Algeria, regional ceramics industries were influenced by techniques, designs and motifs from other parts of the empire, adding to the variety of designs, decorations and styles available locally. While luxury ceramics in the eastern regions of the empire were riotous in polychrome and monochrome, equivalent wares in North Africa – particularly in Ifriqiya – were more sober. Besides the lustre ceramics, monochrome or polychrome glazed-relief pieces and glazed wares with inscriptions, were widespread. Utilitarian ware generally speaking tended to be unglazed and simply and sparsely decorated. Nonetheless, all seem to share qualities typically Islamic.



**Name:**

Plate with lotus leaves

**Dynasty:**

Hegira, last third of the 4th century or beginning of the 5th century / AD 10th–11th centuries Aghlabid–Early Fatimid

**Details:**

Museum of Islamic Art  
Raqqada, Kairouan, Tunisia

**Justification:**

The sobriety found in the delicate decoration of this plate sums up the ceramics tradition in Abbasid Ifriqiya: refined but subtle.

---



**Name:**

Bowl with inscription

**Dynasty:**

Hegira, last third of the 3rd century / AD 9th century Aghlabid

**Details:**

Museum of Islamic Art  
Raqqada, Kairouan, Tunisia

**Justification:**

The written word has always been important in Islamic art. Often, when it appears on ceramics, it is inviting the viewer to engage with the object in a more intimate way.

---



**Name:**

Round-bellied vase

**Dynasty:**

Hegira, last third of the 3rd century / AD 9th century Aghlabid

**Details:**

Museum of Islamic Art  
Raqqada, Kairouan, Tunisia

**Justification:**

The Abbasid ceramics of North Africa were also influenced by the country's Berber heritage, especially in the rendering of a variety of decorative elements, both abstract and figurative.

**Name:**

Ring-shaped flask

**Dynasty:**

Hegira, second half of the 3rd century / AD 9th century Aghlabid

**Details:**

Museum of Islamic Art  
Raqqada, Tunisia

**Justification:**

The simplicity and elegance of this water vessel reflects the production of local ceramics in Abbasid Ifriqiya during the Aghlabid period.

---

**Name:**

Oil lamp

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 2nd–3rd century / AD 8th–9th century Abbasid

**Details:**

Jordan Archaeological Museum  
Amman, Jordan

**Justification:**

Ceramics were made for all levels of society and for all uses. This unglazed but generously decorated oil lamp was probably produced for the less expensive end of the market.

---