

Echoes of Paradise: the Garden and Flora in Islamic Art | The Role of Individual Plants and Flowers

'Individual plants and flowers were often chosen for their religious or poetic significance.'

Muslim culture has always expressed a profound love for plants and flowers, and gardens were carefully cultivated. Many plants were chosen not only for their beauty or health-enhancing properties but also for their religious or poetic significance. As miracles of nature, they were yet another sign of the creative and life-giving powers of Allah. Their flowering and dying away every year invited contemplation of the human condition and Islam's promise of resurrection and eternal life in Paradise for all true believers.



Name:
Kaftan

Dynasty:
Second half of hegira 10th / AD 16th century Ottoman

Details:
Topkapı Palace Museum
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

Justification:
This magnificent kaftan which belonged to a Turkish prince anticipates the exuberant flora of Paradise in its rich overall floral design.



Name:
Stole, mirror dressing (tenchifa)

Dynasty:
Hegira 12th-13th centuries / AD 18th-19th centuries Alawid

Details:
Museum of the Udayas
Rabat, Morocco

Justification:
Flowers are considered a blessing and are therefore a befitting decoration for this embroidery worked for a Moroccan woman's dowry.



Name:
Talismanic shirt

Dynasty:
Hegira, end of the 8th–beginning of the 9th / AD end of the 14th–beginning of the 15th century Early Ottoman period

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

Justification:
The talismanic religious quotations on the front of the garment are complemented by the rich floral pattern on the back.

**Name:**

Dish with floral decoration

Dynasty:

Hegira 10th–11th centuries / AD 16th–17th centuries Ottoman

Details:

Museum of Civilisations | Museum of Oriental Art "Giuseppe Tucci"
Rome, Italy

Justification:

The Turkish artists who produced this plate used for inspiration both flowers in nature and naturalistic flower paintings from Europe.
