

Geometric Decoration | Geometric Decoration in Textiles

'Inscriptions tended to appear on fabrics in bands.'

Inscriptions were also used as a decorative element in textiles, particularly kufic script on account of its rectilinear, angular and geometric forms. It tended to appear on fabrics in bands, although it could also be adapted to fit the different shapes formed by geometric motifs. Conversely, the spaces formed by the letters were sometimes decorated with geometric designs. Inscriptions on fabrics could indicate its place of manufacture, praise Allah or the sovereign, or reproduce Qur'anic verses and talismanic inscriptions or formulas.



Name:

Fragment of a robe

Dynasty:

Hegira 427–87 / AD 1036–94 Fatimid; reign of Al-Mustansir billah

Details:

Museum of Islamic Art at the Pergamon Museum
Berlin, Germany

Justification:

This fragment was initially part of an upper tiraz or band. The two dark-blue borders are decorated with white kufic inscriptions: the Shahada (Profession of the faith) at the top, and details of who commissioned the piece below, although the name is missing.



Name:

Rug

Dynasty:

Hegira 7th century / AD 13th century Anatolian Seljuq

Details:

Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

Justification:

A wool rug that is woven using the Turkish Gördes knot. It has a border bearing an inscription in pseudo-kufic script with perfectly defined, fully geometric characters that stand out on a dark background.



Name:

Tomb cover

Dynasty:

Hegira 11th century / AD 17th century Ottoman

Details:

National Museums of Scotland (NMS)
Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom

Justification:

A design consisting of zigzag bands on a dark-green background, each band containing the Shahada repeated in white calligraphy. The narrow borders also contain prayers to the Prophet Muhammad and the first four (Rightly Guided) Caliphs: Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman and 'Ali.
