

The Atabegs and Ayyubids | Travelling and Trading

'Merchants and travellers carried with them artistic ideas as well as commodities.'

Merchants and travellers were responsible for the dissemination of artistic ideas as well as the distribution of commodities, facilitating the transmission of designs and techniques for ceramics, metalwork, glass and textiles from one urban centre to another. The lustre technique was adopted in 6th- / 12th-century Syria, probably brought by potters emigrating from Fatimid Egypt although, ultimately, the technique originated in 3rd- / 9th-century Iraq. Similarly Persian craftsmen from Khurasan, fleeing from the Mongol invasions of the 7th / 13th century, brought their expertise in inlaid metalwork to Mosul in Northern Iraq. The trade routes also facilitated the transmission of Chinese motifs, techniques and styles.



Name:
Large jar

Dynasty:
Hegira 6th century / AD 12th century Atabeg

Details:
National Museum of Damascus
Damascus, Syria

Justification:
The dragon with a serpentine tail exemplifies the Central Asian or Chinese influence on Islamic art. Its appearance on this water jar is probably purely decorative, although seen above the entrance to Aleppo Citadel it holds a powerful protective symbolism.



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Name:
Citadel of Aleppo

Dynasty:
Hegira 6th–7th century / AD 12th–13th century Zangid, Ayyubid and Mamluk

Details:
Aleppo, Syria

Justification:
The dragon with a serpentine tail exemplifies the Central Asian or Chinese influence on Islamic art. Its appearance on this water jar is probably purely decorative, although seen above the entrance to Aleppo Citadel it holds a powerful protective symbolism.

**Name:**

Bowl

Dynasty:

Hegira 7th / AD 13th century Ayyubid

Details:

The British Museum
London, England, United Kingdom

Justification:

Enamelled ceramics from Persia, known as mina'i, were imitated in Syria but the effect of the enamelling technique was created with coloured underglaze painting, a local tradition.

**Name:**

Bowl with horseman

Dynasty:

Hegira 6th–7th / AD 12th–13th centuries Seljuq

Details:

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

Justification:

Enamelled ceramics from Persia, known as mina'i, were imitated in Syria but the effect of the enamelling technique was created with coloured underglaze painting, a local tradition.
