

# 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:**  
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**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.

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