

The Umayyads | Court Ceremonials and Pastimes

'The life of the prince was expressed through his association with hunting, banqueting and amusement.'

According to one scholar, the recurring themes of dancing females, hunting and music-making were not simply frivolous activities, but were reflections of royal pleasures and pastimes. These were enacted in what is called majlis al-lahu (a place used for ceremonial entertainment) in which the life of the prince was expressed through his association with hunting, banqueting and amusements such as dancing and singing, all of which were common at the Sassanian court, and served to glorify the prince and underline his greatness.



Name:

Fresco from Qusayr Amra

Dynasty:

Reign of Caliph al-Walid I Hegira 86–96 / AD 705–715, probably after AH 92 / AD 711 Umayyad

Details:

Museum of Islamic Art at the Pergamon Museum
Berlin, Germany

Justification:

A fresco from the main hall of Qusayr 'Amra, it depicts a standing semi-nude woman wearing rich jewellery and standing in a niche.



Name:

Lower part of a semi-naked female statue

Dynasty:

Hegira first half of the 2nd century / AD first half of the 8th century Umayyad

Details:

Jordan Archaeological Museum
Amman, Jordan

Justification:

The lower half of a semi-nude woman from the Mushatta Palace. Nudes belong to the repertoire of Umayyad palaces and demonstrate the court's emphasis on pleasurable pastimes.



Name:

Fragment of a female statue from Mushatta

Dynasty:

Around hegira 125–6 / AD 743–4 Umayyad

Details:

Museum of Islamic Art at the Pergamon Museum
Berlin, Germany

Justification:

A fragment from a sculpture of a semi-clad woman found in the Mushatta Palace area. There is a vertical inscription in kufic script on one of her legs.



Name:
Brazier

Dynasty:
Hegira 2nd century / AD 8th century Umayyad

Details:
Jordan Archaeological Museum
Amman, Jordan

Justification:
A brazier found at al-Fudayn which is embellished with erotic, Dionysiac scenes.
The imagery underlines the fact that hammam culture in Umayyad art produced not only typical interior decoration, but also inspired portable objects.
