

# Topics in the Arabic Art and Culture: The Western Mediterranean

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## Course Description

A problem oriented inquiry into Arabic art and culture (ca. 750 to 1300), focusing on regions circling the Mediterranean, from the Iberian Peninsula to Iraq. Materials (the book, painting, portable arts, epigraphy, architecture) and geographic focus vary. Themes also change, but include relations between art and literature, aesthetics, vision and perception, courtly culture, the rise of a mercantile patron class, and cultural continuities and resurgences. The Western Mediterranean is the focus in 2003.

## Introduction

### *Readings*

- Encyclopedia of Islam, s.v. "Al-Andalus" (several authors), vol. 1, pp. 486–503 (FAL, RFA 50.23.50).
- Richard Ettinghausen, Oleg Grabar, and Marilyn Jenkins-Madina, *Islamic art and architecture, 650–1250*, pp. 3–132; 187–212; 265–288.
- Oleg Grabar, "Two Paradoxes in the Islamic Art of the Spanish Peninsula," in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Jayyusi, pp. 583–591

## Caliphal Iberia: Cordoba and the Great Mosque

### *Readings*

- Jonathan Bloom, "The Revival of Early Islamic Architecture by the Umayyads of Spain."
- Jerrilyn Dodds, "The Great Mosque at Cordoba," in *Al-Andalus*, ed. Dodds, pp. 11–25.
- Oleg Grabar, "Notes sur le mihrab de la Grande Mosquée de Cordoue."
- Robert Hillenbrand, "'The Ornament of the World': Medieval Cordoba as a Cultural Centre," in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Jayyusi, pp. 112–135.
- Nuha Khoury, "The Meaning of the Great Mosque of Cordoba in the Tenth Century."
- G. Marçais, "Sur les mosaïques de la Grande Mosquée de Cordoue."
- Evariste Levi-Provençal, *Inscriptions arabes d'Espagne*, pp. ix–xli; cat. entries 1–46.

## Caliphal Iberia: Madinat Al-Zahra

### *Readings*

- Dede Fairchild Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain*.
- Antonio Vallejo Triano, "Madinat al-Zahra': The Triumph of the Islamic State," in *Al-Andalus*, ed. Dodds, pp. 27–39

## **Portable Arts of the Caliphal Court**

### *Readings*

- Anthony Cutler, *The Craft of Ivory: Sources, Techniques and Uses in the Mediterranean World, A.D. 200–1400*.
- Renata Holod, “Luxury Arts of the Caliphal Period,” pp. 41–47, in *Al-Andalus*, ed. Dodds.
- Ernst Kühnel, *Die islamische Elfenbeinskulpturen. 8–13 Jh*, pp. 1–24; cat. entries 19–51; 88–130; 131–141 and accompanying plates.
- Francisco Prado-Vilar, “Circular Visions of Fertility and Punishment: Caliphal Ivory Caskets from al-Andalus.”

## **Art and Architecture of “The Party Kings” (Muluk Al-Tawa’if)**

### *Readings*

- Cynthia Robinson, *In Praise of Song: The making of courtly culture in al-Andalus and Provence, 1005–1134 A.D.*
- Cynthia Robinson, “Ubi Sunt: Memory and Nostalgia in Taifa Court Culture.”
- Cynthia Robinson, “Arts of the Taifa Kingdoms,” in *Al-Andalus*, ed. Dodds, pp. 49-61.
- David Wasserstein, *The Rise and Fall of the Party Kings: Politics and Society in Islamic Spain, 1002–1086*.

## **Fatimid Egypt**

### *Readings*

- Oleg Grabar, “Trade with the East and the Influence of Islamic Art on the 'Luxury Arts' in the West.”
- Oleg Grabar, “Imperial and Urban Art in Islam: The Subject Matter of Fatimid art.”
- Ibn al-Zubayr, *Book of Gifts and Rarities*, translated by al-Qaddumi.
- Marianne Barrucand, ed., *Trésors Fatimides*, exhibition catalogue
- Anna Contadini, *Fatimid Art*, museum catalogue

## **Norman Sicily: The Cappella Palatina and King Roger II's Manuscript of Al-Idrisi's Geography**

### *Readings*

- William Tronzo, *The Cultures of his Kingdom: Roger II and the Cappella Palatina in Palermo*.
- Ugo Monneret de Villard, *Le pitture musulmane al-soffitto della Cappella Palatina in Palermo*.  
[browse illustrations]
- *La géographie d'Idrisi: un atlas du monde au XIIe siècle*, CD-ROM.
- René Herval, “Ecléctisme intellectuel à la cour de Roger II de Sicile.”
- Donald Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily*.
- William Tronzo, “The medieval object-enigma, and the problem of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo.”

## **Cross-Culturalism**

### *Readings*

- Jerrilyn Dodds, *Architecture and Ideology in Early Medieval Spain*.
- Marie Rose Menocal, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain*.
- Thelma K. Thomas, "Christians in the Islamic East," and Priscilla Soucek, "Byzantium and the Islamic East," in Helen C. Evans and William D. Wixom, *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era A.D. 843–1261*, pp. 364–387, and 403–433.