



CARMEN BARCELÓ AND ANJA HEIDENREICH

LUSTERWARE MADE IN THE ABBADID TAIFA OF SEVILLE (ELEVENTH CENTURY) AND ITS EARLY PRODUCTION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

If we examine the general yet complex history of lusterware production, there is only one fact that seems indisputable: the aesthetic purity of its opaque white surface is derived directly from Chinese wares that served as incomparable models for Persian potters (fig. 1). In Mesopotamia, potters produced a brilliant white tin-based glaze, a fact that should come as no surprise given this region's early exposure to wares imported from China, combined with its own long tradition in pottery making, dating back at least to the time of the glazed bricks of the Ishtar Gate of Babylon (central Iraq, ca. 575 B.C.). This background would encourage potters to experiment with their techniques. Subsequent to the blue-on-white style that existed at the end of the eighth century (in particular that of Basra [fig. 1b]), this was where, in the early ninth century, pieces decorated with metal oxides were first produced and made to look as though they had been painted in gold. At this time we also see luster-painted glass of another type that also boasted a long cultural and ceramic technical tradition of its own: these were pieces from Egypt, which were sustained by a lasting Coptic tradition that had evolved there since at least the eighth century (fig. 1a).¹

We can trace luster decoration to Syria, which, together with Egypt, formed a single region under the Tulunids (r. 868–905). Several ninth-century glass pieces were found here that featured painted inscriptions indicating Damascus as their place of origin.² It is clear that at least by the time the palatine city of Samarra was founded in 833 lusterware had been enjoying great success in this area.³

But research in recent decades has expanded upon our original map of production centers, adding more pottery production sites, which were probably in

operation simultaneously in Iran and what is now modern-day Iraq. Subject to the political circumstances of each production site, and during partially overlapping periods in time, these regions produced tiles and pottery that were nearly identical to the prototypical examples of the classical “Samarra” style (fig. 1, c and d).⁴ In this area, wide-scale production seems to have tapered off at the end of the tenth century.

It is probable that before this, about halfway through that same century, many potters were brought to more prosperous countries, such as those located in the western regions.⁵ Large quantities of “Samarra” lusterware fragments have been found at Fustat but mainly in Bahnasa (Upper Egypt). At both locations, the dating of these pottery groupings clearly places them before the appearance of pieces produced under the early Fatimid caliphate (fig. 1d).⁶ That migrant potters settled in Bahnasa should come as no surprise if we take into account the reports of the traveler and geographer Ibn Hawqal,⁷ who praised the export trade from this city, and its artisanal products, in particular the fine textiles made in its workshops. Despite the brevity of his account, it is not difficult to imagine the context and extraordinary extent of the city's textile production. Large pieces of cloth were produced for curtains along with sails for sea vessels; he also describes gold-embossed silk brocades and draws attention to the marvelous wool and linen tents decorated with illustrations ranging “from the insect to the elephant,” using colors that never faded. Textile makers were supervised by the state and received orders from the caliph and high-ranking government officials, or directly from merchants, who came from all over the world just to purchase large and expensive bolts of cloth. We do not know for certain if migrant potters were al-



Fig. 1. a) Egypt, luster-painted glass bowl, eighth century (Photo: after Jenkins, *Islamic Glass*, cat. no. 20); b) Basra (Iraq), tin-glazed earthenware with blue decoration, eighth century (Photo: after J. Mouliérac, *Céramiques du monde musulman*, Institut du monde arabe and J. P. et F. Croisier Collections [Paris, 1999], 87, fig.); c) Iraq, “Samarra”-style luster-painted bowl, tenth century (Photo: after *Memorias do Imperio árabe* [Santiago de Compostela, 2000], 88, fig. 18); d) Susa (Iran), “Samarra”-style luster-painted bowl, tenth century, Musée du Louvre (Photo: Anja Heidenreich) (different scales).

ready living here during this time of splendor (around 950, when Ibn Hawqal visited Egypt for the second time), because the author does not mention this information. It is evident, however, that the craftsmen may have considered this city the ideal location in which to sell their luxury ceramic wares. Moreover, Egypt had already played an important role in previous eras in the transfer of technical skills and the resulting presence of luster within the repertoire of decorative techniques known to the Mediterranean region, as we suggested in our earlier comments on decorated glass. Regardless of these antecedents, it was not until the dawn of the tenth century that luster glazes were used in pottery.

In our study of the ninth century, there is no indication of lusterware production in the Mediterranean region. The demand for these goods could only be met by importing them from Mesopotamia, as evidenced by a well-known written source from 862 that mentions a Baghdad artisan brought to Kairouan (Tunisia) to repair

the mihrab of its great mosque (built ca. 836) and to decorate it with new lusterware tiles (fig. 2).⁸

Since its installation, this grouping of 154 tiles has been preserved in situ for centuries in a semi-public space—a still-visible example of an extraordinary architectural element. According to Marilyn Jenkins, the physical presence of these Eastern Islamic objects would exert a strong influence on the styles of Western Islamic culture for several centuries, such as the early lusterware tiles at Málaga at the end of the twelfth century.⁹ The Aghlabid emirs in Kairouan were not deterred by the cost in either time or money of having an artisan brought to their city instead of importing the tiles alone. This demonstrates the extraordinary importance—both in technical and artistic terms—of this type of wall decoration in one of the most emblematic mosques in the Western Islamic world.

The restoration of the mihrab may have been part of a more ambitious aim to establish workshops and

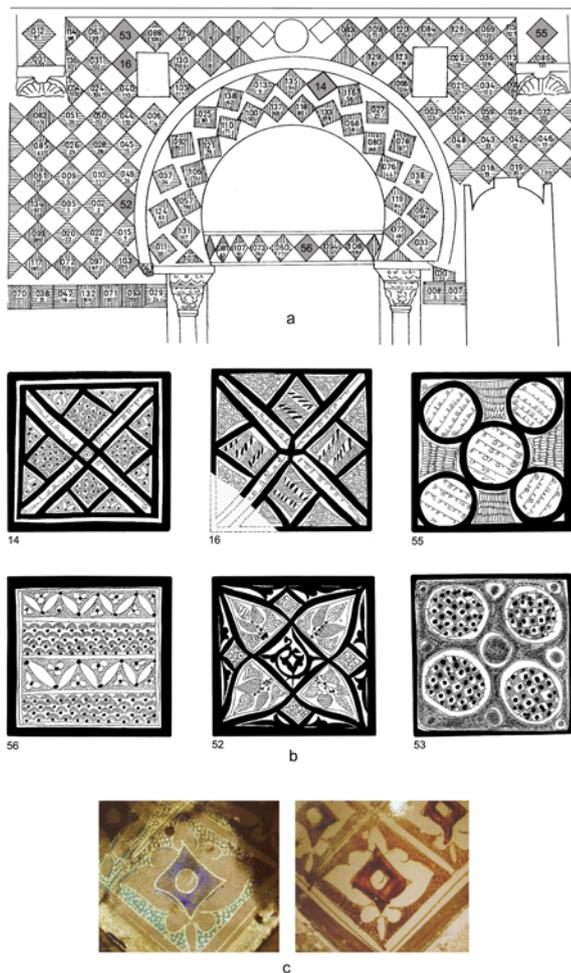


Fig. 2. Lusterware tiles added to the mihrab of the Great Mosque in Kairouan between 836 (date of construction) and 862 (date of repair, as cited in written sources): a) hypothetical positioning of the tiles (Drawing: Ewert, “Die Dekorelemente der Lüsterfliesen am Mihrāb der Hauptmoschee,” 379, fig. 1; after Georges Marçais, *Les faïences à reflets métalliques de la grande mosquée de Kairouan* [Paris, 1928]); b) selected tiles, some decorated with inscriptions (nos. 14, 16, and 55, all bearing the *al-mulk* inscription) (Drawings: Ewert, “Die Dekorelemente der Lüsterfliesen am Mihrāb der Hauptmoschee,” 381–84, fig. 3); c) Luster sheen of one of the tiles, with lateral and frontal light sources (Photo: J. Binus et al., “El arte islámico en el Mediterráneo,” in *Ifriqiya* [exh. cat.] [Madrid, 2000], 19, color pl.).

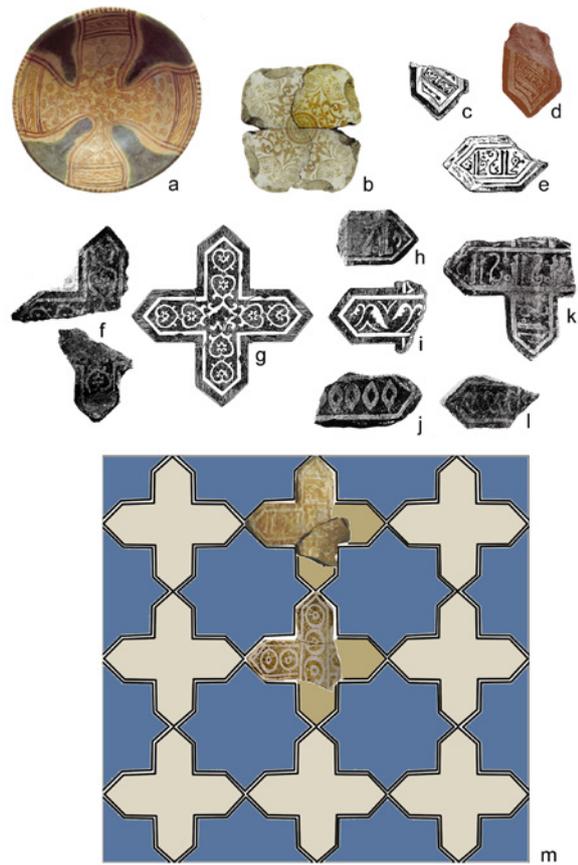


Fig. 3. Lusterware from northern Africa (no scale): a) Raqqada (Tunisia), Aghlabid lusterware, ninth/early tenth century (Photo: *Couleurs de Tunisie*, 119, no. 57); b) Raqqada (Tunisia), Aghlabid lusterware tile, ninth/early tenth century (digital reconstruction of the whole tile [lighter parts] based on one preserved quarter) (Photo: *Couleurs de Tunisie*, 128, no. 66); c–l) Qal’at Bani Hammad (Algeria), emir’s palace, lusterware tiles, eleventh century (missing areas in “g” enhanced graphically) (Drawings c, e, g, i: Marçais, *Les poteries et faïences de la Qal’at*, pls. 15 and 16; photos d, f, h, j, k, l: L.M.E. de Beylié, *La Kalaa des Beni-Hammad* [Paris, 1909], 45, fig. 16; 91, pl. 21); m) reconstruction of a panel from a mural or floor, composed of cruciform elements and blue tiles (graphically enhanced), Qal’at Bani Hammad (Algeria), emir’s palace, eleventh century (Photo: *L’Algérie en héritage*, 300, no. 229; mounting: Anja Heidenreich)

introduce the technique to local artisans. Lusterware pieces found at the Raqqada¹⁰ archaeological site feature mixed luster decoration, this time on a single plate, along with decorative motifs that are distinctly local in nature and typical of the Aghlabid style. Furthermore, we also know of some lusterware tiles from Sabra Mansuriyya¹¹ and another from Qasr al-Sahn (Raqqada) (fig. 3b).¹² Their decoration clearly indicates that there was greater movement between production centers than previously thought. Although there are few published accounts, after the arrival of “the Man from Baghdad” in Kairouan at the end of the ninth century—whether or not his visit was part of a greater plan on the part of the Aghlabid emirs—some lusterware was being produced in the region (fig. 3a).¹³ Another geographer from the East, Ya‘qubi (d. ca. 895–905), reports that several Persian artisans from Khurasan and Mesopotamia had settled in Kairouan,¹⁴ while Ibn Hawqal explicitly mentions the ceramics of Tunisia in the following description: “Wares bearing many colors and extraordinary pottery are manufactured there, like that imported from Iraq, which was previously known as *tarshish*.”¹⁵ For this author, the wares produced locally were just as valuable as those that had been imported before 950, the date of his account.

The history of lusterware in the Mediterranean is further illuminated upon examination of the tiles found at the Qal‘a of Bani Hammad (r. 1015–1152), a new town northeast of Msila (in modern-day Algeria), which served as the capital after 1007 and was celebrated across the Maghreb as a center of art, culture, and fine artisanal products.¹⁶ Among the finds of interest to this study, only a few cross-shaped pieces are known. The ones studied here were used in combination with octagonal tiles (fig. 3[c–l]) to form a highly decorative and elegant composition. It is quite probable that these were combined with blue star-shaped tiles, which were found near the above-mentioned cruciform tiles. We have been able to reconstruct an entire panel, which served as either a wall or floor covering (fig. 3m). These luster-painted tiles also included the repeated painted inscription of *al-yumn* (good fortune), a message commonly found in the epigraphic inscriptions of portable objects, but which has only been found on Fatimid pieces dating, at the very earliest, from the mid-eleventh century onwards.¹⁷ This inscription is generally found on textiles

and an assortment of objects such as ceramics; brought from Egypt to the Iberian Peninsula via northern Africa, these bore the same inscription that survives as an imitation on Valencian Gothic pottery. The inscription also appears on wood (a material used for architectural decoration), and even tombstones.

There was another local production site in the nearby coastal town of Béjaïa (modern-day Algeria), which was named al-Nasiriyya after its founder, the Zirid al-Nasir, who installed himself there shortly after 1068–69. This city became the new capital after he left the Qal‘a in 1067. Lusterware from Béjaïa has been cited as late as the fourteenth century, having been recorded as part of an inventory of a pharmacy in Genoa.¹⁸

Although reports are still quite rare, this evidence informs the picture we have of early Mediterranean lusterware between the ninth and eleventh centuries. We have seen how distantly scattered finds located across the entire Mediterranean region, along with various historical sources, point to the existence of remarkable examples of lusterware. According to the works published thus far, the majority of pieces have been found in Egypt (Upper Egypt, Lower Sa‘id), at several archaeological sites in Tunis, and in two areas in Algeria (fig. 4). It is clear that this map of the distribution of lusterware is also a reflection of the current state of published research: the political and economic situation of the Maghreb in recent decades has not been conducive to further research, which would otherwise have contributed new archaeological data to the field. As can be seen in the map (fig. 4), the distribution of specimens found and registered is only approximate. We believe that this picture is not completely representative, as additional information is likely to appear, in the form of new ceramic finds, documents, or unpublished sources. Only comprehensive future research will be able to add further details to this picture.

Although most are located along the North African coastline, the majority of these finds are of a more isolated nature. This is why groupings or even production centers are, in general, difficult to establish, save for a ceramic grouping of great value from Bahnasa. Here local production was demonstrated by analyzing the composition of the potter’s clay.¹⁹ With these objects, produced under the reign of the Tulunids and their successors, the Ikhshidids (r. 882–968), the luster technique



Fig. 4. Archaeological sites yielding lusterware in the Mediterranean region, ninth to eleventh century (according to material found and historical sources). (Map: Anja Heidenreich)

became firmly established in the Mediterranean world, appearing before the early Fatimids (who ruled Egypt starting in 969) began producing ceramics. The early stages of this ceramic production are marked by an initial conservatism that still incorporated characteristics from its Eastern antecedents. This was rapidly superseded by new lusterware creations bearing the new technique, which was seen until 1000. These magnificent wares are a reflection of the political power of the Fatimid dynasty, which would later create a new arti-

sanal sector. Some of these objects include the name of the artisan and/or patron who ordered the piece. One such patron was an officer in the service of the Fatimid caliph and another must have been a court official, which is why these specimens have been identified as works commissioned by the same caliph, al-Hakim (r. 996–1021).²⁰ When these ceramics were exported to other countries, the Fatimids’ “new style” became a great success: today, there are Tuscan cathedrals whose façades are decorated with large Fatimid platters that



Fig. 5. Medina Azahara (Córdoba, Spain), lusterware from Ikhshidid-Tulunid dynasties, found at the caliphal site, second half of the tenth century. (Photos and drawings: Anja Heidenreich)

have been dated to the beginning of the second millennium—the date of construction of those buildings.²¹ The growing number of imported Fatimid wares discovered on the Iberian Peninsula has gradually changed the traditional map of lusterware distribution. These findings call for a re-evaluation of the research carried out thus far, which is offered in the next section.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS YIELDING EARLY LUSTERWARE ON THE IBERIAN PENINSULA

A hundred years have passed since the archaeological finds of the Medina Azahara palace site were made known to the international scholarly community (fig. 5). The group of objects discovered there comprised frag-

ments from fifty-six small bowls,²² all featuring the common characteristics of the “Samaritan” style—the scientific term generally used since the publication of the first ceramics from Samarra in allusion to one of the most common early lusterware types from Mesopotamia.

Our reevaluation of these finds from the Cordoban palace site must include a revision of the current state of international research in this field, paying close attention to the contributions made by those who were both academic experts and had artisanal training—such as the immense contribution made in the 1970s by the Swiss historian and potter Rudolf Schnyder, who offered more detailed interpretations on the matter. This has led us to abandon the traditional (but hardly contested) idea of attributing the finds of Medina Azahara to the

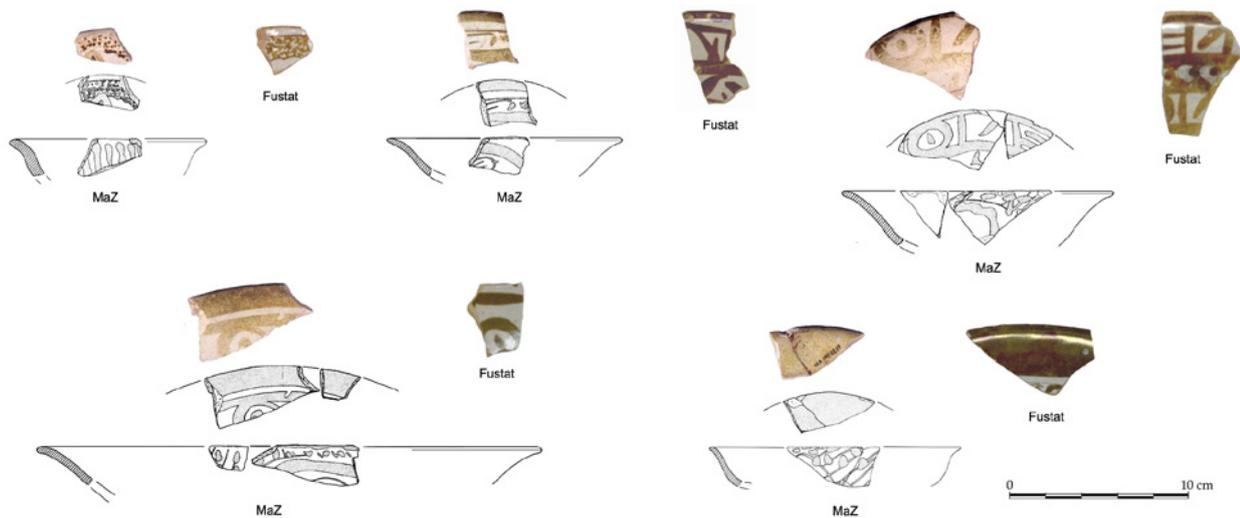


Fig. 6. Medina Azahara (Córdoba, Spain), Ikhshidid-Tulunid bowls with luster decoration found in the upper residential area of the caliphal palace, second half of the tenth century, and almost identical sherds from Egypt (purchased in the 1960s by the Museum für islamische Kunst, Berlin). (Photos and drawings: Anja Heidenreich)

Eastern reach of the “Samarran” horizon. We are aware that the nearly hundred-year lapse in time between the residential phase of Samarra (officially 836–892) and that of Medina Azahara (construction began in 940, with the court moving to Córdoba at the end of the tenth century)—a fact that was initially ignored—is not a counter-argument per se: “Samarran” ceramic production from the Eastern Islamic territories lasted well into the tenth century. Yet production centers located closer to the Iberian Peninsula have been discovered: they manufactured ceramic pieces identical to those from “Samarra” and sold them to the Iberian Peninsula.

In 2008, some of the specimens discovered in Medina Azahara were analyzed to try to resolve the debate as to their origins. The results were compared to those of an analysis carried out on “Samarran” pieces, in particular, the lusterware of Susa (Iran),²³ without taking into consideration that this grouping of “traditional Samarran artisanal wares” included material from both Mesopotamia (an area influenced by Samarra) and Tulunid Egypt, made, very likely, by potters who migrated there during the tenth century.

As early as 1974, Rudolf Schnyder had suggested something that mineral analyses would later confirm: namely, that the potters who migrated to Bahnasa—like

those who had migrated to Fustat—tried to create compositions that imitated so-called Samarran wares.²⁴ This ensured clay that was ideally suited to tin glazes and of a quality that was in keeping with their own artisanal tradition, preventing defective batches. Local mineral components were discovered in this analysis, an expected result given their use of river clays from the Nile, but also significant in that it offers definitive proof as to the Egyptian origin of the pieces.²⁵

Apart from these chemical results, the bowls of Medina Azahara also have other direct parallels: a group of vessels purchased in Cairo in the 1960s and now at the Museum for Islamic Art in Berlin²⁶ contains astonishingly identical details (fig. 6).

In addition to their geometric motifs, most share similarities in their zoomorphic details, painted in yellowish to yellow-brown luster tones, and have even kept their original sheen, as seen in the tin glaze used in the background. The dots and stripes that are characteristic of this type of ware and which are used to identify the “Samarran” style are visible on all the pieces. The sizes of the bowl sherds from Medina Azahara have permitted a reconstruction of various dinnerware sets. It is remarkable that there are no identical pieces, in terms of decoration, diameter, or exact form. Instead, the vessels

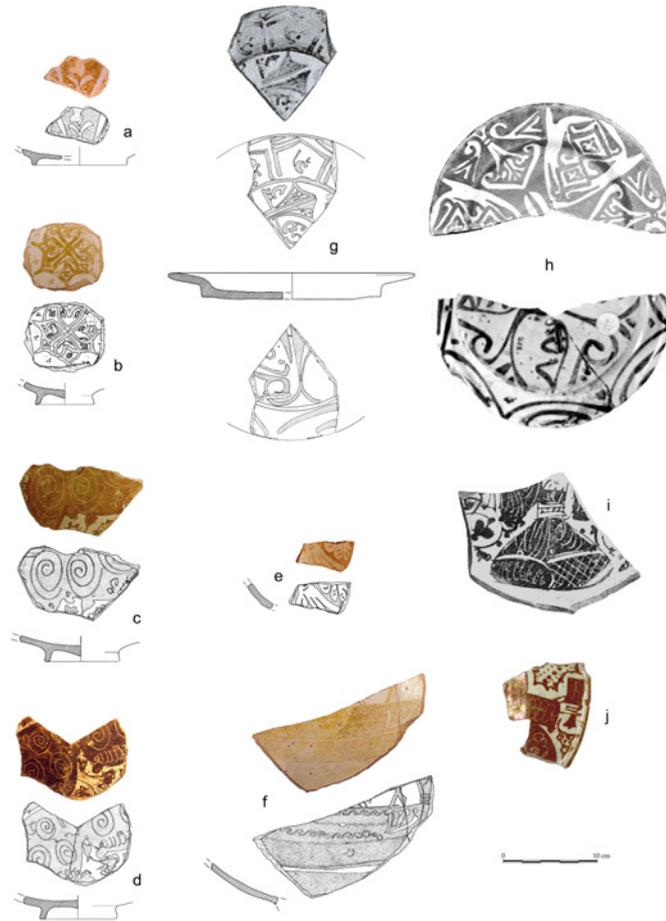


Fig. 7. Fatimid lusterware, eleventh century: a–f) Old City of Valencia (Spain), g) Old City of Medinaceli (Spain) (Photos and drawings, a–g: Anja Heidenreich); h) Egypt (Photo: Philon, *Early Islamic Ceramics*, 142, no. 308, color pl. 9,B); i) Egypt (Photo: Aly Baghat and Felix Massoul, *La céramique musulmane de l’Égypte* [Cairo, 1930], pl. 3.1); j) Egypt (Photo: Anja Heidenreich; stored in the Museum für islamische Kunst, Berlin)

represent a sampling of all the creative possibilities associated with the “Tang” form (with its characteristic “S” profile), the most influential Chinese ceramic type in the development of the “Samarra” style, and the one that served as its formal model.

When dealing with the Iberian Peninsula we cannot know if the isolated existence of these imports in the remarkable Medina Azahara was indicative of caliphal control or restrictions on the importation of luxury goods. The current state of published research cannot resolve this matter. But we cannot discount the fact that other luxury wares dating from the tenth century have

been found in the urban surroundings of other cities along the coast, products such as celadon wares, Chinese porcelain, and a variety of Egyptian pieces with lead glazes.

In the history of lusterware in al-Andalus, the specimens from Medina Azahara have been regarded as a rare example of a “Samarra” import. It has not been demonstrated that this technique was introduced into the area, either as a planned or sporadic occurrence during the tenth century. Looking at the chronology of pieces, we see that there are more imports in Spanish and Portuguese stratified and dated sites. The earliest

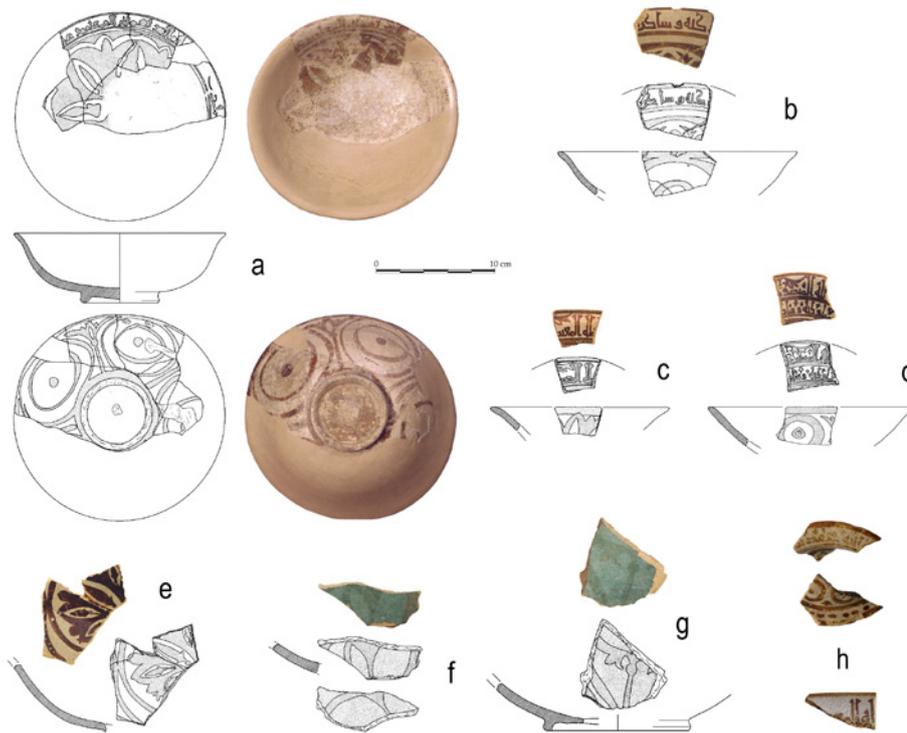


Fig. 8. Lusterware from Seville, second half of eleventh century: a) restored piece, Palma del Río, old quarter or train station; b) Castle of Silves; c) Seville, center of old town; d) Seville, Arabic baths; e, f, and g) Seville, Calle Imperial, f and g with a turquoise ground (Photos and drawings a–g: Anja Heidenreich); h) Coimbra, Pátio dos Escolas (University of Coimbra) (Photo: Helena Catarino).

pieces clearly date to the eleventh century and are less associated with palatial settings than they are with residences of the nobility. We can name examples that are clearly Fatimid²⁷ and others that are likely Fatimid from the sites in the old cities of Valencia, Medinaceli (fig. 7), and Tiermes (fig. 10f).²⁸ Further examples have not been reported and it is likely that many are still underground, waiting to be discovered. Again, more than the existence or non-existence of historical sources, what has really influenced the picture we have of production centers is the state of the research.

Although Fatimid pieces abound in museums, exhibitions, and books, we still lack deeper analyses. Archaeological finds are rarely encountered in the scientific literature because these objects, which are

generally represented by well-preserved examples found in museum collections, are still thought to be more a part of art history than Islamic archaeology. The common motifs representing human forms and other decoration along with spiral sgraffito are still the main ones typically cited as characteristic of these wares.

Beginnings of local production

Most interesting and noteworthy is a small group of early lusterware found in the southern part of the Iberian Peninsula (fig. 8). Until quite recently, the set was considered Fatimid,²⁹ and at first glance their features are self-evident, showing a direct stylistic link to Fatim-

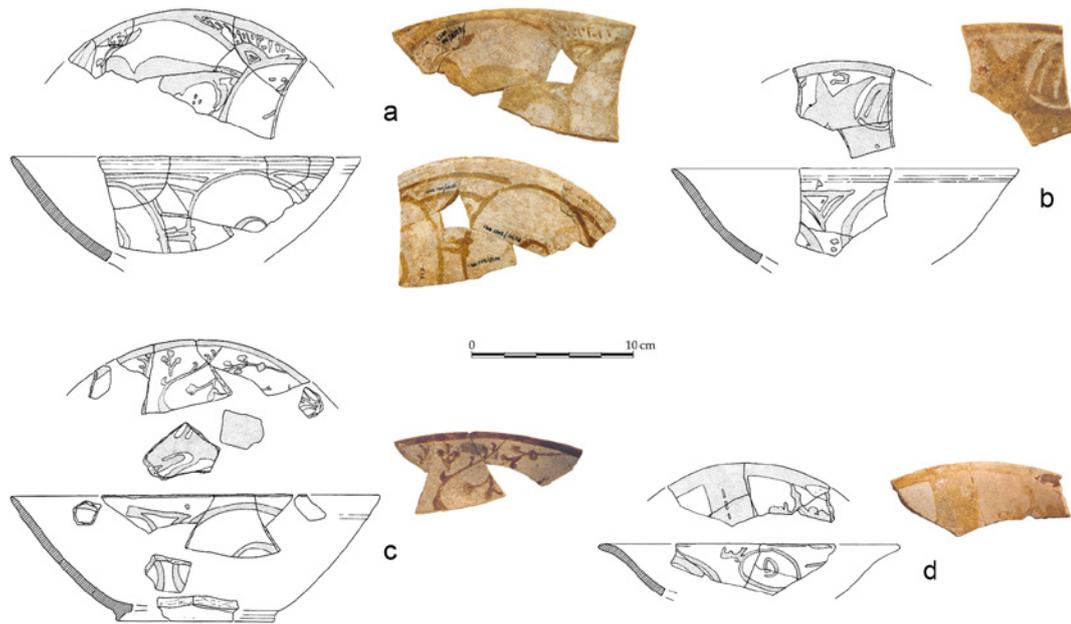


Fig. 9. Early lusterware from the Marca Superior, Spain, late eleventh/early twelfth century: a–c) Albarracín (Teruel), old castle; d) Valencia, Old City, Almoína (stratified date: eleventh century). (Photos and drawings: Anja Heidenreich)

id wares, as well as chronological evidence pointing to the period of importation from Egypt in the eleventh century mentioned earlier.

The inscriptions surrounding the inside edge of the four bowls name not only the artisan who made them but also their owner—a well-known feature of Fatimid ceramic production under the reign of al-Hakim (r. 996–1021) in Cairo. But its message, which we shall analyze in a later section, does not make reference to this ruler but to two Abbadid princes of Seville, who are identified by their proper names and titles.

It is striking that no changes in style are identifiable over the fifty-year period between these two princes and their ceramic products. These pieces seem to be stylistically static; they are decorated conservatively, directly inspired by their Egyptian originals. We are referring not only to the way the inscriptions were written but also to their position and the calligraphic details, which make them quite similar to the production of al-Hakim.

Another set of similar sherds has been added to the above group due to the technical congruence of the paste. Lacking inscriptions, they are identified by their

turquoise ground, another element that relates them to the Fatimid models. This latter grouping, which began to appear around 1060, represents a chronological milestone in early lusterware on the Peninsula, as it points to the existence of local workshops where this technological development would be possible. It is only a question of time before more specimens of this type are found in future excavations.

If we examine the evidence chronologically, we should add other lusterware material, which possibly originated in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries in several workshops located in the Ebro valley. Most of these finds come from archaeological sites, allowing us to date these ceramic pieces according to the stratified layers in which they were found. The earliest pieces still feature the outside decoration and the inside division found in the lusterware of the Taifa of Seville (fig. 9). This group is not homogeneous, but has been expanded to include a certain number of recent remarkable finds from various locations in the region.³⁰

These pieces are of a lesser quality in terms of artistic technique, and the motifs are clearly simpler, indicating that they are derivative works, produced under condi-

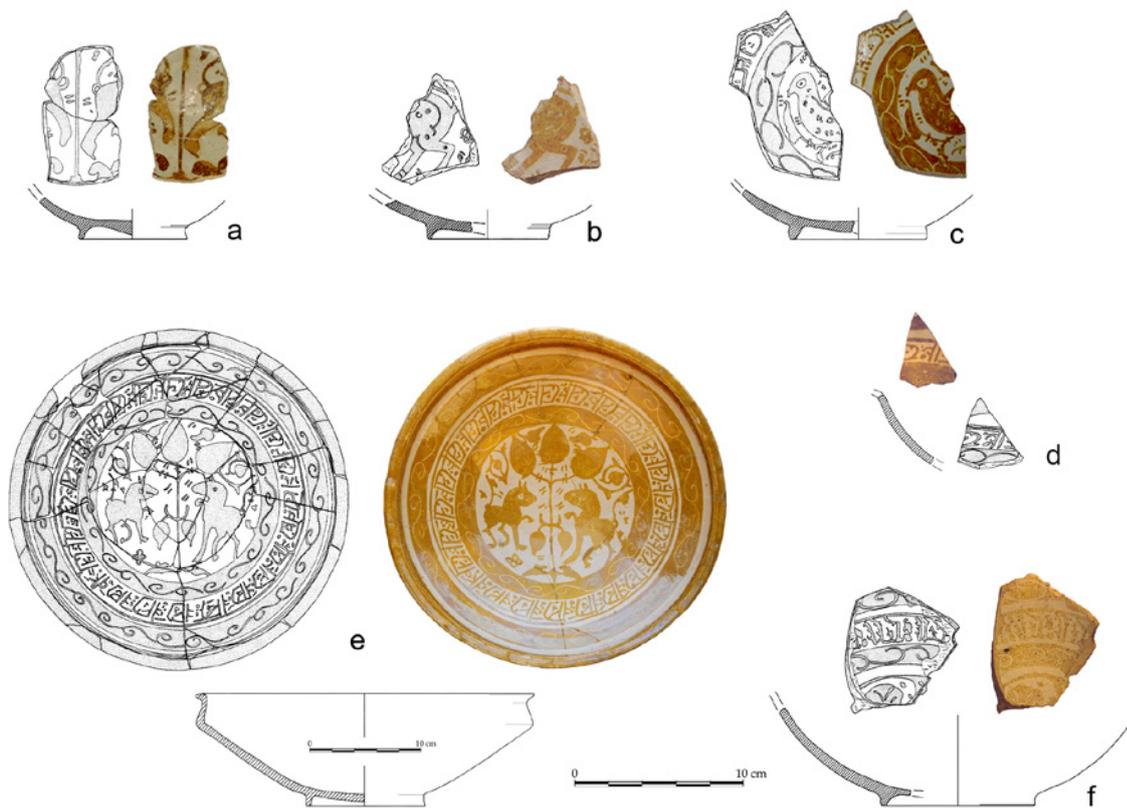


Fig. 10. Early lusterware from the Marca Superior, decorated with the pseudo-epigraphic inscription *al-yumn*, early twelfth century: a) Tudela, Old City, Calle Corta Pelaires; b) Tudela, Old City, Manzana de la Rua; c) Zaragoza, Roman theater; d) Albarracín, castle; e) Tudela, Old City, Calle Corta Pelaires, floor; f) Tiermes, Fatimid (?) lusterware decorated with the inscription *al-yumn*, eleventh century. (Photos and drawings: Anja Heidenreich)

tions that differed from those of Sevillian lusterware. None show any similarity with the styles of Fatimid Egypt. The remaining distinguishable groups from the Ebro valley are from the twelfth century. This material has been described in often-debated written sources on early luster-painted ceramic wares of the Upper March, or Marca Superior (*al-thaghr al-a'lā*), of the caliphate, which were different from the Almohad lusterwares of al-Andalus. Differing qualities have been observed in this grouping, whose glazes are soiled with soot, bearing crudely painted motifs. This suggests that the workshops offered a wide range of qualities and prices to their patrons. In the luster paint, yellowish tones dominate, set off by a characteristic intense coppery red, perhaps influenced by other contemporaneous products

from al-Andalus in the second half of the twelfth century. Among these pieces is one particularly interesting specimen, decorated with a pseudo-epigraphic motif containing a band of repeated, faux Arabic lettering (fig. 10).

In addition to the well-known bowl from Tudela, we have sherds from Zaragoza and Albarracín,³¹ all containing an imitation of the *al-yumn* inscription decorated with animal and tree-of-life motifs. In terms of decoration and artistic techniques, they all share characteristics that suggest they were produced in the same workshop. The epigraphic inscriptions, treated as though they were a decorative frieze, indicate their origins in a mudejar workshop that continued producing lusterware throughout the twelfth century, in accor-

dance with Islamic tradition. A stylistic analysis of the pseudo-epigraphy supports this thesis, although it is worth mentioning that pseudo-epigraphy and imitations of Arabic lettering also form part of the decorative repertoire of late Fatimid wares, even the celebrated ones produced by the well-known artisan Sa'd (who usually signed his work on the bottom of the bowls), and therefore cannot be considered a mark of lesser quality or proof of intervention on the part of Christian artisans. Curiously, there is a similar piece from Tiermes that bears the *al-yumn* inscription, this time written using the correct letters (fig. 10f).

To this current group of finds from the Marca Superior we can add a large new set of objects discovered at the Onda Castle (province of Castellón), which includes sherds from at least twenty-six luster-painted vessels. In 2011, this impressive assemblage of ceramic pieces was found in a fill dating to the eleventh century, in an excavation located at the entrance to the castle. This lusterware find represents 11.88 percent of all glazed sherds from the excavation and will help confirm some of the data on the ceramic groups found in the Ebro valley.³²

Lastly, we come to the early Almohad pieces made in the second half of the twelfth century, which are found in the southern area of the Peninsula. For a long time, both in Spain and abroad these pieces were thought to be the oldest examples of lusterware from the Iberian Peninsula. Almohad ceramics have been highly valued by collectors for a long time, and in many cases this has made it difficult to date them and reconstruct their exact cultural context. The specimens that were used to decorate the façades of medieval Tuscan cathedrals are easier to date, as are the pieces found in dated sites, whose number has increased considerably in recent years. These finds will assist scholars in their evaluation. The grouping found in the stratified site of Mértola (Portugal) (fig. 11) can be dated to the second half of the twelfth century—although written sources did not refer to these until the thirteenth century—a date that for many years was fixed among art historians. Apart from this “classical” group, there are also sub-groups of lusterware from the southern region of the Peninsula, where the finds seem to be more heterogeneous than those of the Marca Superior.

Starting in the mid-twelfth century there may have existed numerous independent workshops in the south-

ern Iberian Peninsula, such as the workshop located in the Mértola area, which produced striking jugs and deep bowls decorated in a coarser manner. In addition to these fragments found in the Almohad layers of the Islamic quarter of Mértola at the foot of the castle, there are other pieces that have been discovered in Andalusi sites. These include the nearly identical sherds from Calatrava la Vieja and Cieza, which have been dated to 1200 using historical sources and/or archaeological methods (fig. 11h).

There are also Mértola jugs and vases from the same period known as “relief wares” (fig. 12). Produced by artisans using bivalve molds, these items are decorated with a tin glaze, and some of the relief areas have been luster-painted or covered in a dark brown glaze (as in the case of Mértola), whose visible defects, arising from firing temperatures that were too high, indicate that they were more likely produced locally than imported.³³ The one-color surface clearly suggests an Almohad style of the purest kind, although the occasional luster-painted area departs from this aesthetic. This is another example of the direct and continued influence of Fatimid ceramics, which in their late phase included jugs that are practically identical, though these wares were made using an alkaline glass due to the introduction of silica. It is believed that one or more production centers existed in the southernmost regions of the Peninsula, whose wares were brought to Córdoba and Málaga, and may have been exported to Fustat.³⁴

In order to better understand the exchange of techniques in this period, let us take a moment to examine the written sources on Mediterranean trade during the tenth and eleventh centuries. These texts show the extensive commercial network that existed well before the caliphate and how it increased under the new rulers. The movement of goods was quite regular and would later peak during the Taifa period, in terms of both frequency and volume. The goods included raw materials and slaves, which generally left or arrived at ports located along the coast of the Peninsula. There are documents detailing individual trade transactions, along with ones describing contacts made for large-scale trade initiatives. In addition to basic foodstuffs, other materials such as silk and cotton were bought and sold. These texts describe a substantial trade system, whose archaeological remains account for only a tiny proportion of

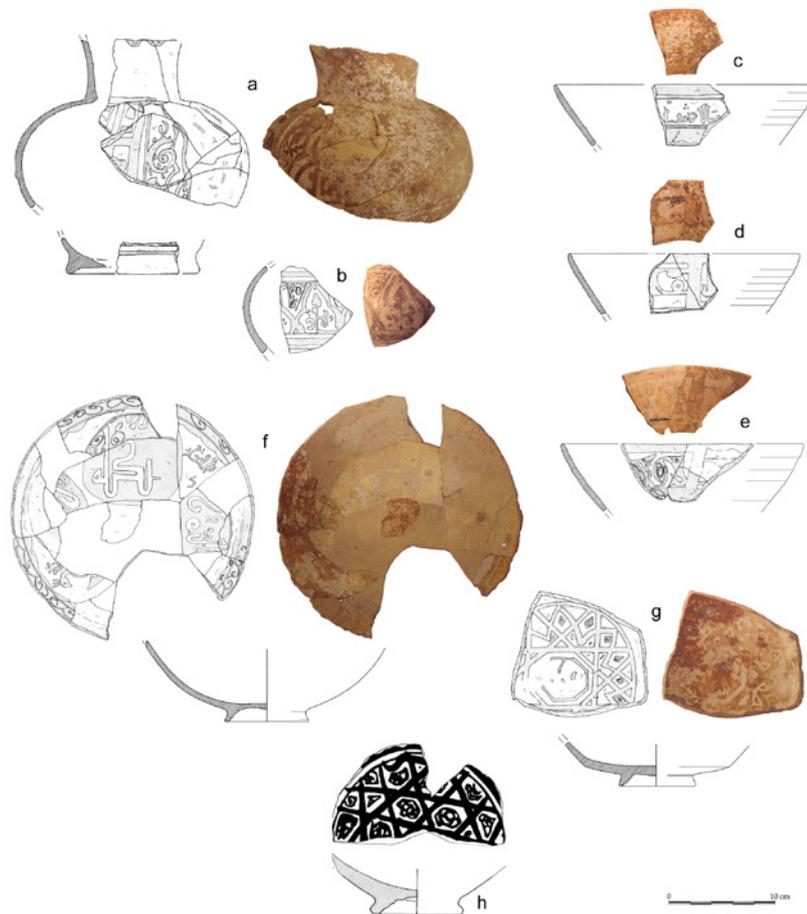


Fig. 11. Lusterware from Garb al-Andalus, second half of the twelfth century: a, c–g) Mértola, Almohad district, b) Silves, castle (Photos and drawings: Anja Heidenreich); h) Calatrava la Vieja, around 1200 (Photo: Juan Zozaya et al., “Cerámica andalusi de reflejo dorado: 1195–1212,” in *Actes du 5ème Colloque sur la Céramique Médiévale, Rabat 1991* [Rabat, 1995], 121–24, fig. 2)

excavation finds, since most materials that were bought and sold were organic in nature. Ostensibly, artisanal material such as ceramic pieces never figured prominently in the regional trade, since they were traded only occasionally and were generally added as ancillary loads to commercial vessel cargoes.³⁵

Fustat, whose potters were always at the vanguard of fashion and new influences from the East, was a key trading city of the Mediterranean region and saw the transit of luxury goods from the Far and Middle East. This busy trade led to the development of a system of maritime logistics capable of delivering ceramics to any

Mediterranean city. Yet Andalusí products still enjoyed popularity and success. Extraordinary ceramics from the Peninsula, including many luxury pieces offered in a variety of styles, were shipped to numerous locales across the Mediterranean Sea. This commerce suffered no territorial or major political restriction, and was subject only to the laws of supply and demand, as well as to the interests of the merchants, who were driven by the opportunity to make a profit.

When the Berber Almoravid and Almohad dynasties arrived in the twelfth century, this commerce gradually began to wane, long before the Peninsula was conquered

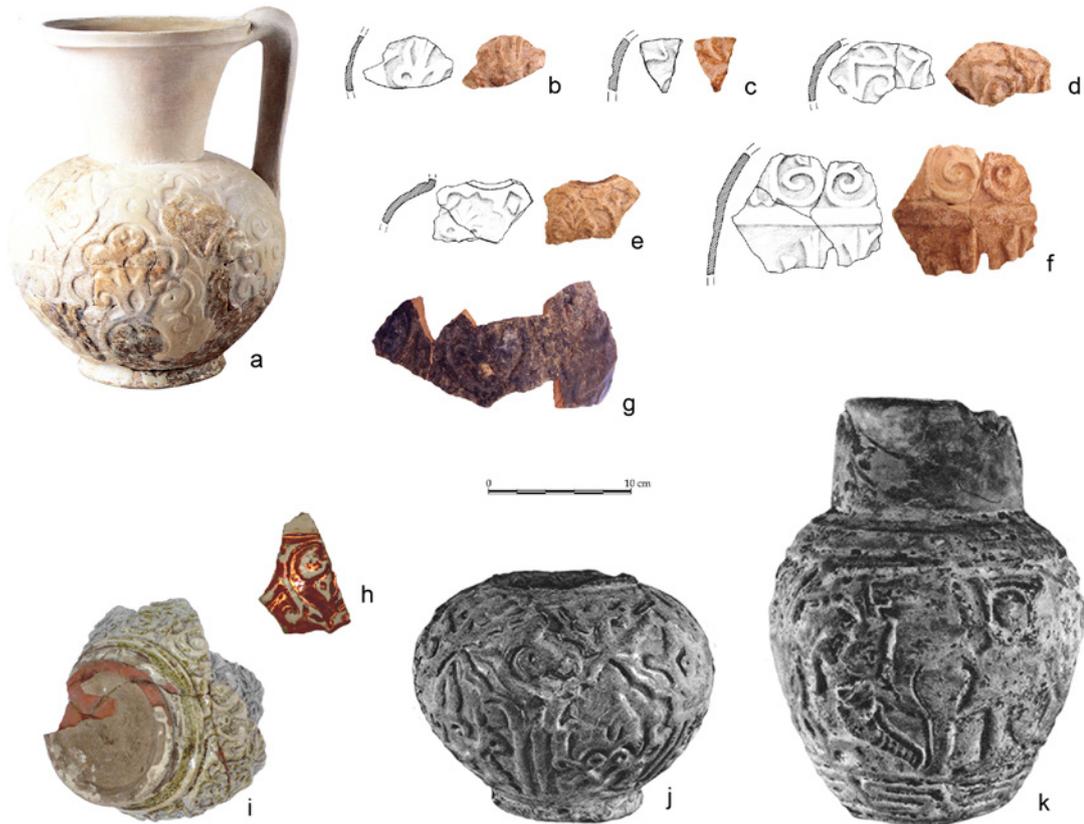


Fig. 12. “Relief ware,” partially luster-painted, Garb al-Andalus, second half of the twelfth century: a–f) Mértola, Almohad district, g) Mértola, Almohad district, from an identical mold with a different glaze color, defective (Photos and drawings: Anja Heidenreich); h, i) Fustat (Andalusian export) (Photos: Anja Heidenreich; stored in the Museum für islamische Kunst, Berlin); j) Córdoba (Photo: Martínez-Caviró, *La loza dorada*, 31, fig. 23); k) Málaga (Photo: Martínez-Caviró, *Cerámica hispanomusulmana, andalusí y mudéjar*, 71, fig. 48)

by Christian rulers, and the increased maritime power of the Italian republics would radically alter this picture of Mediterranean trade.

ANDALUSI LUSTERWARE AND THE TAIFA OF SEVILLE

This study demonstrates the existence in Seville of lusterware production centers that operated under the authority of the Abbadid princes over several decades during the second half of the eleventh century. Deliberately situated within the Taifa period, this material clearly bears the direct influences of the various luxury

ceramics produced in both the Western and Eastern regions of the Islamic realm—a phenomenon not unheard of in the history of Islamic ceramics. The fragments included in this grouping possess decorative and technical features that have allowed for a distinct characterization of this type of lusterware.³⁶ Research conducted thus far has found these types represented mainly in the southern regions of the Iberian Peninsula.

These ceramic pieces are distinguished by their characteristic two-color decoration, usually consisting of light brown and olive-brown hues. The exterior surfaces of the bowls are decorated with large circles and medium-sized stripes (figs. 16b, 17b, 18b, and 20b).

The set of specimens studied here consists of five fragments, each decorated with epigraphic inscriptions; four come from bowls and the fifth once formed part of a lid that was discovered at the Real Alcázar of Seville in 2004.³⁷ The updated and detailed study of the inscriptions clearly shows that they were produced on the Iberian Peninsula during the second half of the eleventh century. The inscriptions contain the names of the Abbadid kings of the Sevillian Taifa, al-Mu'tadid (r. 1042–69) and his successor, al-Mu'tamid (r. 1069–1091), who are explicitly mentioned as having commissioned the lusterware pieces.

This additional historical and political information has allowed us to situate this group of specimens within the greater group of Islamic ceramic pieces produced on the Iberian Peninsula. We may identify them as the only examples found thus far to be produced in a kiln under royal authority that was organized and operated in a manner comparable to the *ṭirāz* textile workshops. To date it has not been possible to establish such a finding for items other than ivories or textiles within the latter half of the eleventh century under Taifa rule in al-Andalus. Production centers that were controlled by the royal court have only been recognized in pottery manufactured during earlier periods.

The similarities in the decorative techniques used on these ceramic pieces and their specific calligraphic features, as well as the existence of the aforementioned glazed turquoise piece—a color hitherto observed only in Fatimid Egypt—indicate that Egyptian artisans may have been brought to Seville at the order of the Abbids. This migration of artisans “from the East” (*fakhhārī al-Mashriq*) was also observed in the eleventh century by the Córdoba-born Jewish physician Abu 'l-Walid Marwan Ibn Janah (d. 1039), who offers interesting details about the new pottery manufacture in al-Andalus. He describes the oriental craftsmen (*ba'dṣannā' min ahl al-Mashriq*) in Córdoba who used wooden wheels instead of the common stone potter's wheels employed by the locals.³⁸ Artisans of the Peninsula learned these new techniques and how to apply them using local means and raw materials available in the region.³⁹ Another proof of the existence of lusterware in the Toledan Taifa is the lusterware plate (*ṣahfa mudhahhaba*) mentioned

in a contract among the notarial deeds of Ibn al-Mughith (d. 1067).⁴⁰

At least one set of items produced on the Iberian Peninsula during an earlier period shows clear technical and decorative similarities, such as the large circular motifs on the outer surfaces of these pieces and the placement of designs within large rounded cartouches on the inner surfaces.⁴¹ These motifs have been observed on low-quality, artistically inferior fragments found mainly in Albarraçín, Valencia, and, as mentioned earlier, in greater quantities in Onda. The study of these specimens indicates that these new techniques spread rapidly during the second half of the eleventh century, up to the Marca Superior or the northern frontier of al-Andalus, the other traditional center of lusterware production since the end of the eleventh century. These techniques subsequently spread to workshops in the southern regions of the Iberian Peninsula.

Epigraphic decoration on pottery

The inscriptions found on lusterware from al-Andalus are largely restricted to single words, sometimes repeated, and almost always in fragments. It is quite possible that this sort of design was used for decorative purposes rather than for its literal sense. Judging from the calligraphic style, we know that most of these pieces were produced during the Almoravid and Almohad dynasties (twelfth and thirteenth centuries), a period in which al-Andalus reached its economic and cultural zenith.⁴²

Despite the existence of these generally brief and succinct decorative inscriptions, there is a long tradition of the use of poetic messages or longer texts in which the object spoke in the first person, as attested by literary sources and ceramic wares found in archaeological excavations and the antique market and held today in museums and art collections.⁴³ Until now no clear evidence has been found to show that ceramics of this type were being produced in al-Andalus in a workshop under the control of a sovereign, nor has anyone been able to identify epigraphic inscriptions bearing the name of a king either preceded or followed by proverbs or expressions of good fortune.

Yet this is what we have been able to ascertain in five specimens of lusterware produced during the reign of

the Abbadid court of Seville during the Taifa period of al-Andalus. These fragments come to us from fortuitous finds or excavations that took place after 1983. They were parts of bowls, and one was possibly part of a lid. Discovered in Silves, Palma del Río, and Seville, these ceramic fragments share a common characteristic: they all feature Arabic inscriptions in a concentric band around the inside edge of the piece encircling a central decorative motif.

The baseline of the inscriptions decorating our lusterware fragments is circular and runs concentrically around the center of the bowl, as does nearly every specimen dated from the eleventh to the thirteenth century from both the East and West.⁴⁴ The inscriptions differ from those found in the majority of older pieces dating from before the tenth century, where the writing baseline appears on the edge. We find a large number of Nishapur ceramic bowls or plates (mid-ninth and tenth century) with elegantly painted Arabic inscriptions on the upper edge whose writing baseline runs along the rim.⁴⁵ The surviving inscription has enabled us to piece together the sovereign title of two rulers of the Sevillian dynasty, al-Muʿtadid and al-Muʿtamid.

Some of the fragments share similarities in the style of Kufic writing employed. However, we have observed some differences that may be attributable to variations in the official epigraphic style of the kingdom, which, as is well known, depended on political factors particular to each court; nor can we rule out the intervention of a careless artisan in some of the inscriptions. We must also consider the likelihood that these ceramic objects were produced in a workshop affiliated with the *dār al-ṣināʿa* (lit. house of manufacturing) of the Sevillian rulers—a workshop that probably carried out its activities in much the same way as an Abbadid *ṭirāz* workshop, following in the tradition of Andalusī workshops of the Umayyad period.⁴⁶

The Taifa of Seville

The collapse of the Andalusian Umayyad caliphate in 1031 fragmented al-Andalus into principalities and locally ruled kingdoms, and the city of Córdoba became a mere provincial town. This period is known as the era of the “party kings,” or petty monarchs (Arabic: *mulūk al-ṭawāʾif*; Spanish: *reyes de taifas*). The illustrious capital

city of Córdoba was soon eclipsed by the flourishing dynasties of Seville, Badajoz, Granada, and Toledo. The city that boasted the most formidable military and the greatest artists of all these rival kingdoms was Seville, ruled by the Abbadids. Notwithstanding the excesses and cruelty of its princes, the dynasty of the Abbadids may be regarded as the most brilliant of the rulers of the taifas, enjoying an unrivalled reputation for literary and artistic works in eleventh-century al-Andalus.⁴⁷

Abuʿl-Qasim Muhammad ibn Ismaʿil ibn ʿAbbad, the kadi of Seville and founder of the dynasty (r. 1023–42), was renowned for his judicious and wise rule, while his son, Abu ʿAmr ʿAbbad al-Muʿtadid, was feared for his tyranny and fierce nature. Nonetheless, poets and scholars gravitated to al-Muʿtadid’s court, since he was also known as a great patron of literature and art, as well as a poet in his own right. The new king, who took the princely title of *ḥājib* (chamberlain) but later adopted the honorific title (*laqab*) al-Muʿtadid, by which he is known, considerably expanded the territory of the principality of Seville.

Abuʿl-Qasim Muhammad ibn ʿAbbad al-Muʿtamid, the third and last ruler of the ʿAbbadid dynasty, annexed Córdoba in 1078. His reputation as an enlightened, benevolent ruler and gifted poet soon surpassed that of his forebears. The biographer Ibn Khallikan described the court of al-Muʿtamid as “the healing place of travelers, the rendezvous of poets, the point to which all hopes were directed and the haunt of men of talent.”⁴⁸ Al-Muʿtamid inherited not only the reins of power from his ancestors but their poetic talent as well.

Epigraphic luster-painted ceramic wares under al-Muʿtadid

This section presents an analysis of the pieces thought to have been manufactured during the reign of al-Muʿtadid bi-llah of the Taifa of Seville, who was also known as al-Mansur bi-fadl Allah. These fragments, labeled Se-4, Se-5, and Si-2, are included in the appendix.⁴⁹ In terms of epigraphy, these three pieces share a number of characteristics: inscriptions decorate the rims of each of these bowls, and they are all concentric, taking up the entire circumference of the bowl. The let-

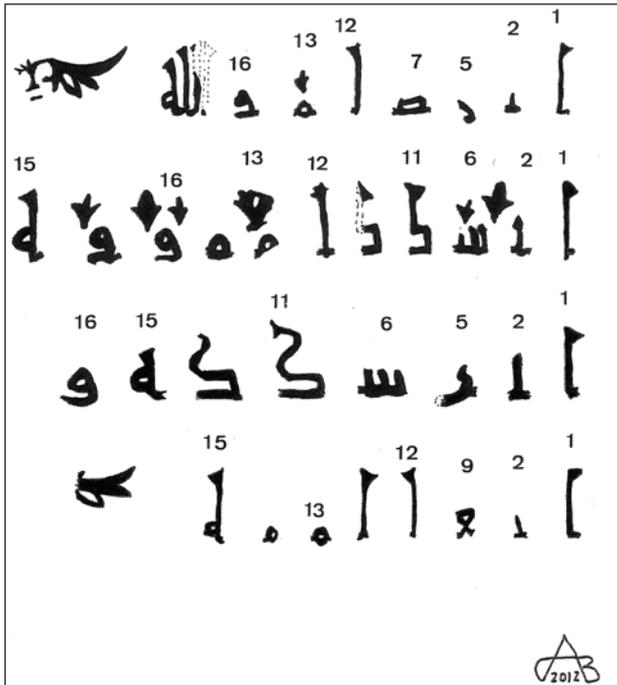


Fig. 13. Inscriptions preserved on three fragments of lusterware commissioned by the king of Seville al-Mu'tamid (r. 1042–69). Groups of characters are arranged alphabetically.

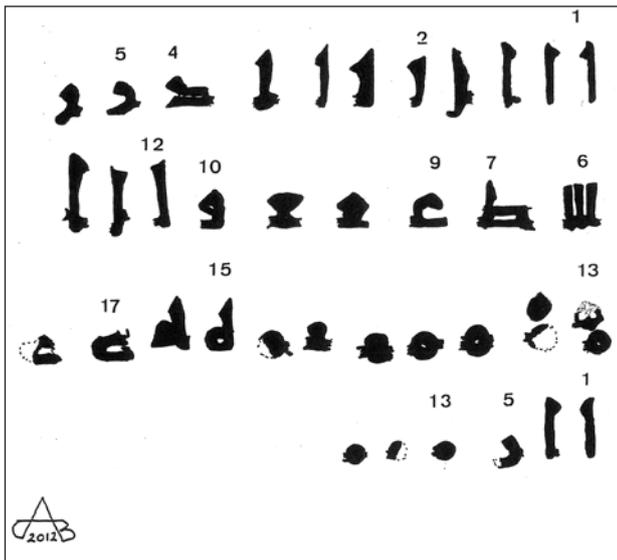


Fig. 14. Inscriptions preserved on three fragments of lusterware commissioned by the king of Seville, al-Mu'tamid (r. 1069–91). Groups of characters are arranged alphabetically.



Fig. 15. A marble fragment inscribed with the name *al-Mu'tadid*. Found at the Moura Castle (Portugal). Museu Municipal, Moura. (Drawing: Ana Labarta and Carmen Barceló)

tering style used is painted and infilled with the same color (figs. 13 and 14).

Fragment Se-5 features a thick line painted along the edge of the bowl and a double-band inscription. The first band, 1.5 centimeters wide, is separated from the second one by a 1-centimeter-wide line. Both lines serve as a guide for the inscriptions and are concentric with the center of the bowl. The inscription running along the outer edge of the bowl reads: [A]llāh al-Manṣūr. Over this *ductus* is a double floral palmette (similar to that seen in Se-4), which is missing its leftmost end; there is also another small foliate motif over the letter *mīm* (our 13m).⁵⁰ The Kufic characters used here are very similar to those shown in the inscription found at Moura (Portugal), which celebrates the construction of a minaret by order of the ruler al-Mu'tadid bi-llah of Seville (fig. 15). This undated inscription also refers to him as "*al-Manṣūr bi-faḍl Allāh*."⁵¹

In fragment Se-5, the second epigraphic band contains two examples of the letter 13i-m, followed by letters 12i, 16f, 11i, 15f, 16a, 6i, 1f, and the beginning of 11i (fig. 16a). We interpret this as "*mamlūkay-hi wa-Shāk[ir]*," that is, "his two slaves and Shāk[ir]," which is also part of the inscription in fragment Si-2 (see appendix). The character 11i of the latter differs slightly, perhaps because it was produced at a later time or by another artisan. This second epigraphic band also features the same foliate mo-



Fig. 16a. Lusterware fragment of a bowl, inner surface (Se-5, in appendix). Spain (Taifa period), around 1060. Archaeological Museum, Seville, REP2002/2. (Photo: Isabel Mª Villanueva Romero)



Fig. 16b. Lusterware fragment of a bowl, outer surface (Se-5, in appendix). Spain (Taifa period), around 1060. Archaeological Museum, Seville, REP2002/2. (Photo: Isabel Mª Villanueva Romero)

tifs (four in this case) that occupy the spaces above the letters (fig. 16a). The largest is located above the first letter of this band (character 13i). This motif is common in epigraphic art of al-Andalus from the middle of the tenth century onwards.⁵²

We have not been able to find any references in our historical texts to an individual serving the Sevillian court who went by the name of Shakir, but there were three Andalusí scholars who lived during the eleventh and twelfth centuries who had this name: Shakir ibn Khayra, a *mawlā* (lit. protégé or client) of the Amirid family of Almanzor raised in Játiva; Shakir ibn Muhammad ibn Shakir of Toledo; and an individual from Beja named Shakir ibn Jannah, who lived and died in Monchique.⁵³ Based on their biographies, the first in particular, we believe that the man referred to as a *kātib* of the Sevillian court in the inscription was a *mawlā* or *fatā* (lit. high officer) of this sovereign.⁵⁴ As the names of the slaves have not survived, we cannot speculate about them; however, it is certain that they refer to two individuals (*mamlūkay*), as this word cannot be read as a regular plural in the Arabic language.

Although the *laqab* al-Mansur in the inscription found on Se-5 may have been used in reference to another ruler within or outside the Iberian Peninsula, it is still one of the titles also given, as we have just seen, to al-Muʿtadid.⁵⁵ The date attributed to fragment Se-5 corresponds to the reign of this Abbadid prince, between

1041 and 1069. We can further narrow the period to the last decade of the Sevillian ruler's lifetime (1060–1069), since the inscription clearly shares features—both in appearance and in the texts—with the piece found at the Silves castle (Si-2).

In effect, the inscription of Si-2 is framed by lines above and below it, forming a double band. If we look at the baseline, which runs concentric with the bottom of the bowl, the final stroke of *wāw* (character 16) can be discerned, followed by the characters 11i, 2m, 15f, 16a, 6i, 1m–f, 11i, 5m–f, and the beginning of a character, which by its height and position we believe to be 11i (fig. 13). Therefore the inscription reads: [*maml*] *ūkay-hi wa-Shākir* [atā-hu] (his two [s]laves and Shakir [his] *fa*[tā]). This inscription also appears in the second band of fragment Se-5 (even though the strokes found in the latter vary slightly in style). Characters 2, 5, and 11 are similar to those appearing on the glazed tiles of the Qalʿat Bani Hammad (fig. 3m).⁵⁶ Moreover, character 11i is similar to the one used during the same period in Fatimid Egypt and in Ifriqiya; that is, with an upper segment bearing a pronounced right-slanting curve.

The Sevillian Abbadid dynasty annexed the Taifa of Silves for the first time in 1052 and then permanently in 1063. The presence of this fragment in this Portuguese city has allowed us to posit a date for the piece between 1052, when the first annexation took place, and 1069, the year in which the Sevillian ruler al-Muʿtadid bi-llah died.



Fig. 17a. Lusterware fragment of a bowl, inner surface with inscriptions within the decorative bands on the rim of the bowl (Se-4, in appendix). Spain (Taifa period), around 1060. Archaeological Museum, Seville, REP2002/3. (Photo: Isabel Mª Villanueva Romero)



Fig. 17b. Lusterware fragment of a bowl, outer surface (Se-4, in appendix). Spain (Taifa period), around 1060. Archaeological Museum, Seville, REP2002/3. (Photo: Isabel Mª Villanueva Romero)

On Se-4, the line painted on the rim of the bowl forms an epigraphic band along with another, wider line, located about 0.8 cm below it. Greenish in color, it serves as the baseline for the inscription (fig. 17a). The band features portions of the character 9m, followed by 13m, 12m, and 15f, which we interpret as “[bi-]‘amali-*hi*” (to be made). This is followed by characters that allow us to easily reconstruct the word “*al-Mu‘tadi[d]*.” The Kufic lettering used in Se-4 bears a strong resemblance to the inscription described earlier, which was discovered at Moura (Portugal) and celebrates the construction of a minaret under the orders of the ruler of Seville, al-Mu‘tadid bi-llah (fig. 15). The most notable difference between these two pieces can be found in the lettering of the honorific title (fig. 13). In Se-4 there is no connecting stroke between characters 2 and 9, and the upper stroke of *hā*’ (character 15f) is as high as character 12m in the first word. There is a floral motif in the blank space above the letters of the title. Today only the right-most portion is visible. This is also true for fragment Se-5.

The date of fragment Se-4 has been narrowed to the reign of al-Mu‘tadid bi-llah (r. 1041–69), as mentioned earlier, the title held by ‘Abbad ibn Muhammad ibn ‘Abbad, second sovereign of the Taifa of Seville, which, as we have seen, appears on the other specimen. Based on the epigraphic considerations presented above, we

believe that this is the oldest example in the group, even though the differences in chronology between Se-4 and the other two fragments may be due to the appointment of a different kiln overseer or perhaps the work of different artisans within the production process.

Epigraphic luster-painted ceramic wares under al-Mu‘tamid

Only two lusterware specimens with inscriptions in Arabic can be attributed to the period during the reign of al-Mu‘tamid (r. 1069–1091), since both inscriptions (in PaR-1 and AlcSe-1) share identical Kufic characters (fig. 14). As we have seen in the fragments dated to the reign of his predecessor, the epigraphic inscriptions on these pieces all share some characteristics: the way in which their rims are decorated, the concentrically placed inscriptions occupying the entire rim of the piece, and the use of solid lettering, that is, lettering whose infill is of the same color as its outline (fig. 18a).

In PaR-1, the epigraphic inscription is painted within a band approximately 1.5 centimeters high, consisting of two lines. One line (0.2 cm) runs along the bowl’s rim and the other (0.3 cm) is placed below it, towards the center of the plate, forming the baseline for the inscription. A small portion of the original text survives in two of the fragments, yet only the writing found on the larger portion (consisting of variously sized fragments) is



Fig. 18a. Lusterware fragments of a bowl, inner surface, signed by “*Tammām*” (PaR-1, in appendix). Spain (Taifa period), around 1090. Archaeological Museum, Córdoba, CE026544. (Photo: courtesy of the Archaeological Museum, Córdoba)



Fig. 18b. Lusterware fragments of a bowl, outer surface, signed by “*Tammām*” (PaR-1, in appendix). Spain (Taifa period), around 1090. Archaeological Museum, Córdoba, CE026544. (Photo: courtesy of the Archaeological Museum, Córdoba)

legible. The letters are not as slender as the monumental epigraphy characteristic of the first decade of the reign of the Abbadid “poet king,” but they bear a stronger resemblance to an early twelfth-century Sevillian tombstone made of marble,⁵⁷ indicating that this fragment was probably produced during the final years of al-Mu‘tamid’s reign.

Many years have passed since Guerrero Lovillo published the interpretation of the 10-centimeter-long inscription on the better-preserved portion. Ocaña translated it as: “which was commissioned by al-Mu‘tamid under the supervision of...”⁵⁸ However, this interpretation had very little impact since the material was discovered in a small village of Córdoba.⁵⁹ Greater interest in the piece has been shown in recent studies, which have suggested that the king may have taken it with him on some of his journeys.⁶⁰

We believe that this specimen was produced in a kiln in Seville that was under the control of the sovereign, although our interpretation of this portion of the epigraphy differs from Ocaña’s. In our reading, the preposition ‘*alā*’ appearing after the title does not introduce the artisan’s name but is part of the *laqab*; the inscription would then read as follows: *mimmā amara bi-‘amali-hi al-Mu‘tamid ‘alā* [Allāh] (which was commissioned by

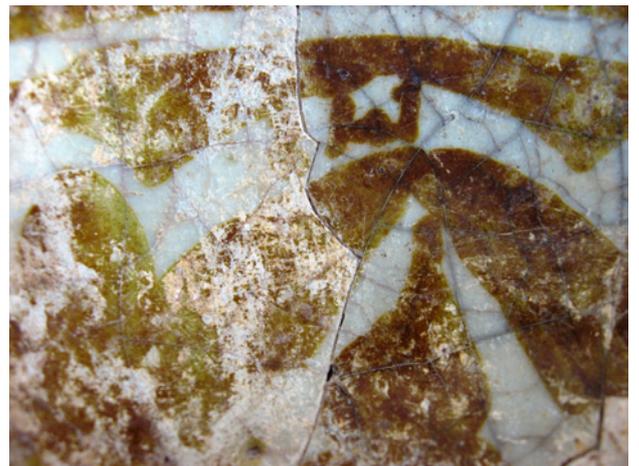


Fig. 19. Detail of the name “*Tammām*” (PaR-1, in appendix). Spain (Taifa period), around 1090. Archaeological Museum, Córdoba, CE026544. (Photo: courtesy of the Archaeological Museum, Córdoba)

al-Mu‘tamid ‘alā [Allāh]). The only decoration in the epigraphic band is a foliate motif above the two 13i characters (letter *mīm*).⁶¹ As stated earlier, this design was commonly used during the Umayyad caliphate of Córdoba.



Fig. 20a. Lusterware fragment of a bowl, inner surface (AlcSe-1, in appendix). Spain (Taifa period), around 1090. Archaeological Museum, Seville. (Photo: Remedios Huarte Cambra)



Fig. 20b. Lusterware fragment of a bowl, outer surface (AlcSe-1, in appendix). Spain (Taifa period), around 1090. Archaeological Museum, Seville. (Photo: Remedios Huarte Cambra)

New photographs of fragment PaR-1 taken at our request⁶² have helped in the interpretation of a hitherto undeciphered portion of the epigraphic inscription, now quite faded (fig. 18a). The extreme left-hand side of this fragment shows an expression often used in medieval Arabic epigraphy to introduce the text: *bi-sm*, or “in the name of.” It is likely that the word “[*Allāh*]” was placed at this point, since it is the only word that is possible in the space that follows, which is connected to the adjacent portion of the better-preserved inscriptions. At the beginning of this band we also deciphered very faint letters, which we believe to be “[*fī qasri-hi*,” that is, “at his palace.” These few words, which conclude and introduce the epigraphy of PaR-1, are of great importance because they refer to the existence of a potter’s workshop within the residential complex of the Abbadid sovereign in Seville; this demonstrates that the inscription was painted along the entire rim of the object.

Fragment PaR-1 holds yet another surprise: underneath the inscription *bi-‘amali-hi*, in the blank space (0.5 cm) between the palmettes that adorn the fragments and the circle separating them from the epigraphic band, are some characters, namely, the letters 2i, 13m, 1f, and 13a, which we have interpreted as: *Tammām* (fig. 19). Artisans’ names were sometimes painted on the

green and manganese ceramics made during the Cordoban caliphate.⁶³ The famous Fatimid artisan named Muslim put his name on some of his works in the blank space between the floral decoration, as happens in our bowl from Seville.⁶⁴ We believe that these characters, which were overlooked in our first study of these fragments, refer to the name of the artisan who decorated and inscribed the bowl; it is a male name, perhaps that of a slave who served at this Abbadid court. Although the date attributed to this bowl corresponds to the period of the Taifa of Seville under al-Mu‘tamid (1069–1091), the epigraphic features suggest that the bowl can be dated toward the end of his reign, between 1088 and 1092.

On fragment AlcSe-1, the baseline of the inscription runs along the rim of the bowl, in contrast to the four other specimens, where the baseline is positioned inside, closer to the center of the bowl. We believe that the inscription, which is approximately one centimeter wide, was painted in this manner because the original vessel was probably meant to be used as a lid or a cover for a bowl (fig. 20a). The fragment contains the following unadorned letters (fig. 14): 13i, 13m, 1f, 1a, 13i, and 5f, which we have interpreted as “*mimmā amara*” (which was commissioned by). This lettering, identical to that used in PaR-1, places this example in the same period,

that is, the last decade of al-Mu'tamid's reign, between 1088 and 1092.

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE INSCRIPTIONS

To understand these five specimens vis-à-vis the broader context of Andalusí pottery, we cannot rely solely on the interpretation of their epigraphs (although this task has enabled us to situate them clearly within the chronology of al-Andalus).⁶⁵ It may also prove advantageous to reconstruct the painted inscriptions and then use them to determine the sequence of the main elements that were usually included in inscriptions of this type. We might thus begin to piece together the official procedure followed by the royal Abbadid workshop.

Arabic epigraphy experts have established a rigorous set of elements that appear—and do not appear—in inscriptions, depending on the purpose of the vessel, the period of rule, and the regions where they were produced.⁶⁶ For the Andalusí period the classical study by Lévi-Provençal established a system of nine elements employed during the period of the Umayyad caliphate. According to his analysis, these elements were also used during the period of the Sevillian or Toledo Taifas.⁶⁷

If we take these antecedents into account, valuable work has already been undertaken in the reconstruction of Andalusí epigraphic texts from various areas and periods using the time-honored method employed by experts in relation to Latin inscriptions from the classical Roman period.⁶⁸ This method is based on confirmed data that the texts employed and the order in which they appear reflects the fashions that were unique to the period in which they were produced. We will thus be able to complete the inscriptions with words or expressions that have disappeared due to breakage or loss. This technique, which is normally used in a critical edition and usually serves as a hypothesis, becomes fully valid when applied to the graphical portion of the analysis. Here it is also important to bear in mind the Arabic alphabet utilized in the text and the size of the object.

We have three reasons to be fairly certain of the reconstructions we have proposed: a) the interpreted text appearing on the ceramic fragments; b) the honorific titles and invocations that appear on coins and inscriptions made in the name of sovereigns of Seville; and



Fig. 21. Detail of a fountain with a small head and Kufic writing with the name *al-Mu'tamid*. Archaeological Museum, Seville, REP00254. (Photo: Manuel Camacho Moreno)

c) the formulaic pattern used in official texts of the Taifa, which were either engraved or painted on other materials.

The first step is to establish the likeliest protocol used in inscriptions. To carry out this task we have used as a model the inscriptions on marble belonging to the Sevillian Abbadids (fig. 21) and the titles given to rulers that appeared in literary texts and on coins.⁶⁹ This has helped us to identify three formulaic patterns used in inscriptions: two employed during the reign of al-Mu'tamid and one used during the reign of his son and successor. Therefore, the likeliest interpretation of the epigraphs painted on the ceramic ware produced under the first Sevillian prince and containing double inscriptions (Se-5) is as follows (fig. 22):

bi-sm allāh mimmā amara bi-'amali-hi al-Mu'tadid bi-llāh, al-Mansūr bi-faḍl Allāh Abū 'Amr 'Abbād ibn Dhī 'l-Wizāratayn Muḥammad ibn 'Abbād adāma Allāh 'izza-hu wa-jayyada mulka-hu fi Qaṣr al-Mubārak 'alā yaday /... wa-... mamlūkay-hi wa-Shākir fatā-hu (wa-kātibi-hi?).⁷⁰

In the name of God. Commissioned by al-Mu'tadid bi-llah, al-Mansur bi-faḍl Allah, Abu 'Amr 'Abbad, son of Dhī 'l-Wizāratayn Muḥammad ibn 'Abbad—may God preserve his glory and the excellence of his reign!⁷¹ —in the Blessed Palace (*Qaṣr al-Mubārak*)⁷² by means of... and..., his two slaves, and Shakir his *fatā* (and his scribe?).

Therefore, the formulaic pattern used on bowls of the same size and decoration would be as follows: a) *bas-mala*; b) *mimmā amara bi-'amali-hi*; c) titles, name, and *nasab* (lineage) of the ruler; d) reverent petition in favor

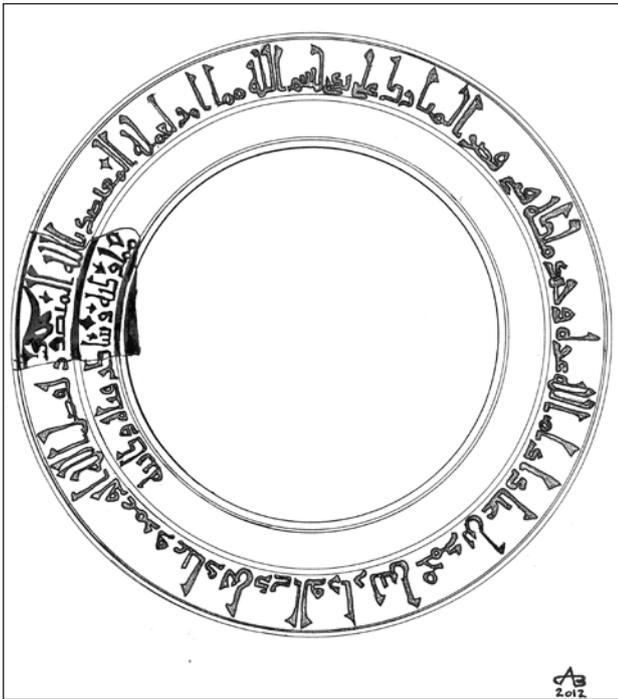


Fig. 22. Drawing of the epigraphic inscription on fragment Se-5, including the restored inscription. (Drawing: Carmen Barceló)

of the ruler; e) place of production; and f) the name of the master potter(s), introduced by the formula *‘alā yaday*. Although it may appear to be an exceptional occurrence, we know of examples of ceramic vessels found elsewhere that contain dates of production—while uncommon, they do exist.⁷³ It is worth mentioning here that our reconstruction forces us to consider the possibility that the second band may include a short inscription containing solely information from item “f” of the proposed formulaic pattern. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the text found in this band was written in smaller letters; however, the placement of the band in the central decorated area of the bowl raises some questions as well.

The most notable difference between Se-5 and the other two pieces is that the formulaic pattern used in the latter could not, due to space considerations, include the location of production and the ruler’s lineage, which, in Si-2, may have been shorter (fig. 23):



Fig. 23. Drawing of the epigraphic inscription on fragment Si-2. The writing along the rim of the bowl has been restored. (Drawing: Carmen Barceló)

bi-sm allāh mimmā amara bi-‘amali-hi al-Mu‘taḍid bi-llāh, al-Mansūr bi-faḍl Allāh Abū ‘Amr ‘Abbād ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abbād adāma Allāh ‘izza-hu wa-mulka-hu ‘alā yaday... wa-... mamlūkay-hi wa-Shākir fatā-hu (wa-kātibi-hi?).

In the name of God. Commissioned by al-Mu‘taḍid bi-llah, al-Mansur bi-faḍl Allah, Abu ‘Amr ‘Abbad, son of Muḥammad ibn ‘Abbad—may God preserve his glory and his power!—by means of... and..., his two slaves, and Shakir his *fatā* (and his scribe?).

A similar framing is observed in the reconstruction of bowl Se-4. The full inscription may not have contained the name of Shakir, who was the scribe and *fatā* of the prince. We therefore propose the following interpretation (fig. 24):

bi-sm Allāh mimmā amara bi-‘amali-hi al-Mu‘taḍid bi-llāh, al-Mansūr bi-faḍl Allāh Abū ‘Amr ‘Abbād ibn Dhī ‘l-Wizāratayn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abbād adāma Allāh ‘izza-hu ‘alā yaday...

In the name of God. Commissioned by al-Mu‘taḍid bi-llah, al-Mansur bi-faḍl Allah, Abu ‘Amr ‘Abbad, son of Dhī ‘l-Wizāratayn Muhammad ibn ‘Abbad—may God prolong his glory!—by means of...

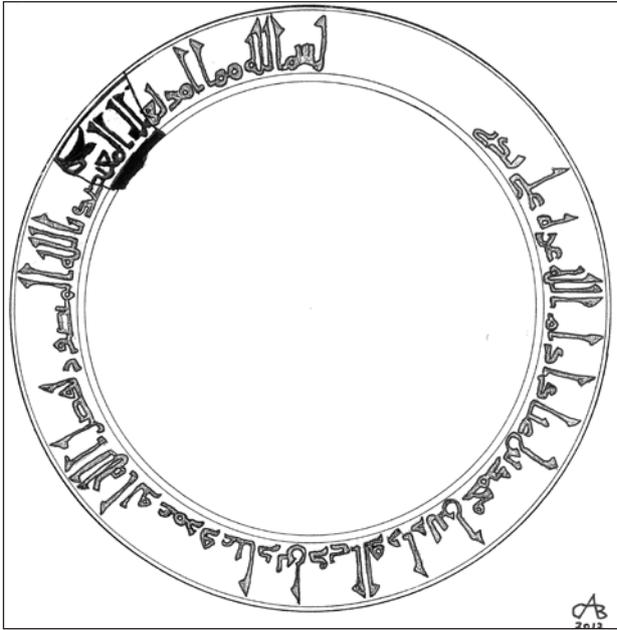


Fig. 24. Drawing of the epigraphic inscription of fragment Se-4. The inscription along the rim of the lid has been restored. (Drawing: Carmen Barceló)



Fig. 25. Drawing of the epigraphic inscription of fragment PaR-1. A part of the text has been restored. (Drawing: Carmen Barceló)

The protocol used in the pieces manufactured during the reign of al-Mu'tamid is fairly similar, but not identical. The following inscription may have been written on PaR-1 (fig. 25):

bi-sm Allāh mimmā amara bi-'amali-hi al-Mu'tamid 'alā Allāh al-Mu'ayyad bi-naṣr Allāh Abū 'l-Qāsim Muḥammad ibn 'Abbād adāma Allāh baqā'-hu 'alā yaday ... fī qasri-hi.

In the name of God. Commissioned by al-Mu'tamid 'ala Allah, al-Mu'ayyad bi-naṣr Allah,⁷⁴ Abu 'l-Qasim Muhammad ibn 'Abbad—may God prolong his life!—by means of... at his palace.

The protocol, or formulaic pattern, would have been as follows: a) *basmala*; b) *mimmā amara bi-'amali-hi*; c) titles, name and lineage of the ruler; d) reverent petition in favor of the ruler; e) the name(s) of the master potter(s), introduced by the formula *'alā yaday*; and f) place of production. The most notable difference with respect to the other piece produced under the same king is the omission of the place of production, which, for reasons of space, could not have been included (fig. 26).

Reconstructing the floral motifs that appear in the empty spaces above the letters would be impossible, at

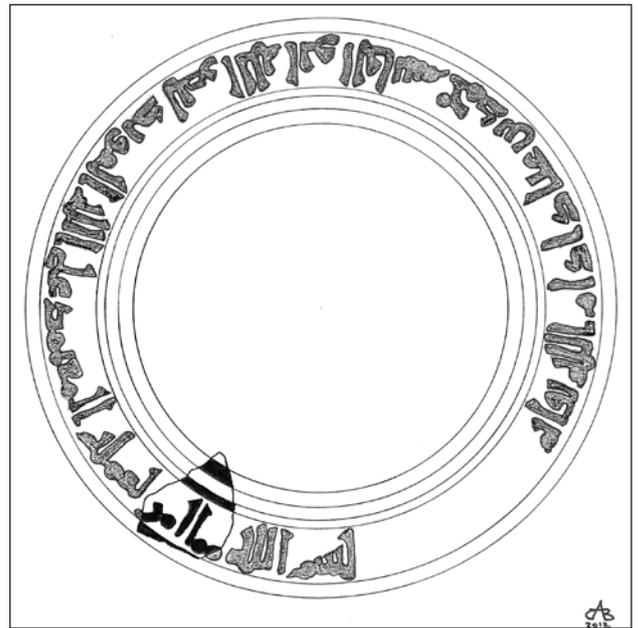


Fig. 26. Drawing of the epigraphic inscription found on fragment AlcSe-1. The inscription along the rim of the lid has been restored. (Drawing by Carmen Barceló)



Fig. 27. Detail of a marble fragment inscribed with the name *al-Mu'tamid*. Found in the Reales Alcázares of Seville (Patio de la Montería). Archaeological Museum, Seville. (Photo: courtesy of the Archaeological Museum, Seville)

least without stretching the limits of reasonable speculation. This type of decoration must have been quite profuse in all the epigraphic bands, as can be deduced from the decoration appearing on the fragments. These were also present in inscriptions on tombstones and can be seen on a marble plinth found in the excavations of the Real Alcázar of Seville (fig. 27).⁷⁵

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the fragments of lusterware with epigraphic decoration analyzed here were all produced during the second half of the eleventh century, in a potter's workshop under the authority of the ruler of the Taifa of Seville (as evidenced by the use of the term *qaṣr* or "palace" found on one of the fragments). They were very likely imitations of Fatimid ceramic vessels—which demonstrates the speed with which fashions and innovation spread in the realm of decorative ceramics. The formal similarities in the decoration and Kufic style of these pieces and those produced in the court of the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim bi-amr Allah (r. 996–1021) are so remarkable⁷⁶ that one cannot help but deduce that the former were imitations produced in the West by artisans from Egypt who served in the Abbadid court.

The ceramic group analyzed in this study is chronologically situated immediately prior to 1069. It should therefore be established as the date at which lusterware

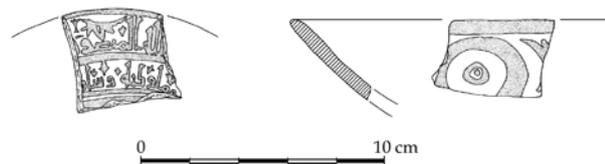
production began in al-Andalus. This grouping can therefore serve as a reference point for existing and future archaeological finds and/or lusterware production centers that have yet to be discovered in this region.

*Faculty of Philology, Translation and Communication,
University of Valencia, Spain
Department of Islamic Art History and Archaeology, Uni-
versity of Bamberg, Germany*

Postscript: After the submission of this article, the authors became aware of a new find consisting of two fragments of lusterware at the excavation site of the Patio da Universidade, located at the palace of *madīnat Qulumbriya* (Coimbra, Portugal). This find has been published by Helena Catarino, Sónia Filipe, and Constança Santos, in "Coimbra islâmica: Uma aproximação aos materiais cerâmicos," *Xelb* 9 (2009): 333–78. Those responsible for the excavation date the pieces to the second period of Islamic rule in this city (987–1064) or to the later period under the rule of Mozarab Sisnando Davides and his son-in-law (ca. 1064–85).

APPENDIX

Se-5. SEVILLE (Province of Seville), Archaeological Museum, Seville, inv. no. REP2002/2 (ancient BA 204).



Excavation site: "Baños árabes," 1983–84, center of the old town of Seville; trench 2, depth of the unit: 1.4–1.6 meters.

Dimensions: depth: 17 cm; thickness: 0.4 cm; height: 0.3 cm; max. length: 4.5 cm; min. length: 2 cm.

Rim fragment of an almost funnel-shaped glazed bowl with a slightly oblique out-turned rim ending in a rounded lip.

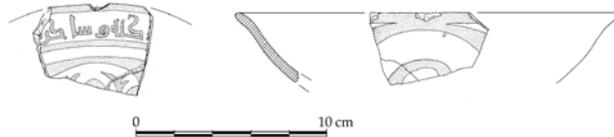
Sherd fraction: pastel yellow color with porous, cretaceous structure. Both sides of the bowl are covered with a white tin glaze and decorated with deep brown (um-

ber) luster. The crazed glaze has allowed humidity to penetrate, which has changed the color under the glaze to gray on parts of the vessel. The motif on the inner surface consists of a double band of Arabic epigraphy (Kufic characters) between at least three thick concentric lines. On the outer surface there is another thick line painted on the rim. Below a portion of a large, crudely painted circle is a small circle with a central dot known as a “peacock eye.” On the right side is an edge of an element occupying the spaces between the circles—the stem of a vegetal motif with three palmettes on its upper end (see PaR-1).

Bibliography

- Campos, Juan M. et al. “Excavaciones en los baños árabes de la Reina Mora (Sevilla).” *Anuario Arqueológico de Andalucía 3. Actividades de urgencia* (Seville, 1987): 346–49.
- Carrasco, María J. “Avance del estudio de la cerámica hispanomusulmana procedente de los ‘Baños de la Reina Mora’ (Sevilla).” In *II Congreso de Arqueología Medieval Española (Madrid, Enero 19–24, 1987)*, 2 vols., 2:530–38. Madrid, 1987.
- Heidenreich, Anja. *Islamische Importkeramik des hohen Mittelalters auf der Iberischen Halbinsel unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der frühen lokalen Goldlusterproduktion im Untersuchungsraum*, 364, pl. 42, color pl. 9. Mainz, 2007.

Si-2. SILVES (Algarve district, Portugal), Municipal Museum of Archaeology, Silves, inv. no. CAST.Q1/C5-1.



Excavation site: “Castelo de Silves,” 1984–87, quadrant 1, unit 5 (probably tenth century).

Dimensions: depth: 19.8 cm; thickness: 0.4 cm; height: 4.8 cm; max. length: 6 cm.

Rim fragment of medium-sized bowl with S-profile. The rim is slightly obliquely out-turned and ends in a rounded lip. The fragment consists of two glued fragments.

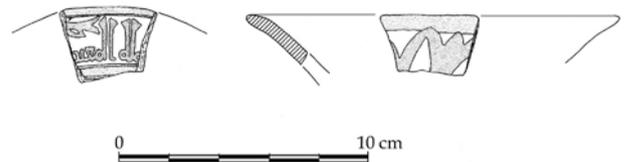
Sherd fraction: pastel yellow color with fine porous, cretaceous structure. Both sides of the bowl are covered with a beige crazed tin glaze. The luster decoration is painted in two different shades: coffee brown and red brown on the inner surface, coffee brown on the outer

surface. The motif on the inner surface features a band of Arabic epigraphy painted in red brown between two lines painted in coffee-brown luster. A portion of a large, central vegetal motif can be seen underneath. On the outer surface the rim is outlined with another thickly painted line. Next to it is a large, crudely painted circle containing a smaller circle, which in turn may have contained a central dot (peacock eye).

Bibliography

- Gomes, Rosa V. “Cerâmicas muçulmanas, orientais e orientalizantes do Castelo de Silves (Peças esmaltadas, policromas e de reflexo metálico).” *Estudos Orientais* 2 (1991): 30, fig. 14.
- Heidenreich, Anja. *Islamische Importkeramik des hohen Mittelalters auf der Iberischen Halbinsel unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der frühen lokalen Goldlusterproduktion im Untersuchungsraum*, 364, pl. 43, color pl. 9. Mainz, 2007.
- _____. “Schalen mit S-förmigem Profil in der islamischen Keramik.” *Madrider Mitteilungen* 43 (2002): 318–52, figs. 2, 1.

Se-4. SEVILLE (Province of Seville), Archaeological Museum, Seville, inv. no. REP2002/3.



Provenance: Center of the old town of Seville (?).

Dimensions: depth: 15 cm; thickness: 0.3 cm; max. length: 3.8 cm; min. length: 4 cm.

Rim fragment of an almost funnel-shaped glazed bowl with a slightly oblique out-turned rim, ending in a rounded lip.

Sherd fraction: pastel yellow color with porous, cretaceous structure. Both sides of the bowl are covered with beige tin glaze. The luster decoration is painted in two different shades: umbra brown and olive green. The crazed glaze has allowed humidity to penetrate, which has changed the color below the glaze to gray on parts of the vessel. The motif on the inner surface consists of a band of Arabic epigraphy painted in umbra brown between two lines of olive-green luster, which in turn are outlined by two thinner lines, painted in umbra brown. On the outer surface another very thick painted line outlines the rim in olive green. Two crudely painted pal-

mettes are visible immediately underneath, possibly the stem of a vegetal motif, with three palmettes on its upper end in umbra brown.

Bibliography

Heidenreich, Anja. *Islamische Importkeramik des hohen Mittelalters auf der Iberischen Halbinsel unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der frühen lokalen Goldlusterproduktion im Untersuchungsraum*, 363ff., pl. 42, color pl. 9. Mainz, 2007.

PaR-1. Palma del Río (Province of Córdoba), Archaeological Museum, Córdoba, inv. no. CE026544.



Provenance: Found during the construction of the train station in Palma del Río at the beginning of the twentieth century (information found in the museum's inventory record in 1969, when it was received from a private donor).

Dimensions: depth: 17.6 cm; height: 5.8 cm.

Five glued fragments from a medium-sized bowl with an S-profile and a slightly oblique out-turned rim, ending in a rounded lip. The rest of the bowl has been restored. The bottom is quite thick, with a slightly oblique annular base.

Sherd fraction: pastel yellow color with porous, cretaceous structure, including fine sand. The central part of the fraction shows a harder structure. Both sides of the bowl are covered with a beige tin glaze. The piece is luster-painted using two different shades, umbra brown and olive green. The crazed glaze has allowed humidity to penetrate, which has changed the color under the glaze to gray on parts of the vessel. The motif on the inner surface consists of a band of Arabic epigraphy between two painted lines. Underneath there is a large, central, vegetal-like motif painted using a resist technique: crudely painted buds consisting of three leaves and separated by single leaves with pointed tips. The entire decoration on the inner surface is painted in an olive-green luster. On the outer surface, the rim is out-

lined with a common thick line. Merged with this line are large circles containing smaller circles and a central dot (peacock eye). Intermediate spaces are occupied by long-stemmed vegetal motifs, ending in a knob and a three-leaf palmette. A painted line outlines the ring-shaped base. The vegetal stems rise directly from this line.

Bibliography

Ación, Manuel. "Del estado califal a los estados taifas. La cultura material." In *Actas: V Congreso de Arqueología Medieval Española, Valladolid, 22 a 27 de marzo de 1999*, 2 vols., 2:510, figs. 36 and 37. Junta de Castilla y León, 2001.

Ewert, Christian and Fernando Valdés. "Die Präsenz des Islam." In *Die Geschichte der spanischen Kunst*, edited by X. Barral, 203–49. Cologne, 1997.

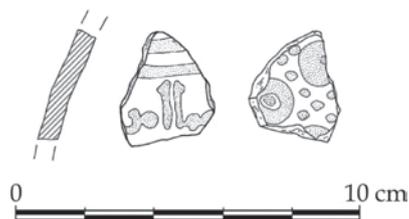
Guerrero Lovillo, José. "Al-Qasr al-Mubarak, el Alcázar de la Bendición." *Boletín de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes Santa Isabel de Hungría* 2 (1974): 106n50.

Heidenreich, Anja. *Islamische Importkeramik des hohen Mittelalters auf der Iberischen Halbinsel unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der frühen lokalen Goldlusterproduktion im Untersuchungsraum*, 359, pl. 35, color pl. 9. Mainz, 2007.

_____. "Schalen mit S-förmigem Profil in der islamischen Keramik." *Madridrer Mitteilungen* 43 (2002): 324, figs. 3 and 7.

Zozaya, Juan. "El comercio de al-Andalus con el Oriente: Nuevos datos." *Boletín de la Asociación Española de Orientalistas* 5 (1969): 132, fig. 3j.

AlcSe-1. SEVILLE (Province of Seville), Archaeological Museum, Seville, uncatalogued.



Excavation site: Real Alcázar of Seville (conducted by Rosario Huarte), unit: refuse dump existing prior to the expansion of the sector undertaken in the twelfth century.

Dimensions: depth: 16 cm (?); max. length: 2.3 cm; min. length: 1.8 cm.

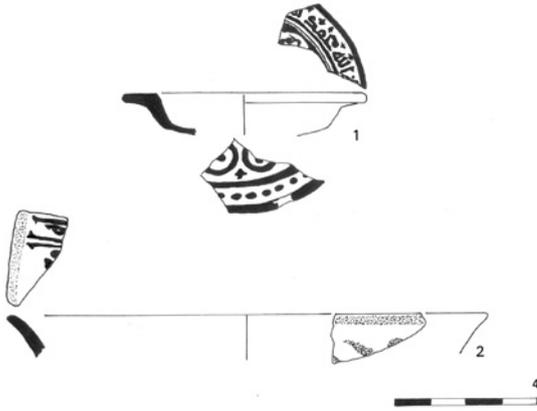
Sherd fraction: pastel yellow color with porous, cretaceous structure; belly-fragment. Both sides of the bowl

are covered with a beige tin glaze. The piece is luster-painted in two different shades: umbra brown and light brown. The motif on the inner surface consists of small peacock eyes and small dots in the background, possibly painted in the above two shades of brown luster. The outer surface (the visible part of the vessel) is decorated with a band of Arabic epigraphy (umbra brown) between two light brown lines. Another painted line can be seen above it.

Bibliography

Huarte, Rosario et al. "Un fragmento de loza dorada encontrado en la zona del Alcázar de Sevilla." In *I Congreso Internacional Red Europea de Museos de Arte Islámico* (Granada, abril 25 a 27, 2012) (in press).

COIMBRA (Coimbra District, Portugal).



Excavation site: Pátio da Universidade; discovered near the wall in the vicinity of "alcácer *Madinat Qulumbriya*," Unidade Estratigráfica (UE) 57 (excavation conducted by Helena Catarino, Sónia Filipe, and Constança Santos)

Coi-1. Fragment 1, inv. no. IAPUC/2002 G12 UE20 - 20-.

Dimensions: depth: 10 cm; thickness of edge: 0.4 cm; thickness of wall: 0.4 cm.

The epigraphic inscription can be reconstructed thusly:

[*al-Mu'tamid 'al]ā Allāh Muhammad bn [‘Abbād]* (Commissioned by al-Mu'tamid 'ala Allah Muhammad bn 'Abbad).

The epigraphic type used in this fragment is similar to that seen in fragment PaR-1.

Bibliography

Catarino, Helena et al. "Coimbra islâmica: Uma aproximação aos materiais cerâmicos." *Xelb* 9 (2009): 354, photo 6; 378, fig. 19.1.

Coi-2. Fragment 2, inv. no. IAPUC/2001 G/H13 UE57 -6-.

Dimensions: diam.: 2.5 cm; thickness of edge: 0.4 cm; thickness of wall: 0.6 cm.

Sherd fraction: features a thick, glossy white glaze and is made of a good-quality pink paste. On the inner surface of this second fragment is an epigraphic motif between two bands; the outer decoration is composed of small points, bands, and circles. The epigraphic inscription can be reconstructed thusly: [*bi-'ama]li-hi al-Mu[taḍid bi-llāh]*, (Commissioned by al-Mu'tadid bi-llah). The calligraphic type used on this fragment is similar to that seen on fragment Se-4.

Bibliography

Catarino, Helena et al. "Coimbra islâmica: Uma aproximação aos materiais cerâmicos." *Xelb* (2009): 353, 354, photo 5; 378, fig. 19.2.

NOTES

Carmen Barceló's note: This article is dedicated to the memory of Manuel Acién Almansa (1948–2013), Professor of Medieval Archeology at the University of Málaga, a dear friend and a mentor to many Spanish colleagues in archeology, history of art, architecture, and Andalusí studies. We are grateful to the editors of *Muqarnas* for receiving this article favorably. The anonymous reader's report held us to the straight and narrow and offered us many helpful suggestions. I would like to thank Dr. Karen Alexandra Leal, managing editor of *Muqarnas*, for her painstaking and methodical preparation of our text for publication.

1. One of these pieces from the years 778–80 bears Coptic lettering: see, for example, Marilyn Jenkins, *Islamic Glass: A Brief History* (New York, 1986), 23, cat. no. 20. Quite early on Carl J. Lamm was able to determine a very early date for several glazed cups, suggesting a Coptic origin dating to the fourth century: Carl J. Lamm, *Oriental Glass of Medieval Date Found in Sweden and the Early History of Lustre-Painting* (Stockholm, 1941), 19–20; in *Lustre on Glass and Pottery Was Known in Egypt Already in Roman Times* (Munich,

- 1928), Fredrik R. Martin classified silver-colored decorations on glass vessels found in ancient production sites.
2. A cylindrical glass cup found at Raqqa in a residential building inside the B Palace (first half of the ninth century) bears an inscription painted using the luster technique: "... made in Damascus...": Kassem Toueir, "Raqqa," in *Syrie, mémoire et civilisation*, ed. Sophie Cluzan, Eric Delpont, and Jeanne Mouliérac (exh. cat.) (Paris, 1993), 378–81; cited in Jeanette Rose-Albrecht, "La route de la faïence lustrée," in *Le calife, le prince et le potier: Les faïences à reflets métalliques, 2 mars–22 mai 2002*, ed. Jeanette Rose-Albrecht (Lyon, 2002), 52–65, esp. 64.
 3. Friedrich Sarre, *Die Keramik von Samarra* (Berlin, 1925), used this toponym to identify the lusterware pieces found there.
 4. John F. Hansmann, "Dating Evidence for the Earliest Islamic Lustre Pottery," *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli* 42, n.s. 32 (1982): 141–47; Myriam Rosen-Ayalon, "Islamic Pottery from Susa," *Archaeology* 24 (1971): 204–8; Monique Kervran, "Les niveaux islamiques du secteur oriental du Tépé de l'Apadana," *Cahiers de la DAFI* 7 (1977): 75–162; David Whitehouse, "Islamic Glazed Pottery in Iraq and the Persian Gulf: The Ninth and Tenth Centuries," *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli* 39, n.s. 29 (1979): 45–61; Moira Tampoe, *Maritime Trade between China and the West: An Archeological Study of the Ceramics from Siraf (Persian Gulf) 8th–15th centuries A.D.* (Oxford, 1989); Alastair Northedge, "Friedrich Sarre's 'Die Keramik von Samarra' in Perspective," in *Continuity and Change in Northern Mesopotamia from the Hellenistic to the Early Islamic Period*, ed. Karin Bartl and Stephan R. Hauser (Berlin, 1996), 229–58.
 5. Jamshedji M. Unvala, "Notes on the Lustered Ceramics of Susa," *Bulletin of the American Institute of Persian Art and Archaeology* 4 (1935): 79; Raymond Koechlin, *Les céramiques musulmanes de Suse au Musée du Louvre* (Paris, 1928), 55; Rudolf Schnyder, "Tulunidische Lüsterfayencen," *Ars Orientalis* 5 (1963): 49–78, esp. 55.
 6. Schnyder, "Tulunidische Lüsterfayencen," 49–78.
 7. Abū 'l-Qāsim Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Naṣībī (Ibn Ḥawqal), *Configuration de la terre (Kitāb Ṣūrat al-arḍ)*, ed. and French trans. Johannes H. Kramer and Gaston Wiet, 2 vols. (Paris, 1964), 1157.
 8. Georges Marçais, *Les faïences à reflets métalliques de la grande mosquée de Kairouan* (Paris, 1928); more recently Christian Ewert, "Die Dekorelemente der Lüsterfliesen am Miḥrāb der Hauptmoschee von Qairawān (Tunesien): Eine Studie zu ostislamischen Einflüssen im westislamischen Bauschmuck," *Madridier Mitteilungen* 42 (2002): 243–431, with a detailed analysis of the decoration. There are parallels from Samarra, Ray, Susa, and Fustat in Abdelaziz Daoulatli, "La céramique ifriquienne du VIIIe au XVIe siècle," in *Couleurs de Tunisie: 25 siècles de céramique* (exh. cat.) (Paris, 1994), 83–114, esp. 90. Based on a close reading of documentary sources, it has been determined that the tiles were meant to decorate the walls of the reception hall built during the reign of Amir Abu Ibrahim Ahmad (r. 856–63), but were later placed around the mihrab. See Rudolf Schnyder, "Keramik des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts aus Mesopotamien und dem westlichen Iran," *Keramos* 64 (1974): 4–13, esp. 6.
 9. Jenkins, *Islamic Glass*, 335.
 10. *Couleurs de Tunisie*, 127, cat. no. 65.
 11. Daoulatli, "La céramique ifriquienne," 83–114, esp. 192.
 12. *Ibid.*, 94.
 13. *Ibid.*, 90.
 14. Abū 'l-'Abbās Aḥmad b. Abī Ya'qūb (al-Ya'qūbī), *Les pays = Kitāb al-Buldān*, French trans. Gaston Wiet (Cairo, 1937), 208, 210; cited after George Paniel, "La céramique de Négrine (IXe siècle)," *Hespéris* 38 (1951): 1–30, esp. 17.
 15. Ibn Ḥawqal, *Configuration de la terre*, 170.
 16. Jenkins, *Islamic Glass*, 338. In the eleventh century, al-Bakri cites this city as being a metropolis that welcomed caravans from Egypt, Syria, and even distant Iraq. A century later, al-Idrisi praises this city once again; cited after *L'Algérie en héritage: Art et histoire*, ed. Hassan Remaoun and Stéphane Guégan (exh. cat.) (Paris, 2003), 249.
 17. Carmen Barceló, "Las cerámicas con epígrafes árabes," in Anja Heidenreich, *Islamische Importkeramik des hohen Mittelalters auf der Iberischen Halbinsel unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der frühen lokalen Goldlusterproduktion im Untersuchungsraum* (Mainz, 2007), 295–312, esp. 298. See also Manijeh Bayani-Wolpert, "Inscriptions on Early Islamic Ceramics: 9th to Late 12th Centuries," in Helen Philon, *Early Islamic Ceramics, Ninth to Late Twelfth Centuries*, Catalogue of Islamic Art, Benaki Museum Athens 1 (London, 1980), 293–302.
 18. Georges Marçais, *Les poteries et faïences de Bougie* (Constantine, 1916), 20.
 19. Robert B. Mason, *Islamic Glazed Pottery 700–1550 A.D.* (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1994), chap. 4, p. 22.
 20. Anna Contadini, *Fatimid Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London, 1998), 80n75; Marilyn Jenkins[-Medina], "Muslim: An Early Fatimid Ceramist," *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum* (May 1968): 359–69; and Marilyn Jenkins[-Medina], "Sa'd: Content and Context," in *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World*, ed. Priscilla Soucek (University Park, Pa., 1988).
 21. Graziella Berti and Sauro Gelichi, "Mille chemins ouverts en Italie," in *Le vert et le brun: De Kairouan à Avignon, céramiques du Xe au XVIe siècle* (exh. cat.) (Marseille, 1995), 128–63, esp. 133–34.
 22. In addition to another three sherds. We thank Dr. Antonio Vallejo, former director of the *Madīnat az-Zahrā'* Archaeological Complex (Córdoba, Spain), for this information.
 23. Twelve selected luster-painted sherds were studied in Ángel Jesús Polvorinos del Río et al., "Estudio arqueométrico de loza dorada de Madinat al-Zahra, Córdoba," *Cuadernos de Madīnat al-Zahrā'* 6 (2008): 165–79.
 24. Jay D. Frierman et al., "The Provenance of Early Islamic Lustre Wares," *Ars Orientalis* 11 (1979): 111–26; supplemented by Mason, *Islamic Glazed Pottery*, chap. 4, p. 22.
 25. Mason, *Islamic Glazed Pottery*, chap. 4, p. 22.

26. These have been catalogued by Anja Heidenreich.
27. Heidenreich, *Islamische Importkeramik*, 257, group VIII.
28. *Ibid.*, 258, group IX.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Some of these are still being processed, as presented at the First International Congress of the European Networks of Museums of Islamic Art (Granada, April 25–27, 2012). For example, Francisco J. Gutiérrez et al., “La cerámica dorada en el noreste de la Península Ibérica: Las taifas de Zaragoza y Albarracín,” in *I Congreso Internacional Red Europea de Museos de Arte Islámico* (henceforth *REMAI 1*) (Granada, 2012), 219–51, <<http://www.alhambra-patronato.es/fileadmin/proceedings-conference-2012.pdf>>.
31. Those groups, like the others from Upper Palancia and the Ebro Valley mentioned by Heidenreich, *Islamische Importkeramik*, will soon be completed or revised, given the abundance of new finds that have come to light as a result of the intense excavation activity that has taken place in recent years; see above n. 30.
32. Personal communication from Jaume Coll Conessa, director of the National Museum of Ceramics in Valencia (November 2011). Manuel Pérez and Vicent Estall also presented their finds at the First International Congress of the European Networks of Museums of Islamic Art (Granada, April 25–27, 2012), in a conference talk entitled “Primera aproximación a la cerámica dorada islámica hallada en la excavación arqueológica de la Alcazaba de Onda”: *REMAI 1*, 189–218, <<http://www.alhambra-patronato.es/fileadmin/proceedings-conference-2012.pdf>>.
- In June 2013 we were able to visit the museum in Onda to examine this extraordinary and abundant collection of luster fragments, all of which seem to be from the Marca Superior and were most likely produced at the latest at the end of the eleventh century. We would like to thank the director of the Onda Tile Museum, Vicent Estall i Poles, for having given us this opportunity.
33. The thesis positing the existence of numerous kilns of this type has now been confirmed by the discovery of molds that were used to produce relief ceramic pieces in Almería. Isabel Flores Escobosa and Ana Dolores Navarro Ortega, “Moldes y cerámica moldada y dorada fabricada en Almería,” in *REMAI 1*, 253–70.
34. Balbina Martínez-Caviró, *La loza dorada* (Madrid, 1982), 31, fig. 23; Balbina Martínez-Caviró, *Cerámica hispanomusulmana, andalusí y mudéjar* (Madrid, 1991), 71, fig. 48; and more recently, Mariam Rosser-Owen, “From the Mounds of Old Cairo: Spanish Ceramics from Fustat in the Collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum,” in *REMAI 1*, 163–87, esp. 170–73.
35. For more information on commerce in this region, see Olivia R. Constable, *Trade and Traders in Muslim Spain: The Commercial Realignment of the Iberian Peninsula, 900–1500* (Cambridge, 1994).
36. Group X in the classification proposed by Heidenreich, *Islamische Importkeramik*, 258.
37. We thank Claire Déléry (Musée du Louvre, Paris) for this information.
38. Abū'l-Walīd Marwān ibn Janāh, *Kitāb al-Uṣūl = The Book of Hebrew Roots*, ed., with an appendix, by Adolf Neubauer (Oxford, 1875), 9, col. 18, s.v. “alif-bā'-nūn.”
39. Manuel Gómez-Moreno, *Ars Hispanica: Historia Universal del Arte Hispánico. III. Arte árabe español hasta los Almohades: Arte mozárabe* (Madrid, 1951), 314.
40. Aḥmad b. Muḥiṭh al-Ṭulayṭulī (Ibn Muḥiṭh), *Al-Muqni' fī 'ilm al-shurūṭ*, ed. Francisco Javier Aguirre (Madrid: CSIC, 1994), 164–65, doc. 33.
41. These characteristics are found in group XI, as established in Heidenreich, *Islamische Importkeramik*, 259.
42. An ample selection can be found in Barceló, “Las cerámicas con epígrafes árabes,” in Heidenreich, *Islamische Importkeramik*, 293–312.
43. The Persian scholar Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Washshā' (d. 936–37) compiled poems that were meant to be written in gold on wares in his *Kitāb al-Muwashshā* (Book of Embroidery) (Leiden, 1886; Beirut, 1965), chaps. 52 and 53. A poem from the Almohad period, written employing the sgraffito technique, was found on a small jug discovered in Valencia (Spain). This piece is discussed in Joan V. Lerma and Carmen Barceló, “Arqueología urbana en Valencia: Una jarrita con texto poético,” *Sharq al-Andalus. Estudios Árabes 2* (1985): 175–81. See also Rafael Azuar, “Jar Almohad Period,” in *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, ed. Jerrilynn D. Dodds (New York, 1992), 353, cat. no. 109.
44. Here we are referring to the horizontal layout of the epigraphy such as that studied by Vera Tamari, “Abbasid Blue-on-white Ware,” in *Islamic Art in the Ashmolean Museum*, ed. J. W. Allan, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art 10, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1995), 2:117–45, in particular 136, fig. 27.
45. See, for example, Ernst J. Grube, *Islamic Pottery of the Eighth to the Fifteenth Century in the Keir Collection* (London, 1976), 96–97, 99, 100, nos. 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 60; and 72, no. 41, from Iraq or Egypt; Myriam Rosen-Ayalon, *La poterie islamique*, Mémoires de la Délégation archéologique en Iran, Mission de Susiane 50, Ville Royale de Suse 4 (Paris, 1974), 240–41, figs. 570–72, from the ninth and tenth century; Richard Ettinghausen and Oleg Grabar, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 650–1250* (New Haven, 1994), 115, no. 95 (Iraq, tenth century); 226, no. 230 (Nishapur, tenth century); 229, no. 238 (Samarqand, tenth century); 230, no. 239 (possibly Nishapur, tenth century). See also Philon, *Early Islamic Ceramics*, 147–49, figs. 322–26 (Egypt, ninth and tenth century).
46. Manuel Ocaña Jiménez, *El cúfico hispano y su evolución* (Madrid, 1970), 35.
47. E. Lévi-Provençal, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition* (Leiden, 1954–2002), s.v. “Abbāsid.” For more information on this dynasty, see David J. Wasserstein, *The Rise and Fall of the Party-Kings: Politics and Society in Islamic Spain, 1002–1086* (Princeton, N.J., 1985), 155–60.
48. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān wa-'anbā' 'abnā' al-zamān*, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās, 8 vols. (Beirut, 1968–72), 5:24; see also *Ibn Khallikān's Bibliographical*

- Dictionary*, trans. William McGuckin, Baron de Slane, 4 vols. (Paris, 1842–71), no. 686.
49. See the appendix of this article; the abbreviation system employed in Heidenreich, *Islamische Importkeramik*, is used here.
 50. For the description of the Kufic characters we shall follow the numeric system established by Samuel Flury, *Islamische Schriftbänder, Amida-Diarbekr XI. Jahrhundert* (Basel, 1920). We have used the following abbreviations from these numeric systems: 1 = *alif*; 2 = *bā'*, *tā'*, *thā'*, and initials and medials *nūn*, *yā'*; 3 = *jīm*, *hā'*, *khā'*; 4 = *dāl*, *dhāl*; 5 = *rā'*, *zāy*; 6 = *sīn*, *shīn*; 7 = *ṣād*, *dād*; 8 = *ṭā'*, *zā'*; 9 = *'ayn*, *ghayn*; 10 = *fā'*, *qāf*; 11 = *kāf*; 12 = *lām*; 13 = *mīm*; 14 = *nūn* final; 15 = *hā'*; 16 = *wāw*; 17 = *yā'* final; 18 = *lām-alif*. The form of Arabic lettering is described according to its position in the word, for which we have used the following abbreviations: a = isolated; i = initial; m = medial; f = final.
 51. Artur G. de M. Borges, "Epigrafía árabe no Gharb," in *Portugal islâmico. Os últimos sinais do Mediterrâneo*, ed. Cláudio Torres and Santiago Macías (Lisbon, 1998), 230 and 231, color pl. Although the inscription shows no date, A. R. Nykl, "Arabic Inscriptions in Portugal," *Ars Islamica* 11–12 (1946): 181, figs. 15–17, dated it to 444 (1052).
 52. It is also quite common in carved ivory pieces of the tenth and eleventh centuries; see Carmen Barceló, "El cúfico andalusí de 'provincias' durante el califato (300–403/912–1013)," *Cuadernos de Madīnat al-Zahrā'* 5 (2004): 173–97, 185–86 in particular.
 53. See Khalaf b. 'Abd al-Malik (Ibn Bashkuwāl), *Kitāb al-Ṣila*, ed. F. Codera, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1882–83), 1:232, biography nos. 529 and 530; 'Abd al-Walīd b. Muḥammad al-Azdī (Ibn al-Faraḍī), *Kitāb Tārīkh 'ulamā' al-Andalus*, ed. F. Codera, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1890–91), 1:167, biography no. 394 (the vocalization *Shākar* [sic] in the edition may be a misprint).
 54. Regarding the role of the *fatā* in the supervision and direction of artisanal production of the Umayyad caliphate of al-Andalus, see Manuel Ocaña Jiménez, "Ya'far el eslavo," *Cuadernos de la Alhambra* 12 (1976): 217–23; and Carmen Barceló and Magdalena Cantero, "Capiteles cordobeses dedicados a Ya'far al-Ṣiqḷabī," *Al-Qanṭara*, 16, 2 (1995): 421–31.
 55. Nykl, "Arabic Inscriptions in Portugal," 181.
 56. Georges Marçais, *Les poteries et faïences de la Qal'a des Beni Hammād (XIe siècle)*, Contribution à l'étude de la céramique musulmane 1 (Constantine, 1913), 21, 23, pls. XV.15 and XV.22; he reads it as "*lām kāf*."
 57. Dated 505 (1111): see Évariste Lévi-Provençal, *Inscriptions arabes d'Espagne* (Paris, 1931), 42, no. 33, pl. X.
 58. Manuel Ocaña Jiménez, in José Guerrero Lovillo, "Al-Qasr al-Mubarak, el Alcázar de la Benedición," *Boletín de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes Santa Isabel de Hungría* 2 (1974): 83–109, in particular 106n50. This work led to the widespread adoption of Ocaña's interpretation.
 59. The piece, donated to the museum by Manuel Nieto Cumpido, was exhibited to celebrate the twelfth centenary of the Mosque of Córdoba. Ocaña's interpretation can be found in the catalogue *Exposición: La Mezquita de Córdoba, Siglos VIII al XV* (Córdoba, 1986), 52, no. 40.
 60. Manuel Ación, "Del estado califal a los estados taifas. La cultura material," in *Actas: V Congreso de Arqueología Medieval Española, Valladolid, 22 a 27 de marzo de 1999*, 2 vols. (Junta de Castilla y León, 2001), 2:493–513, in particular 498, 509, and 510, figs. 36 and 37.
 61. The illustrations of this piece provided by various authors show a motif that resemble the letter *alif*; instead of this foliate form; this is why Barceló, in "Las cerámicas con epígrafes árabes," 293–312, reconstructed the expression as "[*hādh*]ā mā."
 62. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance provided by Dr. Camino Fuertes of the Red de Espacios Culturales de Andalucía (Córdoba, Spain), and María Jesús Moreno, curator at the Archaeological Museum of Córdoba, in obtaining photographs and valuable information on this piece.
 63. See the drawings in Carlos Cano Piedra, *La cerámica verde-manganeso de Madīnat al-Zahrā'* (Granada, 1996), 124. Their names have been deciphered by Manuel Ocaña in *El cúfico hispano*, 35; and Carmen Barceló, "Los escritos árabes de la Rábita de Guardamar," in *El ribāt califal: Excavaciones e investigaciones (1984–1992)*, ed. Rafael Azuar Ruiz, Fouilles de la Rábita de Guardamar 1 (Madrid, 2004), 143n33; and Barceló, "El cúfico andalusí de 'provincias,'" 187–88.
 64. Jenkins[-Medina], "Muslim: An Early Fatimid Ceramist," nos. 1, 4, and 10, in Appendix, and figs. 2 and 13.
 65. This was also stated by Ación with regard to specimen PaR-1 in "Del estado califal a los estados taifas," 2:509.
 66. Following the studies by the great epigraphy expert Max van Berchem, Heinz Gaube compiled a sampling of protocols employed in a wide variety of periods, countries and objects in his "Epigraphik," in *Grundriss der arabischen Philologie, Bd. I. Sprachwissenschaft*, ed. Wolfdietrich Fischer (Wiesbaden, 1982), 210–25.
 67. Lévi-Provençal, *Inscriptions arabes d'Espagne*, xviii.
 68. This has been described in Carmen Barceló, *La escritura árabe en el País Valenciano: Inscripciones monumentales* (Valencia, 1998), 21. Another example of the application of this method can be found in Carmen Barceló, "Un epitafio islámico proveniente da Maiorca portato a Pisa come trofeo di guerra?," *Quaderni di Studi Arabi*, n.s., 1 (2006): 55–68, in particular 65, fig. 3.
 69. Our considerations are based on marble pieces studied by Diego Oliva et al., "Fondos epigráficos del Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla," *Al-Qanṭara* 6 (1985): 451–67, and a marble fragment found in recent excavations of the Alcázar, which was brought to our attention by Prof. Dr. Miguel A. Tabales of the University of Seville, whom we thank for having provided us with a reproduction of this piece.
 70. We have used question marks to indicate words we are not certain of; those that are underlined indicate inscriptions that actually appear on the fragments. The forward slash symbol ('/') marks the beginning of the second epigraphic band.

71. The reconstructed invocation appears in a fragment on a marble basin (see fig. 21); the style of the lettering and syntax, however, cannot be interpreted as being *ayyada* (instead of *jayyid*), as suggested by Oliva et al., “Fondos epigráficos,” 463–64, no. 10. See pl. V.10 and the museum record from the Archaeological Museum of Seville, inv. no. REP00254, in *Colecciones En Red de España*, < <http://ceres.mcu.es/pages/Main> >.
72. “Blessed Palace” was the name of one of al-Mu‘tamid’s palaces in Seville. See A. A. Salem, “Quṣūr Banī ‘Abbād bi-Ishbīliya al-wārīda fī shi‘r Ibn Zaydūn,” *Awraq* 2 (1979): 29–49, and R. Lledó Carrascosa, “Risala sobre los palacios Abbādies de Sevilla de Abu Ya‘far ibn Ahmad de Denia: Traducción y estudio,” *Sharq al-Andalus. Estudios Árabes* 3 (1986): 191–200.
73. See, for example, a piece from the twelfth century (*khamsumi’a*), in Philon, *Early Islamic Ceramics*, 269, fig. 590, inv. no. 11123.
74. This second title consists of two basic inscriptions: see Lévi-Provençal, *Inscriptions arabes d’Espagne*, nos. 31 and 32. He suggests various hypotheses regarding this *laqab*, which has also been found on coins, in David J. Wasserstein, *The Caliphate in the West: An Islamic Political Institution in the Iberian Peninsula* (Oxford, 1993), 108n42, 113n60.
75. We refer to it in n. 69 above.
76. See Gaston Wiet, “Deux pièces de céramique égyptienne,” *Ars Islamica* 3 (1936): 179 and 176, fig. 4; Contadini, *Fatimid Art*, 81, fig. 28; Philon, *Early Islamic Ceramics*, 198, fig. 404.