

Mosaic Foundation 2004-2005 Lecture Series:
**WEST LOOKS EAST: THE INFLUENCES OF
 TRADITIONAL ARAB DESIGN ON CONTEMPORARY WESTERN
 DESIGNERS**
*Dressing the Other: three Case Studies in Border Fashion,
 11-14th c.A.D*

ART

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A WORD FROM THE SPEAKER: Three case studies will be discussed during this lecture on Islamic influences on fashion in early Europe as illustrated through luxury items from the period. The first case study will be centered in the period commonly known as the "Romanesque" to historians of art and will depart from two luxury objects, an ivory box dating to the 11th century, produced in the caliphate of Cordoba, and an enamel container produced for a patron in the southwestern French area known as the Limousin). Both show fashionably dressed people from their respective moments of creation and the concept of exoticism or fascination with the foreign will introduce the relationships between Islamic art and Romanesque taste.

The second case study based on the manuscript, HADITH BAYAD WA RIYAD, or the love story of Bayad and Riyad, dates from the very late 12th or early 13th century -- sometime before the fall of the Almohad empire in al-Andalus, and certainly before the conquests of Fernando III of Cordoba and Sevilla. This story demonstrates the fashion influences from the Islamic world through comparisons of the famous Maqamat images, produced to illustrate al-Hariri's Maqamat in Baghdad and Mosul in the 13th century and the famous illuminated manuscripts produced in Seville under the patronage of king Alfonso X of Castille, many of which are often said to evidence "European" (specifically Italian and French) tastes. We will spend one third of our time attempting to unravel this messy knot of supposed 'influences,' using clothing as our point of departure, and will end up considering what might be the relationship between Islamic and Gothic art.

The third case study requires a long hard look at the ceiling. Specifically, at the ceilings of the Alhambra's so-called "Sala de Justicia," painted in a supposedly "European" style sometime in the mid-14th century, in the Palace of the Lions section of the Nasrid palace in Granada, for Muhammad V ibn Ahmar, the fifth Nasrid sultan. Dress is very much a focus here, with blonde ladies and turbaned warriors sharing the oval space against a backdrop of a series of gardens sprinkled with palaces and fountains whose cultural identity is very much an open question."

BIOGRAPHY: Cynthia Robinson, a Professor of Islamic and Medieval Art at Cornell University, has enveloped

herself in

Art History both through her current teachings and through her undergraduate degree in Art History from College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia as well as her doctorate degree in History of Art from the University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Robinson has worked on historical excavations in France and Tunisia and has taught Islamic and Medieval Art at the University of Pennsylvania, University of Delaware, Stanford University, and University of New Mexico and at Cornell University. She has lectured and published materials ranging in themes from the female identity in medieval Spain to Islamic art and architecture.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

GENERAL WORKS:

Al Andalus: the art of Islamic Spain, edited by Jerrilynn D. Dodds (New York : Metropolitan Museum of Art : Distributed by H.N. Abrams, 1992).

Cambridge History of Andalusian Literature, ed., María R. Menocal. (New York and Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in medieval Spain, edited by Vivian B. Mann, Thomas F. Glick, and Jerrilynn D. Dodds (New York: G. Braziller in association with the Jewish Museum, 1992).

Richard Ettinghausen, Oleg Grabar, Marilyn Jenkins-Madina, Islamic art and architecture, 650-1250 (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 2001).

MORE FOCUSED ACADEMIC STUDIES:

A. R. Nykl, Hispano-Arabic poetry and its relations with the old Provençal troubadours (Baltimore, Printed by J. H. Furst Company, 1946).

Andreas Petzold, Romanesque art (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1995).

Cynthia Robinson, "Going Between: Literary Types and the Fabrication of Female Identity in 13th-Century Spains," in Robinson and Rouhi, eds., Under the Influence: Questioning the Comparative in Medieval Iberia (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004).

Cynthia Robinson, In Praise of Song: the Making of Courtly Culture in al-Andalus and Provence, 1065-1135 A.D. (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2002), PART TWO, "The Case of the Two Caskets."

Cynthia Robinson, "The Path to Perdition, or How to Get Lovesick: Preliminary Considerations of the Hadīth Bayād wa Riyād [Vat. Ar. 368]", in Seeing Things: Textuality and Visuality in The Islamic World, special issue of Princeton Papers (Princeton, New Jersey: Markus Wiener Press, 2001).

Daniel H. Weiss, Art and Crusade in the age of Saint Louis (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Jesús Bermúdez Pareja, Paintings on leather in the Alhambra of Granada (Vich: Colomer Munmany, 1974).

Linda Seidel, Songs of glory: the Romanesque façades of Aquitaine (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

Oleg Grabar, The Alhambra (Sebastopol, Calif.: Solipsist Press, 1992).

Robert Irwin, The Alhambra (London: Profile, 2004).

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