

Royal figural scenes in Andalusian Art During the Caliphate in Cordoba (316-422 AH/ 929-1031 AD): era New vision in light of some ivory antiques

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Abstract

Andalusian ivory Antiques have a great historical importance and extremely artistic value during the Umayyad Caliphate era in Cordoba (316– 422AH / 929– 1031AD), Because of; its decorations, inscriptions, and figural scenes which reflect many important characteristics and attributes showing the extent of artistic progress and a life of luxury in Al-Andalus during Umayyad Caliphate era, and they also highlight many of the well-known aspects of life within the Muslim community during that era.

On the other hand, the phenomenon of "personal figural scenes", relating to the Caliphs, Princes, and Senior statesmen, has been known in Islamic art in the Levant and Iraq since the early age during the Umayyad and Abbasid eras, on buildings and coins, and all of them are almost identical in some artistic characteristics related to those characters, in terms of their features, clothes, movements, and royal insignia, whether it is in their private or entertainment councils, with their aides and servants, as we find analogues on Andalusian ivory Antiques during the Umayyad Caliphate era in Cordoba.

Research Objectives:

For that, this study aims to treat and analyze some figural scenes engraved on models of these Ivory antiques, in order to:

- Know their artistic truth, and to prove that they are figural scenes related to senior statesmen and the High Folk in reality, and it's not just decorative themes.
- Monitor some of the social aspects of these men in terms of their features, clothes, movements, royal insignia, and means of their fun and entertainment.
- The extent to which the significance of these figural scenes are compatible with historical information related to their private life, their social status, and their career plans.
- Finally, Highlighting aspects of the Umayyad and Abbasid eastern influences in these figural scenes.

Research Methodology:

The study relies on both descriptive and analytical approaches to interpret these figural scenes, and proof that they are Royal figural scenes of these characters in fact, as one of the eastern artistic influences in the Andalusian civilization during the Caliphate era in Cordoba (316- 422AH / 929- 1031AD).

Key words:

(Royal figural scene, Art, Caliphate era, Cordoba, Ivory Antiques).

Introduction:

The city of Cordoba, the capital of the Umayyad Caliphate in Andalusia, was a rivalry for the city of Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate in Iraq. This rivalry resulted in

many civilizational connections between each of the two capitals despite the political hostility between them. Among its manifestations was the resemblance of the Umayyad princes and caliphs in Andalusia to the caliphs of the Bani al-Abbas in Iraq with regard to the manifestations and ceremonies of the caliphate and rule. The spread of Royal figural scenes in Umayyad and Abbasid architecture and arts also had an impact on Andalusian arts during the era of the Caliphate in Córdoba, this is what this study tries to highlight through some examples of Andalusian ivory antiques, as follows:

Box of prince Al-Mughira:

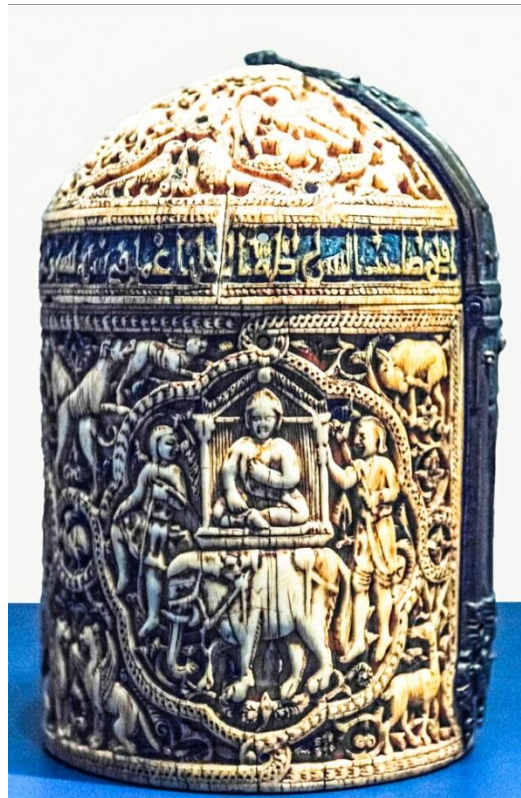
This box is one of the most beautiful Andalusian ivory antiques, because of its great artistic value, decorations and exquisite figural scenes, as we find in its subjects great artistic diversity. One of the most important things that draws attention in these figural scenes is the scene related to drinking and singing, for one of the important figures with one of his friends, and in the presence of a servant who is playing oud. I tried through this study, to prove that this figural scene relates to Prince Al-Mughira Bin Al-Caliph Abdul Rahman Al-Nasser, due to his political and social standing after the death of his father, and his readiness for the mandate of the caliphate after his brother Al-Mustansir.





Ziad bin Aflah box:

This masterpiece is also one of the ivory antiques of great importance in both historical and artistic terms, as this ivory box is unique among its decoration with two figural scenes that do not have analogues in other Andalusian ivory antiques during the era of the Caliphate, the first of which reflects a council of government and authority, and the second relates to one of Royal processions. I also tried through the study to prove that, the first scene is a realistic depiction of the owner of this antique, Ziyad bin Aflah, who was at that time the "owner of the Supreme Police". The second is also a realistic depiction of one of the Concubines of the owner of this ivory masterpiece.





Box of El Hajeb, Saif Al Dawla, Abdul Malik Ibn Al Mansour:

This box can be considered the most beautiful and richest of Andalusian ivory antiques during the Caliphate era, due to the great diversity of its artistic subjects, with vitality and infinite accuracy of expression. Through this study, I tried to treat and analyze two figural scenes in this box, the first reflecting a special council of drink, for one of the important figures, in the presence of two beautiful servants, and this scene is a real depiction of Al-Mansour Muhammad bin Abi Amer, and the second is related to one of the hunting scenes, for one of the important figures also, fighting two lions trying to attack him fiercely, and this scene is a realistic depiction of Abdul-Malik bin Al-Mansour Ibn Abi Amer, who was characterized by courage and great strength.



Results:

1-These figural themes are in fact realistic figural scenes, which means that the phenomenon of "Royal figural scenes", of the caliphs, princes, and high-ranking people, has been known in Andalusian art since the era of the Caliphate in Cordoba at the very least, just as it was in the Levant and Iraq during the Umayyad and Abbasid eras, to help on the other hand, to explain and understand the reasons for the emergence of examples of these Personal Images in the Almohad and Nasarid arts in Andalusia.

2- The Islamic civilization in the Levant and Iraq during the Umayyad and Abbasid eras had a great influence on the Andalusian civilization during the Caliphate era in Córdoba, especially with regard to the class of princes and caliphs, whether with regard to their customs and means of their royal entertainment, or with regard to the decrees and insignia of government and authority.

3- The accuracy of significance and connotations of these figural scenes and their great compatibility with the information of historical sources at both, the countries of the Islamic East and Andalusia, perhaps they are among the greatest evidences that these ivory artifacts are produced by the Arab-Andalusian and Eastern artistic schools in the capital of the Caliphate "Cordoba", not as some orientalist believe to be otherwise. On the other hand, it reflects what may be called "artistic unity", between the two capitals of "Abbasid Baghdad" and "Umayyad Cordoba".

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