



Islam Christianized: Islamic Portable Objects in the Medieval Church Treasuries of the Latin West (Ars Faciendi)

Avinoam Shalem

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Unlike other studies on the interplay between Islam and the medieval West in the 'minor' arts, which have tended to focus on the impact of Islamic ideas and motifs on the West, this book approaches the topic from another angle. It is the first to tackle as a whole the complex subject of how Islamic artefacts (other than textiles) reached the Latin West and what attitudes towards them developed in the ecclesiastical sphere. The standard reaction was to re-interpret the object radically and to invest it with a Christian liturgical purpose and theological meaning. Usually the earlier history of these objects - to which their Arabic inscriptions bore witness - was blurred or indeed entirely obliterated, in a kind of cultural colonialism. The book makes full use of, and occasionally re-interprets, the medieval Arabic and Latin sources and uses the artefacts to illustrate the fascinating medieval interactions between East and West. It also includes a descriptive catalogue of the Islamic portable objects kept in the medieval church treasuries of the Latin West.

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