

Mobile Utensils: Goods, Motifs, Scripts, and Peoples on the Move

Djangar Ilyasov

Institute of Art Studies, Academy of Sciences of Republic of Uzbekistan

Tashkent UZ

Abstract

The mobility of goods, motifs, texts, people from Mesopotamia to Central Asia after the Arab conquest peaked in the 8th century. The proposed paper would like to illustrate these movements on the example of glazed pottery which became an integral part of life. The fact that the fashion of making utensils covered with glaze appeared and spread in the eastern provinces of the Caliphate – in Khorasan and Mawara al-Nahr – as early as the 9th century is well known, but it is still difficult to trace this process in detail. The postulated appearance of glazed pottery in Mawara al-Nahr under the influence of products from Iraq is documented by finds of Mesopotamian tableware at Central Asian archaeological sites. The presentation will give examples of such finds and consider forms and ornamental motifs that served as direct models for the decoration of glazed ceramics of Central Asia of the Samanid period (9th-10th centuries). In addition to the material aspect of the question, namely the emergence of local glazed pottery under the influence of Iraqi products, there is another crucial aspect to consider. It is the mobility of Arabic script and literature, both in its poetic and prose forms. For example, on a 10th century glazed plate found in Samarqand one can read lines from a poem by the famous Abbasid poet Abu l-'Atahiya (748-826), who sold pottery pots in his youth and, thanks to his poetic talent, served at the court of the famous Baghdad caliphs al-Mahdi, Harun al-Rashid, al-Amin