**Art of the Abbasid Period (750–1258)**

According to the Metropolitan Museum of Art: During the Abbasid period, “a distinctive style emerged and new techniques were developed that spread throughout the Muslim realm and greatly influenced Islamic art and architecture. “Since the style set by the capital was used throughout the Muslim world, Baghdad and Samarra’ became associated with the new artistic and architectural trend. [Source: Yalman, Suzan. Based on original work by Linda Komaroff. "The Art of the Abbasid Period (750–1258)" Metropolitan Museum of Art metmuseum.org \^/]

“As virtually nothing remains from Abbasid Baghdad today, the site of Samarra’ is particularly significant for understanding the art and architecture of the Abbasid period. In Samarra’, a new way of carving surfaces, the so-called bevelled style, as well as a repetition of abstract geometric or pseudo-vegetal forms, later to be known in the West as "arabesque," were widely used as wall decoration and became popular in other media such as wood, metalwork, and pottery. In pottery, Samarra’ also witnessed an extensive use of color in decoration and, possibly, the introduction of the technique of lustre painting over a white glaze. Admired for its glittering effect reminiscent of precious metal, luster painting, the most notable technical achievement at the time, spread in the following centuries from Iraq to Egypt, Syria, Iran, and Spain and eventually also contributed to the development of ceramic decoration in the Western world. In terms of architecture, along with the palace of Jawsaq al-Khaqani (ca. 836 onward), the mosques of al-Mutawakkil (848–52) and Abu Dulaf (859–61) in Samarra’ were important in setting the style that was emulated in regions as far as Egypt or Central Asia, where it was adapted to need and taste."^/



Reference: <http://factsanddetails.com/world/cat55/3sub2/entry-5228.html>

**Elements of Art of Book Illustration**

1. Calligraphy
2. Geometrical pattern
3. Vegetal pattern
4. Figurative images

**Four prominent manuscripts which based on art of book Illustration**

1. Materia De Medica of Dioscorides
2. Qalila wa dimna
3. Warqa wa Gulsha
4. Shahnama of Firdousi

**1. Materia De Medica of Dioscorides**

**Folio from an Arabic translation of De materia medica by Dioscorides (ca. 40-90 C.E.); recto: text; verso: Preparation of medicine from the flower of the wild vine**

**Description**

Detached folio from an Arabic translation of De Materia Medica by Pedanius Dioscorides; text: Arabic in black and red naskh script; recto: text, one column, 13 lines; verso: illustration and text, Preparation of medicine from the flower of the wild vine, one column, 7 lines; one of a group of 9 folios.

**Label**

One of the earliest illustrated texts from the Islamic world is the Arabic translation of the Materia Medica, a Greek scientific treatise. It was written in the first century C.E. by Dioscorides, a soldier attached to the Roman army who studied the flora of Asia Minor while in service. Divided into five chapters, the text provides the name, habitat, and pharmaceutical uses of some five hundred plants.

This folio is from a chapter entitled "Vines and Wines." According to Dioscorides, one of the many healing properties of the wild vine flower is the alleviation of stomach pain, headaches, swollen eyes, and the inflammation of fingers and toes.

Arabic copies of the Materia Medica are notable for their lively narrative illustrations. In this example, a young apprentice prepares a remedy under the shade of a large fruit tree while an elderly physician probably explains the medication to his patient. Such compositions allowed painters to add pictorial interpretations to the text and transform it into more than just a scientific treatise.

<https://asia.si.edu/object/F1932.22/#object-content>

**2- Kalila wa Dimna**

This is just one of the many “nested” stories from the tales of Kalila wa Dimna, adapted and translated into Arabic from the Pahlavi in the eighth century by Ibn al-Mugaffa‘ (d. c. 757 CE). The ultimate source of the Kalila wa Dimna can be traced to an original Sanskrit “Mirror for Princes” that was compiled by an unknown author around 300 CE and entitled the Pancatantra (Five Books or Five Cases of Cleverness). The Sanskrit tales were translated in the sixth century CE into Middle Persian (Pahlavi) by the physician Bur­zuya (or Burzoy) at the behest of the Sasanian King Khusraw Anushirwan (r. 531-579 CE). In addition to the tales of the Pancatantra, Burzuya incorporated various other stories into his corpus, principally from the Mahabharata epic and other Hindu and Buddhist sources. Burzuya’s Pahlavi title, Karirak ud Damanak, was derived from the names of two jackals, Karataka and Damanaka, the principal characters in the first book of the Pancatantra. Ibn al-Muqaffa‘’s Kalila wa Dimna is therefore an Arabic recension of Burzuya’s now lost Karirak ud Damanak, although the Arab author also inserted a number of additions into his final work.

The earliest surviving manuscripts of the Kalila wa Dimna date from the thirteenth and fourteenth centu­ries CE, and the widespread popularity of this work is clearly attested to by references to it in other medieval literary works, including the Shahnama of Firdawsi. However, the Kalila wa Dimna was never seen as a fixed corpus of stories, and later authors and editors felt free to add to, subtract from, and otherwise alter its contents. Scholars from the nineteenth century on­ward have attempted to trace the complex history and origins of the Kalila wa Dimna through bothliterary and art historical analysis. The tradition of illustrating the tales of the Kalila wa Dimna is probably based on older, well-established traditions of illustrating the animal fables of the Pancatantra. Eighth-century frescoes found at Panjikent, near Samarkand, that include depictions of the Pancatantra tales attest to a well-established iconographic tradition that was later absorbed and adapted in the Muslim Near East.

**Purpose**

Ibn al-Mugaffa ‘states in his introduction the four­-fold purpose of the Kalila wa Dimna:

(1) to engage the youth through the vehicle of animal fables; (2) to delight the hearts of princes through richly illustrated depictions of the tales; (3) to entice kings and common folk everywhere to acquire their own copies and benefit the painters and scribes and (4) to engage the philosophers in the wisdom of its tales.

**Reference:** [**https://iis.ac.uk/kalila-wa-dimna**](https://iis.ac.uk/kalila-wa-dimna)

**Assignment: please prepare the following mention below. Every student should prepare their own assignment individually. Same assignment would not be acceptable.**

**short questions: 10**

**objectives: 15**

**Marks: 10**