

## Collecting Islam: Travels In Andalucia

This talk looks at the unique Islamic style of architecture developed by the Moorish rulers of Spain during their rule of the Iberian Peninsula from the 8<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**1. The Court of the Lions, Alhambra; Charles Clifford (1821 – 1863); Albumen print photograph; ca. 1855**

*Museum number: 47.790*

Charles Clifford was one of the finest photographers of 19<sup>th</sup> century Spain, and he spent most of his career there. Having settled in Madrid in the 1850s, he became court photographer for Queen Isabella II, and accompanied her on a number of royal tours within Spain. Clifford was very effective at capturing architectural subjects through his technical mastery of the large-format camera.

**2. Plans, Elevations, Sections and Details from the Alhambra; Owen Jones and Jules Gourey; volume; 1845**

*Museum number: NAL; 110.P.36*

This volume was part one in a series of two, and constituted the main output of Jones and Gourey's observational work in Andalucia. The studies contained within this volume include detailed drawings of ornament, translations of all Arabic inscriptions and an in-depth historical account of the Moorish kings of Granada.

To ensure perfect accuracy in the ornament details, plaster impressions were taken of every element of ornament of the Alhambra. Some of these casts were bought by the South Kensington Museum (precursor to the V&A) for students of Oriental art.

Jones worked hard to establish a good standard of chromolithographic printing to do justice to the striking Islamic decorative schemes, and in fact as a result was a major force in pushing forward colour printing in England at the time.

**3. Designs for tiles; Owen Jones; watercolour; ca. 1849**

*Museum number: 8115:5*

One of the key outcomes of Jones's and Gourey's work at the Alhambra was their sustained research into Islamic tile design. Jones soon realised the debt that Islamic design had to geometry, mathematics and astronomy. He was a strong influence in the contemporary development of tile designs, seeing the patterns of tessellation as a key to rationalising the beauty of Islamic ornament.

**4. The Alhambra Court at the Crystal Palace at Sydenham; Philip Henry Delamotte; photograph; 1854**

*Museum number: 39.315*

After the Great Exhibition of 1851, the Crystal Palace was dismantled and re-erected in Sydenham. A fire in 1936 destroyed most of the building, but some of the remains can still be

seen today, and are Grade II-listed. The photographer Philip Henry Delamotte was commissioned to document the preparation and opening of the 'new' Crystal Palace when it was moved to Sydenham. Owen Jones was responsible for many of the design courts, in particular the Court of the Alhambra. This photograph shows tile detailing which follows many of the same patterns shown in the design of object 8115:5.

**5. Model of the interior of the Alhambra; Enrique Linares; 19<sup>th</sup> century**

**Museum number: A.26-1936**

This model shows the lobed 'horseshoe' arch which was a common motif in Umayyad Islamic architecture within Spain. The Umayyads had ruled the Islamic empire from Damascus but were then usurped by the Abbasids from Baghdad. The forced exile of the Umayyads brought them to Spain where they began a parallel Islamic kingdom within the Iberian peninsula.

**6. Drawing of the 'Tower of the Captive', The Alhambra; William Harvey (1883-1962); pen & ink, indian ink, watercolour and pencil**

***Museum number: E.1274-1963***

This large drawing by William Harvey represents well the intense and bold polychromy of architectural ornament within Islamic Spain. The museum holds a number of these measured drawings by Harvey which all utilise a striking black background, which allows the intricacies of the ornamental design to come into sharp relief.

**7. Lions in the Alhambra; John Dobbin; watercolour; from a sketch made in 1859**

**Museum number: 1674-1871**

This painting by John Dobbin presents a very different view of the Alhambra compared with previous objects in this talk. By utilising a topographical approach, showing men lounging in the shadows of the Court of Lions arches, Dobbin exerts a more romantic patina over the image – creating a more subjective and atmospheric impression of what life was like living and conversing in the courtyards and gardens of the Alhambra.