Louise W. Mackie. *Symbols of Power: Luxury Textiles from Islamic Lands, 7th–21st Century*

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Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/abstractairanica/43195>

DOI: 10.4000/abstractairanica.43195

ISBN: 1961-960X

ISSN: 1961-960X

Publisher:

CNRS (UMR 7528 Mondes iraniens et indiens), Éditions de l'IFRI

Electronic reference

Yuka Kadoi, « Louise W. Mackie. *Symbols of Power: Luxury Textiles from Islamic Lands, 7th–21st Century* », *Abstracta Iranica* [Online], Volume 37-38-39 | 2018, document 10, Online since 30 December 2018, connection on 02 October 2020. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/abstractairanica/43195> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/abstractairanica.43195>

This text was automatically generated on 2 October 2020.

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Louise W. Mackie. *Symbols of Power: Luxury Textiles from Islamic Lands, 7th–21st Century*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press/Cleveland Museum of Art, 2015, 520 p., 493 color + 20 b/w ill.; ISBN: 978-0300206098

- 1 This lavishly illustrated and physically imposing volume – a winner of the 24th I.R. Iran World Award for Book of the Year (2017) – has been published as the result of a long-term research endeavour by Louise W. Mackie, an internationally renowned expert of Islamic textiles and a former curator of textiles and Islamic art at the Cleveland Museum of Art. With more than 500 illustrations, mostly in color, *Symbols of Power* offers an unparalleled amount of information on the historical and cultural significance of Islamic textiles. Drawn from not only the Cleveland's collection but also a wide selection of textile collections worldwide, it provides a comprehensive picture of the development of textile industries across the Islamic world.
- 2 This study is chronologically divided into eleven chapters. Each chapter reviews familiar stories and incorporates new thoughts. Many of the well-studied Persian examples, as well as unpublished examples from modern-day Iran, India and Central Asia, are featured in this book. Of particular interest for Persian art historians is the overview of the so-called “Buyid textile”, a group of medieval textile fragments from the excavation of the Bibi Shahrbanu site (1924-5) which became a subject of heated debate in terms of their authenticity (summarised in pages 154-5). The chapter of the modern era 1840-2010 is a much-needed contribution to the scholarship of Islamic textiles (pages 445-65), supplemented by the reading of inscriptions on select pieces

and the glossary of technical terms. The content of endnotes is overwhelmingly rich in information, followed by a relatively short yet concise list of references.

- 3 *Symbols of Power* remains as an authoritative, must-read source for any future study of Islamic textiles. Moreover, the book itself serves as a luxurious visual tool for searching weaving technologies and textile designs, interwoven with their political and economic background.

AUTHORS

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