



The World of Ornament

introduction by David Batterham

Cologne, Germany: Taschen, \$200

528 pages, 250 color illustrations, DVD

The 19th century was obsessed with the past and foreign places as sources of design inspiration—and equally obsessed with the cataloging of information. These two preoccupations combined to produce a number of pattern books on exotic ornament, the most famous being Owen Jones's *The Grammar of Ornament*, published in 1856, and Albert Charles Auguste Racinet's *L'Ornement Polychrome*, published in two volumes in 1875 and 1888.

Racinet's monumental compilation and another, *L'Ornement des Tissus* by M. Dupont-Auberville, have now been republished together in lavish style. The book measures a shelf-devouring 11 1/2 by 17 1/2 by 2 1/2 inches and weighs in at almost 14 pounds. But there is quality as well as quantity: The excellent reproductions are clear and fresh—compared to a more modest reprint of Racinet's book in 1988—and the color plates, each offering a number of examples, are dazzling. Western and Eastern styles are covered, and examples come not just from fabrics but also from ceramics, mosaics, frescoes, manuscripts, and jewelry. The ac-

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companying DVD offers high-resolution images that make the 5,000 individual ornaments accessible for unrestricted use.