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*A Loan Exhibition at the University Art Gallery
April 6 — May 4, 1975*

Compiled and Edited By
STANLEY FERBER

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PREFACE

In its international conferences initiated in 1967 the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies of the State University of New York at Binghamton has concentrated on areas which are too complex and still too diffuse to be handled by an individual. The last two meetings dealt with "Witchcraft and the Occult in the Middle Ages" and "Jewish Culture in the Middle Ages." They are now in process of publication. The ninth conference, "Islam and the Medieval West," stresses methodology, new facts and interpretations even more sharply. Last but not least the published *disputatio* offers an instant and focussed critique, and thus summarizes the *etat de la qestion* providing a new base for future research in an ill-defined field.

Unforeseen by us, the 1975 topic became more central as the Islamic world and the West once more began to take measure of each other, this time not ideologically but economically. The contents of the companion volume of the conference proceedings will deal with the first fundamental political confrontation between the two cultures and the important intellectual competition between Arab and Western sciences, humanities and literatures.

This first volume is dedicated to the interchanges in the visual arts which took place on the creative and usually apolitical plane of techniques, forms and iconography. The symbiosis involved the great triangle consisting of the increasingly dynamic West in search of an identity, the sophisticated aging Byzantine Empire and flourishing Arab civilization which returned much of what it had received to the West.

We are especially thankful to the Exxon Corporation which assisted in funding the exhibit and this catalog. We feel confident that this generous gesture toward the exploration of realized and positive contacts in the past signifies equally fruitful possibilities for the future.

Stanley Ferber of the Department of Art and Art History and the editor of this catalog conceived of the show as a teaching exhibit concentrating less on "star objects" than on works which are exemplary of Islamic production and clearly demonstrate points of influence. He received guidance and advice from our consultant Richard Ettinghausen and the cooperation of the Director of the University Art Gallery, Michael Milkovich, and its Curator, Mary Newcome, all of whom helped to establish contacts with the generous lenders who were understanding and creatively involved.

Finally the conference became — as it should — a University project. The South West Asia and Northern Africa Studies Program and the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies cooperated in planning and administration of funds through Don Peretz and Bernard Huppé. Students and other members of the academic community were of considerable assistance in the preparation of catalog entries. Sam Chianis matched visual splendor with a program of Near Eastern music.

The archivist of the Center, Daniel Williman, prepared a complementary exhibit of documents from the Royal Library in La Valletta, Malta and matched it with recent publications which demonstrated the still disparate range of works addressing themselves to the contacts between Islam and the West. These range from the *Colloque International sur l'histoire du Caire*, S. D. Goitein's "*The Jewish Communities of the Arab World*," Franz Rosenthal's just published *The Classical Heritage in Islam*, to works on the *Islamic Humanities* by Bishai, *Al Kindi's Metaphysics* by Ivry, *Shia Islam* by S. H. Masr and other contributions by L. Seidel, W. M. Watts as well as the Mideastern Studies publications available through the State University of New York Press.

Last but not least we owe thanks to the students of the Medieval and Renaissance Society who paid for preparatory lectures and an Islamic culinary feast, and to Dorothy Huber and Minnie Blaine who solved last minute problems. Only a coordinated interdepartmental effort gave us an exhibition which added color and tangibility to our ninth conference.

Francois Bucher,
Co-director Center for Medieval and
Early Renaissance Studies

FOREWORD

Joint projects of the University Art Gallery with other units of the University are a long-standing and rewarding tradition. This exhibition of "Islam and the Medieval West" is such an effort. The Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, the Southwest Asian and North African Program, and the Department of Art and Art History, with a generous contribution from the Exxon Corporation, have joined together to study artistic developments and relations of the Near East and West from the Eighth to the Sixteenth Century.

It is impossible to record all the individuals who have helped with this exhibition. It is with a great deal of satisfaction and pleasure that we thank Professor Stanley Ferber who is in charge of this exhibition and who was responsible for assembling the objects from the various collections represented. Along with his regular professorial duties he found time to be involved in every phase of the exhibition, the writing of many entries, as well as the general editorship of the catalog. We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of Richard Ettinghausen, Rudolf Schnyder, James Breckenridge, Oleg Grabar and Stanley Ferber for their outstanding essays. The assistance of our colleagues Khalil Semaan, Norman Stillman and Yedida Stillman was invaluable in the translation of Arabic script. The contributions of students and colleagues in the catalog descriptions deserve our gratitude. They are recorded at the end of their respective catalog entries with their initials: Victoria Blevins, Carole Ann Fabian, Stanley Ferber, Sidney M. Goldstein, Ed Kelley, Dwight P. Lanmon, Diane Lesko, Michael Milkovich, Michael O'Rourke, Mary Prokop, Cynthia Richards.

We extend our gratitude to Professors Bernard Huppé and François Bucher of the Medieval and Early Renaissance Center and, particularly, to Professor Don Peretz of the Southwest Asian and North African Program for his enormous efforts to secure the grant from the Exxon Corporation which made the exhibition and catalog possible. Private lenders and officials of public institutions have helped greatly. Individuals are far too numerous to single out, so we wish to acknowledge our gratitude to them collectively.

As in the past, we were assisted by students in the Museum Techniques class and I wish to thank them for their involvement in the many aspects of this exhibition: Mindy Cantor, Allan Hopson, Debra Miller, and Christa Talbot; also, I am grateful to our students Edith Cooper, Harry Dixon II, Michelle Fischer and Diane Lesko for their help. Chris Focht and Dan Ferber were of great help in supplying photographic aid for the catalog.

This exhibition would never have become a reality without the enthusiasm and hard work of the gallery staff and we extend special thanks to Mary Newcome, Walter Luckert, and Kathy Gleason. Lee Ziac, and John Thomson merit special mention for their technical expertise and assistance in expediting the completion of work.

Michael Milkovich
Director

LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION

Anavian Galleries
Blumka Galleries
Boston Museum of Fine Arts
Brooklyn Museum
Cleveland Museum of Art
The Cloisters, Metropolitan Museum of Art
Corning Museum of Glass
Dr. Richard Ettinghausen
Fogg Museum, Harvard University
H. P. Kraus, Inc.
Metropolitan Museum of Art
Nelson Gallery of Art, Kansas City
Pierpont Morgan Library
Saint Louis City Art Museum
University of Michigan Art Gallery
University of Notre Dame Art Gallery
Mr. Carey Welch
Mr. Alfred Wolkenberg
Yale University Art Gallery

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	iii
Forword	v
Lenders to the Exhibition	vi
Introduction	1
Islamic Chronology	3
Muslim Decorative Arts and Painting — Their Nature and Impact on the Medieval West <i>Richard Ettinghausen</i>	5
Islamic Ceramics: A Source of Inspiration for Medieval European Art <i>Rudolf Schnyder</i>	27
The Two Sicilies <i>James D. Breckenridge</i>	39
Islamic Architecture and the West — Influences and Parallels <i>Oleg Grabar</i>	60
Islamic Art and the Medieval West — The State of the Question <i>Stanley Ferber</i>	67
Catalogue	75
General Bibliography	

INTRODUCTION

This "Islam and the Medieval West" art exhibition will serve a triad of purposes. For the novice to the field of Islamic art, the exhibition is intended as an introduction to the variety and wealth of Muslim production. It will provide an exposure to a realm of "crafts" and the normally designated "minor" or "decorative arts" in a culture where such endeavors have been elevated to the highest level of achievement. Inasmuch as a large number of pieces in the total exhibition come from collections which are not well-known and have been little published, their display here serves the purpose of introducing new and less familiar works to scholars in the field of Islamic art. Finally, in relation to the title of the exhibition, the inclusion of a select number of Western medieval objects is intended to suggest the range of possibilities in examining the types and nature of inter-relationships and influences at work between East and West during the Middle Ages.

Obviously, an exhibition which attempts what is outlined above cannot be totally comprehensive nor achieve a level of depth which in another context might be desirable. To fill this lacuna, and in order that the theme of the larger Conference on the same topic and the catalogue be more closely related, we included major essays which explore various aspects of the theme in a variety of genres. These essays will allow the reader to pursue substantive questions of Islamic and medieval Western art on a level far beyond that which the exhibition itself could achieve. The limitations which museums, galleries, and private collectors had to place upon borrowing due to the frailty of objects, have kept the exhibition from following the optimum desired course.

The Islamic arts of India and Southeast Asia have been largely excluded from the exhibition in order to limit it to a more manageable size, and to allow its scope to fall more easily within the allotted geographical and chronological range. The time span has been limited, with only few exceptions, from ca. 600 to ca. 1500. This *terminus* effectively excludes the fine productions of the Safavids as well as any discussion or illustration of the impact of Oriental carpets on the West or Western art on the Ottoman Empire. The Turkish drawings (Nos. 92, 93) and the Safavid belt buckle and manuscript illustration (Nos. 96, 94) are included to indicate the range of styles in Islam in the Sixteenth Century and to demonstrate the specific impact of one school of Western art upon Ottoman Turkey. The Hispano-Mauresque ceramics (Nos. 97, 98) reflect the after-life of Muslim civilization in Spain.

However, the exhibition makes it possible to exemplify the variety of media employed by Islamic artists and trace the changes in style and influences across a broad range of their productions. We can also examine examples of lesser known aspects of Islamic creation and additionally explore some of the relationships between East and West. This latter aspect of the exhibition and the catalogue are intended to serve as a stimulus to further investigation, as is the larger conference of which this is a part.

Within this context, the current exhibition has special significance. Because of the many lesser known objects on display, including some not previously published (Nos. 10a & b, 13, 15a & b), it became an admirable study collection for present and future work in Islamic as well as cross-cultural studies. The catalogue is its permanent record. The cross-cultural studies presented at the IXth Annual Conference of the Medieval and Early Renaissance Center will be published in an accompanying volume.

If the exhibition and concomitant catalogue succeed in any of their purposes; introducing Islamic art to a new and wider audience, bringing to light hitherto little-known works from Islamic collections, or focusing on a whole new range of relationships and questions relative to the dynamics of East-West interchange, the efforts of all concerned will be well rewarded.

S. Ferber

ISLAMIC CHRONOLOGY

This chronological chart is in no way intended as a history of Islam and the West but is designed as an aid to placing objects in a geographical and chronological context.

622 Hijra.	Starting point of Islamic calendar and A.H. dating.
632-661	Four legitimate caliphs. Incorporation of Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt and Persia into Dar-al-Islam.
667-750	Umayyad Caliphate. From its center in Damascus, Islam spread across North Africa into Spain in the West, and Turkestan to the East.
750-1258	The Abbasid Caliphate. The Abbasids built a new city, Baghdad, for their capital. Although Islam continued to spread in the East, the caliphate lost its power during this period, and the empire began to disintegrate.

ISLAMIC SPAIN

750-927	Emirate started by the last remaining Umayyad prince after the Abbasid takeover in the East.
927-1027	Umayyad Caliphate in Spain
1012-1086	Reyes de Trifas; Period of party Kings
1082-1145	Almoravides
1145-1235	Almohades
1235-1492	Nasrid Sultanate; the last vestige of Islam in Spain, centered in Granada.

EGYPT AND MESOPOTAMIA

868-905	Ibn Tulun, the Abbasid governor of Turkish descent, establishes independent Emirate.
967-1171	Fatimid Caliphate establishes its capital in the new city of Cairo adjacent to Fustat. The Fatimids hold Sicily until the Norman conquest in 1071, as well as ruling Egypt and North Africa.
945-1055	The Buyids occupy Baghdad and maintain the Abbasid caliph as a puppet.
1055-1258	The Seljuks and Ayyubids. Central Asian people called the Seljuk Turks take control of Baghdad and the Abbasid caliphate.

1071	Seljuks defeat forces of the Byzantine Empire at Manzikert.
1096/7	First Crusade.
1099	Jerusalem reconquered by Crusaders, and Latin Kingdom established.
1147	Second Crusade, led by Louis VII.
1169	Saladin establishes Ayyubid dynasty, destroys Fatimid caliphate (1171)
1187	Saladin recapture Jerusalem
1189-92	Third Crusade: Frederick Barbarossa and Richard the Lionhearted.
1201-1203	Fourth Crusade: Latin Kingdom in Constantinople; 1204, Baldwin of Flanders, King of Constantinople.
1252-1517	Mamluke Sultanate. Turkish slaves who seized control of Egypt and Syria from the Ayyubids and maintained it until the Ottoman conquest in 1517.
1258	Mongol invasion ends the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad.
1299-1922	Ottoman Turks: From the end of the 13th century the Ottomans were within the bounds of the Byzantine Empire, and finally in 1453 succeeded in capturing Constantinople.

IRAN

874-999	Samanids. Abbasid control in the East was disintegrating and many small dynasties and states appeared. Samanids were one of the more important ones, due to their encouragement of a Persian revival. Firdausi began the Shah-Namah in 957 under their reign.
932-1055	Buyids come to power in Southern Iran and occupy Baghdad in 945.
1055-1256	Great Seljuks (See Mesopotamia 1055)
1256-1336	Ilkhanids. Dynasty founded by the Mongol emperor Hūlāgū.
1387-1502	Timurid Empire. Dynasty founded by Timur (Tamerlane) which unified Turkestan and Iran. Timurid patronage inspired extensive artistic production. Of particular note is the painting of this period.
1501-1736	Safavid Dynasty. A native Iranian Shi'ite dynasty. Extensive patronage of the arts especially by Shah Abbas (1587-1629).

MUSLIM DECORATIVE ARTS AND PAINTING THEIR NATURE AND IMPACT ON THE MEDIEVAL WEST *

by Richard Ettinghausen

THE NATURE OF ISLAMIC ART

Whenever we speak of the Islamic legacy we tend to postulate that it formed an interconnected aesthetic unity. We may be aware of distinct manifestations in various regions of the immense area of Islam, but nevertheless assume overriding common characteristics. This supposition was almost axiomatic two generations ago, and was demonstrated in the Islamic Art Exhibit in London in 1885, in the Munich show of 1910 and as late as 1926 in Alexandria. More recent exhibitions were dedicated to specific countries. The London show of 1931 dealt exclusively with Iran, stressing Luristan bronzes and Achaemenid objects and the 1935 Leningrad Iranian exhibit did so for the Sasanian area. "Sept mille ans d'art en Iran" in Paris (1961) emphasized the diverse civilizations of Iran.

Today, therefore, the concept of Islamic art itself is sometimes seriously questioned, usually by implication and covertly, and then for one of two major reasons. On the one hand we are nowadays so much more aware of the specific character of the arts in the major geographical and cultural areas that at times their relative uniqueness may seem more striking than their interrelationship with other, particularly more distant, regions. Iranian, Turkish and Indian painting of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries is a case in point. This is so not only because comparison of form and spirit within these schools seems to support the advocates of disparity, but even more so because at least two of them represent the period of major regional achievement in this medium and tend therefore to be looked at in isolation. The same restrictive attitude has resulted from the fact that in the various Muslim countries there is a new generation of scholars eagerly exploring their own artistic heritage. Having grown up in a secular and nationalistic period of history, most of them see their past primarily as a national achievement in which international religious and cultural factors played only a small part. Thus these scholars, and also a number of their Western colleagues influenced by them speak exclusively of the art of their country, be it Turkey, India, Spain, or even Uzbekistan.

However, for various reasons the traditional point of view seems to be still fully warranted. In spite of 'dialectal' differences all the arts in the *Dar-al-Islam* do speak the same basic language. For example, a comparison of ceramic production in centers as different as Fourteenth Century Iran, Syria, Egypt, or the lower Volga lands of the Golden Horde makes this point quite obvious. Indeed, after half a century of intensive international research, it is still often impossible to recognize regional differences. No one can name the country of any of the many Koran illuminations up to the year 1000, or distinguish between Egyptian and Iraqi rock-crystal carvings of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries, or between Egyptian and Persian cut glass of the same period, or between the silks from various countries dating from the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries. Similarly, to

*Mr. Ettinghausen's contribution is an abridged and updated version of his essay in *The Legacy of Islam*, Oxford University Press, London, 1973, and is reprinted with the kind permission of the publishers.

give another example to underline this point—a number of illuminated Persian manuscripts of the first half of the Fifteenth Century are now attributed to Muslim India, not because there are any obviously Indian features to be found in them (there are few so far as we know), but because scholars have run out of possible Iranian places of origin.¹ This certainly indicates a uniformly inspired artisanry using similar methods of production which can be assumed to have existed in nearly every craft throughout the Muslim world. In other cases the attribution is not based on any stylistic clues, with regards to the figural and decorative elements, but is the result of epigraphic, and, more recently, of technical considerations. Finally, it should be remarked that the 'Islamic' character in the arts and crafts is so pronounced that it is apparent even after a given region such as Spain or Sicily had been reconquered by Christianity and the main artistic trend become quite different. Thus it is clear that Islam exerted a very strong, even vital force, which was readily mirrored in the arts of the Muslim world.

This having been said, it should nevertheless be stressed again that divergences do of course exist under the umbrella of the universal Islamic civilization. We are not concerned at this moment with stylistic changes from period to period, or with the different horizontal stratifications according to the various social classes, a feature which is only now being recognized. There seem to have been distinct attitudes characteristic of certain major regions. Thus, in the middle of the Twelfth Century Egypt developed a compartmented geometric style, primarily of star configurations, which was readily taken up in North Africa, Spain, Anatolia, and later on in European Turkey. There is comparatively little of this in Eastern Islam, especially not in Iran or India. By contrast Iran developed systems of free-flowing arabesques or floral *rinceaux* to cover such surfaces as the carpet-pages in manuscripts, doors, the sides of pulpits (*min-bars*), and so on. The reason for this East-West split is still obscure. We can only surmise that the more rational mind of orthodox Islam apparently preferred a straight, more rigid, and calculated style, while a mystic orientation, as that of Iran, adopted an abstract, undulating approach which nevertheless seems in its orderly manner to represent the rationalization of an ineffable inner experience.

When we proceed to probe further into the various manifestations of Islamic art, a curious fact presents itself. The Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries are the great periods for pottery and metal production in Iran—well after the finest creations in glass had been achieved in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries—while the highest and most original accomplishments in painting were not to appear until between 1330 and 1550, and the best carpets from 1500 to 1625. On the other hand, when we consider one medium such as pottery, we observe that the Ninth Century saw the flowering of the craft in Iraq, the Tenth Century in Eastern Iran and Transoxania, the Eleventh and early Twelfth Centuries in Egypt, the late Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries in Iran and Syria, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries in Spain, and the Sixteenth Century in Turkey. Rarer working materials made an even more sporadic appearance. Ivory was carved in Spain mainly in the second half of the Tenth and the beginning of the Eleventh Century, and in Egypt in the Twelfth Century.

The conclusion to be drawn—and more could, of course, be said on this issue—is that we cannot speak of one great period in which all or most of the

crafts flourished, nor is there a universal zenith for any one craft. In general, the development is related to political high points in time and space, reflecting peaceful conditions, an economic boom, and specific princely patronage; even in the great creative countries the phenomenon is not constant but occurs in waves resulting in variable creative foci. In practical terms this means, for instance, that there is not one great period of Iranian art, because the selection of one period as such would automatically exclude artistic creations, even masterpieces, of before or after that particular era. This also makes it difficult to compare the great creations of a country in different media, as they belong more likely than not to different centuries, thus reflecting a different spirit; or if objects of the same material are compared, they are from different areas and probably also date from different periods.

This situation has led to a fragmented approach to Islamic art, directed either to a narrow geographic segment of the Islamic world, with wide historical boundaries, or to a specific subject with broad geographic limits. The result is that there are experts on Iranian, Egyptian, or Turkish Islamic art in general, or on architecture, miniatures, carpets, ceramics, or glass, usually of all Islamic countries, each scholar being outstanding in his specialty but in no other and thus missing the connecting links.

Having said all this, it should be added that in the collective mind of persons interested in Islamic art, is a strongly entrenched notion of an all-pervading 'Islamic' cachet which goes well beyond the individual features developed by each country and period. They think specifically of the vegetal arrangements, whether realistically rendered flowers or abstract arabesques, of geometric configurations and finally of calligraphically rendered inscriptions. These are indeed the main themes of Islamic art permeating both the sacred and the secular arts, and as such they demand further discussion.

But what is it that makes the floral, geometric, or epigraphic decorations so noteworthy and appealingly different and, indeed, memorable? And what makes them 'Islamic'? Starting with the latter issue, it is clear that it cannot be the rarity of human and animal figures, as these do occur, particularly on rugs, metalwork, and ceramics, and do not make these art objects any less 'Islamic' in appearance. Even when human figures appear in the decorative arts, they are usually not too obviously Near Eastern. They are more often than not of a non-specific appearance, as they represent crowned princes and not the common people clothed in kaftan and turban. Even the facial features do not help much, as a beard and bushy eyebrows are not sufficiently indicative. In many instances the physical aspects are even misleading to the uninitiated, for the facial cast, especially the slanting eyes, appears to be Far Eastern, whereas it is actually characteristic of Tatars or Mongoloid Turks from Central Asia whose beauty, as sung by the poets, was proverbial.

Can it be said that an Islamic message is contained in the ubiquitous Arabic lettering? This element in the decoration certainly helps to establish the atmosphere, but it seems unlikely that its content is essentially Islamic. Many of these 'inscriptions' are only simulating writing, or they repeat stereotyped words of good wishes. Even when they contain a genuine message, it may not be

Islamic, at least not in a religious sense. These inscriptions can be secular proverbs² or, as is very frequent, they may represent dedicatory eulogies to please royal or princely patrons. Even more revealing is the fact that these inscriptions were not thought to be absolutely essential. They occur rarely on the many Turkish varieties of prayer-carpet, and not at all on those from Iran, India, the Caucasus, or Central Asia. Furthermore, there is a good deal of evidence that, when such inscriptions were most appropriately applied, they were not read even if they contained Koranic quotations.

Since this is an important issue, three examples may be quoted, one each from the earliest and latest periods of Islamic art and a third from an intermediate point in history. The oldest architectural monument of Islam, and one of its holiest, the Dome of the Rock, built in 691 in Jerusalem, has since the Caliphate of al-Walid (705-15) been universally thought to represent a memorial to the Ascension of the Prophet, traditionally held to have taken place on this spot. However, its extensive inscriptions indicate that it is a victory monument commemorating triumph over the Jewish and Christian religions.³ Five hundred years later a dedicatory inscription was applied to a silver-inlaid brass ewer made for the Lord of Mosul, Badr al-Din Lu'lu' (1231-59). Not only are there spelling mistakes, particularly in the name, but one is also of a near-defamatory nature, practically calling the ruler 'Father of Oppressions' (Abu'l-Mazalim);⁴ yet in spite of this implied insult the object was, as a graffito indicates, readily accepted for the royal stores. Finally, the large inscription on the facade of a splendid mosque recently built in a Western capital has a wrongly delineated letter which obviously changes the Koranic text; here again nobody—from the Azhar-educated imams to the many cultural attaches of the various embassies—has read this spectacularly placed inscription and raised objections. There is, therefore, little doubt that the same attitude has prevailed throughout Muslim history and that, while verbal communications were sent out, they were seldom consciously received.

They contained, however, a non-verbal message which was understood by every Muslim, even though the writing was often in Kufic characters which are difficult even for experts to read. An inscription in impressive Arabic letters, the vehicle of the Koran, had the most sacred and symbolic meaning and it is only natural that it occurs as the only symbolic feature on coins and on the flag of at least one fundamentalist Islamic state, that of Saudi Arabia.

If there is not direct scriptural content, could we then perhaps assume a message through specifically Islamic symbols analogous to the use of Arabic writing? Several decades ago, in 1929, the British Orientalist Sir Thomas Arnold wrote an article on 'Symbolism and Islam'⁵ and, while surveying only a limited amount of material, on the basis of his general experience he came to the conclusion that, unlike other religions, Islam did not develop a symbolic language. Professor Rudi Paret in his *Book Symbolik des Islam* (1958) likewise does not impart an important role to symbolism in Islamic art. It seems, however, that the situation is not quite so negative as was assumed by these eminent scholars, although it remains ambivalent.

Let us consider one typical example which is as Islamic as can be, a symbol of Allah, the Godhead Himself. Furthermore, it has all possible canonical sanction, as it is based on a Koranic passage in *Surat al-nur*, the so-called 'Verse of Light' (xxiv. 35): 'Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The likeness of His Light is as a niche in which there is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a shining star...' Now in spite of the very unequivocal language, a symbol based on this image came into being only in the Twelfth Century, apparently instigated by the small tract *Mishkat al-ansar* written by the eminent al-Ghazali, which uses the same sacred verse. This symbol occurs mainly in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt but hardly in the regions to the east, west, and south. It is also found mainly in the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and early Fifteenth Centuries, and not universally as it served almost exclusively for the decoration of *mihhrabs*, although it reappears in late Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century prayer-carpet. That this symbol had such a limited application was not due to a theological reorientation or the rise of another symbol which might have replaced it; it was rather the diffident attitude towards such signs altogether (which made Arnold and Paret despair of their existence) which caused its eclipse, together with a built-in self-destructive factor which affected much of Islamic art (and, for that matter, Islamic literature as well). It was a general rule that when an artist tried to improve on a design he did so not by introducing new imaginative motifs and combining them ingeniously, but by elaborating on the concepts already available. In the case of the 'light symbol' this meant that its ground became more richly decorated with floral designs and the color of the area between the suspension chains was changed, and in addition two candlesticks were placed below, at the sides of the lamp, in imitation of actual *mihhrab* practice. This clouded the issue and ther underlying meaning was gradually lost. This is shown best by the fact that the lamp soon turned into a flower vase if it was not replaced by an ornament or at times by a suspended ewer, suggested by the rite of cleansing before prayer.

The conclusion is that, though at times symbolism existed,⁶ like the inscriptions it did not continue for long to express its message. The message becomes almost immediately purely 'decorative' and, therefore, devoid of a directly understandable meaning. It joins the flowers, arabesques, and starlike configurations which, it seems, never had a specific, explicit message to begin with. This is corroborated by the fact that when a symbol finally disappeared, its well-formed frame, that is, its 'carrier', nevertheless persisted.⁷ In other words, the mere outer shape or the manner of presentation seems to have been more important than what is usually called the inner meaning or the message.

This being a significant aspect of Islamic art, it seems essential to demonstrate it by two other examples. Perhaps the most significant piece of evidence in an Iranian context is the wide application of the four *eyvan* system. This places a high, wide, and open hall half-way along each side of a rectangular courtyard. While this building scheme was well suited to the Iranian house and could also be properly adapted for the use of palaces and *madrasas*, it was less appropriate for hospitals and caravanserais. It made no sense for the enclosure of burial grounds (such as that at Gazargah near Herat⁸), and it was downright unfitted to its eventual major use for Friday mosques where the main *eyvan* was combined with a large dome before the *mihhrab*, a feature derived from Sasanian

palace architecture. Thus the congregational and unitary aspect of the sanctuary part of the mosque was destroyed, as the heavy supports of the dome blocked off the center section from the side wings, while beyond it a great deal of not really needed space was built up to extend the lateral arcading to the depth of the side *eyvan*. Here again, content or function is sacrificed for mere outer form, harmonious and impressive as it may be.

This phenomenon is further borne out by an equally convincing piece of evidence ultimately developed in Egypt: Muslim bookbinding. This is characterized by a pentagonal flap attached to the lower cover which is tucked in under the upper cover when the book is not in use. It is commonly thought that in this way the manuscript is more tightly held together. Since there is not constricting pressure, this hardly seems to be the purpose. And it is worth noting that Europe never adopted the use of the flap, although it eventually accepted the pasteboard foundation of Muslim bindings to replace the usual wooden core. The traditional explanation makes little sense. What happened was that in early Coptic bindings a long strap was attached to a flap of this shape, so that the book could be securely bound, for example while one was travelling. The gnostic manuscripts of Nag Hammadi of the Fourth Century are bound in this manner. The rather untidy-looking strap was later dispensed with, making the flap unnecessary. Neither of them, therefore, is to be found on the Coptic manuscripts of the Monastery of St. Michael of the Desert in the Fayyum of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries, now in the Pierpont Morgan Library. But, as a result of the sacred aura which surrounded the early Koran manuscripts, the traditional flap was retained in Muslim binding, although without the strap which in urban libraries was unnecessary. Hence, we are here confronted with still another functionless form found everywhere in the Muslim world even today.

It seems reasonable to assume that the decisive Islamic element—the feature which has exerted such fascination on the viewer inside and outside the Muslim world—may well be a common denominator found in *all* the arts of the vast region. Since we are here concerned with decorative arts and painting, we have to isolate this factor primarily from them although we are fully aware that it must equally be present in architecture.

With this aim in mind, certain features which have often been mentioned as representing the basic elements of Islamic art may be eliminated. For instance we may dispense with flat, two-dimensional design, as there is a good deal of plastically conceived carving in various media, with the Iranian stucco reliefs forming a particularly noteworthy group. Nor can infinite ornament be a feature, as there is a good deal of limited decoration, as for instance in those not infrequent medallion schemes whose corner designs differ from that of the central form, so that there is no immediate suggestion of an endless repetition of the same pattern. There exist both richly moving kinetic ornamentation and perfectly static ornamentation.⁹ And while there is an obvious preference for such simple materials as clay, glass, brass, bronze, wool, and cotton, precious metals as well as semi-precious stones, marble, ivory, and silk were also widely used. It is true that color is very important, yet the dull tones of clay, wood, and ordinary metals also occur. Finally, we must eliminate the assumption that Islamic art is one dealing with abstract ornamentation; there are many designs representing

figures, mainly in the paintings but also in the decorative arts, especially in princely themes and animal motifs.

While all these features are of primary significance, none of them is of a universal nature and none can, therefore, qualify as the decisive factor.¹⁰ This leaves only one aspect for consideration: the general harmony, balance of parts, and perfection of the whole composition. This, is indeed, ubiquitously found and should, therefore, be regarded as the most important Islamic element. Its nature was well described about A.D. 1106 by al-Ghazali in his *Kimiya al-sa'ada* ('Alchemy of Happiness'):

"The beauty of a thing lies in the appearance of that perfection which is realizable and in accord with its nature. When all possible traits of perfection appear in an object, it presents the highest degree of beauty . . . beautiful writing combines everything that is characteristic of writing, such as harmony of letters, their correct relation to each other, right sequence, and beautiful arrangement. There is a characteristic perfection for each thing, the opposite of which could under special circumstances be characteristic of something else."¹¹

This finding must be underlined by two further considerations. First, harmony of design is only possible when there is design. Hence, it should be stressed that undecorated objects are rather rare in Islamic art. Even cheap unglazed pottery nearly always shows some form of decoration, at times a great deal of it made by stamping or mold imprints. Secondly, the categories of aesthetic judgement with regard to painters mentioned by Mirza Muhammad Haydar Dughlat (c. 1500-51) are those of refinement and harmony, in which such values as delicacy, exquisiteness, finesse, agreeable effect, cleanliness, purity, finish, as well as firmness, are often mentioned, while terms of disparagement are 'unsymmetrical' and 'crude'.¹²

Is there any indication of how this basic element of inner harmony was experienced by a Muslim viewer? Although evidence to judge this is hard to come by, it seems that the approach was on several levels. On the first (which the metaphysician would call the lowest) there is the aesthetic appeal. Jalal al-Din Rumi says: 'Everything that is made beautiful and fair and lovely is made for the eye of him that sees' (*Mathnavi*, i, 2383),¹³ because, as al-Ghazali states: 'Everything the perception of which gives pleasure and satisfaction is loved by the one who perceives it.' It is this aspect of beauty and harmony which caused the work of art to be commissioned in the first place, or which made the object saleable after it had been fashioned. It is still the basis of today's appeal to the connoisseur.

On the second level the design satisfies a psychological need. It caters to human sensitiveness which is bewildered by the surrounding untamed, dangerous, and often phantasmagoric landscape, and displeased by the equally unappealing web of crooked and winding streets in villages and towns. The answer is a formal harmony which is rectilinear in the case of architecture and gardens. It is further enriched by color which is the antidote to the all-pervading monotony of the ubiquitous sand or stone. How great was the need for color is not only indicated by the wide range of richly glazed pottery but even more

startlingly demonstrated by architectural wall coverings such as Iranian brick and faience mosaics, Central Asian carved terracottas, Egyptian and Syrian variegated marble inlays, and Spanish-North African tiled dados. While these are special efforts of communal and princely display, the same love of color can just as easily be detected in works intended for private enjoyment, objects of brass or bronze with their inlays of copper, silver, gold, and black mastic.

While for the average person these two reactions to beauty and harmony may have been sufficient, others of a more reflective and religious nature may have derived inner satisfaction from viewing art in a more profound manner. Hence, another approach to art could be a moral one, viewing art as a reflection of virtue. 'Purity of writing proceeds from purity of heart,' says Qadi Ahmad, an Iranian writing about calligraphers and book illuminators at the beginning of the Seventeenth Century, and he bases this judgment on the highest authority: the goal of Murtada 'Ali (i.e. the Caliph 'Ali) in writing was not the invention of letters and dots, but fundamentals: purity and virtue.¹⁴ This opinion reflects an attitude already expressed five hundred years earlier by al-Ghazali: 'The beautiful painting of a painter or the building of an architect reveals the inner beauty of these men.' Accordingly, in biographies of artists, painters, in spite of their theologically doubtful position, are often regarded as paragons of quiet piety, while their *confreres* who travelled widely or led violent lives were regarded with disfavor. The ideal Muslim artist or artisan had thus nothing in common with the Bohemian of the Romantic Age.

The highest level in contemplation of art is, however, the metaphysical approach, especially that undertaken by a Sufi. It achieves a higher insight which goes well beyond the surface appearance of the object, as it is, for instance, expressed by al-Ghazali: 'The beauty of the outer form which is seen with the bodily eye can be experienced even by children and animals . . . while the beauty of the inner form can only be perceived by the eye of the "heart" and the light of inner vision of man alone.' In this approach the art object becomes a clue to higher verities: 'The one saw in the mind only figured clay; while the others saw clay replete with knowledge and works' (*Mathnavi*, vi. 1144). In further amplification of this idea artistic perfection becomes the extension and counterpart of 'the perfect man' (*al-insan al-kamil*) who according to Ibn al-'Arabi (1165-1240) ' . . . united in himself both the form of God and the form of the universe. He alone manifests the divine Essence together with all its names and attributes (which include beauty). He is the mirror by which God is revealed to Himself and therefore the final cause of creation. Our existence is merely an objectification of His existence.'¹⁵

Whatever approach to the work of art was adopted, it was always the optically brilliant, harmonious, outer form which carried the message, especially so since symbolism or verbal communication played, as we have seen only a minor role. It did not matter that arabesques, flowers, geometric configurations, inscriptions, and even the animals and human images suffered from a certain sameness of appearance which made them fall easily into specific types. Actually the standardized harmony made Islamic art a *koine* readily understood, enjoyed, and imitated everywhere within the world of Islam; it had an appeal which was wider than the Arabic language and even the Arabic alphabet, and

was second only to religion; hence its pervasive influence in a mostly illiterate and publicly frugal but emotionally responsive community which was endeavoring to find salvation without the immediate intercession of a prophet or saints and without the help of a clergy.

Although Islamic art of the mature periods looks like itself and nothing else, it is actually of many origins incorporating even civilizations hostile to itself. When Islam developed its art, great pain was, of course, taken to eliminate every vestige of the symbols of the preceding religions. However, behind the older faiths stood still older ones, especially the age-old myths and magic concepts of a prehistoric past. Recent research has shown that, besides the usual placid-looking main themes of Islamic art, or the calligraphically rendered inscriptions, or the princely scenes, there are also ancient themes of cosmic lore and the power of natural and supernatural forces symbolically reflected in combat scenes, zoological configurations, and various other emblems.¹⁶

Naturally the imprint of the immediate region was the strongest. Royal themes of the Sasanian and Achaemenian period reappear in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries. Going even further back in the history of Iran there are prehistoric zoomorphic pottery containers which, after more than one or even two thousand years, show up again although their very shape contradicted Islamic concepts. Animal designs in the same silhouette style as was used in prehistoric pottery are again used in the most developed period of the Middle Ages, and even strange, ancient, representational motifs and techniques have a way of being suddenly, and to all appearances inexplicably, re-employed. What it amounts to is the existence of a subsurface stratum of former concepts which Islam was strong enough to face and to integrate into its art. In spite of its novel forms constituting a far-flung *koine*, there is, therefore, a decidedly conservative streak in Islamic art, even though it is often overlooked owing to the neutralizing process, which is one of the ways of Islamization.

Islamic art emerges then as an art with many traditional roots in spite of many innovations in themes, their composition, and enrichment. In spite of its neutrality and blandness, it is not only primarily man-related but it has a definite task or message, albeit a non-verbal one. It is this which gives Islamic art its special, unique quality.

THE IMPACT OF MUSLIM ART ON EUROPE

For over 1,300 years the worlds of Islam and of Europe have been in more or less constant, dynamic relationship, and often tense confrontation. But in spite of violent denigration of the Muslim religion and its Prophet,¹⁷ the West has had nothing but admiration for the arts of the Near East. It manifested itself in the association of whatever was available of this art with its most revered institutions, whether sacred or mundane, and in artistic borrowings of one type or another by the West from the East.

This impact was not restricted to the regions where a wide and profound meeting of spirit was to be expected and indeed did occur. In border regions

there are the Mozarabic paintings and South Italian ivory carvings, as well as the bilingual coins of Spain, Amalfi, and Salerno.¹⁸ The 52,000 complete or fragmentary Islamic coins found in northern European countries, some of them made into jewelry, dating from the early Eighth until the early Eleventh Century, show that there were prolonged trade links of these regions with the Islamic world; more than 30,000 of these Islamic coins, minted by the Samanid dynasty of eastern Iran and Transoxiana, were discovered on the Island of Gotland alone.¹⁹ The effect of the Near East on the Far North is further underlined by the fact that one of the oldest extant Oriental carpets which dates from the early Fifteenth Century was found in the village church of Marby in northern Sweden, and that there is a whole category of Scandinavian adaptations of Oriental textiles, some of them of Islamic derivation.²⁰ Even such fragile objects as Syrian enamelled glass of the Thirteenth Century have been found in Sweden. While noting that this influence covered the widest possible area, it is also necessary to stress that it encompassed many, if not all, of the media. On the other hand, the impact was usually sporadic and not as massive and noticeable as that of China in the Eighteenth Century. It is not by chance, therefore, that there is no generally accepted term in Western languages corresponding to 'Chinoiserie,' although from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries there was in Europe enough interest in and material from Turkey to have warranted the use of 'Turquerie.' Also, while many phenomena of this cultural impact have been observed and some have been described, it has hardly ever been systematically treated and evaluated as a whole.²¹

Before giving what at best can only be a brief and sketchy survey, we should first try to understand why the Eastern arts were so popular in the West. Here, the first point to be made is a negative one: there was no specifically Muslim iconography or overt religious symbolism, which would have been offensive to the Christian mind. The innocent blandness of the various quadrupeds and birds, arabesques, and occasional human beings made the objects on which they were portrayed fully acceptable, even for the wrapping of a sacred relic or the carpeting of the altar steps. No exception was ever taken to the use of the Arabic script, which was widely used and can be found on the halo of the Madonna, along the edges of the garments worn by saints, on cathedral doors, and on every other possible surface.²² Although Arabic writing had a symbolic meaning in the Muslim world, and certain formulas contain religious invocations including the name of Allah, the West apparently did not understand it as such. As this writing often occurred on Biblical figures, including the Jewish High Priest, it may have been interpreted as ancient Hebrew script or at least as that used by the New Testament figures and by Christian saints. As such, it would have differed from the Hebrew alphabet used by the little-esteemed Jewish contemporaries and so seemed innocuous enough to be used in a Christian context.

A more positive reason for the ready acceptance of Islamic objects was their obvious aesthetic quality—their harmony, opulence, and often the great richness of their colors. A further asset, especially in the early periods, was the high degree of technical skill evident in the execution, far surpassing anything possible in the West. To this was added their exotic quaintness, and, what was particularly important, their true or assumed associations with the Holy Land and specific saintly figures.

The reaction of the West took various forms. There was the outright acceptance of the object as it was, physically unchanged, with a readiness to adapt it to the West's own purposes. The very large numbers of imported Oriental carpets belong to this group, which was undoubtedly the most extensive. Culturally more significant, though numerically much rarer, are those objects which were not just passively taken over but adapted to specific functions, and modified according to the prevailing *Formgefühl*. Thus, a textile could be used as the lining of a luxurious manuscript's binding; then again it could be painted in place as if it were original, and thus appear as a consciously envisaged *doublure*.

In turning now to actual objects, the place of honor should be given to textiles which from the beginning were imported into Europe, and left an indelible mark. We have only to consider the many terms derived from Near Eastern words or place-names: cotton, divan, sofa, and mattress, as well as damask, muslin, and baldachin. Such imports must have started soon after the rise of Islam, if they did not actually pre-date it. This is indicated by the important group of silks of the Seventh to the Eighth Century, made in Zandaneh near Bukhara, which were brought to the West at an early date to be used, like so many other fabrics, as wrappings for holy relics in churches of France, Belgium and Holland.²³ It should be pointed out that the comparatively large number of textiles brought to the West is not surprising as weaving was the foremost craft of the Muslim world, providing not only all the clothing but also essential home furnishings such as covers, bolsters, pillows, carpets, curtains, and tents. Being durable and easily folded, textiles were not difficult to transport. Once they reached the West, their use was usually an ancillary one: for instance, an early Muslim fabric with an Iranian bird design served as cover for the 'Veil of Our Lady' now in the cathedral of Chartres.²⁴ Occasionally, however, they were objects of veneration, being erroneously identified with persons of an earlier period of history. Such is the case of the 'Veil of Saint Anne' which is kept in a fifteenth century Venetian bottle in the church of Apt, Vaucluse, France. Here the impossibility of the early date and of the alleged function is indicated by its Arabic inscription which contains not only the formula of the Muslim faith but also the names of the Fatimid Caliph, al-Must'li (reigned 1094-1101), and of his chief minister, al-Afdal, as well as an indication that the textile was woven in Damietta, Egypt, in 1096 or 1097.²⁵ Since it was woven before the fall of Jerusalem and al-Afdal's defeat at Ascalon, the fabric could very well have been brought back by the Lords of Apt or its Bishop, who took part in the First Crusade and who, like many other Crusaders, may have brought back precious objects to be presented to their church as a thanksgiving for a safe return.

The earliest Islamic figured silk with a datable historical name on it and which has had an ecclesiastical connection comes from eastern Iran. It must have been made before 961, when the Turkish general mentioned on it was put to death; it was once in the small church of Saint Josse-sur-Mer in the Pas de Calais and is now in the Musée du Louvre. On the other hand the first figured silk with the name of a town, part of the treasure of the Colegiata de San Isidoro in Leon, is of slightly later date, about the Eleventh Century.²⁶ It is indicated on it that it was made in Baghdad, but it is actually a Spanish copy of an Iraqi model.

Though many textiles reached Europe from distant regions, those found in Spanish churches were usually from a neighbouring Hispano-Islamic manufacturing center. This was already the case when the 'Veil' of the Caliph Hisham II (976-1013), which is possibly part of a dress, was given as a battle trophy to the Church of San Esteban in San Esteban de Gormaz; the same applies to the great Almohad textiles of the Twelfth Century.²⁷ In contrast to these ecclesiastical uses, but no less significant and even more spectacular, was the secular history of the ceremonial cloak originally made for the Norman King Roger II in Palermo in 1133, and subsequently worn as the coronation robe of the Holy Roman Emperors until 1806. It is a large semi-circular garment with a twice-repeated, monumental scene of a lion destroying a camel, a symbolic portrayal of the Norman conquest of the Arab land. Its origin as the creation of Muslim craftsmen in the service of their new Christian overlord is indicated by a large Arabic inscription. In its new role, the garment appears in a drawing by Albrecht Durer, showing Charlemagne somewhat incongruously clothed in this coronation robe.²⁸ From the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century a new use was made of Oriental textiles from Spain, Egypt, Persia, and Turkey which could be made into luxurious vestments for the Mass. The beauty of the pattern was more important than the design which was, at times, quite unsuited for the purpose. We thus find sacred vestments incorporating dedications to a Muslim ruler, or with episodes from a romantic poem, or even a drinking scene.²⁹

In the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries another important development took place. The Islamic textile patterns were taken over by European weavers who paraphrased them freely, albeit on a reduced scale. First, the Sasanian-type roundels with pairs of animals were copied in Lucca and Regensburg, then there followed ogival composition schemes and geometric tile patterns which were woven in Mudejar patterns of Chinese derivation.³⁰

Carpets are considered here as a special category of the textile arts. The Oriental carpet as we know it is assumed to have been brought to the Near East by the Seljuq Turks when, in the middle of the Eleventh Century, they moved west from their Central Asian homes. The patterns of these early carpets are no longer known to us, but they were undoubtedly further developed in Anatolia in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries. At the end of this period we know that they had arrived in Italy because, at that time, they begin to be represented in ever-increasing numbers in Italian paintings, and then in others as well. They appear below the throne of the Madonna, on the floor of the interiors where the sacred rites take place, or they are seen hanging from windows as colorful decorations displayed on feast days. At first these carpets show one or two animals or birds in a series of octagons placed in squares; then from the middle of the Fifteenth Century purely abstract and geometric patterns begin to appear and these tend to become more elaborate.

Important as the craft of the Muslim metalsmith was in the Middle Ages, it seems to have exerted only a minor influence on the arts of Europe, possibly because the individual objects were usually too heavy to be carried back by the weary pilgrim or crusader. Still there is some evidence of the existence of such pieces and of their eventual impact. The earliest and most famous is the bronze griffin of Pisa, probably one of the outstanding metal objects of the Fatimid

period of Egypt. A crusading connection exists in the case of a basin long owned by the Dukes of Arenberg, and now in the Freer Gallery of Art. It was made for the Muslim opponent of the Crusaders, the Sultan al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub, just before the middle of the Thirteenth Century, and entered the ducal collections at a now uncertain moment, although, to judge from the engraved blazon on the base, this must have happened not later than the Seventeenth Century.³¹

Unlike these large, remarkable, but uninfluential pieces, some smaller objects had a specific impact. Often the precise prototype is not known and the model can be established only by means of related pieces. The earliest group are Romanesque animal-shaped vessels of the Twelfth Century, usually called *aquamaniles*, which were used for the pouring of water. As they existed in the Near East earlier than in Europe, had the same functional features such as inlet and outlet pipes and animal-shaped handles, reproduced the same, often fantastic creatures of Near Eastern derivation, and showed the same stylization, their descent from Oriental models can hardly be questioned.³² Also of medieval date are a group of French objects of the second half of the Thirteenth Century, the enamelled copper basins made in pairs in Limoges and called *gemellions*, whose compositional schemes and decorative motifs have such a pronounced Islamic character that they seem to have been inspired by related Muslim pieces.³³ Again, there are the astrolabes which were made in such profusion in the Near East and then closely copied in Europe.³⁴ Happily, these astronomical instruments are often signed and dated so that their diffusion can be easily followed.

The influence of Islamic metalwork became even more pervasive towards the end of the Fifteenth Century when, at the very end of the period in which the inlay technique was used in the Near East, a large number of basins, bowls, platters, pitchers, and candlesticks executed by this process appeared in Venice, and possibly in other Italian towns as well, and continued to do so during the first half of the next century.³⁵ They are all made of very shiny brass which is delicately chased and inlaid with silver, and at times signed by members of a small group of artists although the pieces are never dated. They are known as 'Azzimina work' (a designation derived from the Arabic term *'Ajami*, denoting non-Arabs, and especially the Persians), a fact corroborated by one of the masters who was a Kurd. These pieces have long been reputed to be the work of Near Eastern craftsmen working in Venice, but this assumption has recently been challenged, particularly on the grounds that the stringent and restrictive Venetian guild rules would have made it impossible. They may thus be Muslim objects made for export, possibly in Iran, which might explain the bilingual signature on one of them, a unique occurrence on a Near Eastern piece.³⁶ However, there is no doubt that the group exerted a strong influence on north-Italian production, which often copied the technique on objects of the same general shape, but with more Western arabesques and linear patterns. The Oriental designs were probably also the model or at least the source of inspiration of the six copper engravings with circular, white-on-black, graphic exercises consisting of interlaced cord patterns which are datable to about 1483 to 1499. They are of Milanese origin and most likely go back to a follower of Leonardo da Vinci, who may have worked after designs by the master.³⁷ About

1507 they in turn were copied as woodcuts by another great artist, Albrecht Durer, who refers to them in the diary of his journey in the Netherlands as 'Knoten'.³⁸ Ingenious as these compositions are, they nevertheless fall short of similar patterns on Azzimina work where the main motifs are made up of the same light, narrow, silver-inlaid lines of the same width throughout, which appear as the major theme and are set against a darker, more delicate, and denser secondary set of themes, which neither the Italian versions nor the German copies produced. These designs together with those on the *Tukenbeute*, i.e. objects captured from the Turks, were the precursors of the widely spread fashion for *mauresques* which was started in 1530 by the woodcut book of Francesco Pellegrino, when working in Fontainebleau. They appear in a work entitled *La Fleur do la science de broderie, facon arabicque et ytalique*.³⁹ It contains black, flat arabesque and floral designs as well as interlacings set against a white background which, in their two-dimensionality, loose spacing, and spirited movement, are very close to their Islamic counterparts.

Although pottery breaks easily and is consequently difficult to transport, medieval specimens reached Europe in limited numbers from the Near East. Proof of this is found in the so-called *bacini*, flat, round, glazed vessels which for coloristic effects are set into the fabric of some Italian churches, whether in the facade or the campanile.⁴⁰ As these are not easily accessible to investigators, they have never been systematically studied, but there is little doubt that wares from different Muslim countries, especially Egypt and the Maghreb, are prominently displayed among them. That pottery was also put to more direct use is shown by a rare Twelfth Century white, carved, semi-porcelainous cup, a fragment of which is still preserved as the Chalice of Saint Girolamo, originally from S. Anastasia, now in the Museo Sacro of the Vatican.⁴¹ In the Fourteenth Century the Hispano-Islamic lustre pottery of Andalusia was valued very highly, both in Europe and the Muslim East. Complete pieces have been found in the West as far apart as Sicily and Schleswig-Holstein, while fragments galore have been discovered in the rubbish heaps of Fustat in Egypt. It is, therefore, not surprising that in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth the lustre platters, dishes, and vases of Valencia with appropriate coats of arms became the most coveted status symbols, owned not only by the great families of Spain but also by such leaders of European taste as the Dukes of Burgundy, the Medicis of Florence, the Kings of Naples, and even by a Pope, Leo X.⁴² A more direct influence of Islamic pottery and particularly of its Hispanic-Muslim varieties with their tin glazes and *sgraffito*, or lustre decorations, can be seen in the nascent Italian pottery production, which was soon to enjoy such an extraordinary flowering.⁴³ Certain shapes, such as small bowls, vases, pots, and the drug jars called *albarelli*, as well as specific decorative motifs, were readily taken over, and the artistic effects of the techniques which had originated in the Near East and had been developed in Spain were still further refined in the different Italian centers. However, before long they turned to a figural imagery quite alien to the East and with it a specifically Western type of pottery came into being.

Islamic glass, being even more fragile than pottery, has been found in only a few medieval European sites, although the discovery of such glass objects in Sweden, southern Russia, and even in China, indicates that distance did not always prevent their being transported. As usual they found their ultimate

resting place in cathedrals, churches, or abbeys, where they were thought at times to be crusader gifts, or to hail from Charlemagne himself.⁴⁴ The most celebrated of these ecclesiastical treasures, now in St. Stephen's in Vienna, is an enamelled Syrian pilgrim bottle of about 1280, said to contain earth from Bethlehem which was saturated with the blood of the Innocents. The rich decoration of this piece, which was made for an unnamed sultan, is somewhat incongruous in such a sacred association, for it contains various secular subjects including a party of revellers and musicians seated at the water's edge.⁴⁵ Pieces in private collections exist also. Here the best-known piece (which according to a well-known legend should actually no longer exist) is a Syrian beaker of about 1240, the so-called 'Luck of Edenhall' whose alleged destruction, under dramatic circumstances, has been poetically described by Ludwig Uhland, and, following him, by Longfellow. Other objects are known to us from inventories.⁴⁶ For instance, those of Charles V, King of France (1379-80) list 'troys pots de voirre...a la facon de Damas' and in addition a basin, a lamp flacon, and other glasses from the same place. In the next century the inventory of Piero Cosimo de Medici is likewise full of such objects 'di vetro domaschini'.⁴⁷

Some of these Syrian glass objects have been discovered in various places in the Holy Land, and it is, therefore, not surprising that fragments have also been unearthed in the Crusader Castle of Montfort which was destroyed in 1272. As far as one can tell, their decoration, consisting mostly of inscriptions, was completely in the Muslim idiom.⁴⁸ But there are five pieces, also apparently Syrian, which although executed in traditional enamelling technique nevertheless show purely Western subjects. These include not only European coats of arms but also representations of the Holy Roman Emperor, an enthroned Madonna and Child, Latin invocations to the *Domina Mater*, and even the signature of an Italian Magister Aldrevandinus.⁴⁹ These pieces form a link with the later Venetian work. As is well known, the craftsmen there used the Near Eastern enamelling technique and they also copied certain forms of decoration, especially the ever-popular application of rows of pearls and of scale patterns.

Objects made of rock crystal and ivory might seem to be so rare as to be of little significance in this survey, yet they too contribute to our understanding of the underlying issue. They are almost exclusively known to us from the pieces preserved in the West, especially in ecclesiastical establishments. We know nothing about the use of ivory from Muslim sources. There is the case of the ivory huntinghorn, called *oliphant* in various Western languages, of which about thirty carved pieces with Islamic decorations have been preserved. These are the survivors of a much larger number as according to early records there used to be nine such *cornea eburnea* in Winchester alone, and six in Speyer, while Salisbury and Limoges each had four, of which to judge from the still preserved examples, about half must have been Muslim.⁵⁰ The second point to be made is one which was made earlier: that although the ivory and rock crystal pieces were originally destined for secular use they were nearly always re-employed in a religious context. They usually became reliquaries (or were associated with them), as the magnificent rock crystal bottles in the treasury of Saint Marc, or of San Lorenzo in Florence testify, where one of them contains a relic as sacred as the Holy Blood. The rock crystals also became endowed with Christian didactic values. Owing to their hardness and penetrability by light, they came to symbolize the

mystery of the Virgin birth. This was envisaged, for instance, by St. Bridget, according to whom Christ had said, 'I have assumed flesh without sin and lust, entering the womb of the Virgin just as the sun passes through a precious stone.'⁵¹

Even so ancillary an art as bookbinding showed the imprint of Islam. There were first the technical improvements which Europe learned from its Eastern neighbours. These were the substitution of cardboard for wood as the core material for the covers, and then the gilding of the leather, especially by means of a hot tool. In the latter case we have an actual gauge to establish the Muslim priority over Europe: the first mention of a gilding process occurs in a North African technical handbook pertaining to the arts of the book, written between 1062 and 1108, while the first gold-tooled binding for an Almohad sultan of Morocco dates from 1256. On the other hand the earliest known Western use of this technique is Italian and dates from 1459,⁵² and the history of the craft in its most creative period, the second half of the Sixteenth Century, cannot be understood without taking Muslim bindings into special consideration.

Miniature painting is the last art to have made an impression on the West. But the usual expression of its impact takes us too far beyond the limitations of the current conference and exhibition.

However, an interesting, unexpected manifestation of the influence of paintings appears in a totally different context, whose sources of transmission remain unknown. There are a number of Baroque automata, primarily clocks,⁵³ which must ultimately derive from the book of automata by al-Jazari, written about 1206 and illustrating the same kind of artfully complex machinery, full of startling surprises. A clock of that type had long before been brought by an ambassador of Harun al-Rashid to the Court of Charlemagne. Later on, however, the wheel clocks of Europe had in general replaced these earlier water-powered mechanisms which the Arabs had taken over from the Alexandrine physicists and further developed.

This survey may be likened to a searchlight which has illuminated a landscape and brought certain details into full view, while leaving others in a dim haze or even in darkness. However, it seems sufficient to provide certain insights into the nature of the meeting between Europe and the Near East. It has been shown that there were two major periods in which this encounter took place: the Eleventh to the Thirteenth Century, and then again the years from the end of the Fifteenth Century and throughout the Sixteenth. The first period, of course, is that of the Crusades, and although we do not have much information about how the objects were transported, there seems little doubt that those far-ranging events greatly aided a transfer of goods. The second period is that of the Renaissance when a new freedom of spirit and a new world-awareness overcame old prejudices. There were, of course, other times of cultural exchange even before the Crusades, but there was apparently never the same large and varied body of material involved.

A second conclusion to be drawn from this survey is that the regions of the Near East which were the primary sources of import and inspiration are located in the Mediterranean area, namely, Egypt, Syria, Spain, and North Africa, and later Turkey. Countries like Iran and India played a much less important role, and such marginal regions as the Caucasus and Central Asia were even less significant. It is indicative of these relationships that Caucasian carpets are very rarely represented in Western paintings, and that Central Asian rugs reached Europe only in the second half of the Nineteenth Century.

The third point concerns the aspects of the arts which served as models. It seems symptomatic that it was usually not the objects themselves, their shape and function, which were creatively taken over for further development, although this did happen—in the Azzimina type of metalwork, for instance. What the West appreciated and tried to imitate were the patterns. This applies particularly to the animal designs and their organizational schemes as found on medieval textiles, as well as to the arabesque and knot designs which fascinated the Renaissance artist. In other words, the West had from the beginning an instinctive awareness of what represented the most basic nature of Islamic art, namely its ability to decorate flat surfaces with appealing patterns.

The fourth point relates to the manner of incorporating Near Eastern art forms. It cannot be compared with the process which led to the appearance of certain words of Near Eastern origin in Western languages. These are like luggage acquired at a foreign port and carried along on an extensive journey. The nature of adoption is also different from the continuous challenge exerted by the arts of antiquity on those of the Renaissance. What we encounter is rather a sporadic digestive process in which certain patterns were assimilated into the general artistic complex, where they soon lost their identity.

What then was the value of this encounter? It must be admitted that, although our survey mentioned such illustrious names as Leonardo and Durer, the impact of the Near East on the art of Europe has, on the whole, not been vital. It has enriched the fare and at times given it a special flavor. However, if it had never happened, the arts of the West would, with the possible exception of Rembrandt and Delacroix, have taken the same direction and come to the same conclusions. The encounter was probably too sporadic and limited in scope to have borne real fruit. Moreover the offered forms did not appeal to the deepest emotions, and as they were not akin to or identical with the major Western categories of painting and sculpture they were never readily appreciated. They remained largely curios tucked away in church treasures rather than serving as inspiring model which touched the Western soul. The very blandness of the design, which first made it possible for Eastern art to be acceptable in Europe, militated against its making a deeper impression. A great deal of the production was also merely due to the manual dexterity of craftsmen who could not be observed in their workshops. Hence there were no great technical achievements involved which might have captivated the West.

The attitude of the West towards Eastern objects is brought into even sharper focus when we observe the impact of the political reality. Here we are referring to the Turkish Wars which, from the Sixteenth Century on, forced

Europe to recognize and to come to terms with a formidable Eastern power.⁵⁴ This resulted in a direct and often prolonged influence on the arts of the West and was made evident not only in paintings but also in sculptures, etchings, and broadsheets, as well as in church furniture and ecclesiastic implements. The presence of a Near Eastern political power remained a conscious reality, but no such long-lasting highly diversified response was exerted by the art. Even so receptive a person as Delacroix was not primarily attracted by the arts when he visited Tangier, Morocco, and Algeria in 1832. What overwhelmed him were the human types and the whole *ambiance* with its teeming life of men and animals, 'the living, emphatic sublime' as he called it. The decline in Islamic art which had especially affected the Arab world may very well have contributed to this more ethnographic attitude. However, not only artists, but scholars too were equally blind. Four large albums with superb Persian paintings and drawings of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth centuries, which had belonged to the Prussian State Library since 1817, remained unknown until 1956 when they were discovered when a special exhibition was arranged in Tübingen. They had not been catalogued earlier because they contained no religious or literary texts! It was only in the opening years of the Twentieth Century that the development of research in the history of Islamic art created a new and deepening understanding of this field, and helped to educate the public by means of museum displays of outstanding objects and by the organization of many large and small exhibitions all over the Western world.⁵⁵

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 3. O. Grabar, 'The Umayyad Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem,' *Ars Orientalis*, iii (1959), 32-62; idem, *The Formation of Islamic Art*, (New Haven, 1973) pp. 48 ff.
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 5. *The Burlington Magazine* liii (1928), 155-6.
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 8. L. Golombek, *The Timurid Shrine at Gazur Gah* (Toronto, 1969), *passim*.
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47. *Ibid.* ii. Pl. 494 (no. 68), 495 (no. 71).
48. *Ibid.* i. Pl. 326 (no. 12), vol. ii, Pl. 126 (no. 12).
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ISLAMIC CERAMICS: A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION FOR MEDIEVAL EUROPEAN ART

Rudolf Schnyder

Let us suppose you had joined the large numbers of people in Europe who set out for the First Crusade during the years before 1100. Wherever you might have come from to take part in the movement: from France, Germany or the North of Italy, you would have experienced there a kind of daily life in which products made of fired clay played an extremely modest role. This role was, in fact, so modest that until today it has been practically unnoticed by research and, as a result, has remained unrecognized. For this reason, to attempt to describe it, however briefly, at the present phase of our knowledge might at first sight appear to require special justification. With this reservation in mind, I want to attempt to present a sketch of the actual situation.

If we examine the results of excavations which have taken place in the area of Switzerland, we had until now only a few fragments of simple, spherical-bodied pots which could belong to the period we are discussing.¹ These pots were, to a great extent, formed by hand and bear witness to a surprisingly primitive level of rotation technique. They are relatively poorly fired as well. Until now, I do not know of any examples on which scratched or stamped ornaments have been used. We do, however, expect them to appear. Engobes or glazes are unknown. This means that the prerequisites for painted decoration of any kind are lacking. There is no trace of evidence, apart from such unpretentious ceramic containers that bricks were fired as well.

The picture which Switzerland presents in this matter is not very much different in the countries bordering Switzerland, north of the Alps. On the other hand, in the North of Italy, the technique of brick firing seems never to have been completely forgotten since the time of the Romans. And in Central Italy glazed pottery was known around 1100.²

Let us suppose then that you had joined the powerful crusade movement in one of the northern countries, and had passed the important point, Constantinople, where we do not want to linger for the moment, and had safely reached the goal of the undertaking: the Holy Land. There you would very soon have noticed that the material, clay, played quite a different and far more significant role than at home. In fact, you would not at first have recognized certain clay products as such and would have suspected that they had been made of some far more precious material. The potters in the coastal countries along the eastern Mediterranean were able to employ various techniques which made it possible for them to give their products such brilliance that the eye would have been deceived. They knew how to refine clay products using so-called engobes, that is, through colors of very delicate fluid clay. Transparent and opaque, colorless and colored glazes were known. There were workshops for colorfully painted wares and there were specialists who guarded the secret for producing ceramics with gold-lustre ornaments.

As far as we know today, the leading ateliers for this last-mentioned speciality around 1100 were located in Egypt. There the production of opaque white glazed pottery, so-called faience, was understood. This white ware was fired and its smooth surface painted with color made of metal oxide. In the course of another reducing fire, this became gold-lustre. At this time Egypt seems to have occupied an exclusive position in the production of such faïences decorated with luminous golden paintings. It has required the results of excavations in the present century to make known once again the maximum achievement with which we are dealing here. Although the Egyptian lustre faïence has received its recognition in the history of the art of Islam, the material which has been uncovered has not yet been critically evaluated. We are still lacking in definite points of reference which would make it possible for us to observe more exactly the development of production during the 11th and 12th centuries and to select definitively the products from around 1100.³ It is certain that in Egypt besides the lustre faïences other more primitively painted and glazed wares were produced. And there is no doubt that the major part of the total ceramic production of the country was unglazed. Unglazed articles could be decorated with stamped, scratched or cut ornaments. Charming examples of cut ornaments can be found above all on the sieves of water pitchers. These other, more simple articles have not received sufficient attention to enable us to say anything more definite about them in relation to our key date.

In the coastal area of Syria and in the Holy Land no faïences, not to mention lustre faïences, were being fired at the time the crusaders arrived there. The ceramic market was dominated by unglazed products along with glazed slipware with graffito decoration, that is, ornaments scratched into the white slip.⁴ It is possible that workshops producing painted and glazed ceramics also existed at that time. However, the great period of painted ornaments must have been earlier. The role of construction ceramics, brick industry, brick buildings, and ceramic architectural decoration in the countries of the Levant which the crusaders reached is extremely difficult to judge because of the limited number of architectural monuments which have been preserved. But there can be no doubt that it existed.

The ceramic production which the crusaders discovered in Syria must have been in many ways similar to that with which they had already become acquainted in Constantinople.⁵ Glazed slipware with graffito ornaments were probably widely used as current, better quality ware in Constantinople as well. However, the appearance of this technique had been comparatively recent. Along with it, painted, glazed wares continued to be produced. But they were not of the same extraordinary quality of the time prior to the great political crisis in the years following 1071. Under the rule of the Macedonian Dynasty (867-1055) workshops had existed which had understood the production of ceramics from firing white clay. The white pot-sherd was used as an ideal base for painting. From the standpoint of ceramics, a surprisingly rich selection of colors was available, among which neither red nor gold was missing. These ornaments which appear on pottery tiles and structural parts are usually under-glaze painting which has been covered with a transparent, thin glaze. Monochromatic glazed products, ornamented in relief were also produced from the same white fired clay. Now, after the great crisis of the empire, white clay seems to have

been available only as a coating. And the palette was limited to green and brown as the main colors. Generally speaking, unglazed ware may have played a far less important role than in the East. Furthermore, Byzantium had its own great tradition of brick architecture to which the monuments in the capital and in various provinces of the former empire bear witness even today. Around 1100 Byzantium knew the brick as surface stone in walls, as well as its use for decorative purposes. With the exception of dog-tooth friezes, the brick patterns were not constructed in relief, but laid flat in the surface of the wall.⁶

If we return to the West once again, we are able to observe that, in the period after the First Crusade, a striking development first begins in the field of architectural ceramics. We can follow the beginning of this development in the North of Italy. It was an area in which knowledge of fired brick had never been completely lost, and in which, as a result, the technical prerequisites for a revival of the art of brick architecture existed. Whereas in Venice, which was extremely eastern in orientation, bricks had already been in use in building St. Marks Cathedral since 1063, the decisive renewal in brick architecture first began in Emilia and Lombardy after the turn of the century.⁷ The leading construction plans of the time illustrate this in the cities Modena, Parma, Piacenza, Brescia and especially in the centre of Milan. The brick building St. Ambrogio was erected there and just outside the city the impressive Cistercian church Chiarvalle had been under construction since about 1150. It is an innovation that bricks were not merely uniformly produced and set in a regular manner, but they also served to construct decorative patterns. Dog-tooth friezes, nobly formed, simple arched friezes and crossed arch friezes became the basic ornamental themes of Lombardian brick architecture.

The impulse which led to a renewal of brick architecture in Lombardy soon began to spread. In the second half of the century the movement exerted its influence in the North of Germany. Since 1173, the Cathedrals of Luebeck and of Ratzeburg had been under construction as impressive examples of brick architecture. An example of early Cistercian brick architecture is the cloister church Lehnin, built after 1215. In the technical and decorative use of bricks both Luebeck and Lehnin had been influenced by Lombardy.⁸ Among their repertoire of ornamental motives are to be found dog-tooth and round arched friezes as well as crossed arch friezes.

If we inquire about the origin of these motives, we find that dog-tooth friezes are common in Byzantine brick architecture. The crossed arch frieze, however, indicates contact with the South of Italy, Sicily and Spain, countries bordering the western Mediterranean which were influenced by Islam. In the South of Italy and Sicily it decorates stone buildings in the form of arcades which cross each other, such as at the Church of St. Michael in Caserta Vecchia completed in 1153.⁹ For Spain, we are able to mention examples of the use of bricks which however, apart from the examples which we find in Cordoba¹⁰, are later in date. We find the same subject on the towers of Zaragoza and Teruel¹¹ and, similar to Caserta Vecchia, on the Giralda in Seville built from 1176-1196.¹² In typical manner it also appears now in England¹³ and Normandy¹⁴ where it had undoubtedly been brought by the Normans from Sicily. The expansion of the use of this decorative theme is convincing evidence that the new contacts

with the Islamic world during the 12th century had begun to exercise a profound influence far into Europe.

As we are able to trace the decisive renewal in brick architecture to the period shortly after the first great crusades to the East, it would appear correct to assume that the impulse which led to the rapid development of brick architecture in Europe came from the East. With this development, improvements in forming and firing were introduced. Above all, however, architectural ceramics soon assumed a role in the decoration of buildings which had previously been fulfilled by stone. The production of decorative floors was among the most important of these functions. It seems to have first appeared in the north in the second half of the 12th century in Northern France and bordering areas and flourished at the beginning of the 13th century.¹⁵ Apparently one had here unexpectedly the means for producing different coloured tiles, irregular in shape, for mosaic floors as well as ornamented square floor tiles. It would seem that quite suddenly masters appeared who were able to refine the surface of their architectural ceramic products not only with a white engobe, a covering of white fired clay, but also with a simple lead glaze. At the same time, they worked with various decorative techniques. Most commonly the tiles were decorated by stamps which were pressed deeply into the still moist, unburnt clay. The engraved ornaments were often filled in with white fired clay so that a two-color effect was produced which resembled stone incrustations, although they were actually graffito decoration. Among the wealth of subjects included in the widely spreading fashion of decorated tiles ceramics in Europe in the 13th century are to be found a surprising number of examples which illustrate how rapidly oriental illustrations became known and attained popularity there.¹⁶

Is the unexpected, simultaneous appearance of engobes and glazes in Northern French tile ceramics in the 12th century a result of the new exchange which was developed with the countries of the Syrian Mediterranean coastal area? Or were these results the product of relations with Southern and Central Italy? Both are possible. However, the method of covering ceramics with a white engobe and with simple lead glazes was used far more brilliantly in the East at that time. This is illustrated primarily by the graffito ornaments which were produced there. But the graffito technique was also known in England and Normandy. On both sides of the channel tiles have been preserved from the period around 1300 which have been decorated with drawings which have been scratched or cut into the white engobe base.¹⁷

Shortly after this we find opaque white glazed faience tiles decorated with paintings for the first time in northern Europe. Fragments of these tiles, painted in green and purple, have been found in Hamburg.¹⁸ They once belonged to the decorations of a tomb which had been erected in the first half of the 14th century in memory of Pope Benedict V who died there in 966. The tiles were completely unique in the north at that time. We are not able to include them in the development which European tile ceramics had taken in Northern France. Their sudden appearance is convincing proof that here once again we are dealing with previews of a new technique. It proves that relations existed with a country which already knew how to produce green-purple faience. Where, at this time, after the crusades had proven a complete failure, were the points of

contact through which the faience decoration of Pope Benedict's grave had been brought to Hamburg?

Let us recall once again: the finest ceramics which had been produced in the Byzantine empire in the 10th-11th centuries were white based and according to information found in the pertinent literature, covered with a transparent, thin glaze. Green and purple were used as the main colors. These extraordinary products must to a great extent have stimulated new creative possibilities both technically and aesthetically wherever Byzantine art was influential. An early example of this may be found in the distant Spain of the Moors. When the Calif al-Hakim had the large Mosque in Cordoba expanded, the cupola above the Mihrab (965-968) was decorated with a band of green and purple painted tiles on a white base.¹⁹ As it is known that Byzantine artists had been brought to Cordoba to construct the mosaic decorations of the Mihrab, we can suppose that Byzantine artists were also responsible for the ceramic decoration of the building, quite apart from the fact that the decorations are quite Byzantine in flavor. Green and purple painted pottery on a white base was also produced in Spain in the 10th and 11th centuries. Examples of this can be found in many fragments of bowls decorated with band and letter ornaments, similar to those found widely spread in the eastern countries of Islam. Less frequently we find quite characteristic animal illustrations. For a long time it had been assumed that, similar to Byzantine work, these ornaments were under-glaze painting which had been placed over a white engobe. More recent research has now shown that there are also pieces to be found here on which the white base was achieved by using an opaque glaze containing tin.²⁰ This means that we are dealing with faïences. According to these results, the faïence technique which we find for the first time in the 9th century in Mesopotamia, from where it had spread throughout the entire Islamic world, had in Spain in the 10th century combined with the green-purple palette which had been derived from Byzantium. Whether such faïences were produced in Spain from the end of the 10th to the 13th century without interruption is a question which, until now, has not been clarified.

Discoveries made in Sicily illustrate the strong influence of Byzantine painted ceramics of the 10th and 11th centuries on the western Mediterranean area. Here as well, white coated painted wares in the colors of green and purple were found. They date partially from the time of the Arab and Norman rule.²¹ It appears that on these early Sicilian products the two color ornament always lies under a transparent glaze. The subject matter of the paintings reflects various themes common to the polychrome painted ceramics of the Middle East and more especially to the Fatimid lustre faïences from the time before and around 1000. Typically Byzantine subject matter, on the other hand, seems hardly to occur.

Although we know that green-purple ceramics existed in Arabic-Norman Sicily and in the South of Italy, the beginning and the development which this ware took here has remained, to a great extent, without explanation. Unexplained as well is the connection to the green-purple painted, transparent ware which had been produced in Central Italy since about 1150.²² The circumstances first become clearer in the 13th century. Discoveries in Lucera²³

and Naples²⁴ have made us realize that at the time of Friedrich II workshops already existed which produced white coated painted wares using an opaque tin glaze. This means that here for the first time in the area of western Christianity that union of Islamic and Byzantine elements took place which earlier had already led to the creation and independent production of faience in Islamic Spain. The palette of these Southern Italian faïences increased rapidly and included yellow and blue as well. Soon, however, it was again reduced to the main colors of green and purple. Apart from the oriental themes, the ornaments contain a remarkable number of illustrations of figural themes such as fish, birds, animals and human beings. Discoveries in Assisi show that green-purple faïences were also produced in Central Italy in the second half of the 13th century.²⁵ Early examples of Italian faïence production are bowls which, as so-called *Bacini*, had been used before 1263 to decorate the walls of the church of St. Francis in Bologna.²⁶

In the past there has been a tendency to consider the colored painted faïences of the 13th century which were found in the South of Italy as products of the Syro-Frank cities of the Middle East which had been introduced into Italy.²⁷ This opinion fails to give sufficient consideration to the fact that in the course of time the borderline between artistic production in the Levant and in single centers in Italy could have become deceptively unclear. In other cases as well, this has led scientists to look for the origin of Italian products in the East. As an example I should like to show the enamelled glasses of the so-called Syro-Frank group.²⁸

As the result of excavations in Italy,²⁹ England,³⁰ Bavaria,³¹ Austria,³² and more recently in Switzerland,³³ the number of examples of such glasses has increased considerably. In the East fragments of glasses of this type whose origin is certain are known only from Fostat. Despite this map of expansion the idea remained that we are dealing here with products of Syro-Frank glass producers from the years 1260-1290. According to this opinion, during the decades of the decline of the crusader states until the time of their final annihilation in 1291, an industry established to supply the demand of western buyers, blossomed. This opinion was respected although one of the glasses bears the inscription "Magister Aldrevandinus." Aldrevandinus (Aldobrandini) is, however, an Italian name, and many of the glasses of the group are decorated with the emblems of Swabian families. However, after documents from Venice have become known proving that the production of enamelled glass goblets was already a speciality in Venice in 1280, this thesis about Syro-Frank origin is no longer tenable.³⁴ There is no doubt in my mind that these glasses which can be distinguished from the oriental products of the time both by their more compact form and heavier ornamentation are in fact the first tangible examples of the promising future Venetian glass industry.

In this period, during which Venice ruled the entire eastern Mediterranean, the technique of *graffito* ceramics was transferred from the lands of the Levant to Venice and neighbouring Emilia. Glazed pottery, coated with a slip, decorated with scratched and cut ornaments, was produced in workshops in the area in excellent quality. The earliest examples of representative pieces, produced by this technique are found illustrated on a mural painting created in 1330 in the chapel of St. Nicola in Tolentino (Macerata).³⁵

The various developments which began on the one hand in Italian ceramics in the south and west and on the other hand in the northeast appear at first to be of more local significance and not to have exercised much influence beyond those centers in which we find them. However, single, further removed branches of Italian workshops did exist. The production of underglaze pottery painted green, yellow and brown, which was produced in the Saintonge around 1300 and appears to have been exported from there to England in large quantities, can probably be traced to encouragement from Central Italy.³⁶ An important branch of an Italian workshop for green-purple painted faience came into existence in Avignon where the Papal residence had been located since 1307.³⁷ This is proven by the remains of floors of green-purple painted faience tiles which came to light in the Papal palace which Benedict XII (1334-43) built there. These floors were most certainly manufactured by a workshop which worked, according to the architectural plans of the pope and which was located in the vicinity of Avignon or in Avignon itself. Here we also have the connecting point through which the tiled ornaments of the papal grave in Hamburg were provided. Pope Benedict XII, after futile efforts to return to Rome, resigned himself to a long term papal exile. He must have remembered his predecessor and patron, Benedict V, who had also been condemned to and died in exile, and planned to erect in his name a worthy monument. Therefore, it is my opinion that the faience tiles from the grave of Benedict in Hamburg were made around 1335/40 by masters from the faience workshop whose work had been commissioned by Benedict XII in Avignon.

In a document from 1362, mention is made for the first time that masters from Manises, a suburb of the city of Valencia, Spain, noted for its ceramics, moved to Avignon to produce there green-purple and blue-white painted faience tiles.³⁸ This information draws our attention back to Spain. For in the west, it is in this country that, in the course of the 14th century, the last phase of the decisive encounter took place between the Latin Middle Ages and the great inheritance of the Islamic world. In 1238 Valencia was captured from the Moors by Jaime I, King of Aragon and Catalonia. After the crown of Aragon was also able to gain control of the Island of Sicily (1282/83) it ruled to a great extent the western Mediterranean. The leading position of Aragon brought the cities of the Spanish Levant economic advantages which contributed decisively towards establishing faience workshops there, which soon attained considerably more than regional significance. The cities of Teruel and Barcelona, but above all the suburban towns Paterna and Manises near Valencia developed in the first half of the 14th century to become leading centers in the production of green-purple painted faience.³⁹ Their products were exported across the Mediterranean to the ports of the French and Italian coasts, and even as far as Egypt.⁴⁰

The rapid increase in faience workshops in the cities of the Spanish Levant was made possible primarily through contacts with their neighbors in the Islamic world. After the positions of the crusaders in the east had fallen and the colony of Moors in Sicily had been liquidated, Spain remained the only country in which a strong, active Islamic community lived under Christian rule, and where the Christian West was directly confronted by an Islamic state in the 13th century. This state, the kingdom of Granada, must have been an extremely important gathering point for artistic talents bearing the traditions of work-

manship of the Islamic East. Among the exclusive artistic techniques which at that time were brought from the east to Spain, was to be found the secret of the production of lustre faience. The movement towards the west resulted in the fact that the city of Malaga was the only important center for gold lustre ware which still existed in the 14th century.⁴¹ One of the leading products of Islamic culture, which had once been developed in the center of the Abbasid world empire and which for almost 500 years had been among the most sought after specialities of a few leading cities in the Middle East, became a glorious signpost for the extension of the Islamic world into Europe. For Europe the center of production of such exclusive ware was brought into comparatively easy reach. Malaga exported its golden pottery not only to the Mediterranean countries⁴² but far into the north as well: to England, Flanders and the Hanseatic cities.⁴³ Malaga became a norm for the quality of excellent faience. The Italian word *Majolica* reminds us of this even today.

In the past, single examples of gold lustre ceramics from Islamic countries had mainly reached Italy. The *Bacini*, which once decorated churches in Pisa (St. Sisto),⁴⁴ in the region of Lucca (Badia di Cantignano),⁴⁵ *Pomposa*⁴⁶ and *Ravena* (St. Apollinare in Classe)⁴⁷ testify to such imports. But at that time the source from which these pieces came must have seemed to be located in some exotic distant land. Now all that had changed. Malaga was no longer located outside of the sphere of influence of European trading powers. In the 14th century the city was extremely limited in its economic possibilities by the advance of Castille and the fall of Algeceiras. To balance its losses it became more closely affiliated with Aragon which controlled the sea trade in the western Mediterranean and was not inclined to refuse the profitable role of intermediary for the goods of the Moors. The city of Valencia became a main trading place for the ceramics from Malaga. In the 14th century Moorish experts moved here and in the suburb of Manises began to produce lustre-ware. The surrender of this professional secret to a western land governed by Christians had taken place. Manises developed quickly to become a leading center in the art of lustre faience. Already in 1383 its gilded and expertly painted products enjoyed such an excellent reputation that the Franciscan monk Eiximenes, author of a eulogy to Valencia, was able to write that even the Pope, the Cardinals and the Princes of the world were among its admirers.⁴⁸ Pottery decorated with the emblems of important Italian, French and Spanish personalities are known only from the 15th century.⁴⁹ At this time the golden ceramics from Valencia achieved their widest distribution to the furthest reaches of Europe. We find in the acts of the Ravensburg trading company from the year 1479 among other goods imported from Valencia, the entry "*abra de terra*."⁵⁰ This word has nothing to do with a kind of "sweets" as the publisher of the acts suspected. *Obra de terra* is a commonly used expression for ceramics.⁵¹ That Spanish lustreware also came to Switzerland slightly earlier is proven by discoveries in the Castle of Hallwil located in Canton Aargau.⁵²

Wherever the brilliant examples of the artistic ability of Valencia arrived, they served as guidelines and ideals which presented new goals for artistic production. They had a particularly strong influence on the Italian *Majolica* art of the 15th Century with the effect that it later won leadership throughout the whole of Europe. The challenge posed by the ceramics of Valencia produced

amazing results in the French centers as well. After the established relations between Manises and Avignon during the years 1362-64, we hear in 1382-85 of a certain Jehan de Valence who was employed in the service of the Duc de Berry and who produced painted faience tiles in Poitiers and in Bourges.⁵³ The same technique which had been taken from Spain will most probably also have been those used to produce the tiled floor which the Prince of Burgundy had made in 1391 for his castle in Hesdin by Jehan le Voleur and Jehan de Moustier, after drawings by the court painter Melchior Broederlam.⁵⁴ The painting of the "Annunciation" by Jan van Eyck in the National Gallery in Washington gives us a most impressive idea of how such a floor must have looked.

Shortly after the middle of the 15th century the inspiration which came from the center in Valencia led to efforts to produce white coated, painted wares in central Europe. Tiles, painted in blue on white, decorated with the name of the Bishop Arnold von Rotberg (1451-58) have been discovered in the chapel of the Bishop's court in Basel.⁵⁵ During the same years a potter from Zurich tried for the first time to produce stove tiles with blue painting.⁵⁶ In a workshop in Zurich which can be proven to have been in use from 1455-69 fragments of pottery from unsuccessful firings, decorated in this manner have been found. They show that the master, Heini Keller, who worked there decorated his pottery with vines and rosette blossoms, branches and stars quite often in green, more rarely in blue.⁵⁷ Among the forms which he produced, we are surprised to find sieve pitchers.⁵⁸ This is a type of vessel which very rarely appears in the west, but is most common in Islamic countries. The production of white coated painted ceramics in Switzerland after 1450 remained for the time being little more than an episode. The next attempts which aimed in this direction were encouraged here only after the leadership in the art of faience had long since been transferred to Italy.

The long process of development which ceramics in the West went through from the 12th to the 15th century was determined to a great extent by impulses which flowed from Byzantium but above all from Islamic sources. To determine the innovations, technical as well as decorative which were introduced in the West in the course of this development, and to try to locate more exactly the points of connection with their eastern sources, remains an extremely profitable and exciting research task. The conditions which we can grasp in such a wonderfully precise yet complex manner in the field of ceramics would seem to offer a validity beyond the limits of this subject alone. They bear witness to the far-reaching and overall changes which took place in the forms of living in the West under the inspiration of the Islamic world.

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51. Alice Frothingham, *op. cit.* note 41, p. 83f.; M. Olivar Daydi, *op. cit.* note 39, pp. 94, 101ff.
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54. Robert Forrer, *op. cit.*, note 15, p. 26; M. Olivar Daydi, *op. cit.*, note 39, p. 137; M. Dehlinger, "Les incunables de la Faïence Française à Poitiers et à Bourges," *Mémoires de la société des antiquaires de l'ouest*, 16, (1940), pp. 3-41.
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57. In Schweizerischen Landesmuseum, Zürich.
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THE TWO SICILIES

James D. Breckenridge

The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, to which my deliberately ambiguous title alludes, was of course the post-medieval political anomaly ruled from Naples, which survived until Garibaldi toppled its hollow corpse not much more than a century ago. Still the name is useful in reminding us that for a great deal of its history, the lower part of the Italian boot has been closer in its ecology, population, language and culture to Sicily than to the territories of Rome and the North. On the other hand, the sense in which I will deal with "Two Sicilies" in this case primarily refers to the Muslim and Christian cultures which encountered each other at this Mediterranean crossroads during four fruitful centuries of the Middle Ages, with results of profound significance to the development of all European civilization.

There is obvious possibility of confusion in the fact that there are many instances where I shall wish to refer to Sicily the island, as against Sicily the double domain: in the former cases I shall use the singular, and in the latter the plural term: Sicilies.

It must also be understood that the two cultures selected for the present study are only two of an almost endless list of peoples and cultures which have met here at the narrow mid-point of the Middle Sea: from the original Sicels, whoever they were—certainly not the first inhabitants anyway—to the Greeks, who perhaps had the greatest impact on the Sicilies over the longest period of time; to the Punic Carthaginians who contested the island with first the Greeks and then the Romans; to the Romans who met Greek civilization undiluted for the first time here in the South; to the Ostrogoths and the Lombards and the other barbarian peoples who troubled the land for shorter or longer periods of time, until challenged by Byzantine resurgence; to the Byzantines themselves who found in the Two Sicilies their longest-lasting Western foothold; to the Arabs who took and held the island for two centuries, but never established themselves on the mainland; to the Normans who overthrew all the survivors of the foregoing conquerors with an almost casual thrust, and then saw their dynasty extinct in less than a century; to the Hohenstaufen who inherited the Normans' realms, and squandered this Southern patrimony on other ambitions, all vain; and so on to the present day, as absentee rule became more and more typical of this once-blessed land, and it reached the condition it is in today.

Our point is, of course, that the Mezzogiorno's loss was largely gain for the rest of Europe: the possibility of insemination from both the Muslim and Byzantine lands and cultures that this land offered between the Tenth and the Twelfth centuries became a thing of the past by the time of the Angevins, but in the meantime much of what had been learnt passed northward to become a permanent part of Western European culture, not only in the arts and literature but in science and learning as well. The European university system, which is responsible for our own involvement in the present enterprise, has its beginnings in the Two Sicilies—in both my senses of the words.

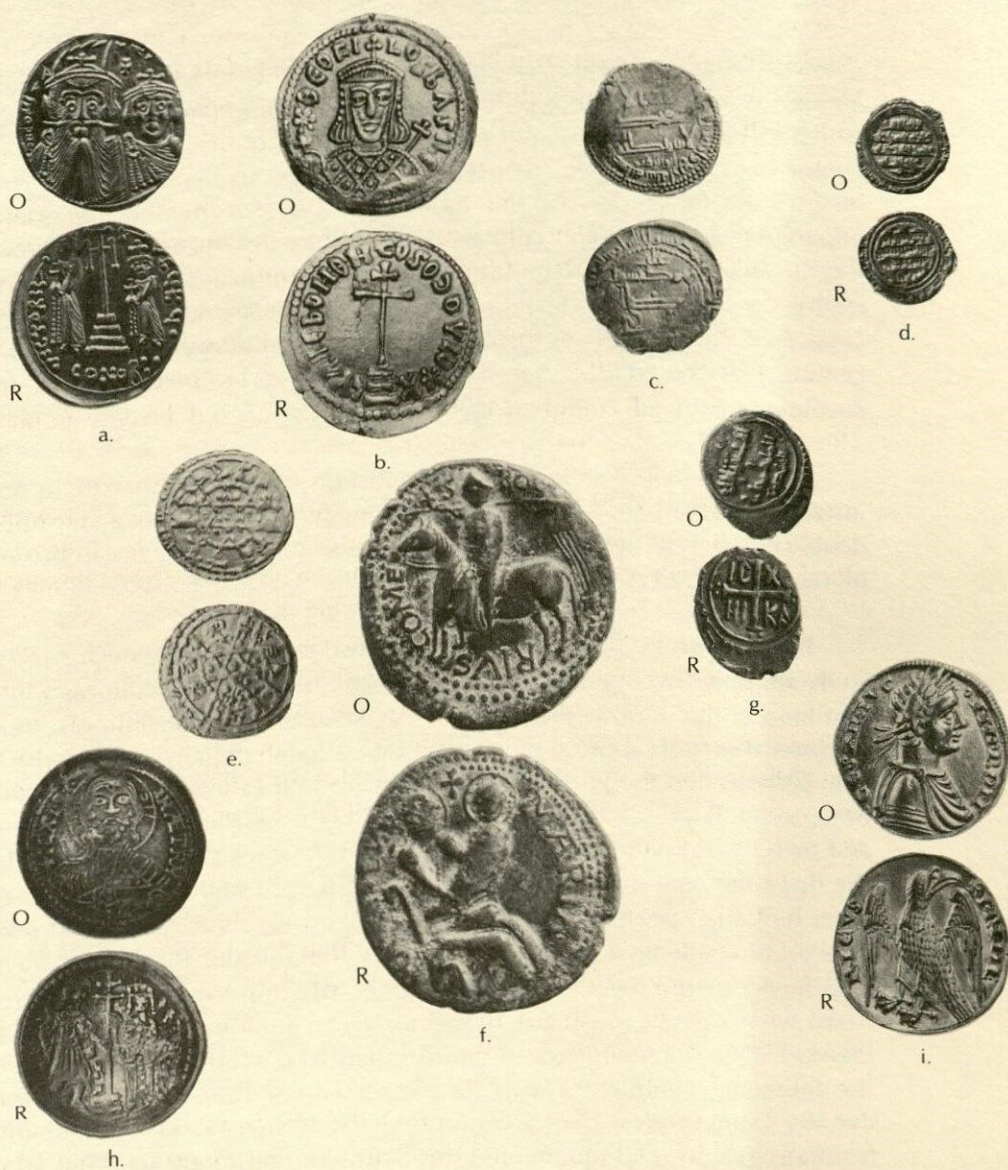


Fig. 1: NUMISMATICS

- a. CONSTANS II with CONSTANTINE IV. Gold solidus, Syracuse mint, 663-668 AD.
- b. THEOPHILUS. Gold solidus, Naples mint, 829-831 AD.
- c. ABU-IBRAHIM AHMAD. Silver quarter-dinar, Palermo mint, AH 224/858 AD.
- d. AL-MUSTANSIR. Gold quarter-dinar, Palermo mint, AH 43x/1039-1048 AD.
- e. AL-MUSTANSIR. Gold quarter-dinar, Sicilian mint, 1036-1094 AD.
- f. ROGER I. Bronze double-follaro, Sicilian or Calabrian mint, 1072-1101 AD.
- g. ROGER II. Gold quarter-dinar, Sicilian mint (probably Palermo), 130-1154.
- h. ROGER II with ROGER DUKE OF APULIA. Silver ducat, Brindisi mint, 1140-1148.
- i. FREDERICK II. Gold augustale, Brindisi mint, 1231-1250.

If we wish to study the impact of Islamic civilization on medieval Western Europe, we have special opportunities for "case study" in two particular localities where Arabs actually ruled over large parts of West European territory for substantial periods of time: Spain, of course, as well as Sicily. If I have chosen to take the latter to study for this purpose, I may take my easiest justification in that it is easier to compress the key data into the available time and space when dealing with this smaller territory whose Muslim rule lasted for a much shorter time than was the case in Spain. (Fig. 1)

Another reason for being able to survey the topic within manageable compass lies in the smaller quantity of remains surviving from the Islamic period there: unlike Spain, where not only the Alhambra in Granada and the Great Mosque of Cordoba survive into our own time, but a myriad other monuments great and small abound as testimony to the centuries-long period of Muslim rule, in Sicily only one bath and a few derelict water-towers still attest to two centuries when the island was not only governed but heavily populated by Muslims from various parts of North Africa.

The chief cause of this erasure of the Arab mark on Sicily was also one of the causes of the efficacy with which aspects of Arab culture were actually absorbed into the bloodstream of Christian civilization: the Normans made a deliberate practice of adapting and re-using buildings left over from their Muslim predecessors, from mosques to palaces and much more. Only in very rare cases, such as Roger II's Benedictine foundation of S. Giovanni degli Eremeti adjoining the Royal Palace in Palermo, can even traces of the antecedent Muslim building—in this case a small mosque which forms one transept—be identified. (Of course it is also true that the most spectacular survivals of the Arabs in Spain have endured only because of the special interest, and unique tolerance, of a single man at the critical moment: the Emperor Charles V.)

In a certain sense, too, it can be argued that the largest part of the impact of Muslim Spain was felt only in Iberia itself, while, because of the very special situation pertaining in the Sicilies, the effect of diffusion could reach much farther across the continent. It is not only a matter of close ties between the Normans of the South and those astride the English Channel; the relations with Provence and Burgundy are close in both directions, while the subsequent ties to the Holy Roman Empire channeled ideas and artifacts to Germany as well. In the way it happened, it may all seem almost accidental; but it is difficult to overstate the importance of what did take place.

Although all of Sicilian history is a continuum of remarkable consistency and symmetry, it may be possible to set the stage for subsequent events by looking farther into the past than the Fall of Rome. The resignation of the last Emperor of the West was of course occasioned by the conquests of the Ostrogoths, who gained control of all of Italy, and Sicily as well. Their administration was short-lived, however, since a part of the sixth-century plan of Justinian the Great to restore the power of his Roman Empire was the reconquest of some of its territories in North Africa, Spain, and above all in Italy. Belisarius evicted the thin layer of Ostrogothic overlords from Sicily in one campaign in

535, and the island suffered relatively little in the protracted wars that preceded pacification on the mainland. It was spared also when the Lombards moved south to fill the vacuum left by the overthrow of the Goths—a vacuum the Byzantines could not fill. By the end of the century direct imperial holdings were limited to the Exarchate in and around Ravenna; the city of Rome (dominated in actuality by the Popes); and Sicily, which was in close touch with the stronghold of the Western Empire, Carthage in Tunisia.

One strange episode gives us a tantalizing glimpse of what still survived in the way of ancient glory in Sicily in these Dark Ages: the curious adventure of the Byzantine Emperor Constans II who, in 660 A.D., with Constantinople menaced by the Arab advance out of Syria, took flight to the West, eventually settling upon Syracuse as his choice of a new capital for the Empire—a third Rome, as it were!

Constans' bizarre attempt to reverse the course of history was short-lived; in 668 he was murdered in his bath by his chamberlain, agent of a palace plot which failed when the imperial heir, Constantine IV, crushed the Sicilian revolt and confirmed Constantinople as the permanent seat of Empire. The only trace in Syracuse of Constans' brief residence is the structure which he made its cathedral, the pagan temple of Athena whose peripteral colonnade was walled up to convert it into a more-or-less conventional Christian church.

Muslim raids by sea were already occurring at this period—and at moments which seem to have been well timed in relation to local conflicts. But the main force of the sudden Islamic power was concentrated elsewhere: while one wing, the chief thrust of the Muslim advance, moved north and east out of Arabia and Syria, another wing moved more rapidly westward from Egypt along the North African shore, taking Tripoli by 643—only a decade after the death of the Prophet; Kairouan was established as the great metropolis of the coast, and from it campaigns were waged against Carthage which succeeded in 689. While the main advance had raced west again, jumped the straits and taken Spain, no serious moves were made against Sicily, only continued raids for quick booty.

In the second half of the eighth century even the raids slackened, due to internal disorders throughout the Caliphate (or Caliphates), and both Western and Eastern Christendom gained a breathing space. The first beneficiaries of this Muslim detente, the Isaurian Emperors, brought about at this point an administrative reorganization of their domains which had, as one effect of long-range significance, the effect of removing Sicily from the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Rome and placing it under that of Constantinople. This took place about 735, and undoubtedly related to the imperial efforts to eradicate religious art—a matter with which few Westerners, including the Sicilians, were in sympathy. In fact the remoteness of Constantinople allowed increasingly greater independence to Sicily as it did to Ravenna. In 805 the Byzantine governor of Sicily signed a treaty with the Aghlabid rulers of Kairouan, and in 813 a trading agreement showed that Arab merchants were resident in Sicily. But this peaceful situation was not to endure. The way of its ending is in fact typical of the manner in which political changes seem to have taken place throughout this period: we shall recognize the pattern again.

It seems that a Sicilian admiral, Euphemius, had made himself too conspicuous through repeated naval successes against Africa, and in 827 Constantinople ordered his arrest. Instead Euphemius rallied a popular revolt, seized and executed the Byzantine governor, captured Syracuse, and declared himself Emperor. One of his subordinates rebelling in turn, Euphemius appealed to the Emir, offering Sicily as a tributary province on condition of his own appointment as governor—with the title of Emperor. The Emir responded eagerly with an expeditionary force of ten thousand men, who landed at Mazara on the west coast and moved to the siege of Syracuse. The city was impregnable, but Palermo fell in 831, Messina in 843, Enna in 859, and the island was under effective Saracen control. The invading force was an infinitely mixed lot of Arabs, Berbers, Spaniards, Sudanese; even Christians participated, as when Neapolitans aided the siege of Messina in exchange for trading concessions. It is futile to evaluate the motivations and maneuvers of the period in the light of modern ideological politics—whether for better or worse, no one can say.

There was of course some ideological resistance: the last Christian stronghold on the island fell only in 965; but that was irrelevant to the true situation. With their other fresh conquests, Sardinia and Corsica, the Muslims now had more complete control of traffic in the Western Mediterranean than in the East. Even though they never gained a permanent foothold on mainland Italy, their incessant raiding reduced the Christian cities to bare subsistence level for years to come. In the meantime, Sicily became the home of a new Muslim culture to rival that of any prior one there—just as its principal city, Palermo, was now praised as the rival of the capital of the Western caliphate, Cordoba itself.

The ascendancy of Palermo is a significant result of the Arab conquest: at long last the political and cultural importance of Syracuse (which only fell in 878) was replaced, and its Greek culture became less dominant. The monk Theodosius, brought thence from Syracuse with Archbishop Sophronius in 883, acknowledged the grandeur of the new capital, describing it as “full of citizens and strangers, so that there seems to be collected there all the Saracen folk from East to West and from North to South . . . Blended with the Sicilians, the Greeks, the Lombards and the Jews, there are Arabs, Berbers, Persians, Tartars, Negroes, some wrapped in long robes and turbans, some clad in skins and some half naked; faces oval, square, or round, of every complexion and profile, beards and hair of every variety of color or cut.” A century later, in 972-973, ibn Hauqal, a merchant from Baghdad, described the quarters of the city, their palaces and above all their hundreds of mosques: “The mosques of the city and of the quarters round it outside the walls exceed the number of three hundred.” He had never seen an equal number of mosques, even in cities twice as large. Of course these buildings, even more than as places of worship, served as schools each with its own schoolmaster: “To hear them talk, they are God’s own men, the worthiest and most virtuous of all. Notwithstanding that every one knows their lack of capacity and their flightiness, they are employed as witnesses. Yet, in sooth, they have only taken up this trade so as to escape the Sacred War and avoid every kind of military service.” This was the basis, nevertheless, of the University of Palermo, which though it scarcely rivalled that of Cordoba, nevertheless had its share of capable scholars, and produced several generations

of gifted poets, culminating in ibn Hamdis, the noble Syracusan who left the court of Count Roger at Palermo for Saracen Spain, where he wrote elegaic reminiscences of his youth.

Of material remains, as we have noted, there are precious few surviving, though records speak of such treasures as a collection of thirty thousand pieces of Sicilian embroidery left by a caliph's daughter in the late Tenth Century. In point of fact, for a long time experts refused to ascribe anything of quality, despite Sicilian or Italian provenance, to a local origin, attributing it to the East—usually Egypt. In some cases this is probably valid, as with the famous inlaid coffer now in the Treasury of Palermo Cathedral; but a sizable group of works in ivory have in the last generation or two been securely given to Arab workmen of this region: magnificent carved oliphants, caskets and other articles which need not defer to Egypt or Persia in quality. (Fig. 2)

Some of this work is likely to have been executed on the mainland, as patronage in the Christian cities expanded; much of it was probably executed under the Normans as well. The same is true with another type of ivory work of the Saracen shops, the manufacture of boxes and other articles of thin sheets of ivory on a wooden frame, whose decoration was painted rather than carved. In this case, continuing patronage can be traced until the fall of the Norman dynasty, although with gradual deterioration in quality with the passage of time.

On the mainland, where rule was fractionated among various Christian forces, no such flourishing culture existed, but nevertheless new developments were under way while the Emirs held Sicily. The Byzantines, having seen much of their holdings slip away during the Ninth Century, while they were preoccupied with civil strife much closer to home, began to regain strength under Basil I, who directed campaigns to South Italy between 876 and 886, and reorganized their domains under the Catepanate, based on Bari. As part of the process of re-establishing control, new religious establishments were set up, and churches in the Middle Byzantine style erected across the countryside.

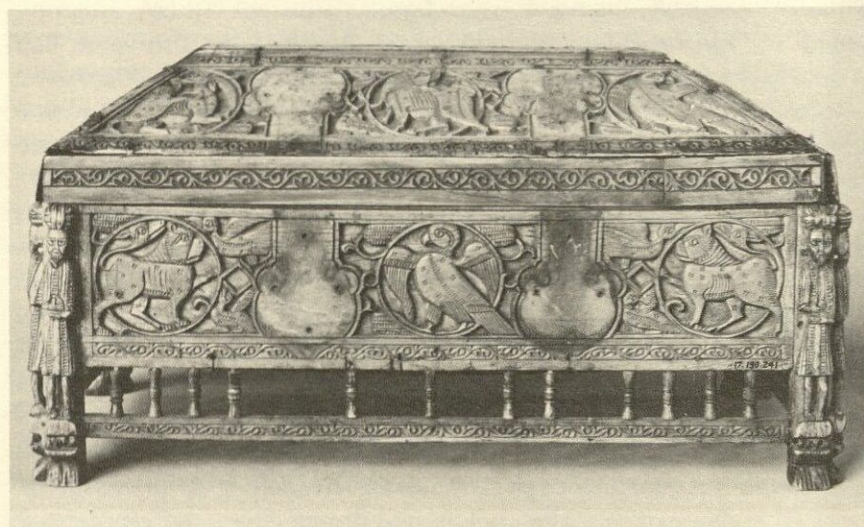


Fig. 2 WRITING BOX. Ivory, Sicily or South Italy, Eleventh Century. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917. □ One of a large group of ivory carvings now attributed to Saracen Italy, this elegant box has ornament related to that employed by a group of Christian artists working at Amalfi in the latter part of the century.

For the time being, the Byzantines were probably more involved in fluctuating relationships with the Lombard principalities—Benevento-Capua and Salerno—against which they now abutted, than with the Arabs of Sicily. Nevertheless when a major shift occurred in the distribution of power in the Eleventh Century, its seed lay in changes within Islam itself. While the Muslim world at the time of the conquest of Sicily was remarkably unified—a chain of watchtowers along the North African coast could flash news from Alexandria to Gibraltar in a single day—this situation changed with the rise of the Fatimids, one of whom became Caliph of Kairouan in 909. Under their General Gawhar—apparently a Sicilian Christian in origin—the Fatimids conquered Egypt and in 969 moved their capital to Cairo. The first effect of all this was to render Sicily both more independent and more prosperous, with the Kalbid family of Palermo as dominant rulers of the whole island; but as time went on the slow disintegration of the civilization of North Africa affected them too. It was at this time, with desert nomads and Berber tribesmen pressing down on the rich coastal strip, that the ancient irrigation systems which had kept that coast fertile from Punic times was at last totally destroyed. Starving fugitives from Africa had to be accommodated on Sicily, a new problem.

Under these circumstances, with the Kalbid Emir of Palermo in open warfare with the Zirid rulers of Tunisia, a treaty was forged between Sicily and Byzantium, with the unexpected result that in the 1030's a Byzantine General, George Maniaces, led an army into eastern Sicily, and held Messina and Syracuse for several years. Jealousy in Constantinople, not Sicilian resistance, led to his downfall; but the way was shown toward eventual recapture of the island; though not by Greeks but by Latin Christians.

The agents for this reconquest were of course the tiny group of Norman adventurers who swept across South Italy in the next few decades. The combination of Norman conquests in the Eleventh Century is one of the most remarkable phenomena in history. Very special circumstances were required to allow so few but determined a band of warriors to take hold of so much territory. We are familiar with Duke William's conquest of England, but far less well informed about that wrought by his cousins in the Mediterranean, despite the fact that for some centuries the latter had more evident impact on the course of European history.

The first contact of the Normans with Italy is now shrouded in myth, but it is clear that their natural adventuresomeness brought them there as it did to other far-flung lands: the Varangian Guard was already long established in Constantinople as a result of contacts with Viking Kiev, while a number of Norsemen, including a future King of Norway and England, Harald Hadrada, were in the motley army of George Maniaces in Sicily. The specifically Norman-French involvement in Italy had already begun, however, and followed a pattern already familiar to us.

A Lombard of Bari named Meles, it seems, organized a revolt in 1009 against Byzantine rule, and after some successes was expelled from the Catepanate, taking refuge with his countrymen first at Salerno and eventually at Capua, where he was in touch with the papacy, ever eager to increase its in-

fluences in the South, and diminish that of the Byzantines. At this point, according to Leo of Ostia, "There came to Capua about forty Normans. These had fled from the anger of the Count of Normandy, and they were now with many of their fellows moving about the countryside in the hope that they might find someone who would be ready to employ them. For they were sturdy men and well set up and also most skilled in the use of arms." Other contemporary writers identify the leader of the Normans as Rodulf, presumably Rodulf II of Tosny in central Normandy; just why he was in disfavor at home is never clear. Another story, that he and his companions had been on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, is also mentioned in these early accounts. In any event, it appears that Pope Benedict VIII, whose rule from 1012 to 1034 is the only one of any length in this troubled period for the Holy See, recommended these ambitious knights to Meles for the latter's campaign to win back power in the South. Thus was established the fateful triangle of the Papacy, Byzantium and the Normans which pursued its course (with the Western Emperor soon substituted for the Eastern one) for the next two centuries.

The campaign of 1017 won back almost all of Apulia for Meles, but its ultimate consequence was to rouse the authorities in Constantinople, who organized an effective force and routed the rebels at Canne in June of 1018. The Normans learned to focus their attention on less doughty prey. For a decade they seem to have survived as roving brigands, selling their services when they could to any of the myriad petty rulers in need of a few swords. But about 1027 this situation changed, as simultaneous and related dynastic problems roiled the Lombard cities of Salerno, Naples, and Capua, and one of the original group of Norman "pilgrims," Rannulf by name, won as reward for his intervention, possession of the hill fortress of Aversa, astride the road from Naples to Capua, the first significant Norman territorial foothold in Italy.

Although Rannulf's heir Richard of Aversa became, by mid-century, the most eminent of the Norman leaders in Italy, the rising and ultimate power lay with the family of Hauteville, latecomers to the South. No less than twelve of the sons of Tancred of Hauteville-le-Guichard, a petty landowner in Normandy, came to Italy in the 1030's and 1040's, and even later. The first of them enlisted in Maniaces' Byzantine invasion of Sicily, but the one who came to coordinate the family endeavors was Robert, called Guiscard or "the wily," who arrived only in 1047. At first he is said to have operated as a highwayman from the cave refuges with which the South is honeycombed; but by 1050 he had married the daughter of a Norman landholder, and in 1053 he had become so successful that the then Pope, Leo IX, declared a Holy War against him. Benevento, which had become a papal city, was the focal point for an army under command of the son of Meles, but it was overwhelmed by a rapidly organized Norman army under Guiscard, his elder brother Humfrey, and Richard of Aversa. The Pope himself was captured and taken to Benevento, now his prison rather than his dominion.

The situation changed rapidly in the next years: Richard of Aversa took Capua in 1058, while Guiscard mopped up Apulia and Calabria, and in 1058 repudiated his first wife (who had borne him a son baptized Marc, but named for his great size—even in the womb—after the legendary giant Bohemund) in order to win a new alliance by marrying the sister of the Duke of Salerno. In 1059

the papacy reversed itself, and recognized the titles of Richard of Aversa and Robert Guiscard in exchange for their acknowledgement of vassalage. By 1068 Guiscard was ready to eliminate the Byzantine presence in Italy: his siege of Bari only succeeded in April 1071, but that was the year of Manzikert. No possibility of further intervention from the East existed.

In the meantime: Roger, youngest of the Hauteville brothers, arrived in Italy in 1056, and was put to work securing Calabria for Guiscard. He soon was in contact with the Emir of Syracuse, who was in the normal state of conflict with Palermo, and under these auspices the Normans crossed the straits and attacked Messina in 1060. If anything, the Sicilian Christians seem to have been less supportive of the Norman invasion than the Muslim factions, for their lot had not been oppressive under the Emirs: they bore higher taxes than Muslims, but this fact reduced the temptation to force them to abandon their faith. For whatever reason, the Norman invasion proceeded slowly at first. Roger needed help from his brother to complete the capture of Messina the following year, and after that his forces moved slowly across the island. Capture of Palermo, the key to the situation, had to await the freeing of troops from the attack on Bari, but when the latter city fell the final assault on Palermo began, and in January 1072 it surrendered. Sicily was now Norman territory.

Elimination of the Byzantines as a factor in Italian politics, meanwhile, led the papacy to seek a new balance of power. The brilliant cardinal Hildebrand, who had played a complicated part in the diplomacy of the 1050's and 1060's, now became Pope Gregory VII in 1073 and inaugurated a new stage in the history of the papacy, as of all Latin Europe. The immediate effects of his politics were less than fortunate, however. His attempt to check Guiscard's growing power by setting against him Richard of Aversa/Capua, coupled with three successive sentences of excommunication, failed to slow Guiscard's gathering in of Salerno and Amalfi to his domains. Eventually the intervention of Desiderius, the renowned abbot of Monte Cassino and close ally of Gregory's, brought about a reconciliation. In the mounting struggle with the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV, the Pope saw that Guiscard would be more useful as an ally than an enemy—although the results were not especially fortunate for either Gregory or for the physical fabric of the city of Rome.

We have devoted what may seem an inordinate space to these purely political maneuvers, with the view of showing the complex relationships which brought about the remarkable civilization that emerged from the Hauteville domination of the Two Sicilies: all the elements involved in this struggle, Lombards, Papacy, Byzantines, Muslims, and Normans, played a part in shaping the glories of the South.

We may pass, however, more rapidly over the events that followed, as Guiscard, his ambitions in Italy apparently satisfied, began to become embroiled in contest with the Comnenian rulers who had restored some stability to the Byzantine Empire; these adventures clearly prefigure the Crusades of only a decade later. In 1085 both Guiscard and Gregory VII died, bringing a new set of actors to the stage. Bohemund, who was disinherited in favor of his father's Salernitan progeny, became a roving warrior who sought fresh conquests with

the Crusaders in the East. Control of the Italian domains passed to his uncle Roger, and thence to the latter's son Roger II, who elevated his own status to that of King in 1130, at the same time that he made Palermo the chief capital of his double kingdom, initiating the years of its greatest glory.

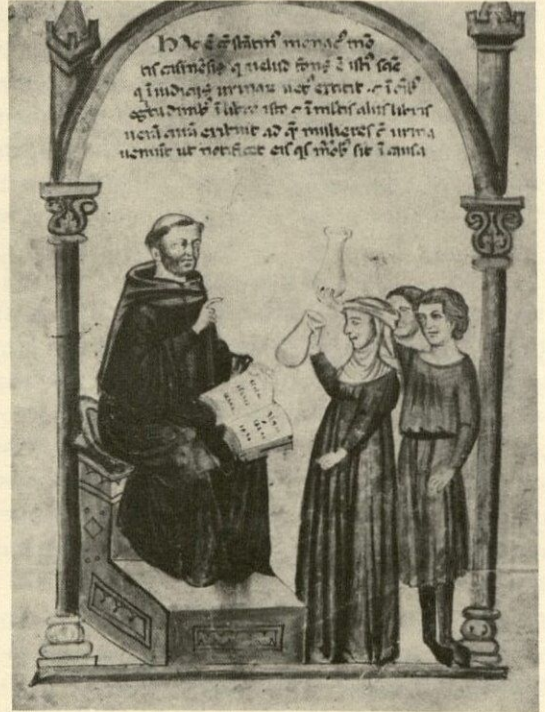
For a case study of the results of the interaction of cultures which took place in these territories, we may look first at the city which was probably the most crucial of all to Guiscard's policies: Salerno. As we have seen, Salerno had survived the Dark Ages as an autonomous Lombard principality, often attacked, sometimes sacked, but never held by the Saracens. Its position on the coast looking southward made it favored as a trading center only second to Amalfi, and a true crossroads of culture came into being, where men from all quarters of the globe met, with sometimes unexpected results.

Just why this concatenation should have produced a school of medicine at Salerno, rather than anywhere else, is one of those insoluble questions of history. Certainly the north shore of the Bay of Naples, with its vast number of medicinal baths, had been a center of cures since antiquity: Augustus watered at Baia, and Tiberius died there; Nero murdered his mother there. In the Middle Ages the baths still survived, but as Naples was in a state of decline (particularly in relation to the rising fortunes of Salerno), they seem to have been less frequented. Nevertheless they were resented by the "doctors of Salerno:" Peter of Eboli tells the fable of the boatload of savants who secretly crossed the Bay of Naples by night to destroy the inscriptions which set forth the specific virtues of the individual baths. "After such villainy it was only just that they should have perished in a violent storm before they could reach home." According to Peter, their hostility was largely based on the economy of the bath treatments when compared with the physicians' rapacious fees.

Peter was writing about 1220, but the reputation of "the doctors of Salerno" had been established centuries before. The Bishop of Verdun, Adalbero II, went to Salerno for medical treatment sometime after 985. (The cure evidently failed, for he died in 988.) The terms of reference indicate, moreover, that "the doctors of Salerno" were already thought of as a distinct body of experts. Kristeller felt justified in stating, "The second half of the Ninth Century may thus be considered as the date of origin of the school of Salerno. This date is early enough to maintain the traditional claim that Salerno was the first European university."

The tradition that the University of Salerno had its origin with four founders, a Latin, a Greek, a Muslim and a Jew, must be taken as symbolic rather than literal, but it symbolizes a truth about the tolerance of the times, when Gregory VII himself could write the Emir of Bougie in Algeria that "we worship the same God, albeit in a different form." The basis of the school's fame lay in practical skills and a reputation for successful cures; but by the second half of the Eleventh Century the beginnings of a serious interest in theoretical science is also evident. The earliest identifiable medical writer at Salerno seems to have been one Gariopontus, author of a work on fevers and, more significantly, of a popular book called the *Passionarius*, a compilation of passages from the writings of Galen and other ancient medical authorities. Although many of the

Fig. 3 CONSTANTINE THE AFRICAN PERFORMING A UROSCOPY. *Medical Manuscript, Italy, Fifteenth Century*. Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. Rawl. C.328, f. 3r. □ The continuing fame of the great doctors of Salerno persisted into the Renaissance period, when this miniature was painted showing a diagnosis in progress.



treatises from Salerno which circulated so widely throughout Europe were practice-oriented, there is clearly evident also a developing body of literature for instructional purposes.

By mid-century, writers on medical topics appear at Salerno who are distinct personalities as well as truly "historical" figures. First among them is Alphanus, later (1058-1085) archbishop of the city, who has been called "the most notable Latin poet of the eleventh century in Italy." But first he was a practicing physician. Tradition attributes to him a treatise on the pulse, but his most influential work was entitled *De quattuor humoribus*. The classical doctrine of the four humors became the cornerstone of Salernitan medical theory. Alphanus was in turn the patron of Constantine "the African," evidently an Arab, who is supposed to have fled Carthage during the civil disorders then current there, arriving in Salerno about 1077. Under Alphanus' auspices, Constantine moved later to the great Benedictine abbey of Monte Cassino, and before he died in 1087 he had translated a large number of medical works from Arabic to Latin. Almost single-handed he laid the foundation for European medicine by restoring access to the classical scientific tradition which, lost to the West, had survived in Arabic texts. The fame of this great scholar persisted throughout medieval Europe, as may be seen in a Fifteenth Century miniature showing Constantine performing a uroscopy, the cornerstone of medieval diagnostics. (Fig. 3)

Salerno's link with Monte Cassino was, of course, critical at this moment. The latter's abbot Desiderius was supposed to have become a friend of Alphanus when seeking at Salerno treatment for "nervous exhaustion and weakness of the stomach"; Alphanus, whose cure succeeded, meanwhile became so attracted by Desiderius' exposition of the ideals of monasticism that he joined the latter afterward in entering the monastery of St. Sophia at Benevento in 1054, and

following him to Monte Cassino two years later. Desiderius remained in contact with Alphanus after the latter had become bishop at Salerno, and provided in turn the link with Gregory VII—another former monk at Monte Cassino—and hence to Robert Guiscard. All three, Gregory, Alphanus and Guiscard, died within a few months of each other, Gregory in exile in Salerno to be entombed in the crypt of Alphanus' new cathedral, whose facade inscription proclaims Guiscard "the greatest conqueror of his time."

Just as nothing survives of the medieval medical school of Salerno except the tradition that lectures were held in a small room off the atrium of the Cathedral, we have little in the visual arts to remind us of the glories of Salerno at this moment when it was the capital of a powerful dukedom. The Cathedral was built by Alphanus, with Guiscard's help, between 1079 and 1084, with the great new abbey church of Desiderius at Monte Cassino as its model, and it is quite likely that the fragments of mosaic surviving on its eastern arches were made by craftsmen sent down by Desiderius for the purpose. Like the basilican church structure itself, these mosaics apparently emulate Early Christian art in Rome, not contemporary Byzantine art; this conscious revival of the forms of the first Christian Empire, that of Constantine, is known to have been fundamental to the policy of Desiderius and Gregory. The pavement of the Cathedral, on the other hand, was inlaid with marbles in a technique and in patterns originated by the Muslims. The furnishings of the Cathedral are largely from the following century, but one curious and remarkable work survives from Alphanus' dedication, an altar frontal (or *antependium*) of some fifty-four ivory panels carved with biblical scenes. The style of depiction looks back to early Christian art, as does the iconography of some of the episodes portrayed, while the borders have Islamic affinities; as a result, the series was once considered an Egyptian importation of uncertain earlier date. Like the comparable tendency to attribute all Islamic ivories of quality to the East, this idea has been abandoned,

Fig. 4 CREATION OF THE ANGELS. Ivory *antependium*, probably Amalfi, c.1080. Cathedral Treasury, Salerno. □ This extremely rare scene of the Genesis narrative is executed in a simple scheme reminiscent of early Christian art, although stylistic and ornamental details betray the later date. Its creation was part of the "Constantinian Revival" sponsored by the Papacy and by Monte Cassino as part of the great struggle with the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry IV.



Fig. 5 CREATION OF THE ANGELS. Mosaic, c. 1180. Cathedral, Monreale. □ Although executed in a much more "modern" style, and in the technique propagated from Constantinople, this scene is dependent on the same rare model as the comparable episode on the Salerno altarpiece. It is hypothesized that the common source was at Monte Cassino.



and recent research suggests that the antependium was made locally, probably at Amalfi, where activity in the arts was at apogee, and where other works with comparable affinities with the Early Christian East seem to have been made by artists equally aware of more contemporary Saracen ivory carvings like the writing-box in the Morgan Collection at the Metropolitan Museum. Rare features of the iconography of some scenes at Salerno, like that of the Creation of the Angels, recur in the mosaic program at Monreale in Sicily a century later, doubtless derived from a common source. (Figs. 4 and 5)

One more work at Salerno Cathedral merits attention: the magnificent bronze doors made in Constantinople in the first half of the Twelfth Century at the order of Landulfo Butrumile, protosebastos of Salerno, and presented to the church. In making this benefaction, Landulfo, who had himself and his wife depicted on the panel with St. Matthew, patron of the Cathedral, was following a well-established tradition—was in fact possibly the last Italian benefactor to make this particular sort of donation. Fitting major buildings with bronze portals was of course an ancient tradition: the doors of the Roman Senate house can still be seen at one of the portals of the Lateran basilica, while Justinianic bronze doors have survived at Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. A new tradition of pictorial doors, apparently based on Roman Early Christian precedent, had arisen in Ottonian Germany in the later Tenth Century, and was followed in northern Italy; but these all follow the late antique model of Rome and Milan in having scenes deeply modelled in sculptural terms. The Byzantine doors, on the other hand, followed the Orthodox reluctance to work in the third dimension, depicting figures with incised and inlaid materials; and it was to the center of manufacture of this sort of bronzes that the first Italian patron, Pantaleone of Amalfi, turned to order a set of doors for the cathedral of his native city about 1060.

He may not have appreciated what he had started, but within a generation his family had supplied at least four more sets of bronze doors for important South Italian churches. Abbot Desiderius, on a shopping trip to Amalfi in 1065, saw and admired the new doors of the Cathedral there, and the following year a presumed son of Pantaleone, Mauro, donated a set to Monte Cassino—unfortunately they were executed to the measurements of the old church Desiderius was in the act of replacing, and so had to be altered and enlarged by local artisans. The Monte Cassino link led to the donation of yet another set to the basilica of S. Paolo fuori le Mura at Rome in 1070, again by an Amalfitan named Pantaleone (not a donation of Hildebrand as a later inscription suggests). A Pantaleone gave a set of doors to the pilgrimage church at Monte S. Angelo in 1076, but when it came the turn of the church of S. Sebastiano at Atrani in 1087, a local imitation of the first set, made at Amalfi, was good enough. Finally, in Venice, a pair of Constantinopolitan doors were given for the south portal of S. Marco about 1080, and then imitated locally for a larger set for the main nave portal at the order of Leo da Molino, procurator of the basilica in 1112. With the Salerno set, the list of Byzantine doors and their copies is at least complete.

Of course the response of local craftsmen was not confined to fabricating copies, as apparently took place in Amalfi and Venice; early in the Twelfth Century doors began to be made in South Italy that represent an interesting fusion of the Byzantine two-dimensional tradition with North Italian plasticity—

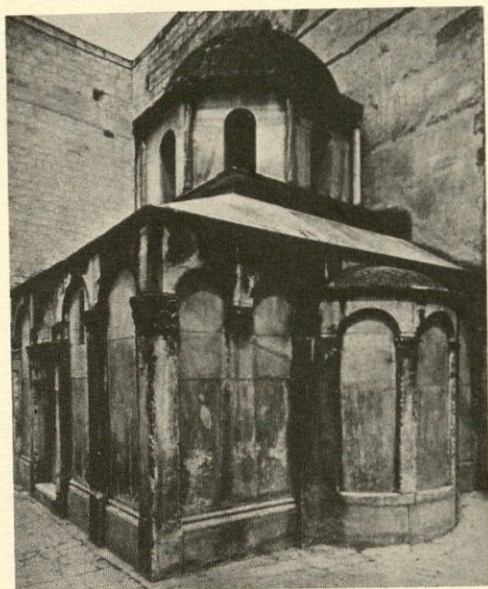


Fig. 6 MAUSOLEUM OF BOHEMUND. After 1111. Cathedral, Canosa. □ When the Crusader hero Bohemund lost his principality of Antioch he was obliged to return to Italy, though his patrimony had been lost there. He died in a minor local skirmish, far from the scenes of glory recalled by the form and placement of his tomb which, while executed in Romanesque vocabulary, is conceptually closer to the customs of honorific burial of his erstwhile Muslim subjects.

and an enjoyment of Saracen ornament as well. The pair of doors inscribed as the work of Ruggerus of Melfi, made for the Mausoleum of Bohemund adjoining the Cathedral of Canosa after that warrior's death in 1111, retain the flatness of Constantinopolitan portals, but are decorated with extended inscriptions as well as large areas of linear ornament of purely Saracen character; figural decoration is present, but minimal. The Mausoleum itself is a curious document of cross-cultural exchange: although the idea of such free-standing tombs adjoining regular places of worship had been present in Constantinian Christian architectural practice, it had gone out of use in the Christian world long since; instead it became a common practice in Islam, where tombs of holy men continued to be set within mosque courtyards, or otherwise adjacent to them. These tombs of the Near and Middle East often took forms not unlike that of Bohemund's, a cubic mass topped by a dome—albeit not trimmed with such classicizing ornament as in this case. The mighty warrior, the frustrated conqueror of Antioch who met his death almost casually after his withdrawal to the land of his birth, found his resting place in a tomb at least as much a part of the Islamic heritage as of the Christian. (Fig. 6)

To return briefly to the question of bronze doors, we may note that two sets were made for the Cathedral at Troia by native craftsmen within the next few years. The East doors of 1119 as well as the smaller South ones of 1127 both betray an uneasy attempt to reconcile the Byzantine linear tradition with the North Italian interest in greater plasticity through the use of cast applique ornament. A generally acceptable "Italian" style will arrive on stage in the next decades.

Bohemund, of course, had found glory as a crusader only after being dispossessed at home: son of Robert Guiscard by a first marriage, he lost his patrimony to Roger Borsa, son of the second, Salernitan alliance. But the ultimate beneficiary of all the Norman conquests in the South was the line of yet another of the Hautevilles of the first generation, Roger Count of Sicily, who settled Norman rule on the new land, while preferring to keep his court in Calabria rather than on Sicily itself.

Roger I died in 1101, leaving his son Roger a minor under the regency of Queen Adelaide, and it was she who shifted the court to Palermo. Roger II himself quickly matured, and took over the reins of power while, in 1113, his mother undertook an ill-advised marriage with the dowry-hunting King Baldwin of Jerusalem. In 1127 Roger inherited Apulia with the extinction of Guiscard's heirs, and in 1130 he declared all his possessions a new "Kingdom of Sicily." Other campaigns brought him large dominions in North Africa. It took strenuous fighting to bring all the Normans of the mainland to heel, but in less than a decade King Roger won recognition even from the papacy. This included confirmation of a papal bull given his father in 1098 which conceded hereditary and exclusive powers of Apostolic Legate in Sicily and Calabria, so that the King was the only authorized representative of the Holy See in his own realm: this is the closest any Western ruler ever came to the ecclesiastic authority held by the Byzantine emperors.

The nature of Roger's kingdom, and of Roger himself, was unlike anything in Christian Europe. He knew not only Latin, but Greek and Arabic, and preferred to use Greek. He was reputed to keep a harem, and certainly had a closed quarter in his palace, guarded by eunuchs. The impression given by his court was of a fusion of the most splendid aspects of Byzantine and Islamic monarchic display. The chief minister of the kingdom held the interesting double title of Emir of Emirs and Archonte of Archontes; by 1125 this was George of Antioch, a Christian native of Muslim Syria who had served the Zirids at Mahdia. The chief administrators were evidently largely Greek, while the lower bureaucracy were Muslims, and a certain number of documents continued to be issued in Arabic, with dates from the Hijra—as were certain issues of coins. (We may recall that it was almost the Eighth Century before the Umayyad Caliphs at Damascus were able to reduce the control of their administration by Christian and Jewish Syrians.) Above all, the concept of royal authority was Byzantine.

This totally Constantinopolitan concept is exemplified in one of the mosaics in the church of the Martorana, built by George of Antioch for a convent of Greek nuns in Palermo. Still more curious is the Arabic inscription running round the base of the tiny dome, which actually translates a Greek hymn. The doors of the Martorana were carved by local craftsmen, recalling the skills of the Saracens who wrought the fantastic ceiling of Roger's own Palace Chapel, built in the 1130's and constituting a paradigm of the regime's synthetic character: basically a cruciform aisled basilican church in the Western tradition, is endowed with a cupola over the crossing, and decorated in all its upper walls, choir vaults and dome, with mosaics executed by imported Byzantine artisans. Yet the roof structure and ceiling of the nave are the work of Muslims, decorated with paintings of oriental style illustrating Eastern legends and fables. (Fig. 7)

By an accident of history—the fact that the Norman Kingdom fell to a German heir, Henry VI, who used the keys to the Sicilian treasury to send one hundred fifty mule-loads of booty over the Alps—we have in the Schatzkammer

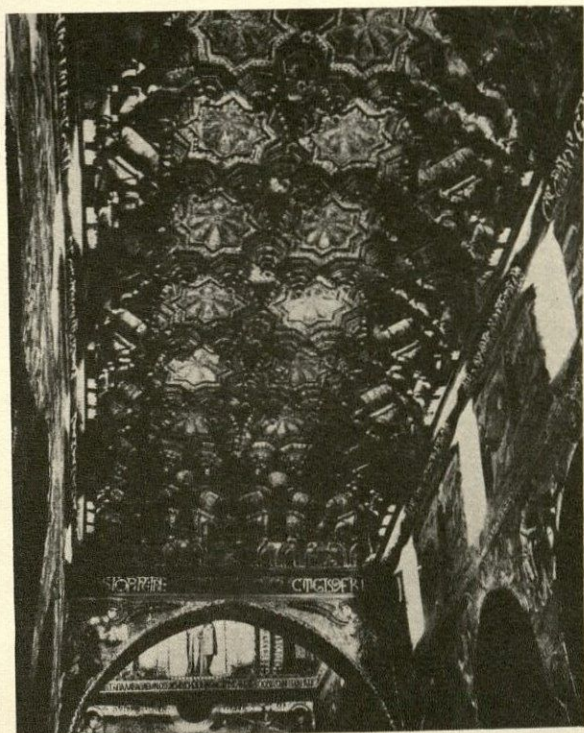


Fig. 7 CAPELLA PALATINA. Interior, 1130-1145. Royal Palace, Palermo. □ Shortly after assuming royal titles and fixing his capital at Palermo, Roger II began the reconstruction of the palace there, including the chapel. While the architectural form is basilican and Western, the figural decoration is in Byzantine mosaic, while the roof and ceiling structure were clearly the work of Saracen builders and decorators—a synthesis of the antithetical factors reconciled within Roger's kingdom.

at Vienna some of the regalia of Roger II, including his tunic and the magnificent cloak which is inscribed by the Palermitan workers who made it in 1133. Hence we have at least one insight into the artistry of the Sicilian textile craftsmen whose work had gained such fame under the Emirs. (Fig. 8)

Surrounded by luxury, the King moved between his palace chapel and his residence, all built atop the ruins of the palace of the Emirs. One room of his palace gives us an almost unique glimpse of secular mosaic decoration, with scenes of the hunt in idealized landscapes that follow a very ancient tradition, frozen into rigidity and symmetry by Muslim law; there are also patterned vault mosaics framing animal devices that represent scarcely any shift from the esthetics of the annular vault mosaics of the tomb of Constantia in Rome, made about 350 A.D. Under Roger II's successor, William I, other palaces were built in

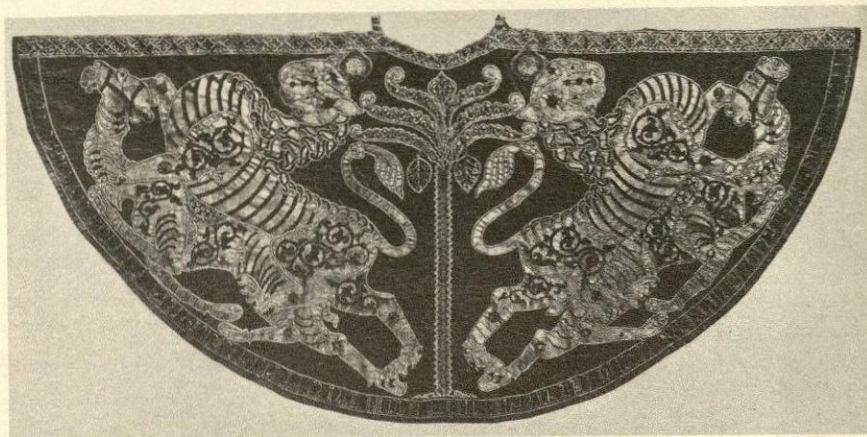


Fig. 8 MANTLE OF ROGER II. Weaving and embroidery, Palace Workshops, Palermo, 1133-1134. Schatzkammer, Vienna. □ Although the textile factories of Palermo were famous under the Arabs, and carried on under the Normans, little survives other than the regalia of Roger II, preserved in the Treasury of the Holy Roman Empire in Vienna.

Fig. 9 ORNAMENTAL DECORATION. Mosaic, c. 1160. Palazzo la Zisa, Palermo. □ William I, indolent heir to Roger II, built a number of retreats in the outskirts of Palermo, of which none were more splendid than the "Zisa." Its mosaics of nature and hunting give us a rare glimpse of non-religious decoration in this medium; in these particular works, the geometric structuring of the design suggests a relation to woven textile patterns, a frequent means of transmission of ornamental motives during the middle ages.



the suburbs of Palermo, like the Zisa (whose name derives from the Arabic *al-Aziz*, "the Splendid"), whose mosaics are perhaps still less free, more circumscribed than those of the Stanza di Ruggero. (Fig. 9)

Roger surrounded himself with splendor, but also gathered to his court the scintillation of learned conversation. He was especially interested in astronomy and astrology, and his Arab-made water clock was famous. His scientific curiosity led him to employ a diver to plumb the Straits of Messina to get a better idea of their treacherous currents. He regulated medical education, and required examination for admission to practice. During his reign and that of William, Latin translations were made of Plato, Euclid, and Ptolemy, including the *Almagest*. A work of geography by Al' Idrisi brought Roger fame in the Muslim world, although it was unknown in Europe. The Arabs in Sicily continued their literary activity, but French *jongleurs* also came to Roger's court with tales of the wars of Roland, and of the paladins of Charlemagne—still heroes of Sicilian puppet theater.

The story of the latter half of the century is, perhaps inevitably, one of consolidation, even decline. William I (1054-1166) could not have hoped to have the overpowering personality of his father; he preferred the harem to the battlefield in any case. The power of the Norman barons grew, and with it the Latin component of the unique Sicilian mixture began to dominate the rest. Muslim emigration increased, hastened by pogroms, and the Greek monasteries received fewer and fewer benefactions, so that more and more of them passed from the Basilian to the Benedictine rule. Under William II (1166-1189), known as "the Good," the leading political personality was one Walter Offamilia—Walter of the Mill, an Englishman who took advantage of an uprising in 1168 to have himself made archbishop of Palermo.

William II lived the secluded life of an oriental potentate, with Muslim concubines and a bodyguard of Negro slaves; it is reported that when the great earthquake struck the island in 1169, he told everyone in the palace to pray to whichever god they fancied. His greatest memorial is the huge Benedictine abbey he established at Monreale, only five miles outside Palermo, but the seat of an archbishop who might challenge Walter. The structure is now entirely Western Romanesque, but the interior walls are once more, and for the last time,

covered with acres of mosaics. The main doors were the work of a Pisan, with narrative scenes in the Northern manner; and the cloister is a captivating example of the form, with endlessly varied sculptured capitals, all with closest antecedents in the South of France.

The balance had already tipped away from the old tolerance of diversity by the time William died, only thirty-nine years old and childless. Although his illegitimate nephew Tancred succeeded in winning control of most of the realm, he too died in 1194, and the Sicilies became by default a part of the Holy Roman Empire.

An epilogue, or perhaps a coda, is needed to close this scattered account of such various events. From the time of its own dynasty's extinction, the Sicilies became an appendage of other domains, first the most remote of imperial possessions, then of the Angevin Counts, later of the house of Aragon, and so forth—a condition still oppressing the land to this day. Still there was one last opportunity to pass on at least some part of its special legacy—what Salvini termed its “highly successful instability of equilibrium”—to the rest of Europe.

Title to the Sicilies rested only briefly on the shoulders of Henry VI, the German husband of Constance, posthumous daughter of Roger II and *faute-de-mieux* heiress of the kingdom; Henry died of a fever three years after assuming the crown of the Hautevilles, and Constance (twice his age) a year after that. Their infant son, named Frederick, was left a ward of the Pope, but actually at the mercy of the German barons who kept him prisoner in the royal palace at Palermo. That he should have survived at all is clearly a miracle; that he should have come to be called *stupor mundi*, *immutator mundi*—“transformer of the world”—is incredible. Frederick II is one of the most remarkable individuals in all human history, one of the clearest proofs that men can be the agents, not merely the products of history. Frederick's struggles to consolidate his empire ranged from the Tyrrhenian Sea to the Baltic, and cannot be even outlined here; but it must be emphasized that those formative years in Palermo were clearly fundamental to all his future development, just as his Southern domains remained the core of his power throughout his reign.

Frederick brought to fullest fruition—despite the interregnum—the secular intellectuality of Roger II's court. “Frederick's knowledge must have been stupendous,” wrote Kantorowicz. “His mind embraced every line of culture in the contemporary world: Spanish, Provençal, French, Roman, Italian, Arab, Greek and Jew. Add to this knowledge of tongues, of jurisprudence, of ancient literature, of Roman educational literature and the literature of Scholasticism . . .” Under his auspices a revival of interest in antiquity produced what is conceded to be the first, if perhaps false, dawn of the Renaissance in literature and the arts; but his range of interests was far more than antiquarian. His practical sense, for example, led him to take a special interest in the Schools of Salerno, which he sought to transform into something closer to a true secular University, making it a training center for the new lay bureaucracy he wished to create for the administration of his realm. (Like Roger before him, he saw the drawbacks of the medieval system of ruling through potentially rival instruments, the nobility or the clergy.)

Fig. 10 De arte venand cum avibus (Paris B.N. ms. fr. 12400), ca. 1300. □ The most ambitious literary creation of the Emperor Frederick II was his book on falconry—so much more than a hunting manual, it was a major treatise on ornithology which was one of the most-copied secular works of the Gothic period. Its illustrations belong less to any specific school of illumination (although perhaps more reminiscent of the Persians than any other source), because they were evidently based on direct observation.



"The mingling of the Orient and Occident at the Sicilian court is nowhere better illustrated than in Frederick II's own work, *De arte Venandi cum Avibus*," writes Van Cleve. "In this work one feels that all Frederick's scholarly efforts, the results of his correspondence and learned discussions with men from all corners of the earth, found their ultimate repository . . . If there were a single moment during the Middle Ages of which it could be said: Here begins the habit of thinking based upon a determination to see the world of nature as it is, it would be when the greatest of the Thirteenth Century sovereigns boldly defied the prevailing acceptance of Aristotle as infallible." Frederick's own observations, and those of his Arab falconer Moamyn, were the final determinants. (Fig. 10)

It was all happening too soon and too fast. The forces of the papacy, supported by most of the established monarchs of the West, overcame the hero-emperor, and within a generation his glorious dream was a heap of dust. But in the meantime, fragments had been transplanted to the North where they struck root. Medical education began to advance more rapidly at Bologna than at Salerno, while the approaches to scholastic method found in Salernitan treatises of the Twelfth Century were developed systematically at Paris in the Thirteenth. The art of the South, too, fertilized the North: in minor ways, as when a Thirteenth Century school of North Italian ivory workers imitate the Siculo-Arabic painted boxes of the Norman period; but above all in the introduction of an awareness of classical art which seems to have come to Tuscany with an immigrant sculptor who called himself Nicola d'Apulia. What Frederick II had set in motion, stayed in motion.

Frederick is one of the great heroes of Dante's *Purgatorio*, for Dante had risked his fate for the cause inspired by Frederick's legacy: "Boccaccio said of Dante that he would have been ill able to create his work had he not been a Ghibelline." Dante saw Frederick's "Sicilian" poetry as the source of vernacular Italian verse, and evoked the spirit of the Southern court as the perfect home for the civilized man: "Those who were of noble heart and endowed with graces strove to attach themselves to the majesty of such great princes (Frederick and his son Manfred); so that, in their time, whatever the best Italians attempted first appeared at the court of these mighty sovereigns."

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ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE AND THE WEST INFLUENCES AND PARALLELS

Oleg Grabar

It is not by accident that most discussions of Oriental and more specifically Islamic influences in Western art have dealt with objects or with motifs found on objects. Textiles, metalwork, even glass and ceramics traveled easily; they were essential ingredients of an East-West luxury trade and, after the beginning of the Crusades, became almost automatic items of the loot brought back from the East. The impact of such objects appears in architectural decoration, such as in imitations of Arabic writing like those on the doors of the cathedral at Le Puy in central France, in the use of Persian and Syrian ceramics in several churches of northern Italy, or earlier in the mosaic decoration of Germigny-des-Près. During and after the Renaissance orientalizing elements derived from objects continue to appear, whether as precisely depicted curios, (e.g., rugs), as ornamental devices (the pseudo-Kufic inscriptions on the robes of Virgins being the most obvious examples), or, somewhat later, as exotic *turqueries*. How significant these elements of Islamic origin really were within the rich creativity of Western art, whether they were accidents, minor themes, or major sources of inspiration, is still debatable, although their existence is easy to demonstrate and historical logic can in most cases explain their presence.

Matters are quite different when we turn to architecture. Since its monuments are immobile, influences and impacts can only occur if one of three types of events occurs: 1) masons, architects or other technicians move from one area to the other; 2) patrons or other influential taste-makers carry with them the impact of an alien architectural monument or effect and seek to translate their memories into local techniques; and 3) drawings, photographs, and at times literary descriptions transmit technical or esthetic impressions which are then used or transformed by some receptive milieu. In the first part of this paper I will discuss a few instances which seem to me to illustrate these three possibilities and bring up some of the problems and difficulties raised by them. But it also seems to me that the relationship between Islamic and Western architecture should not be limited to the identification and evaluation of direct or indirect imitations and influences. A far more interesting and important historical problem is that of parallelisms, for both architectural traditions were based in large part on the extraordinary heritage of Roman forms and techniques. Both utilized this inheritance for comparable purposes, secular and religious, public or restricted, while neither experienced a technical revolution comparable to the development of concrete or vaults in Rome or cantilevering in the nineteenth century. In other words, at least *a priori*, only cultural and ecological variables would have led to differences in the development of the same vocabulary of forms. The problem is whether the western and Islamic evolutions remain indeed comparable during most of the Middle Ages or whether cultural differences were sufficient to make the results of the two artistic traditions incompatible. It is obvious that any conclusion or hypothesis which can be reached on this sort of question has implications which extend far

beyond the field of medieval trans-Mediterranean art. Since the methodology available for possible answers to the problem has not yet been properly developed, I shall limit myself to a few tentative considerations.

The remarks which follow must be considered as only very preliminary observations on this complicated subject of influences and parallels, for existing research has not yet made it possible to move easily from very concrete details to broadly significant generalizations. What I have tried to do is to discuss some of the directions which further work may take in order to improve our understanding of the problems involved.

Influences and Imitations

Influences and imitations are easiest to detect and most obvious in areas where the two cultures coexisted for any length of time or where Christian rule replaced Muslim hegemony. Such is the case of Spain, where a whole architecture style, what is known as *mudejar* art, is clearly derived from Islamic art. Its major monuments are in the cities of Zaragoza, Toledo, and Seville, though hardly a province of Spain outside of the extreme Northwest, has escaped the impact of Islamic forms. Even Renaissance palaces in Seville (Casa de Pilato) and Guadalajara (Palacio del Infantado) still maintain strong traces of Muslim motifs. It is important to note, however, that this impact did not affect all aspects of architecture. It was minimal in the development of plans and in such details as supports like columns. It was very influential in the design of cupolas, where the Andalusian system of intersecting (fake or real) ribs is carried to some of its most baroque extremes, and in the development of polylobed arches, in exterior masonry as with the use of polychrome effects, and particularly in the consistent theme of blind arcades. The Islamic impact may or may not be present in the character of single or attached towers, as the square towers of Teruel or the octagonal ones in Zaragoza reminiscent of Muslim minarets, both Andalusian and oriental. It is consistent in certain types of composition, such as the doorway or window whose arch is set in a rectangular frame. It is overwhelming in architectural decoration, as exterior or interior wall surfaces and vaults or wooden ceilings are covered with motifs and techniques of Islamic origin. Although a monument like the 14th-century Alcazar in Seville followed the Islamic model in almost all respects, for the rest of Spain there seems to be a peculiar rhythm to Islamic influences, certain motifs predominating in one area or another and maintaining themselves for a more or less long period of time. Thus in the area of Zaragoza exterior masonry and decoration are often more Andalusian than the interiors, whereas in the provinces of Burgos and Valladolid, interior stucco decoration of Islamic background has remained much longer.

There is altogether a whole "ecology" of Islamic influences in Spain which still awaits an historian. Two points about it may serve as possible initial hypotheses. One is that secular architecture may have maintained such influences far longer than religious building. In Burgos, for instance, it appears stronger in the royal chapel than in the churches themselves and in Tordesillas almost a complete secular building has been largely preserved. The explanation

is probably that Christian Spain, until the height of the Renaissance, did not possess alternate models for an architecture of royal prestige, at least not until Charles V's palace in Granada or Philip II's Escorial. The second point is that, with regional variations, Islamic motifs did not begin to disappear until the middle of the fifteenth century when their integrity became either lost or difficult to disentangle from a strange mixture of Gothic and Renaissance designs. Such examples as the Seo of Zaragoza or the crossing of the cathedral of Burgos may serve to illustrate the point.

In the Spanish example we can assume, if not always demonstrate, both the presence and movement of artisans and the formation of a taste among patrons which explain the constancy of Muslim influence. The only similar area is Sicily. Muslim occupation there was short-lived but an orientalizing taste can be demonstrated through literary sources through the time of Frederick II in the early thirteenth century. It is, however, much more difficult to show in architecture, for, outside of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo with its spectacular Islamic ceiling, only fragments have remained, and it is not possible to illustrate precisely the actual depth of an Islamic impact in Sicilian and southern Italian architecture. Just as in Greece or the Balkans, the impact on architecture seems to have been less than that on the other arts, possibly because there were fewer available artisans and because the Christian patronage of these areas did not sponsor architectural monuments on the scale of the Spanish patrons from the thirteenth century onwards. The problems of the significance and character of patronage and of the availability of works acquire their full meaning when the situation is compared with a non-western area of Islamic impact which may serve as an interesting historical parallel. I refer to Armenia, where, since the early tenth century, a strong and original local architecture was constantly influenced by—just as it influenced—Islamic developments.

When one moves out of Spain and Sicily, matters become much more complex. All scholars have agreed that certain ornamental motifs, for instance Kufesque writing, are of Islamic origin. Beyond that the tendency has been either to indulge in orientalizing orgies, whereby almost any motif or novelty is given an Islamic background since a high Islamic technical growth occurred earlier than in the West, or in denying "saracenic" influences altogether, on the grounds (to which I shall return in the second part of this paper) that there is no need for Islamic influences to explain certain western architectural developments. That both extremes are probably incorrect is certain, but where does a reasonable middle ground lie?

On methodological grounds I should like to suggest three kinds of direct or indirect influences or imitations. The first kind may be called *regional*. It seems fairly clear and makes historical sense that, as the great pilgrimage routes of the Romanesque period were established, contact with Spain became the norm for many actual or potential patrons and taste-makers in Romanesque Europe. As a result, by processes of osmosis which are still very obscure, themes and motifs were carried from south to north. The Rousillon definitely shows many Andalusian motifs; these are more selective in the Languedoc or Poitou, seem to increase in intensity in the Auvergne, and are but occasionally found in Burgundy or the Provence. For the most part they consist of architectural

details, horseshoe arches, polylobes, masonry of stones of alternating colors, roll corbels, impost blocks, certain kinds of vegetal ornament, tendency in some monuments to cover entire surfaces with ornament. A complete survey of a characteristic Romanesque feature like the sculpted capital would no doubt bring out many points of Islamic influence. While the Romanesque period in France is the most obvious example of this sort of regional impact, it is not the only one. In Romanesque and even Gothic and Renaissance Italy proximity to Islamic centers certainly played a part in developing certain architectural motifs. The bichromy of masonry in churches in Siena and in Pisa, the towers of San Gimignano and the complex surfaces of official and secular monuments in Venice (even some details in San Marco) are just a few examples of tastes and techniques derived from the Muslim world. In the instance of Italy it is probably merchants and travelers who returned with memories of Islamic lands rather than workers and, as a result, one encounters less frequently than in Spain or southern France the small consistent detail, the tell-tale motif. Except in the south, it is rather an overall impression which was being imitated and its evaluation is correspondingly more difficult to make. In the same vein, Islamic influences are also recurrent in, though not always easy to extract from, the Russian art of the Middle Ages and even in the pre-Petrine Kremlin, where Italianate and Oriental motifs are often inter-mixed with local traditions.

Regional impacts pose two distinct problems. One is to try to date their rhythm as securely as possible. The other is what may be called the "ripple effect." For, in theory at least, the farther one is from the source of contact and the later in time, the less prominent the influence is. The question is whether this proposition is really true or whether it only applies to the impact created by actual artisans, for the impact of a patron is less specifically tied to geography and could occur anywhere. At which point, in dealing with an architectural motif, do we begin to deal with exoticism rather than the movement of a motif?

Next to regional influences of several kinds, there are *unique* and problematic instances. The most obvious example is that of Le Puy in central Auvergne, where the long study by A. Fikry has suggested that, beyond the usual ornamental motifs which could have traveled along regular routes, a great deal of the actual construction of the cathedral (along with several other monuments) is unusual within Romanesque architecture and exhibits major similarities with Islamic architecture. The emphasis on cupolas rather than on vaults and the use of a wide variety of squinches relates Le Puy to Kairouan and North Africa rather than to Spain and thus a unique and still not very satisfactorily solved problem is posed. Another apparently unique example occurs in seventeenth-century Turin, where the Baroque architect Guarini created a type of intersecting ribs for several churches which are strikingly reminiscent of those of Cordova and its descendants in Spain. Guarini's manual with drawings of his own monuments was published in 1686 and made its way to Spanish America where it is supposed to have influenced the design of a number of Mexican churches as well. Whatever impact they may have had, the examples of Le Puy and of Guarini seem at the moment to be unique and, unless they can in the future be fitted into some pattern, they must be explained by unique circumstances, each of which deserves extensive research. One point about the two examples I have cited may deserve special emphasis. It is that, in con-

tradistinction to that which seems to occur in what I called regional impacts, unique ones tend to relate directly to major centers of Islamic architecture—Ifrīqiyah and Cordova—and cannot be explained as the result of popular osmosis.

The third kind of imitation or influence may be called *interpretative*. What I mean by this term is that the source of the impact was not necessarily a contemporary monument or group of monuments, an architect, or a team of artisans, but some knowledge acquired directly or indirectly about something Islamic. Such instances do not seem to me to have been frequent in the Middle Ages, although one may wonder whether the Islamic elements in the palace of Theophilus were carried directly or through stories and literary accounts. Something like this may have occurred, at least in part, with the Norman kings of Sicily or with Frederick II, or else with whatever the returning Crusaders may have sought to create in their homeland. On the whole secular art seems to have been more frequently affected by this type of influence but unfortunately it has been less well preserved.

But this type of impact is not limited to the Middle Ages. It appears most significantly in the nineteenth century, as romantic curiosity led to a new awareness of the Orient. It was at times somewhat ludicrous, as in Brighton's pavilions reproducing all sorts of Islamic motifs. It becomes more interesting when practicing architects like Jones, Prisse d'Avernes, Bourgoin, Coste, Flandin bring back and publish the first detailed drawings we possess of Granada, Cairo, and Isfahan. The evaluation of their effect on nineteenth- and twentieth-century architecture has not yet been attempted, but one may wonder, among several possible examples, whether Louis Sullivan and some of his contemporaries were not influenced by the striking solutions found in the Sultan Hassan *madrasah* in Cairo for the problem of long and tall continuous walls. Similarly Jones' publication of the Alhambra introduced into western architecture a totally new conception of the relationship between outside and inside, covered and open spaces, construction and decoration. An Islamic influence cannot but be considered as a very secondary feature in the growth of modern architecture, but it is just possible that it was greater than has usually been imagined and that it went beyond a Hollywoodian exoticism.

Parallels

Although, as I mentioned earlier, the methodology for the study of parallels is far from being properly worked out, there are three broad areas in which its investigation seems to me to be particularly profitable.

One such area is that of construction. The idea developed in the thirties that Gothic vaulting may have had its origins in Iranian architecture of the eleventh century is not tenable. What is true, on the other hand, is that both Islamic and western architects were faced with the problems of light and of height within an architectural system based on multiple supports for ceilings and roofs. Both were searching for ways to minimize reliance on continuous

walls and to building efficient vaults. As a result both sought to develop systems of ribs used for actual construction and for carrying thrusts down, and both sought to alleviate wall surfaces. The ultimate results were quite different, as Islamic ribs became integrated within the vault's mass rather than the partly independent western units; yet the Muslim world developed the *muqarnas* which did emphasize in its own fashion the architectonic value, if not structure, of the vault. Thus also the Muslim world alleviated its walls by extensive surface decoration rather than by the striking thinning out of walled areas, but the intent was the same in both cases. The eventual development of stained glass in the West may be compared to that of faience tiles in the Muslim east. It has even been argued that the rose-window is of Islamic origin. While not excluded on purely chronological grounds since its earliest known instance is in the Umayyad palace of Khirbat al-Mafjar, this conclusion seems highly suspect to me, for the means of transmission of the motif have not been made clear. Nor is it necessary to imply in this case a direct influence, for the parallelism of concerns might easily have led to the same results. That both cultures were frequently operating on practically the same kind of "track" is further suggested by the visual and esthetic similarities between the ornamental values of flamboyant vaults and Islamic architectural decoration. It is not very likely that a direct impact of one over the other can be demonstrated and we are certainly dealing with parallel growth.

The second area of investigation of parallels lies in the utilization and development of certain common units of composition. One example is that of the porticoed court adjoined to an enclosed building. Whether we are in the cloisters of Spanish monasteries or of Mont St. Michel, or in the courts of mosques and palaces, we are dealing with a relatable type of transformation of an open area into a place where different activities can take place simultaneously but where an esthetic cohesion of the whole is maintained. At a certain moment, for internal cultural reasons, such cloisters will lessen in importance in the West, while in a building like the Alhambra, a unique mix of covered and open, interior and exterior, space will be created, but the initial formal concerns are very much the same, even if the ultimate results are not. A similar method of reasoning could be used with respect to large congregational spaces, as western churches or Islamic mosques tried to create interior spaces which could hold enormous crowds while maintaining symbolic, liturgical, or esthetic foci.

Finally there are parallels between the two cultures in the relationship between patronage and architecture. The development in Gothic times of churches and cathedrals to accommodate secular patrons, often buried there in their private chapels, finds a remarkable analogy in the private mausoleums attached to privately-funded religious institutions in Islam. And it is possible that certain characteristics of a mercantile architecture in Flanders or in Italy could be compared to similar features in Islamic urban architecture. But perhaps at this level, as for instance with military architecture, universal functional needs begin to predominate and the comparison between two very specific features loses its significance.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL GUIDE

Islamic influences and western-Islamic contacts have been discussed in a very large number of usually small articles. A full bibliography would take dozens of pages and I have limited myself to three very recent works dealing with architecture which lead to most other pertinent studies:

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ISLAMIC ART AND THE MEDIEVAL WEST THE STATE OF THE QUESTION

Stanley Ferber

Manifold problems confront art historians and archaeologists who deal with the complexities of Islamic-Latin West art interaction during the Middle Ages. Rather than simply survey what has already been accomplished and review the extant literature, I have chosen to present a series of problems which, in a sense, are paradigmatic of the work which has been done while suggesting what remains. The material treated ranges from initial discussion of very specific problems to those of increasingly broader implications. The latter, in turn, must raise questions dealing broadly with theory and method.

At the outset, it is readily apparent that Islamic art works of various sorts have found their way into the literature and lore of Western Medieval art.¹ Even a peremptory search of the church treasures of much of western Europe reveals the high esteem in which such objects as Fatimid crystals, ivory caskets and pyxes, and Persian and Syrian textiles were held. Yet a systematic study of the impact of these objects or the culture which produced them upon the art of medieval Europe, has scarcely begun.² Such a study would simply begin with an inventory of Islamic objects known to or in the possession of Latin Europe between the years 800 and 1500. Completion of this inventory would be essential for any further work in the area. This additional work would range over a wide variety of topics and demand a knowledge of languages and literature rare in modern art historical scholarship. Our current age of specialization has made endeavors of this nature too broad for any one scholar to either encompass or contend with in one lifetime.

Among the many problems with which East-West Scholarship must concern itself, the following stand out.

The state of art historical and archaeological investigation in the Islamic world is so much newer than in the West that one of the major problems appears to be bringing Islamic materials more clearly and sharply into focus.³ This state of investigation is a necessity prior to any probing of Islamic-Latin West interaction. Only if we can see Islamic art in terms of its own internal imperatives, without superimposing Western chronological periodicity upon it, will we be able to determine the relationship of the two cultures on a level beyond that of chronological synchronism or simple motival exchange of transfer.

Once this initial hurdle is overcome, which will undoubtedly be accomplished reasonably soon by the ever-increasing number of archaeologists and art historians directing their expertise to the task, we can turn our attention to a variety of general and specific questions.

Detailed study is necessary in the area of architecture. What is the determinable relationship between the rib-vaulting of Umayyad structures in Spain and the development of rib-vaulting north of the Pyrenees? Certainly there have been frequent allusions to this dependence, but the nature of the dependence and its transmission has yet to be ascertained. The elaborate and complex rib-

vaulting of the Mosque at Cordoba dates just past the middle of the Tenth Century, while the only analogous rib-vaulting this writer knows of appears almost contemporaneously in Armenia,⁴ a land which at this time was subject to the influence of Islam. Whether Armenia or Muslim Spain is given priority in the development of this particular structural technique, there can be little question as to the importance of the Islamic ambient. However, this still offers not explanation of how the technique was transmitted. Certainly Spain, with its close intermingling of Christian and Muslim cultures appears to be fertile ground for such transmission. A relatively late link in this chain is forged when we take note of Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, making a special trip to Spain in 1142, which resulted, among other things, in the direct transmission of various aspects of Islamic culture into the Latin West.⁵ It is from this point we must work our way back to the time and places of earliest contacts between Islamic East and Latin West to search for artistic transferences.

In his *Mohammad and Charlemagne*,⁶ the noted Belgian historian, Henri Pirenne pointed out the relationships between the court of Charlemagne and that of Harun al-Rashid at Baghdad. I would suggest that the implications of this relationship have not been sufficiently explored from an art historical point of view. For example, recent reconstructions of the Palatine Chapel at Aachen⁷ have placed a "window of appearance" at the gallery level of the chapel. This symbolic architectural form has a counterpart in the "window of appearance" as it appears in Umayyad "desert palaces" of the Eight Century, such as Qasr al-hayr al Gharbi.⁸ Although there is some small evidence of the use of this symbolic form in Byzantine imperial building, in the Tenth Century, there does not appear to be any evidence of it in imperial architecture in the Roman West. The tradition can be traced back to New Kingdom Egypt, and from this source into Islamic architecture. The unprecedented appearance of this motif in Carolingian court architecture shortly after its appearance in Umayyad structures in the East, should make us reconsider Pirenne's *Mohammad and Charlemagne* in terms other than economic history.

Specific architectural questions of this sort can be multiplied and serve only to emphasize the need for greater concentration upon cross-cultural studies among art historians. Naturally, questions of this sort are not limited solely to architecture. Other genres of art are also involved in the complex interlocking of Muslim and Western medieval art.

For example, the ceramic arts of the Byzantine Empire are rarely treated in discussions of Byzantine Art. If this is due to the absence of luxury pottery production in Byzantium, then we must ask why this particular art form, of such great importance in earlier Greek and Roman cultures, did not flourish in the East Roman Empire? Was the excellence of Islamic ceramics such that Byzantine needs could best be satisfied by importing luxury pottery? Finds of Byzantine pottery sherds appear to indicate that the most interesting and ambitious glazed pottery produced in the Empire dates, at the earliest, from the Ninth Century and reaches its apogee in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries.⁹ These achievements are chronologically parallel to the first efflorescence of Islamic glazed ware in Nishapur and Samarra. Are such manifestations purely coincidental or are there more specific relationships to be explored?

The entire question of design and decoration on Islamic ceramics is one which needs much fuller investigation. I do not refer to the internal change in design motifs and techniques, nor their copies and imitations in Western ceramic ware, but rather the transference of Islamic motifs to Western objects in other media. Three such types of transference are demonstrable, each posing its own questions. The first and among the clearest manifestations of the assimilation of Islamic decorative motifs into non-Islamic objects is the adaptation of the arabesque into foliate vine-scrolls in the decoration of some Armenian Gospel Books as, for example, in a Walters Art Gallery manuscript (W. 538) dated 1193.¹⁰ Here the question is one of straight-forward adaptation and modification of Islamic sources to synthesize with both Byzantine and indigenous Armenian decorative motifs. Similar analyses and comparisons can be done with Tenth and Eleventh Century Byzantine manuscripts. As pointed out by Andre Grabar,¹¹ there were multiple aspects of Islamic influence upon the Byzantine court during the hegemony of the Macedonian Dynasty and subsequent to it. In addition to the motival influences in manuscript decorations there was an especially strong impact of Iranian costumes and textiles, emanating undoubtedly from the diplomatic channels opened between Constantinople and the Abbasids in Baghdad. Continued study and analysis of this type of influence will increase our knowledge concerning changing Armenian and Byzantine tastes as reflected in the newly adapted and assimilated Islamic styles and motifs. What this will tell us about the changing nature of the respective cultures and their images of each other, is still to be determined.

A second aspect of the consideration of design and decoration has been pointed to by Meyer Schapiro. He was struck by the frequent presence of pseudo-kufic inscriptions in Romanesque art,¹² and cited this phenomenon as evidence of a delight in strange and exotic forms as part of an overall Romanesque aesthetic. But, can we still accept this completely formalistic view of Romanesque use of Islamic kufic forms? Should not future investigation begin to determine the precise attitudes signalled by Romanesque usage of these motifs? Are they solely indicative of a delight in the exotic or do they carry some meaning beyond this? Could we not see in this use of kufic forms a magical sign language, obscure and occult? Evidence of such a usage is found in the strange pseudo-Hebrew characters in kufic forms on the Majolica vase found in Roger Campin's Merode Altarpiece.¹³ Perhaps the presence of kufic forms is indicative of a misguided historicism - the kufic invoking the image of some pre-Latin, biblical language, or perhaps an early stage in the development of writing? Whatever the answer may ultimately be, it is apparent that a clearer view of medieval Western artists' and patrons' attitude towards this aspect of the art of Islam is necessary.

The third, quite different, and perhaps most challenging and creative avenue of exploration open to investigators of Islamic-Western interrelationships is that of the effect the forms of Islamic art had upon the formal solutions to visual problems by Western medieval artists. A question of this broad nature involves not only the transfer of motifs from one medium to another, but perhaps more significantly a transference of visual concepts. An example which illustrates this point is a depiction of the "Dancing of the Daughters of Israel" on fol. 449 v. of a mid-eleventh Century Byzantine Psalter,

now in the Vatican Library, Rome, (Vatican Grec 752).¹⁴ This full-page miniature depicts fourteen dancing women arranged in a circular pattern. They wear long dresses and elaborate turbans of Eastern origin. The most striking features of their robes are the long, hanging sleeves. The deep, rich colors of the robes and sleeves contrasted with the natural vellum of the background create an unusual and suggestive pattern of positive and negative shapes. This particular image is not common in Byzantine art, and even more unusual in this striking format. However, the circular pattern of figures enclosing a smaller central circle containing figures is conceptually close in design to certain types of Islamic pottery. Glazed ware from Nishapur, dating between the Ninth and Twelfth Centuries is most closely analogous to this Byzantine miniature.¹⁵ The polychromed white-ware of Nishapur is distinguished by frequent use of a deep, tomato-red kufic script border against a light cream background. This is the color of the illustration, and the forms of the robes and the sleeves contrasted against the vellum background are indeed suggestive of a kufic inscription.

Posed here is a problem much more difficult than the other types of influence already discussed. Rather than facing a direct copy of specific motifs or forms, we are confronted with the problem of how and when the aesthetics and formal values of one culture impinge upon those of another, and in so doing, effect a change in traditional formal and iconographic patterns.

On a less formal level, but a question of broad theological and political implications is that of the relationship of the iconoclastic triumph in the Byzantine Empire and the rise of Islam in the East. Certainly the Iconoclasts, in their *ex post facto* explanation of the phenomenon of Iconoclasm pointed to the evil Jews and Muslims exerting their pernicious influence upon the Orthodoxy of the Emperor, Leo III.¹⁶ This view has tended to be discounted, and rightly so, by modern scholarship. The polemics of the post-Iconoclastic restorers of images are hardly the sources of objective history.¹⁷ Contemporary scholars, in a more materialistic vein have found political, social, or economic causes for Iconoclasm. But is it merely coincidence that the imposition of Iconoclasm coincided with the first great victories of the forces of Islam against those of the Empire? Surely the impact of the early Muslim attitude toward images upon the artistic activities in Byzantium needs still further clarification.

Another broad question of consequence to all students of medieval art is one which until now has hardly been raised. In most discussions of the manifestation of High Romanesque style in Europe, emphasis is placed on the heightened impact of Late Antique sources as transmitted via Byzantium. Despite the Late Antique/Byzantine impact, Romanesque style is most frequently characterized by its abstract, geometric quality and its attention to decorative, compartmentalized surfaces. These are the very characteristics which can be most effectively and accurately applied to those qualities common to Islamic art in various geographical areas of the medieval Muslim world.¹⁸ A few examples culled from the current exhibition will serve to illustrate this point.

Perhaps the most obvious examples of this aesthetic or formal concordance are to be found in the group of bronze lions on display (Nos. 22, 23 & 56). The two Seljuq lion incense burners, with the elaborate, open cut-work surfaces

exhibit the approach to decoration typically associated with Islamic art. Less frequently noted are the carefully delineated, articulated parts of the whole. Each limb is clearly defined, separated from the body by a change in surface texture as well as by decorative scroll-work banding at the haunches. Although the heads of the beasts are treated differently from one another, they achieve the same results. On the Kansas Lion (No. 23), the ears and brow are treated as a unit distinctly compartmentalized and differentiated from the nose, cheeks and jowls. On the Cleveland lion (No. 22), each ear is distinct, the nose and brow form a unit, and the remainder of the face is unified.

The Thirteenth Century German *aquamanilia* (No. 56) has the expected generic resemblance to his Islamic counterparts. Although the surface treatment differs, the formal conception of separation and articulation of parts is similar. This is especially noticeable in the facial components: eyebrows, eye delineation, chasing on nose and muzzle. Similar conceptualization of the parts of the "feathered" units of the mane and of the decorative, linear compartments of the legs, serve to underscore the analagous formal goals.

Functional necessities of the objects should not obscure the basically similar formal conceptions. The perforated surface of the Islamic lions allows the aroma of the burning incense to permeate the space in which they stood. It should be noted that the underside of the lions is solid so that the burning incense could not fall through, whereas the function of the *aquamanilia*, to hold water, precludes any open-work handling of surface.

The specific issue of direct influence of the Islamic bronzes upon the Latin *aquamanilia* appears to have been resolved.¹⁹ However, I would suggest that as important as the solution to the problem of typological influences is the need for a solution to the problem of similitude of formal goals.

A group of bronze birds in the current exhibition (Nos. 8, 24, 25 & 91) illustrate another aspect of the nature of East-West formal and typological relationships. In this case, the morphological similarities demonstrate the continuity of a tradition which, apparently, transcends chronological, geographic and religious boundaries. The earliest of our birds is Byzantine, the next, chronologically, is Seljuq Iranian, and the last is Moghul Indian. There are countless other examples extant, which show the migration of these birds across the Eurasian land mass, moving both East and West. An analagous phenomenon, with dragons, has been described most beautifully by Henri Focillon.²⁰ The point to be made, of course, is that both Islam and the West found this formal presentation acceptable to their needs, and were able to utilize it with a minimal amount of change or adaptation. Why, is one of the outstanding questions.

One final illustration from the current exhibition can serve to demonstrate another aspect of formal parallels we have been noting. A French enamel piece (No. 36) displays in its surface design the characteristic patterning and compartmentalization of forms which are found in a host of Islamic pieces on display. The stylized foliate scroll forms on the base of the Iranian candlestick (No. 54) are employed in a fashion analagous to those on the body of the enameled cruet. In both pieces, despite the difference of medium and only

superficial similarity of motifs, the decorative elements are employed with the same vision: banded compartments filled with geometric and scroll forms, and in each case the elements are used to articulate the form of the objects. It has been suggested that medieval Western enamel work was influenced directly by Islamic enamel ware.²¹ The absence of any Islamic enamel work predating the Fourteenth Century makes this a difficult proposition to substantiate. But a further examination of the formal imperatives of Islamic art and the medieval art of the Latin West will go a long way toward clarifying the distinctions between direct influence and analagous formal goals.

In attempting to understand the parallelism in formal achievements we must examine aesthetic aims. Although, as has been pointed out by Mr. Ettinghausen,²² Islamic art was primarily secular, and "benign" enough to be incorporated or adapted by Western artists with little or not qualms, there was more to the West's acceptance of Islamic forms than its mere "neutrality." The operative factor was *receptivity*: the degree to which the Latin world was "attuned" to the Islamic "frequency." This is best demonstrated by an examination of their respective visions of "the beautiful."

The aesthetics implied in the work of the Persian mystic, al-Ghazali, have been explored by Mr. Ettinghausen,²³ and are especially revealing.

In his *Alchemy of Happiness*, (1106) al-Ghazali writes,²⁴
"The inner vision is stronger than the outer one, the 'heart' keener in perception than the eye, and the beauty of the objects perceived with the 'reason' is greater than the beauty of the other forms which present themselves to the eye."

When these sentiments are compared to the attitude revealed in the first medieval Latin work devoted expressly to aesthetics, the *Didascalion* of Hugh of St. Victor, (1096-1141), significant similarities come to light. In his treatise, Hugh writes²⁵

"Our mind cannot ascend to the truth of invisible things, unless instructed by the consideration of visible things, that is, so that it will recognize visible forms as notions of invisible beauty. . . . Because of this, the human mind, properly aroused, ascends from visible to invisible beauty."

Many similar comparisons can be culled from these two works and would serve to reinforce the parallelism of thought apparent in the two passages cited. Although the poetic language, metaphors and similes, may differ, their goal is the same: to discover the "greater beauty," the "invisible beauty" which transcends the material object, and which can only be perceived by the "mind", "heart", "soul." Clearly one area of future study for an increased understanding of the complexities of Islamic - Latin medieval artistic relationship lies in the exploration of the commonality of aesthetic goals. Hugh of St. Victor's aesthetics are based upon those of Plotinus and Neo-Platonic thought. To what extent do al-Ghazali's ideas derive from these sources, and to what extent do they grow out of the emotional, psychological, and religious needs of his Muslim culture?

A question such as the preceding one leads us to one of even broader art historical significance, one encroaching upon our very methodology when investigating comparative cultures. How do we resolve the question of copies, derivations and influences as opposed to independent simultaneous invention? This very question reflects the impact two disparate disciplines have had upon our thinking: 1.) contemporary criticism, with its emphasis on formal or structural analysis;²⁶ 2.) cultural anthropology with its generally humanistic tendency to emphasize the commonality of human achievement.²⁷ The former has so attuned us to its vision that we tend to solve problems by inferring relationships wherever we see formal similarities. However, there are schools of cultural anthropology with a wide variety of deterministic philosophies which emphasize, through artistic achievements, cross-cultural identity, and thus opt for independent simultaneous invention. This view is supported by inferring a causal relationship between economic, material conditions and the forms of the art produced. In either case, the practitioners of both methods tend to disregard a contextual approach. That is, to examine works, East or West, in terms of the totality of the context in which they were produced, not in a simple deterministic manner. This context includes emotional, spiritual, and psychological factors as well as the more material physical and economic conditions. It is also a context which most importantly stresses the intended function of the work. When specific motifs which have crossed cultures are found, we must ask why and how they migrated, rather than solely identify the motifs. At other times when similar motifs are found in two disparate cultures, and we can find no evidence to link the cultures or no way to account for the transmission of the motif, we must ask about the context in which the work was produced, the conditions of its production, and its functions in relation to as many of the varied forces involved in effectuating its production. Such matters are not abstract theorizing, tilting at windmills, scholastic puzzling. Rather they deeply affect the ways in which we approach and attempt to solve the questions of Islamic-Western interaction.

Once we gear our thinking to evaluation and judgement based upon the art work itself, produced within its given context to fulfill a specific function, we will be able to approach the entire problem with fresh vision. Thus we may on occasion find that a particular formal or symbolic solution to a visual problem is the most functional solution possible, regardless of the differences in the civilizations arriving at the answer. We will at last in comparative studies have moved away from the traditional, more limited, influence syndrome of art historical understanding and perhaps, will have approached a more profound realization of the process of creation and of the process of creation and relation.

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1. For a survey of various objects in this class see the opening essay in this volume by R. Ettinghausen.
 2. One such wide-ranging attempt is R. Z. Jairazhboy's, *Oriental Influences in Western Art*, (Bombay) 1965. But the author is constrained by the monumentality of his task solely to the discussion of specific motifs, decorative and figural, which are found in both East and West.

3. Cf. O. Grabar, "Islamic Archaeology, an Introduction," *Archaeology*, 24,3 (1971), 197.
4. K. J. Conant, *Carolingian and Romanesque Architecture, 800-1200*, Baltimore (1959), 209-10, discounts the importance of Armenian influence, and at best recognizes "parallel solutions." Conant also suggests that Armenian rib-vaulting is ultimately derived from the ribbed dome of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul.
5. See, J. Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam*, Princeton (1964).
6. H. Pienne, *Mohammad and Charlemagne*, New York (1939). For additional bibliography see E. C. Dodd, "On the Origins of Medieval Dinanderie: The Equestrian Statue in Islam," *AB*, 51 (1969), 220, notes 4 & 5.
7. Cf. F. Kreusch, "Kirche Atrium und Portikus der Aachener Pfalz," *Karolingische Kunst*, ed. W. Braunfels and H. Schnitzler, Dusseldorf (1965), 463.
8. Cf. O. Grabar, "Al-Mushatta, Baghdād, and Wāsit," *The World of Islam, Studies in Honor of Philip K. Hitti*, London (1959), 102, note 1.
9. D. T. Rice, "The Pottery of Byzantium and the Islamic World," *Studies in Islamic Art and Architecture in Honor of Professor K. A. C. Creswell*, London (1965), 194, see also, *idem.*, *Byzantine Glazed Pottery*, Oxford (1930).
10. S. Der Nersessian, *An Introduction to Armenian Manuscript Illumination*, Baltimore (1974), figs. 5 and 6.
11. A Grabar, "Le Succes des arts orientaux à la Cour Byzantine sous les Macedoniens," *Munchner Jahrbuch*, 3 Folge, III (1951) 39 *passim*.
12. M. Schapiro, "On the Aesthetic Attitude in Romanesque Art," *Art and Thought*, London (1947), 130.
13. Similar "kufic" writing is found in Giotto's work in Padua, as well as Northern painters such as Henri Bellechose and Meister Francke. See: G. Soulier, *Les influences orientales dans la peinture toscane*, Paris (1924).
14. E. T. DeWald, *The Illustrations in the Manuscripts of the Septuagint*, III, Psalms and Odes, pt.2, Princeton (1942), Pl. LIV.
15. C. K. Wilkinson, *Nishapur: Pottery of the Early Islamic Period*, Conn. (1973).
16. Cf. A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire, 324-1453*, Madison (1958), I, 251-8. The same author has pointed out the parallelism in growing Muslim and Christian iconoclasm. Moreover, he suggested that the edict of Yazid II in 721 prompted the actions of Leo III in 726. ("The Iconoclastic Edict of the Caliph Yazid II, A.D. 721," *DOP* 9/10 (1956), 25-47. However the fundamental question of a positive Byzantine response to Muslim iconoclasm, remains to be answered. For the full development of the cult of images before Iconoclasm, see, E. Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images in the Age Before Iconoclasm," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 8 (1954), 83-150.
17. See C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312-1453*, (Sources & Documents in the History of Art), Englewood Cliffs, N. J. (1972), esp. 149-50.
18. See R. Ettinghausen, *supra*, 8.
19. Cf. E. Meyer, "Romanische Bronzen und ihre islamischen Vorbilder," *Aus der Welt der islamischen Kunst*, Berlin (1959), 317-22.
20. This is found in a chapter of *L'Art des sculpteurs romans*, Paris (1931), entitled "Métamorphoses," 164-94.
21. Cf. H. Buchtal, "A Note on Islamic Enameled Metalwork and Its Influence on the Latin West," *Ars Islamica*, 11-12 (1946), 195-98.
22. See *supra*, 11f.
23. R. Ettinghausen, "Al-Ghazzālī on Beauty," *Art & Thought*, London (1947), 160-65.
24. al-Ghazzālī, *Alchemy of Happiness*, as cited by R. Ettinghausen, *ibid.*, 163.
25. High of St. Victor, *Didascalion*, in, W. Tatarkiewicz, *History of Aesthetics*, II, the Hague, (1970), 197.
26. A collection of essays exemplifying this approach is to be found in *Art and Philosophy*, ed. Sidney Hook, New York (1966).
27. See the volume, *Anthropology and Art, Readings in Cross-Cultural Aesthetics*, ed. C. M. Otten, New York, (1971).