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Books for review should be sent to the above address.
THE EARLIEST ISLAMIC COMMEMORATIVE STRUCTURES, NOTES AND DOCUMENTS*

By Oleg Grabar

One of the most characteristic buildings of Islamic architecture is, without doubt, the monumental tomb. The Taj Mahal or the great Mamluk mausoleums in Cairo are visited by thousands of casual tourists, while every traveler in North Africa or the Near East has seen along the roads, on top of hills, in cemeteries of cities and villages, at times even in fields, hundreds of small shrines usually assumed to be the resting place of some saint or hero, or supposed to mark the spot of some celebrated or forgotten action. Many terms are used for these constructions, whether of a rough peasant work or exquisite artistry. They may be called gubbahs and gunbadhs, “domes,” after their prevalent form, or turbahs, “tombs,” from their most common function, or imāmzādehs, “sons of an imām,” expressing their religious, almost ecclesiastical, connotation. They may be walis or marbaṭs, “places of a holy personage,” indicating their relation to some holy hero, maqāms, “places,” when related to the emplacement of some event, mashbads, “places of witnessing,” true martyría implying a commemorative value. At times, rarer terms such as qasr, “castle,” or dargah, “palace,” were used for them. All these names—whose precise history and origins are still to be elucidated—illustrate the multiple facets of memorial construction in the minds of the Muslims.

The memorial building is not a peculiarly Islamic phenomenon. Indian stupas served to honor Buddhist relics; most ancient Near Eastern civilizations developed varying kinds of mausoleums; the nomadic world itself, whether Semitic in Arabia or Indo-European and Turkic in Central Asia, used more or less permanent forms of commemorative architectural symbols; Hellenistic and Roman memorial structures have remained in large numbers; and the martyrium was a central concept as well as form in the growth of Christian architecture.

It is easy to assume that Islamic memorial and funerary construction was but a continuation of the numerous traditions of the pre-Islamic or non-Islamic worlds, and this assumption underlies some of the studies which have been devoted either to precise Islamic examples1 or to the most characteristic forms and functions of such buildings.2 If such was the case, the problem for the historian of Islamic art would be simply to identify various types of commemorative forms used by the Muslims and to study their evolution. There are, however, two objections to the hypothesis that the new civilization simply and directly appropriated the procedures and func-

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* This study was completed thanks to a grant from the Center for Near Eastern and North African Studies at the University of Michigan.
tions of old. The first objection is theoretical. It is rare to find any branch of Islamic art merely taking over completed older forms without alteration of shape or meaning. Overwhelmed as they are with Sasanian and especially Byzantine and Roman plans and methods of construction and decoration, the monuments of early Islamic art can rarely be considered Byzantine or Sasanian; either in their purpose or in the relationship of their components, these monuments are new and imply new needs or new tastes. It is usually only when a facet of the new Islamic culture developed in a manner which demanded or permitted monumental expression that monuments developed to express it. Therefore, the fact that there were mausoleums in the pre-Islamic world does not by itself explain the existence of Islamic mausoleums; an explanation of their appearance must be given in the cultural terms of the time when they appeared.

The second objection to the notion of a direct passage from pre-Islamic functions and purposes to Islamic times is raised by the early Islamic view on mausoleums. It is clear that early Muslim doctrine condemned any architectural glorification of tombs, and in fact found even most funerary and commemorative ceremonies objectionable. The *taswiyah al-qubur*, "equalization of tombs (with the surrounding ground)," was felt to be the most appropriate expressions of the equality of all men in death, and veneration of tombs or ceremonies around tombs were considered to derive from improper Christian and Jewish habits. From the very beginning this prohibition ran against older tradition of behavior, and stories abound which indicate that certain funerary practices remained, visits to tombs, lamentations, erection of tents over tombs, setting up of pillars nearby, watering of tombs. All such practices derived from pre-Islamic habits and were maintained in spite of numerous efforts, at least in the first centuries of the Hijrah, to curb them. But, the early examples of funerary practices and the opposition to them involved behavior, not constructions. The tomb of the Prophet, whose potential significance as a focal point for worship was self-evident, was carefully kept out of the main direction of prayer in the mosque of Medina; it was unavailable to the faithful and enclosed in an irregular and purposefully ungainly screen; and it was only in the late 13th century that it acquired a cupola.

If, then, early Islam was so strongly set against the building of mausoleums and against cultic practices in or around tombs, the eventual appearance of thousands of mausoleums and shrines with a memorial significance throughout the Islamic world requires a more precise explanation than the simple statement of a continuation of pre-Islamic habits and practices. An attempt must be made to determine precisely

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where, when, how, and why this new and apparently most characteristic Islamic monument appeared. The documentation presented here has been gathered in an attempt to provide an answer to these questions. My original purpose was merely to draw up an annotated list of the earliest remaining sanctuaries, but it soon became apparent that a simple list of standing monuments and of monuments known through inscriptions—i.e. from basically archaeological sources—was not sufficient. On the one hand, among the disused sanctuaries, it is only accidental that some have remained rather than others. And on the other, many of the still popular shrines were so much redone in later centuries that archaeological analysis alone cannot provide the date of foundation of the sanctuary. But, as one begins to cul! literary sources for documents on the subject of early shrines, a number of additional problems are raised which require preliminary comments.

The most important of these problems is one of vocabulary. If we define our concern as being an investigation of the origins of a centrally-planned roofed building erected over a tomb or a holy place in order to emphasize and proclaim, as the case may be, the holiness, the glory, the wealth, or the power of an individual or an event, how are we to interpret the numerous instances, among early geographers and historians, of practices which imply an architectural setting of some kind, or to explain the exact significance, in their time, of such words as mashhad or turhab? A few illustrations may help to explain the difficulty.

In his description of the provinces of the Muslim world, the 10th century geographer, al-Muqaddasi, almost always includes a more or less lengthy paragraph on mashhads; these vary from specifically mentioned domes over tombs or sanctuaries to simple tombs, caves, or even to ribâts, military monasteries which often had acquired a holy significance by their association with religious leaders, but whose architectural forms—at least insofar as we can claim to know them—were quite different from those of mausoleums, even though their holy character led people to be buried in or near them. Nâšir-i Khosrow also mentions that many shi’ite mashhads in Tripoli and Tyre looked like ribâts. In these instances, it seems fairly clear that, even though these institutions played a function similar to that of mausoleums in the religious behavior of their time, they were not shrines in the same sense as the tomb of ‘Ali, and their architectural type was different. In order, then, to stay within our definition of the architectural form with which we are involved, these buildings

6 This difficulty with terminology has been recently pointed out by C. Cahen in his re-edition of J. Sauvaget, Introduction à l’histoire de l’Orient musulman, Paris, 1961, p. 14.
7 Al-Muqaddasi, pp. 102-103, 130, 146, 209 to 210, 333-334, 367, 344, etc. . .
8 The question of the ribât as an architectural form or as a function is still unsolved, at least in the Orient. In North Africa, the works of G. Marçais (Note sur les ribâts, Mélanges R. Basset [Paris, 1923-25], pp. 393 ff.; art. ribât in Encycl. of Islam) and A. Lézine (Le ribât de Sousse, Tunis, 1956) have somewhat clarified the situation, but the degree to which the North African examples are applicable to the Cilician or Central Asian frontiers is still very uncertain.
9 For instance, Ibn al-Jawzi, Muntazam, vol. 8, pp. 214, 303-304, 325, lists one group of examples which can easily be multiplied from historical and geographic sources.
are not included in our list inasmuch as the formal and functional problems they pose are not yet solved and would here lead us astray.

But if the case of the mashhad-ribāṭ is fairly simple, difficulties are greater when one attempts to evaluate the architectural setting suggested by the mashhads to Biblical prophets and events mentioned by Naṣīr-i Khosrow and Muqaddasi, by the thirteen shi'ite mashhads seen by the Persian traveler in Basrah,\(^\text{11}\) by the mashhad of the Palm (of the Prophet) and the mashhad of Vows in Baghdad,\(^\text{12}\) or by the complex sanctuaries of the Seven Sleepers,\(^\text{13}\) or by numerous other examples found in historians or geographers.\(^\text{14}\) In most instances there is clear evidence of some kind of construction, but these constructions are not always mausoleums or precisely commemorative buildings. Thus, the mashhad of the Palm in Baghdad was originally a masjid, a private mosque, in which a miracle took place; the first ascertained construction, in the 10th century, around the cave of the Seven Sleepers in Damascus was also a masjid.\(^\text{15}\) For the Palestinian examples our information is less clear, but many of the mashhads were pre-Islamic constructions, simple oratories or even natural features. At the risk of being overly conservative, this list eliminates all instances of mashhad where there is no clear evidence that a specific building was erected in Islamic times for the sole purpose of commemorating a person or an event.

A very similar problem exists in reverse for a group of archaeological documents. In southern Egypt there were until very recently two buildings known as mashhads (one only still remains),\(^\text{16}\) consisting of a hall covered by nine or six domes, of a minaret, and of a court. The date of these buildings can be fixed fairly accurately, but not their purpose or use. A passage in Maqrizi may, however, help to explain them and to exclude them from our concern. The Cairene historian described a jam' al-fiyalah, "mosque of the Elephants," from Fatimid times, with nine domes over the sanctuary, whose decoration recalled the backs of elephants in caliphal processions.\(^\text{17}\) The building is obviously related in type and plan to the southern Egyptian buildings and belongs to a long series of oratories, often built in cemeteries, whose purpose was less precisely commemorative than that of a mausoleum, for they were erected for a different liturgical activity, prayer. While it is true that these constructions served, partly at least, to glorify a man or a family, they were, architecturally and functionally, different both from mausoleums and from congregational mosques. That the practice was not limited to Cairo

\(^\text{11}\) Ibid., pp. 239–40.
\(^\text{12}\) G. Makdisi, The topography of eleventh-century Baghdad, Arabica, vol. 6, 1959, p. 289, with all appropriate sources.
\(^\text{14}\) For instance, in addition to the fairly easily accessible instances in geographical texts, see Ibn al-Jawzi, Muntazam, vol. 8, p. 46, for a mashhad outside Kufah, which was visited by pilgrims to Mekkah; vol. 9, p. 104, mashhad of the cemetery of the Quraysh; p. 139, mashhad of one Muḥammad b. Ishāq.
\(^\text{17}\) Maqrizi, vol. 2, p. 289.
is clearly shown by a passage in Ibn al-Jawzi relating the burial of one ‘Ubaydal- lāh b. al-Ḥasan in front of his masjid in Baghdad.18 It is in this category of cemetery mosques that I propose to put a construction usually assumed to be a mausoleum, the mashhad of Sharif Ṭabaṭaba, datable ca. 334/943. K. A. C. Creswell is responsible for the recovery of this curious structure, a square building with nine domes on cross-shaped piers and open on all sides except the central part of the qiblah wall, where there is a mibrāb. Nearby, in a more recent building, were found inscriptions with the names of members of the Ṭabaṭaba family.19 By relating this discovery to a passage in Ibn al-Zayyāt describing a mashhad in which eleven members of the family were buried, Creswell suggested that the newly discovered building was that mashhad and dated it at the time of the death of the most celebrated member of the clan. One cannot quarrel with the reconstruction or with its relation with the Ṭabaṭaba family. But two additional remarks may be made which alter a little its significance. First, there is in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo an inscription20 which refers to the “gate ([uncertain reading]) of the maqbarah" of another member of the family, also mentioned by Ibn al-Zayyāt, who died in 348/949. The term maqbarah (see below) simply means a cemetery or a part of a cemetery and this early piece of information (as opposed to the late description of Ibn al-Zayyāt) merely suggests some kind of enclosure separating a family plot from other family or single burials. The second point is that the plan of nine domes is to be related to that of the oratories we have just mentioned.21 Later some of these oratories may have come to be called mashhads and the tombs which were near them were covered with domes, but all we can safely suggest is that in the 10th century there were family plots in the larger cemeteries and that oratories were at times added to them for prayer and devotions.

The point of these examples is that the term mashhad, either as it is used today for certain buildings or as it was used in the past, implies different things; whenever it is possible, each instance merits a special analysis and suggests a different explanation, but it seems that, in early times, mashhad was most commonly used for any sacred place and does not always mean a specific construction over it, while, as the centuries went by, many a small building with obvious religious features, such as a mibrāb, acquired the name of mashhad.

A third difficulty arises around such words as turbah, maqbarah, and even qabr.22 In the early periods the terms seem to have been interchangeable, and the

20 Répertoire, No. 1495.
word *turbah* does not mean more than a large plot in a cemetery, which was often bought in advance, in which one or more people were buried, and which could at times be separated from other similar plots by a fence, a wall, or even a portico. Here again the amount of construction is not always clear, and in a few instances we have included *turbahs* because of the probable extent of the constructions erected around the tombs, even though no clear evidence exists about constructions over the tombs. As one reads the geographers of the 10th and later centuries, it becomes quite apparent that an intense life was developing in the cemeteries of the great cities, a life which has recently been illuminated by the late L. Massignon. A great deal of attention was given to the places where people were buried; and it was a new form of piety to visit cemeteries and tombs, as, for instance, Abu Bakr Muhammad b. 'Ali, the last of the great Mâdara'yyûn family (d. 956–57), used to do every day in Cairo, or as the Hanbalites did in Damascus and Baghdad, for “the neighborhood of the saints is preferred in the state of burial, just as it is preferred in the state of life.” These ceremonies, no doubt, all found certain forms of architectural expression, but the latter were far from always involving the tombs themselves.

As a consequence of these facts, this list eliminates all buildings which cannot be clearly shown to have had, when first erected, a precise memorial connotation and to have been built by Muslims over sacred places and tombs. This rather strict definition was dictated by our primary interest in investigating the origins of the great mausoleums of later times, but it should not overshadow the fact, in itself deserving study, that in many instances a whole apparatus of guesthouses, kitchens, bakeries, enclosures, oratories, gates, even dwellings, sprang up together with the commemorative buildings and, at times, even earlier. The word *mashhad* referred to this whole phenomenon and a complex but different subject of research from ours would be the development of activities around holy places and the architecture these activities created.

A last preliminary remark concerns our exclusion of the earliest epigraphical document suggesting the existence of the practice of erecting domes over tombs. It occurs in the comparatively modern mauso-

23 Ibn al-Jawzi, *Muntazam*, vol. 7, pp. 207, 240 (buying of a *turbah* in Kufah), 289 (a dome, which miraculously collapsed, was built over the tomb of a man buried in a *turbah*); vol. 8, p. 118; vol. 9, p. 10 (two *turbahs* next to each other); vol. 10, pp. 80 (*maqbarah* with apparently the same meaning), 134, 142 (*turbah* used in the plural apparently to indicate plots); Mas‘ûdî, *Muri‘*î, vol. 8, p. 234. Other instances are brought out in our list when they occurred in places later to be covered with a dome.


26 G. Makdisi, *Diary*, vol. 3, p. 34.

27 The examples quoted here do not pretend to be exhaustive; many others can be brought out, including some provided by epigraphy, such as *Répertoire*, No. 1813, by which a *qabr*, tomb, is built (bânâ) in 970 for a woman who died in 862. Is this a mere stone or brick cenotaph, such as has been illustrated by D. S. Rice, *The oldest illustrated Arabic manuscript*, Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, vol. 22, 1959, pl. VIII?—or should we interpret it as a true mausoleum?
leum of Dhū‘l-Nūn al-Miṣrī in Cairo and has been published by L. Massignon and studied in detail by G. Wiet. The inscription is presumed to have been made at the time of his death in 245/859 and includes, in addition to formulas fairly common on epitaphs, the following sentence: "he required in his authentic testament [fi waṣiyyatib al-musnadah 'anhu] that no construction be made at his tomb and no dome [qubbah] be raised over it." The rather neutral first prohibition may refer to any enclosure, while the second one deals very precisely with a dome; this inscription has been taken to be an indication of the prevalence of domes over tombs in the middle of the 9th century, and later evidence exists that such prohibitions were made by holy personages. But, with respect to Dhū‘l-Nūn’s inscription, L. Massignon was struck by the expression “in his authentic testament,” and especially by the suggestion that the authenticity is shown by an isnād, a chain of authority going back to the mystic himself; the implication would be that this is a later medieval forgery reflecting opinions opposed to the prevalent growth of a funerary architecture. The evidence presented in this study, as well as the fact that all other inscriptions in the building are much later, confirms this interpretation of the text of the inscription. If it is indeed a medieval forgery it is not unique. The celebrated Central Asian tombstone of Abū Zakariyā al-Waraghshari, for instance, with the date 230/844 (the actual date of the death of the personage), has been proved to be 13th century forgery in a recent article by M. E. Masson.

To these problems presented by the lack of adequate historical dictionaries of Arabic and Persian, one should also add the peculiarities of our information about the early medieval Islamic world. Thanks to al-Maqrizi’s description and to the researches of M. van Berchem, G. Wiet, and K. A. C. Creswell, our knowledge of Egypt, especially Cairo, is quite extensive; for Baghdad the texts are more rewarding than the monuments but have not yet been fully exploited; in Central Asia systematic explorations have recently brought to light large quantities of archaeological documents as yet insufficiently related to a rather scanty literary information. But for most of Iran and Syria few authentic literary or archaeological sources remain from before the 12th century. The extent to which these variations in the nature of the information available have unbalanced our results cannot now be said, but the possibility should be kept in mind. As we have attempted to cover the whole extent of the Islamic world, there is no doubt that many examples, especially in texts, have been missed; but it is hoped that this list may serve both to suggest a few conclusions on the origins of a major form of Islamic architecture and to illustrate a method and an approach which may be used in dealing with other types of monuments as well.

31 Répertoire, No. 310.
33 As additional information, archaeological or textual, is acquired, it is hoped that supplements and corrections to our list will be published.
The monuments are arranged in chronological order with an arbitrary limit set around 1150, at a time when all provinces of the Muslim world had acquired large numbers of mausoleums. Undated buildings are set at an estimated ante quem date, although it is clear that some of the shi'ite sanctuaries, especially in Iraq, preceded the earliest date known for them, and that the chronology of the numerous Central Asian mausoleums has not yet been satisfactorily established. A brief description follows each monument and, when it seemed indicated, a discussion of certain problems posed by individual monuments is included. The bibliography appended to each entry is not meant to be complete but simply to refer the reader to the most accessible publications.

LIST OF MAUSOLEUMS AND MEMORIAL CONSTRUCTIONS

1—Jerusalem, Dome of the Rock, dated 691 A.D. This celebrated building consists of a central circular part covered with a dome and surrounded by two octagonal ambulatories. The building has been described by K. A. C. Creswell, Early Muslim architecture, Oxford, 1932, vol. I, pp. 42–94, and its meaning was discussed by O. Grabar, The Umayyad Dome of the Rock, Ars Orientalis, vol. 3, 1959. By its early significance as a memorial to Muslim domination, by its later development into a shrine to the Ascension of the Prophet, and by its name and shape—the first qubbah of Islam—this building fully belongs to our series, even though its sources and its apparent lack of immediate formal posterity single it out as a unique creation.

2—Samarra, Qubbah al-Sulaybiyyah, datable on historical grounds in 862. A central square room covered with a dome

34 Main Abbreviations.
Denike: B. P. Denike, Arhitekturyni Ornament Srednei Azii, Moscow 1939.
Iutake: Trudy Iuzhno-Taşkentenskoi Arheologicheskoi Kompleksnoi Ekspeditsii, Moscow, 1952 ff. (11 vols. to date).
MCIA: G. Wiet, Matériaux pour un corpus inscriptionum Arabicarum: Egypte deuxième partie, Cairo, 1929–30 (vol. 12 of the Mémoires de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale au Caire).
Pugachenkova: G. A. Pugachenkova, Puti Razvitiiia Arhitektury Iuzhnogo Tšarkmenistana, Moscow, 1958 (vol. 6 of Iutake).
Répertoire: E. Combe, J. Sauvaget, G. Wiet, Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe, Cairo, 1931 ff.

There is no single recent work known to me covering the whole of Central Asian architecture; the most comprehensive is by G. A. Pugachenkova, Puti Razvitiiia arhitektury Iuzhnogo Tšarkmenistana, Moscow, 1958, but the criteria used for the dating of the many anepigraphic monuments do not seem to me to be as yet sufficiently precise to justify all the proposed dates.
is surrounded by an octagonal ambulatory. The main publication is by K. A. C. Creswell, Early Muslim architecture, Oxford, 1940, vol. 2, pp. 283–285. The identification of the building as the mausoleum built for the caliph al-Muntasir by his Christian mother has been made by E. Herzfeld, in E. Herzfeld and F. Sarre, Archäologische Reise im Tigris- und Euphratgebiet, Berlin, 1911–20, vol. 1, p. 86; and the eventual discovery there of three tombs seemed to confirm the statements of the texts that the caliphs al-Mu'tazz and al-Muhtadi were buried together with al-Muntasir (Tabari, Ta'rikh, ed M. de Goeje and others, Leyden, 1879 ff., vol. 3, pp. 1498–1499, 1711, and 1823; al-Mas'udi, Muruj al-Dhahab, ed. and tr. Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille, Paris, 1861–77, vol. 7, p. 300). Two problems are still raised by this identification. The first one is that, since there was no contemporary tradition of Byzantine mausoleums for emperors, one may wonder where the Christian mother acquired the idea of erecting a mausoleum over the tomb of her son, unless it be from some obscure provincial tradition; the form of the building may very well have been inspired by the earliest Islamic commemorative construction, the Dome of the Rock, as has been suggested by Creswell. The second problem is that the texts do not mention a building; they simply say that the tomb of the caliph was known and that it was the first caliph’s tomb to be known35; Tabari actually even refers to the place of burial as a maqbara, a term which, as we have seen, is usually difficult to interpret as referring to a built mausoleum. It is possible, of course, that funerary terminology was still quite vague at the time when the two chroniclers wrote, but, while the two points we have made do not necessarily invalidate the identifications made by Herzfeld, they raise the question of the origins of the monument and point to its exceptional character.

3—Qumm, tomb of Fatimah, second half of the 9th century (?). The history of the sanctuaries of Qumm is quite difficult to disentangle from the legends which have surrounded them and from the fact that the full development of the city as a Shi'ite shrine is comparatively late; furthermore, whatever archaeological evidence may exist there has not been collected. For the early period our best source is the Ta'rikh-i Qumm, written in 988–89.36 According to it (pp. 213–213), the tomb of the sister of Ali al-Rida (who died in 817–18) first received a covering of mats and then a qubbah. The latter was built two generations later by Zaynab, a granddaughter of Ali. The same person was apparently also responsible for a second qubbah next to the first one. In these two constructions six descendants of Ali al-Rida (mostly in the second generation) were buried. The exact date of the construction of these family mausoleums is difficult to establish. Zaynab outlived Muhammad ibn Mūsa (see below, no. 11), who had died in 908; hence the qubbahs could have been built either in the

35 The same verb (azbarā) is used elsewhere (Ibn al-Jawzi, Muntazam, vol. 6, pp. 45, 199; vol. 9, p. 215) without any suggestion of mausoleum.

36 The Ta'rikh-i Qumm by Hasan b. Muhammad Qummi was published in Tehran in 1934; it was used by A. Houtum-Schindler, Eastern Persian Iraq, London, 1897, pp. 63–64, and in a compilation published in 1906 by one Muhammad ʿHasayn Qummi.
early 10th century or in the latter part of the 9th. They were considerably enlarged in 961–62 by a local governor, presumably because they had become major places of pilgrimage, even though other geographers of the 10th century do not mention them.

4—Tirmidh, mausoleum of al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, supposedly of the late 9th century. No plan of the building is known to me and the evidence for the date has been based on its decorative motives: B.V. Veimarn, Iskusstvo Srednei Azii, Moscow, 1940, p. 29, fig. 10; B. P. Denike, Architekturnyi Ornament Srednei Azii, Moscow, 1939, pp. 38 ff., fig. 22. Both authors publish the same decorative fragment which they appropriately relate to the third Samarra style. There are, however, definite objections to be made to the date and to the identification of the tomb. Recent work by N. Herr on al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (among other articles, A Sufi psychological treatise, The Muslim World, vol. 51, 1961, p. 26) shows that the date of his death is quite uncertain; moreover the general evidence about mausoleums over tombs of holy men shows that these were rare before the 11th century, and there is, to my knowledge, no outside evidence which would indicate that a cult would have developed early around al-Ḥakīm. As to the ornament it need not be of the 9th century merely because it resembles a Samarra style, for R. Ettinghausen has clearly shown that the “beveled” style persisted for many centuries (The “beveled” style in the post-Samarra Period, Archæologica Orientalis in Memorial Ernest Herzfeld, Locust Valley, 1952). It is true, of course, that the ornament of the tomb differs from the great ornamental designs known from Tirmidh in the 11th and 12th centuries, but there are other instances of survivals of older decorative patterns in religious architecture alongside new ornamental developments. Thus either we have here an early mausoleum from around 900 whose present identification is incorrect or a later mausoleum with archaizing designs.

5—Najaf, mausoleum over the tomb of ‘Ali. The exact date of the first construction is not certain and for a long time even the precise place of the tomb was controverted (it still is in Mas‘ūdī, Murūj, vol. 4, p. 289). A first qubbah over the spot on which eventual agreement will be made seems to have been erected in 902 (L. Massignon, Explication du plan de Kuja, Mélanges Maspéro, Cairo, 1935, vol. 3, pp. 356–357). Whatever this first construction may have been, it was replaced some time before 317/929 by a new building sponsored by Abū al-Hayja ‘Abdallah b. Ḥamdāh. Ibn Ḥawqal’s text (ed. J. H. Kramers, Leyden, 1938–39, p. 240) describes the building as a high dome on columns with a door on each side and superb tapestries and rugs. In spite of what has been usually assumed (Le Strange, Lands, p. 76; Creswell, Early Muslim architecture, vol. 2, p. 111), the text does not say that the building was a square and that the dome was held on four columns, an unlikely feature for a building of any size. It is much more likely that it was of circular plan with curtains between columns and that it was open on all sides. The plan has not been preserved as such from early Islamic times, but it can be presumed for certain mosque fountains (for instance in the mosque of Ibn Ṭulūn,

Maqrizi, *Khīṭat*, vol. 2, pp. 268–269) and in a curious and still unclear feature of the 9th century mosque in Nishapur (al-Muqaddasi, p. 319); it can also be recognized in the common *tholoi* of Gospel manuscripts throughout the early Middle Ages, and especially in Armenia. In other words—and this is an important point to which we shall return in conclusion—the form suggested by the texts for the first *qubbah* at Najaf was not one which was precisely identified with funerary practices. It is apparently from the time of the Ḥamdānid construction that we may date the development of Najaf into a hallowed cemetery in which princes and simple believers came to be buried. The first mausoleum was replaced or transformed in 366/979–80—369/979–80 (Ibn al-Athir, *sub anno*, 369, unless it is a reference to the 366 reconstruction), burnt in 443/1051, but used again in 479/1086 (Le Strange, *Lands*, pp. 77 ff.).

6—Bukhara, *Mausoleum of the Ṣamānids*, datable before 943. This celebrated construction is generally called the tomb of Ismā‘īl (Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, vol. 2, pp. 367 ff.; L. Rempel in *Bull. Amer. Inst. for Persian Art and Arch.*, vol. 4, 1935, pp. 199 ff.). The cleaning of the building in the thirties and discoveries in Bukhara libraries brought to light three new documents about it: a *waqf* rescript copied in 1568–69 relating that Ismā‘īl had given land for the tomb of his father Ahmad and that several princes were buried there; several bodies in the tomb itself; a fragment of a Kūfic inscription on a wooden plaque at the eastern entrance with the name of Naṣr ibn Ahmad ibn Ismā‘īl (d. 943). To my knowledge these documents have not been published as such; their earliest mention known to me is in Denike, *Architektur und Ornament*, p. 8; they have been recalled in various other works, in particular the important study of V.L. von Ronina, *Kharakteristiki arhitektury Srednei Azii epohi Samanidov*, Trudy Akad. Nauk Tajik SSSR, vol. 27, 1954, pp. 41 ff. The exact interpretation of these documents for the dating of the monument is difficult to make, inasmuch as the *waqf* statement may have referred to a *turbab* (on which see introduction) rather than to a *qubbah*. While an early date before the death of Ismā‘īl in 903 is not excluded, it may seem preferable, from a strictly methodological point of view, to use the earliest available archaeological document and to date the monument from the reign of Naṣr (913–943). In plan the monument is a simple square with four openings and a large central dome; there are four small cupolas in the corners of the building over a gallery. The extraordinary brickwork has often been analyzed.

7—Salamiyāh, *mashhad*. An undated inscription, assumed on epigraphical grounds to be of the first part of the 10th century, refers to a *mashhad* presumably built (the verb has disappeared) by one Abū al-Faraj ‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. ... ‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Ṣamad (Répertoire, No. 949). Salamiyāh is known to have been a major shi‘ite center, but the inscription


39 This is the date admitted by Madame Pugachenkova in her latest study, *Mazar Arab-ata v Time*, Sovetskaia Arheologiya, 1961, p. 203, whereas earlier she had been less definitive, as in the important survey she wrote with L. Rempel, *Vydaiuchiesia Pamiatniki Arhitektury Uzbekistana*, Tashkent, 1958, p. 65.
does not say whether we are dealing with an actual construction over a holy place or, as is perhaps more likely, with some feature associated with a hallowed area.

8—Baghdad, tombs of ‘Abbāsīd caliphs. As in the cases of Fatimid and Buwayid tombs (nos. 16 and 29), the lack of remaining tombs makes an interpretation of the texts rather uncertain. With the exception of the three princes buried in Samarra (see above, no. 2), the early ‘Abbāsīd caliphs and members of their families do not appear to have been buried with any particular formalities. By the 4th century of the hījrah, however, clear evidence exists of one or several turbahs reserved for them in Rusāfah (Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Muntażam, vol. 6, p. 324). Some texts dealing with al-Rādi, al-Ṭa’ī, his mother and son, al-Mut‘ī, seem to imply individual turbahs (Ibn al-Jawzī, vol. 7, pp. 79, 139; al-Sūlī, Akhbār, tr. M. Canard, Algiers, 1946, vol. 1, p. 238), while others suggest some sort of collective necropolis (Ibn al-Jawzī, vol. 8, pp. 113, 217; vol. 10, p. 128). Some constructions existed in or around these turbahs, which were endowed, but with the single exception of al-Rādi (d. 329/940–41), there is no evidence of a monument over the tomb itself. As far as al-Rādi is concerned, Yāqūt (Buldān, sub Rusāfah) mentions the existence of a qubbah. The date of its construction is not known, to my knowledge, but even though al-Khaṭīb, for instance, does not mention it, it may have been built at the time of his death. The precise architectural characteristics of the dome are not known.

9—Damascus, tomb of Mu‘āwiya, before 332/943–44. Maṣ‘ūdī (Muruji, vol. 5, p. 14) relates that the first Umayyad caliph “was buried in Damascus by the Bab al-Saghīr; his tomb is visited to this day…; over it a bayt was erected, which is open on Mondays and Thursdays.” From a further statement by the same author (vol. 7, p. 90) it can be assumed that no such construction existed in 212/827–28. It has been asserted that in 270/883–84, Ahmad Ibn Ṭulūn built a qubbah over the tomb of Mu‘āwiya.40 While this is not impossible in the light of Ibn Ṭulūn’s activities and beliefs,41 the major text supporting it (Ibn Taghibirdi, al-Nujum al-Zahirah, Cairo, 1929, vol. 3, p. 47) simply says that the Tulunid prince erected four riwaqs around it (lit. “over it,” ‘alayhi, which does not make sense architecturally) and assigned people to read the Koran by it and to keep candles lit. This first construction seems, therefore, to have been an enclosure rather than a construction over the tomb and it may even be wondered whether the bayt of Maṣ‘ūdī implies much more than what Ibn Ṭulūn had accomplished. An explanation for the choice of Mu‘āwiya’s tomb can easily be provided by the significance of the caliph as an anti-shi‘ite hero.42

10—Aleppo, mashhad of Sahykh Muḥasib, dated 351/1962. The present building is of the 13th century (J. Sauvaget, “Deux sanctuaires shi‘ites d’Alep, Syria, vol. 9, 1928), but an inscription referring to it as a mashhad has been preserved by Ibn Shaddād (Répertoire, No. 1557; in the edition by D. Sourdel, Damascus, 1953, p. 48;
E. Herzfeld, *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscr. Arab.: Alep*, Cairo, 1956, vol. 1, pp. 193 ff.), and a legend has been preserved of the miraculous discovery by Sayf al-Dawlah of the tomb of this obscure son of Hūsayn. The term mashhad, of course, does not guarantee that there was an actual construction over the tomb.

11—Qumm, tomb of Muhammad b. Mūsā, 366/976–77. This sanctuary, like that of Fāṭimah in the same city (see above, no. 3), seems to have begun as a family maqbarah, eventually being transformed into a mashhad (*Taʿrīkh-i Qumm*, pp. 215 ff.). Muhammad himself died in 908, but it is apparently only in 366/976–77 that a dome was built over his tomb (modern *Taʿrīkh-i Qumm*, p. 131; Houtum-Schindler, pp. 63–64). As in the instance of the tomb of Fāṭimah, this sanctuary seems at this time to have been of local and parochial significance only, since it is not mentioned by the geographers.

12—Tim, mausoleum known as “Arab-ata,” dated in 367/977–78. This recently discovered mausoleum is of considerable architectural significance (G. A. Pugachenkova, *Mazar Arab-ata v Time*, Sovetskaiia Arheologii, 1961, pp. 198 ff., where all other studies are mentioned, the most important one being the account by the discoverer, N. I. Leonov, in *Sov. Arh.*, 1960, pp. 186 ff.). It is in the mountainous regions around the Zerafshan valley but it has not yet been possible to identify the medieval city—apparently from the ruins near the mausoleum a minor one—with any one city known from geographical descriptions. According to local lore, the mausoleum was erected over the tomb of an early Arab conqueror. The inscription has not yet been published in its entirety. The mausoleum is a square building with a single richly decorated facade higher than the side walls and its dome is carried on the earliest known instance of a muqarnas squinch. Thus the building is an important transitional one between the Bukhara mausoleum and later “Seljuq” ones.

13—Mashhad, mausoleum of ‘Ali al-Riḍā, before 375/985. This celebrated imā&m was buried by al-Maʾmūn near the tomb of Hūrūn al-Rashīd (*Tabari*, vol. 3, p. 1030); both tombs were well known in the 9th century, but the earliest reference to major memorial construction is by al-Muqaddasi (p. 333), who wrote that the amīr Amid al-Dawlah Fāʾiq built a fort with houses and bazars and a splendid oratory (masjid) near the tomb. Although the text does not precisely say so, it is probable that some construction was made over the tomb. The amīr is known as early as 354/965, but it is likely that he did not embark on any major program of construction until 372/982–83, when his situation seemed more secure. Since al-Muqaddasi wrote around 375/985, we may date the buildings around these years. The buildings were destroyed and rebuilt several times in the course of the 12th century. The first archaeological documentation from the shrine consists in an inscription dated in 512/1118 (*Répertoire*, No. 2978). The Mongols sacked the city, but probably not the shrine, for there are inscriptions there from 612/1215 (*Repertoire*, Nos. 3783–84, with an important bibliography).

14—Mosul, sanctuary of Jonah, second half of the 10th century. The history of this sanctuary is still unknown and so is the nature of its earliest constructions. But al-Muqaddasi mentions that the daughter of Wāṣir al-Dawlah built it up and endowed
it (p. 146). A recent archaeological study failed, however, to discover any certain constructions earlier that the 6th century of the hijrah (S. al-Daywahjī, Jamī al-Nabī Yūnis, Sumer, vol. 10, 1954, pp. 260ff.), but could not do more than survey the present buildings rather superficially.

15—Kerbela, mausoleum of Husayn, before 369/979–80. Our earliest definite evidence about the existence of major constructions at Kerbela certainly appears considerably after the fact. Already under Hārūn al-Rashīd financial support was given by the caliph’s wife to people taking care of the tomb (Tabari, vol. 3, p. 752) and in 236/850–51, al-Mutawakkil had the tomb leveled and the buildings around it destroyed (Tabari, vol. 3, p. 1407); these texts do not, however, indicate the existence of a mausoleum. By the time of Ibn Ḥawqal (978) and from Ibn al-Athīr’s account of the year 369/979–80, it is evident that a large mashhad existed to which Ḍūd al-Dawlah had made repairs or additions (Ibn Ḥawqal, p. 243). The archaeological evidence (A. Nöldeke, Das Heilig- tum al-Husayns zu Kerbela, Türkische Bibliothek, vol. 11, 1909; M. Streick, Kerbela, Festschrift E. Sachau, Berlin, 1915, pp. 393ff., with interesting comments on the possible pre-Islamic origins of the cult) is practically nil, but it may be suggested that no major construction existed in 951, since al-Iṣṭakhrī does not mention any. It is quite likely that Ḍūd al-Dawlah was responsible for its recreation, as is suggested by later sources (Mustawfī, Nuzbat al-Qulub, London, 1919, p. 39). There is no textual proof that an actual mausoleum was built over the tomb, but, if we recall that this is the time when many other Shi‘ite tombs acquired one, it can be assumed.

16—Buwayhid tombs, second half of the 10th century. The major evidence for the existence of Buwayhid mausoleums comes from al-Muqaddasi, who relates that, at Rayy, the Daylamite princes built high and solid domes over their tombs and lower ranking princes erected smaller ones (Muqaddasi, p. 210). On the other hand, under the year 388/998, Ibn al-Athīr tells that Ṣamṣam al-Dawlah was eventually buried in the turbah bani Buwayh, whereas Ḍūd al-Dawlah, Bahā al-Dawlah, and several other members of the family were buried in the Najaf-Kūfah cemetery, near the shrine of ‘Ali; Ibn al-Jawzī refers to at least Ḍūd al-Dawlah’s sepulchre as a turbah (Ibn al-Jawzī, Muntazam, vol. 7, p. 149). No definite archaeological evidence exists concerning these mausoleums. Herzfeld claims to have seen the copy of a wooden door presumably from the mausoleum of Ḍūd al-Dawlah (MClA: Alep, p. 157, n. 1), but his information is not clear; it is also possible that the wooden panels with unusual inscriptions from the year 363/973–74 (Répertoire, Nos. 1831–32) may have come from Buwayhid cenotaphs, but they do not imply the existence of large constructions. Since no archaeological evidence exists and since the texts do not fully agree, the only safe conclusions to draw would be to assume that there were Daylamite princely mausoleums which may indeed have reflected by their size the importance of the princes buried in them, that these mausoleums were probably grouped together, but also that they are more clearly ascertainable for Iran than for Iraq, where many of the principal Buwayhids were buried.

17—Hebron, sanctuary of Abraham, before 985. The early history and develop-
ment of the greatest Muslim sanctuary dedicated to Old Testament prophets and to their wives has been greatly complicated by the Crusades and the Muslim reconquest (H. Vincent and H. MacKay, *Hébron*, Paris, 1921, p. 159ff.). From the most trustworthy early description, by al-Muqaddasi, we can safely assume that in the latter part of the 10th century there was a stone dome built by Muslims (al-Muqaddasi insists on this point) over the tomb of Abraham, but presumably not over that of other prophets. The latter were included in the *mashhad* which contained also hostels, bakeries, and various other institutions necessary for the upkeep of pilgrims (al-Muqaddasi, p. 172; G. Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems*, London, 1890, pp. 309 ff.).

18—*Sarakhs, mausoleum (?) of an uncle of ‘Alî al-Ridâ*, before 985. Al-Muqaddasi writes (p. 333) that there was a tomb at Sarakhs on which a *mashhad* was built. It is likely that it included a dome.43

19—*Central Asia, mausoleum of Ahmâd*, late 10th century. This building, a simple square with apparently two entrances facing each other, is only known through an unmarked photograph remaining in Leningrad (Pugachenkova, pp. 178–179, ill. p. 179). On its facade there is an inscription in brick, on which the word *ahmâd* can be read, hence the name given to the building. It is built in typical "Kharaşani" brickwork. Its date is impossible to determine with certainty, but a very late 10th century one is not improbable.

20—*Chehâr Jây* (anc. Amul on the Oxus), *anonymous mausoleum*, late 10th century (?). This small (6.20 by 6.20 meters) construction with a heavy low dome is remarkable in several ways, even though of very mediocre execution. It has three doors, the *qiblah* side being provided with a *mihrâb*; two large pilasters transform one of the sides into a sort of embryonic façade (Pugachenkova, pp. 177–178). The proposed date in the late 10th century has to be accepted with caution.

21—*Near Merv, mausoleum known as Kizbibi* (now disappeared), late 10th century. This simple construction (7.50 by 7.50 meters) has a single entrance; inside there is a domed room with four deep recesses giving it an almost cruciform shape. A date in the 10th century is apparently suggested by the brick technique (Pugachenkova, p. 175).

22—*Merv, mausoleum in the Imâm bâb cemetery*, late 10th century (?). This building also has now been destroyed and is only known through photographs (Pugachenkova, pp. 179–180). It is archaic in that it has four openings, and its brick technique (all layers seem to be one instead of two bricks thick) differentiates it somewhat from other buildings assigned to this period.

23—*Mestorîân, mazar Shîrâb*, late 10th century (?). Madame Pugachenkova, who has studied the building (Pugachenkova, pp. 168ff.; *Iutake*, vol. 2, pp. 194ff.), proposes an earlier date, perhaps even in the late 9th century, but its comparatively complex character would rather suggest a somewhat later date, following in that Madame Krachkovskaia’s analysis of the epigraphy (V. A. Krachkovskaia, *Evoluzia kuficheskogo pisma*, Epigrafika Vostoka, vol. 3, 1949, p. 17). As it is now the mazar

43 For reasons that do not appear clearly, B. Spuler, *Iran in Frühislamischer Zeit*, Wiesbaden, 1952, p. 181, n. 11, suggests that the Sarakhs in question was near Qazvin. The point, however, is not important for our purposes.
consists of several parts, of which the most ancient is a single domed hall with a cupola carried on several recessed squinch arches; the walls were originally covered with stucco, of which only a few fragments have remained; these can properly be related to 10th century stucco in Iran, as in Nayin (Survey, pls. 263 ff.); a single entrance was not on the axis of the building, which is otherwise provided with a large mibrab. Whether this hall was the original mausoleum over some unidentified spot or a prayer hall attached to a tomb is not very clear from the available evidence, but the later history of the site with several additions to the original construction and its character as a center for pilgrimage until the 19th century strongly suggest that it had commemorative connotations from the very beginning. The city in which it is found has been identified as the Dihistân of the Ḥudūd al-ʿAlam (tr. V. Minorski, London, 1937, p. 133) and of al-Muqaddasi (al-Muqaddasi, pp. 358–359).

24—Mizdakhbâneh (Kirghizia), 10th or early 11th centuries. A small mausoleum is mentioned there by various authors (for instance, E. A. Davidovich and B. A. Litvinskij, Ocherki areologii: raiona Isfara, Trudy Akad. Nauk Tajik SSR, vol. 35, 1955, p. 187), but the original publication has not been available to me.

25—Biskra, Mausoleum of Sidi Oqbab. Neither the date of the building nor the original shape of the mausoleum to the great conqueror of the Maghrib seem to be clearly ascertained; the earliest remains, a wooden gate datable ca. 1000, may be of a mausoleum but also of an enclosure without major construction over the tomb itself (G. Marçais, Le tombeau de Sidi Oqba, Annales Inst., Et. Or., Alger, vol. 6, 1939–41, reproduced in Mélanges d’histoire et d’archéologie, Alger, 1957, vol. 1, pp. 151 ff.).

26—Cairo, mausoleum of Abū al-Faḍl Jaʿfar, 391/1001. The evidence gathered by G. Wiet (MCLA Egypt II, p. 101) permitted him to conclude that a mausoleum had been built over the tomb of this member of the remarkable family of viziers, the Banu al-Furat. The texts usually mention the word turbah and it is possible that we have here another instance of a family plot with surrounding constructions rather than a true mausoleum over the tomb.

27—Gunbad-i Qabus, dated 397/1007. This earliest and most magnificent example of tower-tomb is called a qaṣr in the inscription (Répertoire, no. 2118). Its significance as a work of art and as a peculiar monument, at the same time mausoleum and royal symbol, has been fully analyzed by E. Diez and Max van Berchem (Churasanische Baudenkmäler, Berlin, 1918, pp. 39 ff. and 100 ff.) and later by A. Godard (Survey, pp. 967 ff.).

28—Baghdad, mausoleum of Abū Dāʿūd b. Siyāmard, presumably from the time of his death in 399/1008–09. Ibn al-Athīr relates that he was buried near the qabr al-nudhur (see above, p. 10) and that its qubbah was well known.

29—Resjet (Mazanderan), anonymous mausoleum, 400/1009–10 (?). This building, whose inscription has mostly disappeared, belongs to the category of tower-tombs on a circular plan (A. Godard, Les tours de Lājim et de Resjet, Ahtār-ē Iran, vol. 1, 1936, pp. 109 ff.).

30—Cairo, sabaʿ banāt, ca. 1010. Four square buildings covered with domes still stand and two others have been excavated. They are all alike and almost of the same
The earliest Islamic commemorative structures

size with a door on each side; the largest is provided with two small mihrābs, one on each side of one of the doors. All the mausoleums are surrounded with an enclosure with a single door, whose sill has been preserved (Creswell, *MAE*, vol. 1, pp. 107 ff.). The buildings have been identified with the seven mausoleums said by Maqrizi to have been built over the graves of members of the Magrebi family executed by al-Ḥākim (Maqrizi, vol. 2, p. 459). The event took place in 1010 and such is the date suggested by Creswell for the mausoleums. Architecturally, of course, these simple constructions with their squinches and octagonal drums with windows can well be assigned to the first half of the 11th century. Whether, on the other hand, these mausoleums were likely to have been erected immediately after the execution of the Magrebis is perhaps less certain and they might have to be dated after al-Ḥākim’s death in 1021.

31—Cairo, mausoleums of the Fātimid caliphs. From the point of view of our investigation of monumental memorial constructions, the exact position of the tombs of the Fātimid caliphs is difficult to ascertain. The main passages in Maqrizi which deal with the subject (Maqrizi, vol. 1, pp. 407–408; vol. 2, pp. 49 and 442–443) are clear enough in indicating that the caliphs and members of their families were buried in special areas, the *tubhah al-Za’farān*, which was part of the palace complex, the extreme south of the Qarāfah cemetery (Wiet, *MCIA* *Egypete II*, p. 132), or, later, the area to the north of the Bāb al-Naṣr. It is also clear that mosques were built nearby, as the magnificent mosque built in 366/976–77 by the mother of the caliph al-ʿAzīz (Maqrizi, vol. 2, p. 318), and that a considerable amount of money was put into the servicing with candles and chanting of the tombs of the *imāms* in the palace itself (Maqrizi, vol. 1, p. 408). But most of these texts are not clear on what precise type of structure, if any, was built over the tomb proper. Ibn al-Jawzi (*Muntazam*, vol. 7, p. 156) does mention that in 380/990–91 the great vizier Yaʿqūb b. Yūsuf, was buried in the *qubbah* inside the palace which had been prepared for the caliph al-ʿAzīz, but, since I do not know of other texts describing the palace resting places as *qubbahs*, one may wonder whether the work *qubbah* is not meant here in its later sense of “mausoleum” rather than in its precise sense of “domed chamber,” or whether Ibn al-Jawzi’s information is altogether correct. One may, then, conclude that greater importance was given by the Fātimids to the tombs of their caliphs than by the ʿAbbāsid. The existence of funerary chambers in the palace, while obviously related to the common practice of burials in houses, had an added significance in a regime which emphasized lineage so much. But there is no fully documented description of these rooms and their actual shape is not clear. It is quite possible that the Fātimids followed to a degree, intentionally or not, the Byzantine practice of one or two major mausoleums fitted into some other construction (the church of the Holy Apostles in Byzantium, the palace in Cairo), in which the tombs of the caliphs and of members of their families were put. As in Byzantium, the rule was probably not absolute (Ph. Grierson, *Tombs and obits of Byzantine emperors*, Dumbarton Oaks Papers, vol. 16, 1962). The subject deserves a more complete textual study than has been accomplished so far.
32—Mil-i Radkân, mausoleum of the ispahbad Muhammad b. Wandārin Bâwand, 407–11/1016–21. This remarkable example of the tower-tomb, quite different from the slightly earlier Gunbad-i Qâbûs, is called by three different names in its inscriptions: mashhad (Répertoire, no. 2312), qâr (Répertoire, no. 2313),41 and gunbad (in the pahlavi inscription read by Herzd). Its architectural and symbolic meanings have been discussed by Diez and van Berchem (Churasanische Baudenkämäler, pp. 36 ff. and 87 ff.).

33—Lajim, imâm-zadeh 'Abdallah, dated 413/1022. It is in fact the tomb (qâr in the inscription, Répertoire, no. 2331) of one Shahriyâr b. al-'Abbâs and another instance of the circular tower mausoleum (A. Godard in Athâr-é Iran, vol. 1, pp. 109 ff.).

34—Damghan, Pîr-i 'Alâmâr, 417 or 419/1026–27 or 1029. Called both a gubbah and a qâr, this mausoleum to a hâjib, Muhammad b. Ibrâhim, is also a circular tower-tomb (Répertoire, no. 2352; Survey, pl. 339 B; cf. also Bull. Amer. Inst. for Persian Art and Arch., vol. 4, 1936, pp. 139 ff.).

35—Ghazni, tomb of Mahmûd, in or shortly after 421/1030. The exact shape of the mausoleum built over the tomb of Mahmûd by his son Mas'ûd is not known precisely, but it was most probably a cupola over a square plan (M. Nazim, The life and times of Sultan Mahmûd of Ghazna, Cambridge, 1931, pp. 124, 167). The epigraphical evidence derives from the sarcophagus and from wooden doors later taken to India (Répertoire, nos. 2377, 2379, 2380).

41 See the modified reading by E. Herzd, Postssasanidische Inschriften, Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran, vol. 4, 1933–34, pp. 140 ff.

36—Sangbást, mausoleum of Arslân Jadhib, dated 419/1028. So far as I have been able to gather there is no absolute certainty about the identity of the personage for whom this mausoleum was built, but its simple square with a dome on squinches and a door on each side makes the date plausible (Survey, pp. 923, 986–988, 1275, and pl. 260 B; C; Diez, Churasanische Baudenkämäler, pp. 52–55; Schroeder in BAI-PAA, vol. 4, 1936, pp. 136 ff.).

37—Yazd, Duvâzdeh Imâm, dated 429/1037. This square mausoleum with a single door and a mibrâb is of considerable importance for being the earliest known building in Central Iran with a muqarnas squinch (Survey, pp. 1001–1005, pl. 274). Its inscriptions have not yet been published, and no information exists with regard to the personage in whose honor the mausoleum was built.

38—Baghdâd, Kazîmayn, mausoleums of Mûsa al-Kâzîm (d. 800) and of Muham- mad al-Taqi (d. 219/834). The earliest information known to me about this celebrated sanctuary is that, during the riots of 443/1051, it was plundered of its rich treasures and that, after the plunder, the two wooden cupolas and the sarcophagi over the tombs of the imân were burned, one of the sarcophagi having been opened. At the same time most of the surrounding tombs were destroyed, including tombs of Buwayhid amîrs and of members of the 'Abbasid family (Ibn al-Athîr, sub anno 443; Ibn al-Jawzi, Muntazâm, vol. 8, p. 150). The extent of the establishment thus destroyed suggests that the sanctuary, including the domes, had been established for some time. The most likely period is the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th centuries, in all probability before
the growth of the shrine to Abū Hanīfah (see next item).

39—Baghdad, mausoleum of Abū Hanīfah, 437–38/1045–47. The earliest reference to some construction by the tomb is in al-Muqaddasi (p. 130), who relates that one Abū Ja‘far al-Zammām erected a suf-fah apparently to the side of the tomb; it was probably some kind of platform for prayer or gatherings. The next information comes from Ibn al-Jawzi who relates (Muntażam, vol. 8, p. 245) that in 437 or 438/1045–47 new constructions were made which include a roof (sagaf) over the tomb of the holy man; it is interesting to note that the work was sponsored by Turks. In 459/1067, a complete reconstruction took place which involved strong foundations, a brick mausoleum, a madrasah, and other institutions which required considerable acquisitions of land and the transfer of many tombs. Whatever the later history of the sanctuary may have been, it would seem, then, that the tomb of Abū Ḥanīfah had acquired some kind of architectural recognition as early as in the late 10th century, but it is only in the early decades of the 11th that we have specific documentation for a construction over the tomb. In 1067 a complete institution was created there, one of the earliest of its kind in Islam, as has been shown by G. Makdisi.

40—Kermīn, mausoleum of Mir Sayyid Bahr, datable in the first half of the 11th century. The city is probably the Karmīniyāh of medieval texts, between Bukhara and Samarkand (Le Strange, Lands, p. 468). The building is a simple square (4.50 by 4.50 meters inside) with a single entrance, a developed facade, and no gallery. The original publication is by V. Nilsen, Mavzolei . . ., Materialy po istorii i teoriy arhitektury Uzbekistana, Moscow, 1950; it was discussed by V. L. Voronina, p. 47 and L. Rempel, Arhitekturnyi ornament Uzbekistana, Tashkent, 1961, p. 152, both of whom tend to date the building in the late 10th century (cf. Pugachenkova, p. 272). The building is provided with an inscription of which, apparently, only the basmalah is readable (V. A. Nilsen, Monumental’naia Arhitektura Bukharskova Oazisa, Tashkent, 1956, pp. 37 ff.). It is difficult to assign a precise date to this construction. However, because of the existence of a rather developed facade extending beyond the limits of the walls of the building, a later date than the one proposed by the discoverers seems plausible.

41—Aswan, anonymous mausoleums, datable in the first half or the middle of the 11th century. A full description of these 49 buildings and of the incidents which led to the disappearance of their inscriptions and tombstones can be found in Creswell’s summary of and additions to Monneret de Villard’s original publication (U. Monneret de Villard, La necropoli musulmane di Aswan, Cairo, 1931; Creswell, MAE, vol. 1, pp. 131 ff.). There is considerable variety in the detail of the mausoleums, but a unity of basic forms, squares covered with a dome on squinches and on a drum; some buildings have four doors, others only one and a mihrāb. The construction material is usually cheap mud brick for the walls, baked brick for arches and vaults. The main
problem posed by the Aswān mausoleums is the evaluation of their significance. The rather primitive construction and the large number of buildings suggest that we are not dealing here with the sanctuaries of single saints and heroes, as in the 'Alid shrines of Iraq. For some reason, considerable numbers of people of more modest origins buried in Aswān thought it appropriate to have mausoleums erected over their tombs or had memorials built by family or followers. Is it possible to identify some peculiarity of Aswān which would explain this development? Or is it merely accidental that so many qubbabs have survived from there, whose existence we should assume for other cities as well? To the last question the evidence presented so far and the rather detailed account which concern at least the cities of Baghdad and Cairo seem to indicate that there was no general practice of mausoleum building. It is, therefore, something precisely related to the city of Aswān which must explain its memorial constructions. The peculiarity of Aswān was that it was on one of the pilgrimage routes to Mecca and that it was the last major Muslim city before Nubia. This latter quality made it a thughr, a frontier area (Maqrīzī, vol. 1, pp. 197–199) where holy men and warriors gathered in order to guard the frontiers of Islam, to partake of an intensive if little known spiritual life, and perhaps to die as martyrs. There were other institutions which developed around the frontier areas, in particular the ribāt, a sort of military monastery which had been analyzed in detail in the Maghrib. In fact Aswān was known as a ribāt. Because of the holiness attached to them, ribāts were often places in or near which people were buried and they became, at times, mashhads, as we have seen before (see above, p. 9; numerous examples of the relationship between the ribāt and burials can be found in the necrologies of Ibn al-Jawzi and Ibn al-Athīr). For Aswān, we may then suggest that the mausoleums express one aspect of the “frontier” spirit, the identification either of those who had died for the faith or of those who guided warriors for the faith. Since many of them were of modest origins, since many of the ribāts and other related institutions were private foundations, and since no cults developed around most of them, the simple character of the buildings, which were mere memorials, can easily be explained. It remains to be seen whether similar phenomena occurred in other frontier areas. To be true, the Cilician and Central Asian frontiers have been the scene of so many invasions that many earlier monuments have been destroyed, but the very remarkable number of recently discovered mausoleums from Central Asia could, partly at least, be attributed to the same causes.

42—Near Talas (modern Janbul), mausoleum of Babaji-khātīn, first half of the 11th century (?). This rather unusual building is a square (6.80 by 6.80 meters) with a curious ribbed low dome in brick, an inscription on the façade which is said to contain the name Babaji-khātīn, and a simple decoration of arches and medallions (A. Margulan and others, Arhitektura Kazakhstana, Alma-Ata, 1959, pp. 97 ff.). The date is hypothetical and especially difficult to establish on stylistic grounds for so remote a region. Its justification resides

46 J. Maspéro and G. Wiet, Materiaux pour ...la géographie de l’Egypte, Cairo, 1914–19, p. 15.
mainly in the fact that the second half of
the century witnessed elsewhere in Central
Asia considerable modifications in decorative
techniques and esthetic values which
are not apparent here. But, of course, arguments
of that order can only be used with
cautions dealing with provincial centers.

43—Rayy, circular tower-tomb, now
destroyed. The inscription known through
Coste’s transcription (P. Coste, Momments
modernes de la Perse, Paris, 1867, pl.
LXIV) and a photograph by Curzon (G.
N. Curzon, Persia, London, 1892, vol. 1,
p. 350) has been published in the Réper-
toire (no. 3153) as being of 546. In reality
the first digit is missing and, if one con-
siders the extreme simplicity of the con-
struction, 446/1054-55 may seem prefer-
able. The tomb is called a qubba and the
builder was one ‘Abd al-Jalil b. Fāris, the
treasurer.

44—Damghān, so called Chehel Dukb-
tavān, dated 446/1054-55. The exact date
of this well-known circular mausoleum is
not very clear (Répertoire, nos. 2572-73;
E. Herzfeld, Khorassan, Der Islam, vol. 11,
1918, p. 168; Survey, pl. 340 a), just as the
name of the personage buried in it is un-
certain. From the inscription and from the
popular tradition attached to it, it seems,
however, likely that it was built for a
whole family.

45—Abargūb, Gunbad-i ‘Ali, dated
448/1056-57. It is an octagonal building
built for a descendant of the Fīrūzānid
dynasty, Hazrāsp b. Naṣr, by his son (Ré-
pertoire, no. 2582). The building (Survey,
p. 1023, pl. 335-336; A. Godard, Abargūb,
Athār-ē Iran, vol. 1, 1936, pp. 49 ff.) is
remarkable for being in rubble rather than
in the more common brick technique of the
time.

46—Baghdād, mausoleum of the
shaykh Ma‘rūf al-Karkhī, before 459/1067.
The earliest information available
to me on this mausoleum is that it burned
down accidentally in 1067, being mostly in
wood (Muntazam, vol. 8, p. 105; G. Mak-
disī, The topography of 11th century
Baghdād, Arabica, vol. 6, 1959, p. 286; esp.
M. Jawād, al-‘Imārah . . . , Sumer, vol. 3,
1947, pp. 54 ff.). As early as 345/956-57
(Muntazam, vol. 6, p. 382, describing the
burial of one Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wa-
hid al-Zāhīd in the suffah which faced the
qabr of the shaykh) some sort of construc-
tion existed in the area of the tomb, but it
does not seem to have consisted in a mauso-
leum.

47—Imām Dūr, mausoleum of Muslim
b. Quraysh, ca. 478/1086. Whether the
shrine was actually built for the prince
whose name appears on the inscription
(Répertoire, no. 2756) or for Muḥammad
b. Mūsā, a son of the fifth imām (E. Herz-
feld, Damascus I, Ars Islamica, vol. 9,
1942, pp. 18 ff.), or for both, is not clearly
established. The building itself is a square
covered with the earliest instance of the
spectacular muqarnas dome which will be
so characteristic for Iraqi and Syrian archi-
technique in the following century.

48—Cairo, so-called mosque al-Juyū-
shi, dated 478/1085. The recent study of
this well-known monument by K. C. A.
Creswell has posed anew the question of
its purpose. Max van Berchem, who was
the first to have brought attention to it,
had considered it to be a mausoleum over a
tomb with an attached small sanctuary
consisting of a court, a hall for prayers
with a dome in front of the mihrāb, in
other words a typical martyrium (Max van
Berchem, Une mosquée d’époque fatimite,

It is quite true that the inscription calls the building a mashhad (Répertoire, no. 2753; Creswell mistakenly calls it a zawiyyah), but the mausoleum, which is found near it, has been shown by Creswell (p. 157) to be a very late addition. It is, therefore, the mosque itself which is a memorial structure; in other words an architectural form created for prayer is used with a commemorative function emphasized by the founding inscription. The problem is to discover what was being commemorated. An interesting peculiarity of the shrine is the unusual choice of Koranic quotations found in its inscriptions, as Max van Berchem has already noticed. The two passages on the dedicatory inscription on the facade (LXXII, 18, and IX, 109) are standard passages found in mosques and refer to the masjid Allah. But the passages found in the domed room in front of the mihrab are, with one exception (XXIV, 36–37), much rarer in monumental inscriptions: XI, 36: "My counsel, if I want to counsel you, will not profit you, if God wants to keep you astray; He is your Lord and you will be returned to Him"; XXIV, 11: "Those who spread the slander are a small group among you; do not think it a bad thing for you; in fact it is good for you; to every man who carried it what he has earned of the sin and to the one who had the greatest share an awful doom"; X, 24: "Yet when He had delivered them [people in a storm] behold they rebelled on the earth with untruth; O men, your rebellion will only turn against you; a [brief] enjoyment of the life of the world, then unto Us is your return and We shall proclaim to you what you used to do"; XLVIII, 1–5: "Lo We have given thee a signal victory, that God may forgive thee of thy sin that which is past and that which is to come, and may perfect His favour unto thee and may guide thee on a right path; and that God may help thee with strong help; He it is Who sent down peace of reassurance into the hearts of the believers that they might add faith unto their faith; God's are the hosts of the heavens and the earth, and God is ever Knower, Wise; that He may bring the believing men and the believing women into Gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide, and may remit from their evil deeds; that in the signs of God is the supreme triumph"; and finally, XXXV, 39: "He it is who made you regents [khala'if] on the earth; so he who disbelieveth, his disbelief be on his own head; their disbelief increases for the disbelievers, in their Lord's sight, anything but abhorrence; their disbelief increases for the disbeliever naught but loss." In the center of the cupola the names of Muhammad and 'Ali are intertwined. The quotations from the Koran all emphasize two points: the doom prepared for slanderers, disbelievers, dissenters, and rebels, and the victory given to the Prophet, to the caliphs, and to the pure men for whom the building was erected. If one recalls the remarkable position of the mashhad on the edge of a cliff overlooking the whole city, it may be suggested that its purpose was to symbolize the victory achieved only a few years earlier by Badr al-Jamāli in the name of the caliph al-Mustanṣir over the rebellions and disorders which for a long time plagued the Fātimid empire. Like the Dome of the Rock, then, the "mosque al-
Juyūshi,” as an expiatory chapel and a symbol of victory, was a building commemorative of a precise historical event. As the event receded into time and lost its pungency, the memory of the purpose of the building faded away and, in order to fit with the more common commemorative constructions, it acquired a funerary sense and a small mausoleum with a tomb was even added to it.

49—Aleppo, maqām Ibrāhīm, 479/1086. Only an inscription with the names of Malikshāh and Nizām al-Mulk (Répertoire, no. 2760; E. Herzfeld, MCIA Alep, p. 177) reflects this early sunnite memorial construction in Aleppo (J. Sauvaget, Alep, Paris, 1941, p. 107).

50—Salamiyah, mashhad of ‘Ali b. Jarīr (?), 481/1088. This mashhad, presumably built over the tomb of an obscure officer, is only known through an inscription (Répertoire, no. 2772).

51—Tunis, mausoleum called “Sidi Bou Khrissan,” 486/1093. This small square building was apparently open on all four sides and is dated by an inscription (S. M. Zbiss, Documents d’architecture fatimite d’Occident, Ars Orientalis, vol. 3, 1959, p. 30).

52—Tunis, cupola known as Msid al-Qubbah, undated, but typologically related to the preceding (Zbiss, Ars Orientalis, vol. 3, p. 30).

53—Cairo, mausoleum of Sayidah Nafisah, 482/1089–90. This celebrated Cairene mausoleum no longer remains in its original shape, which was a very simple square construction with a mihrāb and one or three doors (D. Russell, A note on the cemetery of the ‘Abbāsid caliphs, Ars Islamica, vol. 62, 1939, pp. 168 ff.). Maqrizi (vol. 2, p. 442) reports that the ‘Abbāsid governor at the time of Nafisah’s death (206/821–22), ‘Ubaydallāh b. al-Sāri, had already built a cenotaph around the tomb with marble plaques, whose inscriptions have been assumed to have been copied on a later refection (Répertoire, no. 162, with important comments by G. Wiet in MCIA: Egypte II, pp. 33 ff.). It is doubtful, however, whether a real construction was erected at that time, not only because the general evidence collected here would contradict it, but also because Maqrizi transmits the story strictly as a rumor without documentation. Furthermore, the remaining inscription, presumably an Ayyūbid copy, is suspicious by its use of the word mashhad and by its curiously antiquarian character in that, as G. Wiet has pointed out, the Koranic quotation stops precisely on the spot where, according to the legend, the holy woman had stopped when she died. There is a literary flavor to it which makes one question its archaeological value. The second inscription from the shrine also comes from Maqrizi (vol. 2, p. 442; Répertoire, no. 2776); it refers to the construction of a door under al-Mushtansir and gives a precise date. Its archaeological index is much greater than that of the first inscription and, while it is possible, even likely, that there were earlier constructions over the tomb of the holy woman, they cannot be dated more precisely.

54—Ascalon, mashhad of the head of Husayn, 584/1091–92. Nothing is known of the shape of this great Fātimid mausoleum and much in its purpose is still not clear. Even its exact date is a matter of controversy, although the very clear epigraphical indications of the minbar made for the shrine and eventually brought to

55—Mehmandust (near Damghan); a ten-sided tower-tomb was found there with a date which was read as 49 x by Schroeder (E. Schroeder, BAIPAA, vol. 4, 1936, p. 135, fig. 4) and published as 496 by Godard (A. Godard, Athar-é Iran, vol. 4, 1949, p. 259, fig. 210). The building is thus to be dated ca. 1096.

56—Iarty-Gumbez (near Sarakh), dated 491/1098. This comparatively large (12 by 12 meters) mausoleum is remarkable in many ways. First it is one of the few early Central Asian mausoleums to provide us with a dated inscription. Second, its zone of transition from square to dome has a rather subtle variation on the muqarnas type first seen at Tim and Yazd (see above, nos. 12 and 37) and later throughout Central Iran. Third, it has elaborate decorative compositions on all four sides, even though there was only one entrance; the type of composition (corner columns, pilasters framing the central part, etc.) relate the monument to the 10th century Samanid monuments rather than to the tradition of a single façade typical of 11th century monuments in the area. Fourth, for unexplained reasons, its eastern façade was more elaborate than the southern one on which the entrance is found (G. A. Pugachenkova, Iarty-Gumbez, Epigráfica Vostoka, vol. 14, 1961, pp. 12 ff.).

57—Aysha-bibi mausoleum, near Tashkent. This heavily decorated brick mausoleum is comparatively small (8 by 8 meters) but remarkable for two features: a façade wall which may have been higher than the dome, and an extraordinary decoration of terracotta fragments in which ornamental principles of Samanid times appear to have been executed in a new decorative technique (A. Margulan and others, Architektura Kazakhstana, pp. 99 ff.; Denike, pp. 98 ff.). Like the group of buildings which follows, this mausoleum is difficult to date and could in fact be put anywhere in the 11th century.

58—Sayat (on the right bank of the lower part of the Kafirnigan valley in Tajikistan). Two mausoleums (ca. 10.50 meters to the side) are preserved there and are connected with each other by a vaulted passageway. The interest of the building resides in its brickwork, especially in the squinches, and in a 16-sided zone above the squinches. Parts of its façade were provided with a decoration which is certainly later. The mausoleums are not dated (A. M. Belenitkij, Mauzolei u selenii Saiaj, Trudy Sogdiansko-Tadjikskoi Arheologicheskoi Expeditzii, vol. 1, Moscow, 1950, pp. 207 ff.; also in KSIIMK, no. 33, 1950, unavailable to me).

59—Sarakh, mausoleum of Abu Fadl. This very monumental construction, described in detail by Madame Pratybytova (A. M. Pratybtova, Pamiatniki Arheologii XI veka v Turkmenii, Moscow, 1955, pp. 6 ff.), consists of a square of heavy brick masonry carrying a gallery and a superb dome; while its sides are decorated with blind arcades, its façade is of a new type with projecting towers making a sort of entrance eywān. It has been dated by Madame Pratybtova and others who have followed her in the second quarter of the 11th century. The personage for whom it is supposed to have been built (see refer-
ences in review by O. Grabar, *Ars Orientalis*, vol. 2, 1957, p. 545) died in 1923, but, so long as there is no epigraphical or textual justification for its attribution, the identification, which is of popular origin, is hardly more than a *terminus post quem*. On the other hand, the tremendous development of the façade relates this building to definitely dated 12th century examples. It is, therefore, mostly because of the sobriety of the ornamentation and of the decoration of arcades on the sides of the building that a late 11th century date is tentatively proposed.

60—*Mihnah* (near mod. Mean; Le Strange, *Lands*, p. 394), mausoleum of *Abū Saʿīd*. In plan this other remarkable mausoleum is similar to the preceding one (Pribytkova, pp. 20ff.; Pugachenkova, pp. 272ff.). Some of its proportions are different and its façade and side decorations are quite different. Its most remarkable characteristic, however, is that it has a double brick dome. As in the preceding example and for somewhat the same reasons, a late 11th century date seems preferable to the earlier date proposed by some of the Russian scholars who have written about the building.

61—*Astan-baba* near Karkhi (Le Strange, *Lands*, p. 404, so-called *mausoleum of Alamberdar*. This is another instance of an anonymous mausoleum of heavy proportions with a slightly developed façade, a low and wide dome, and most original brick squinches (Pribytkova, pp. 77ff.; Pugachenkova, pp. 268ff.).

62—*Tirmidh*, mausoleum in the cemetery known as *Sultān-Saʿīdah*. The only publication available to me that deals with the religious buildings of Tirmidh is the poorly printed second volume of the account of the Tirmidh archaeological expedition (in *Trudy Akad. Nauk Uzbeck SSR*, ser. 1, Tashkent, 1945, pp. 196ff.). From this account it would appear that several mausoleums may, on architectural grounds, be dated fairly early, but the only one which has been discussed more fully (Denike, pp. 12–14) shows close similarities to the preceding monuments and should be dated in the late 11th century.

63—Mausoleum at Baba-Gamber (small town on the river Mug). Madame Pugachenkova (pp. 273ff.) has discovered a photograph of a mausoleum now disappeared; it is a rather simple construction with a high facade which can be dated in the 11th century.

64—*Uzgend*, so-called middle mausoleum. This simple square building is squeezed between two later and dated buildings. Cohn-Wiener (E. Cohn-Wiener, *Turan*, Berlin, 1930, pp. 18, 35) had thought that it might be of the early 11th century, perhaps the tomb of one of the first Karakhānids (cf. also Denike, pp. 14ff.). Its large gate and extensive decoration make it more likely to be a somewhat later monument.

65—*Vekil-Bazar*, in Turkmenistan, mausoleum of *'Abdallāh ibn Burayda*, late 11th century. This small mausoleum with two Kufic inscriptions, one in brick, the other in stucco, is not dated and is only known to me through a reference in *Epigrafia Vostoka*, vol. 16, 1963, p. 149.

66—So-called *Shaburgan-ata* (in the area of Bukhara). This very curious building is octagonal with a large protecting façade (Nilsen, pp. 55ff.). It is dated around 1100 because of the simplicity of its decoration and of its methods of construction. Nilsen mentions also, p. 61, two other similar buildings but without any
reference. The plan is curiously close to that of the Jabal-i Sang near Kerman (Survey, pl. 281).

67—Astarakhd (Mazanderan), mausoleum. This building known from an illustration in Dietz, Persien, Islamische Baukunst in Churasan, Berlin, 1923, pl. 8, is a low octagonal construction and has been related by E. Schroeder to our no. 55, but it is possible that it is later.

68—So-called Khoja Chisht (near Herat). Two square mausoleums are found there, apparently with two entrances on one axis, a double dome, and a very good decorative design of bricks. The fragments of inscriptions which have been published are not easily legible and do not seem to be of a historical character (O. V. Niedermayer, Afghanistan, Leipzig, 1924, pp. 62-63, pls. 182-184).

69—Mausoleum of Muhammad Bashdar, near Kolohozhion (in Tadjikistan). This complex building is in fact a mosque-mausoleum. It is divided into three parts: a large central domical room with a later portal and a mihrab to the right of the entrance and two side areas which are partly covered with domes, one of which contained two tombs. The zone of transition has a sort of pendentive in brick which is comparatively rare in Central Asia (L. S. Bretanitski, Ob odnom malyozvestnom pamiatnike, Materialy i Issledovaniia po arheologii SSR, vol. 66, 1953, pp. 325 ff.). The date is not given but around 1100 is suggested as plausible on comparative grounds.

70—Dihistan, mashhad. The name mashhad is given to a large cemetery near Dihistan, where seven mausoleums are still standing, of which five are datable around 1100 on architectural grounds (Pugachenkova, pp. 292 ff.). These mausoleums, which may have fulfilled a function similar to that of the Aswan examples, have rather curious forms. In plan they are circular or octagonal, with, in a few instances, thin half-towers or star-like points. In elevation they are very squat and curiously tapered, somewhere between the tower and the polygon covered with a dome.

71—Ferav (southern Turkemistan). Two small mausoleums were found, one a square with projecting entrance, the other a square with large façade but provided inside with a curious series of recesses on four different axes. (Pugachenkova, pp. 299 ff.).

72—Kujan (Le Strange, Lands, p. 394). The ruins remain of a small square mausoleum with a long entrance iwân (Pugachenkova, pp. 301-303). The mausoleum was redone in the second half of the 13th century, as is attested by inscriptions—to my knowledge unpublished—on its stuccoes, but the original construction is supposed to be earlier.

73—Talas, so-called mausoleum of Karakhân. This mausoleum, popularly attributed to the founder of the Karakhânid dynasty (cf. above, no. 64), was destroyed in the early part of this century. On the basis of remaining photographs it is rather difficult to decide on its date, but its decorative designs (Denike, p. 15) are certainly later than the beginning of the dynasty, and, while an early core to the building is conceivable, the visible parts can hardly be dated before 1100.

74—Astân-baba (cf. above, no. 61). A shrine stands there consisting of four domed rooms of different sizes fitted within an irregular rectangle (Pugachenkova, pp. 286 ff.). Various added constructions
suggest that this was a mashhad of some significance. The various legends which exist with respect to the identity of the people buried there do not help in explaining its original function or even shape. One of the domes is set on a very developed type of brick squinch. The mausoleum has been dated in the 10th century, but a date around 1100 seems preferable because of the extent of the whole complex (B. A. Litvinskij, Arhitekturnyi kompleks, Trudy Akad. Nauk Tajik SSR, vol. 17, 1953, pp. 131 ff.).

75—Irâyâd, a village in Kuhistan. According to Yaqût (sub voce), a khângâh for sufis was there and by it a mashhad with a qubbah over the tomb of shaykh Abû Naṣr al-Zahid al-Irâyâdhi, who died after 500/1066–07 (cf. E. Herzfeld, Khorasan, Der Islam, vol. 11, 1918, p. 168). Yaqût does not give us the date of the building and it is only a suggestion that it was erected in the first decade of the 10th century. It is interesting in illustrating a phenomenon for which there probably are other examples in texts: the honoring of a local holy man through a mausoleum and through some philanthropic or pious organization. Conversely many of the anonymous buildings we have listed may be explained in similar terms.


77—So-called Khoja Rushnai, in the area of Isfara (V. Barthold, Turkestan down to the Mongol invasions, 2nd ed., London, 1958, pp. 160–161). A simple square mausoleum of mediocre construction was found whose system of squinch arches recalls that of the later mausoleum of Sanjar in Merv, hence the suggested date at the beginning of the 12th century (E. A. Davidovich and B. A. Litvinskij, Ocherki arheologii raiona Isfara, Trudy Akad Mauk Tajik SSSR, vol. 35, 1955, pp. 185 ff.).

78—Mausoleum also known as Khoja Rushnai, in the southern part of the Surkhân valley, not far from Tirmidh. It is a square building with a projecting façade and two side entrances; the dome is on squinches consisting of a series of recessed arches. On comparative grounds the discoverer of the building has suggested the late 11th century as a probable date (V. A. Nilsen, Nekotorye syrtzovye... postroiri, Istoria Materionaloi Kulturny Uzbekistana, no. 3, 1962, pp. 102 ff.).

79—Tirtas gunbadh, in the same area and of a similar type (ibid., pp. 107 ff.).

80—Uiink-gunbadh, also in the same area, but different from the preceding ones in that it has no axial entrance but a side one; on the other hand, its squinches are of a rather peculiar type, as though some local craftsman was trying to copy the newly developed Iranian muqarnas without quite understanding its significance (ibid., pp. 109 ff.). It may be that this building is a little earlier than the preceding two.

82—Cairo, Khadrā Sharīfah, 501/1107. This building with an entrance complex, a court without porticoes, and a sanctuary with three halls, the central one being covered with a dome, poses a problem. When it was cleared, tombs were discovered in the rooms to the side of the dome (Creswell, MAE, vol. 1, pp. 224–226); the whole construction should then be interpreted as a funerary compound. On the other hand, Maqrizi’s text used to identify the building and to date it (Maqrizi, vol. 2, p. 452) refers to this and other similar structures as masjids. If the tombs are indeed contemporary with the building, the use of the word masjid would indicate an interesting extension of the meaning of the word or a change in the understanding of the building between the time of its foundation and the 15th century. If the tombs are not contemporary, the building should be related to the category of oratories built in cemeteries but not primarily for memorial purposes, which I have discussed in my introduction. By Maqrizi’s time, of course, many of these distinctions had become somewhat blurred and it is possible indeed that it is in the later Fātimid period that the tremendous growth of an architecture in cemeteries (Creswell, p. 226) led to the convergence of two originally separate architectural and functional traditions, the funerary oratory and the mausoleum. The Khadrā Sharīfah would then be one of the earliest examples of a new type of building.

83—Busra, mausoleum (?) of Shaykh Ṣafi al-Dīn, before 503/1109–10. An inscription on a sarcophagus refers to the waqf of a madrasah and to the renovation of a turbab (Répertoire, no. 2932). There is no absolute certainty that a mausoleum was involved, but the combination mausoleum-madrasah becomes so common during the 12th century that it is possible to interpret the Buṣra structure as an early example.

84—Aswān, mashhad, ca. 1110. This remarkable structure bears a close resemblance in plan to the Juwyshī mosque (see above, no. 48). Since it has preserved a cenotaph, it must be assumed to have been a funerary building, although the identity of the personage involved is not known and there is no absolute certainty that the cenotaph is contemporary with the building (Creswell, MAE, vol. 1, pp. 222–224). The problem here is in reality the same as for no. 78.

85—Damascus, mausoleums of Safwah al-Mulk and of Duqaq, 504/1110–11. The mausoleum of Safwah al-Mulk, now disappeared, consisted in a central dome supported by two half-domes (J. Sauvaget, Les monuments ayyoubides de Damas, vol. 1, Paris, 1938, pp. 1 ff.). Its inscription is of great interest for the history of funerary and commemorative terminology; it begins as follows: “Has ordered the construction of his mashhad and of the turbah which is in it…” (Répertoire, no. 2942, with the correction already made by Sauvaget, p. 8, n. 8). As Sauvaget has reconstructed it on the basis of literary and topographical evidence, the construction of Safwah al-Mulk, made in her life-time (she died in 1119), was fitted into an existing complex of buildings which included the mausoleum of her son Duqaq (who died in 1104), an oratory, and perhaps a khānqāh for sufis; all of them made up the mashhad and it is likely that the introduction into it of a new mausoleum required certain refections (hence the word ‘imārah in the inscription,
which can refer to a new building as well as to a reconstruction). The word turbah appears to refer to the mausoleum Safwah al-Mulk built for herself; if so, it would be one of the earliest instances of the clearly documented use of the word for a domed building over a tomb. It is possible, on the other hand, that the mashhad refers to the mausoleum and the turbah to a cenotaph.  

86—Merv, mausoleum of Muhammad b. Zayd b. 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidîn, 506/1112 to 13. It is only recently that the inscription of this long known mausoleum has been entirely deciphered, but, to my knowledge, M. E. Masson's reading has never been published (it is paraphrased with a discussion of the building in Pugachen-kova, pp. 394 ff.). The mausoleum was built by the local governor Sharaf al-Dîn Abî Ťâhir b. Sa'îd and is referred to in the inscription as a mashhad. Like the Astanbaba complex (see above, no. 74) it is a couriously composed construction of four domical rooms of varying sizes—the largest of which was over the tomb of the 'Alid—arranged in an irregular rectangle. One of

The halls was an oratory. Its walls were painted and the remains are accepted as being of the early 12th century. The façade, as reconstructed by Madame Pugachen-kova, had a composition based on three arches, a comparatively uncommon motive in Iranian architecture of that time.

87—Aleppo, mausoleum of the qâdi Abû al-Hasan, 508/1114–15. Known only through Ibn Shaddâd (ed. D. Sourdel, Damascus, 1953, p. 35), it is called a turbah and the text insists on the remarkable quality of its stones. There is no absolute certainty that it was domed.

88—Damascus, cemetery Dabdâh, 514/1120. An inscription mentions a qubbah built by the mother of Fakhhr ak-Dîn Bûri (Répertoire, no. 2981).

89—Cairo, mausoleum of Sayidah 'Atikah, ca. 1120. This small square mausoleum is to an aunt of the Prophet (Creswell, MAE, vol. i, pp. 229 ff.).

90—Cairo, mashhad of Umm Kultum, before 516/1122. Only a mihrab remains of this building, and the date as well as the identification is hypothetical but plausible (Creswell, MAE, vol. i, pp. 239 to 240). The textual reference which permitted the identification (Ibn Doukmak, Description de l'Egype, ed. K. Volders, Cairo, 1893, vol. 4, p. 121; Maqrizi, vol. 2, p. 442) relates that seven mausoleums were redone at that time; the other six have probably disappeared.

91—Qâsî, mausoleum, ca. 1125. The date of this simple qubbah is based on its architectural characteristics (Creswell, MAE, vol. i, pp. 236–238).

92—Cairo, mausoleum known as ikhwâ Yûsuf, ca. 1125. Similar to the preceding and dated at the same time (Creswell, MAE, vol. i, 234–236).
93—Cairo, anonymous mausoleum, first third of the 12th century. This small square construction in front of the khanqah of Baybars (Creswell, MAE, vol. 1, pp. 227–228) belongs to the same group.


95—Cairo, mausoleum known as shaikh Yunis, before 1125. This mausoleum, typologically related to the preceding ones, had, until Creswell's studies, been thought to be the mausoleum of Badr al-Jamali (Creswell, MAE, vol. 1, pp. 232 to 234).

96—Huday-Hazar, some 28 kms. from Bayram 'Ali in Turkmenistan, near the ruins of a medieval village. This simple square building is remarkable for its large façade and for its sober decoration (Pugachenkova, pp. 310 ff.).

97—Aleppo, mausoleum built by Amr b. abi al-Fadl, 522/1128. The curiosity of this mausoleum, known only through an inscription (Répertoire, no. 3027), is that it is called an eywan.

98—Cairo, mausoleum of the head of Zayn al-Abidin, 525/1130–31. A rather complex set of problems is connected with this mausoleum (Maqrizi, vol. 2, pp. 436, 440; G. Wiet, MClA: Egypte II, pp. 213 ff.). First, as Maqrizi already pointed out, the mausoleum was built in fact for Zayn's son, Zayd. Second, the date 525 is the date of the invention of the head and the earliest reference to a construction is in a bad Ottoman copy of a Fatimid inscription giving the date 549/1154 (Répertoire, no. 3163). Third, the historical circumstances of the invention, as they are told by Maqrizi, contain a number of peculiarities and obviously legendary elements which have been discussed in detail by G. Wiet. If we have preferred the date of 525 to 549 it is merely that the miraculous invention of the head of an imam is likely to have been followed by the building of a shrine and that a waiting period of almost a quarter of a century seems rather meaningless. The monument contained an oratory with court, an eywan, and a domed mausoleum, but most of the present structure is modern.

99—Cairo, mashhad of Sayidah Ruqayyah, 527/1133. This mausoleum with a central domed hall, two side halls, and a porticoed ante-hall, has often been studied (Creswell, MAE, vol. 1, pp. 247 ff.; and esp. G. Wiet, MClA: Egypte II, pp. 195 ff.), and G. Wiet, in particular, has brought out all the complex features of Fatimid piety which are involved in it.

100—Sobag, 529/1134. An inscription published in the Répertoire (no. 3071) refers to some construction ('imarah) which served to commemorate a victory of the army commanded by the son of the caliph al-Hafiz. Although the events which are so commemorated are not recorded and the nature of the construction unknown, we have here another instance of a rare type of memorial construction, the victory monument.

101—Madinah, mausoleum of 'Abbas b. 'Abd al-Mu'talib and of al-Hasan b. 'Ali, before 529/1134–35. Our major source for the monuments of Madinah is Samhüdi, who relates that there is some argument as to the time when this mausoleum was built but opts for 529 and the caliphate of al-Murtashid (al-Samhüdi, Kitâb wa'afâ 'al-wafâ', 2 vols., Cairo, 1326 H., vol. 2, p. 101). The building had a high dome and
two doors, one of which was open all day.\(^{48}\) So far as I have been able to discover, this is the earliest certain instance of a mausoleum in Madinah, but it is possible that a number of Alid mausoleums were destroyed in earlier times.

102—Mazar-i Sharif, mausoleum to 'Ali, 530/1136. Although no part of this celebrated Timurid building seems to be as early as the 12th century, a sanctuary was apparently created there as early as 1136 (O. von Niedermeyer, Afghanistan, pp. 65 ff).

103—Shahristân (near Isfahan), Imâmzâdeh Sehzâdeh Husayn and Ibrâhîm, ca. 532/1137–38. This mausoleum has been assumed by A. Godard to be that of the caliph al-Rashîd, who was indeed killed near Isfahan (A. Godard, Les anciennes mosquées, Arts Asiatiques, vol. 3, 1936, p. 55), but the evidence of contemporary chronicles does not justify this conclusion, although, of course, this simple octagon (Survey, p. 1023 and pl. 334 A) could well be dated at this time.

104—Rayy, so-called tomb of Tughril, 534/1139–40. This much reconstructed tomb is still pretty much of a mystery. The evidence for the date is based on an inscription, now in the Museum of Art at the University of Michigan (formerly in the possession of E. Herzfeld), which is said to have come from the tomb (E. Herzfeld, Imâmzâdeh Kurrâr, Arch. Mitt. aus Iran, vol. 7, 1935, p. 80); cf. Appendix.

105—Marâgbâb, so-called red mausoleum, 542/1148. This square mausoleum, with a dome on múqarnas and a superb façade, is empty, but its inscription has preserved the names of the patron and of the builder (Répertoire, nos. 3135 and 3136; A. Godard, Les monuments de Marâgbâb, Paris, 1937, p. 4).

106—Turan-pusht (between Abarqûh and Yazd), Gunbad-e shaykh Junayd, 543/1148–49. An octagonal tomb. The plan and photographs have been published by A. Godard (Les coupoles iraniennes, Athâr-é Iran, vol. 4, 1949, fig. 213 and 258).

107—Madinah, masbhad of Ismâ'îl b. Ja'far al-Sâdiq, 546/1151–52. As described by Samhûdi (p. 104), this was a complex building with a court and a well in addition to the qubbah itself. The date is given by an inscription.

108—Cairo, masbhad of Sayîdânâ al-Husayn, 549/1154–55. In 1154–55, the head of Husayn was moved from Ascalon to Cairo, where a new sanctuary, included in the palace area, was built (Creswell, MAE, vol. 1, pp. 271–273; Maqrizi, vol. 1, pp. 427 ff.). Most of the present building is modern.

109—Cairo, mausoleum of Muhammad al-Hasawati, ca. 1125–55. The main curiosity of this mausoleum is that it seems to have reverted to earlier patterns by being open on three sides (Creswell, MAE, vol. 1, pp. 259–260).

110—Cairo, mausoleum of Yahya al-Shâbîh, ca. 1150. This is a more complex structure with a court and an oratory, in addition to the domed room over the tomb (Creswell, vol. 1, pp. 264 ff).

111—Cairo, mausoleum of Qâsim abu Tayyib, ca. 1150. Here also we are probably dealing with a complex building (Creswell, MAE, vol. 1, pp. 269–270).

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\(^{48}\) It is conceivable that a few other Medinese mausoleums, for which no date is given in Samhûdi, are as early as the first part of the 12th century (in addition to our no. 107); only a thorough study of the personages involved could provide a solution.
112—Tas, anonymous mausoleum. This well-known large mausoleum with a superb facade has not yet been satisfactorily dated (E. Diez, Khurasan, pp. 57-62; Survey, pp. 1072 ff.), but the evidence of other Central Asian mausoleums makes it quite likely that the middle of the 12th century is a possible date (Pribytkova, pp. 19 ff.).

CONCLUSIONS

This list of 112 items corresponding to over 160 mausoleums erected before the middle of the 12th century suggests a number of conclusions and raises a series of problems.

The first point to be noted is that the two earliest monuments in the list—the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and the Qubbah al-Sulaybiyah in Samarra—are extraordinary monuments, which, in their function and in the circumstances which surround their construction, stand out as exceptional creations explicable only through precise events of their time. It is, therefore, in the late 9th, but especially in the 10th and 11th centuries that we can ascertain the growth of commemorative buildings. Their function was almost always funerary; there are only a few instances (nos. 48, 100) in which other aims are clearly indicated. This result coincides with evidence provided by the geographers of the time. The writers of the 3rd century of the hijrah (9th century), like Ibn Rostah or Yaʿqūbī, not only do not mention monuments built over tombs, but also rarely list names of personages buried in given places; on the other hand, the writers of the 4th century (10th century A.D.), like al-Muqaddasi or Ibn Hawqal, almost systematically provide the reader with such lists. By the time of Ibn Jubayr, in the 6th century (12th A.D.), places of burial and of pilgrimage and mausoleums are standard fare, and guide-books appear for pilgrims.50 The comparison between monuments and texts leads to a further remark: the interest in places of burial of holy men, their more or less systematic cataloguing, and cultic and social functions around tombs and in cemeteries—as they appear in the studies of L. Massignon and G. Makdisi on Cairo and Baghdad—seem to have preceded the actual appearance of an architectural form to single out and to honor tombs and holy places. It is difficult, if not impossible, to determine the time which separated the towers of victory (E. Diez, Persien, pp. 73 ff.), but they obviously could not all fulfill that purpose. Some of them certainly had a commemorative aim, which explains their use as tombs. But, typologically and genetically, they belong to a different group and their understanding must await more complete archaeological, epigraphical, and literary documentation than has so far been available. The importance of such precise studies is fully shown by the many surprising conclusions reached by Madame Sourdel-Thomine in her reading of the inscriptions on two such manārs (Deux minarets seldjoukides d’Afghanistan, Syria, vol. 30, 1953).

growth of the two phenomena, but it should be pointed out that, both during the period with which we have dealt and in later centuries, several important branches of Islam, *hanbalism* being a conspicuous example, consistently avoided the use of architectural symbols for their heroes and great events.

As far as the purposes of the mausoleums are concerned, the fact emerges that the overwhelming majority of early mausoleums served either to emphasize shi’ite holy places or to glorify princes from smaller dynasties, usually heterodox. This is not surprising, for the very basic shi’ite emphasis on descent from the Prophet and the mystical significance of the succession of *imāms* might naturally result in the desire to transform into places of veneration the real or alleged places where the members of the holy family were buried or lived. Princely mausoleums are, in earlier instances, particularly characteristic of the new dynasties of Iran and it is interesting to contrast the funerary practices of these princes with the comparative simplicity of the burials of the ‘Abbāsid and even Fāṭimīd caliphs. Many more princely mausoleums probably existed than have been identified, since so few local chronicles are known and since the meaning of the building faded away with the disappearance of the dynasties which built them. Some of the remaining anonymous mausoleums of Central Asia, for instance, could originally very well have been princely mausoleums to which at a later date a holy man or a holy event was attached. Many of the early sunni shrines (nos. 9, 49) were probably built in answer to the growth of shi’ite places of veneration; it is known, for instance, that in Aleppo one of the first acts of the conquering Turks was to create a sanctuary to Abraham in order to counterbalance the earlier shi’ite shrine.\(^5\) In their search for personages around whom cults and ceremonies were to be developed, the sunnis tended either to use scholars, Companions of the Prophet and early conquerors, or Old Testament Prophets, especially Abraham and Solomon, whose Islamic associations are particularly strong.\(^6\) It is, of course, unlikely that all sunnite mausoleums and *mashhads* were built as a reaction to shi’ism, and the many early constructions of Egypt and Central Asia in particular, if properly dated, pose a major problem. In some instances (no. 17), older sanctuaries were taken over. Elsewhere (no. 48) attention has been brought to one aspect of sunnism which may have affected the growth of shrines, even though it is still comparatively little known: the frontier spirit of the ghazw, which often involved allegiance to a man or to the place from which the *jihād* originated. To perpetuate the memory of the founder or leader of such a group through a mausoleum is a logical enough procedure, and it could well explain the monuments at Aswān as well as many Central Asian ones. Altogether, however, the evidence of the buildings seems to indicate that it is not before the ubiquitous impact of shi’ism in what Massénon had called the “Qarmatian century” that either branch of Islam began systematically to transform its tombs and historically meaningful places into sanctu-

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51 J. Sauvaget, *Alep*, Paris, 1941, pp. 124 ff., with a discussion of the further development of these shrines in the second half of the 12th century.

aries and to build shrines over them. It might also be noted that a significant number of early mausoleums served for several personages, one of which, usually, was of greater holiness or quality than the others. Whether this feature is merely accidental or whether it reflects the fairly early identification of certain parts of cemeteries for specific individuals or families (cf. introduction) is still unresolved.

The third conclusion to emerge from our list is that while early shrines existed throughout the territories of Islam and while some of the earliest sanctuaries appeared in Iraq, where 'Ali and Husayn had died, the two areas which show by far the greatest concentration of early mausoleums are the northeastern Iranian provinces and Egypt. North Africa and Spain, from which considerable literary and archaeological remains are available, seem to have been least affected at this time by the development of mausoleums.

A last conclusion concerns the architectural types which are involved. On this subject our list did not lead to any major new conclusion, at least insofar as the mausoleum itself is concerned. The tower-tomb is peculiar to the mountains and plains around the Caspian sea and to the northern edge of the Iranian plateau; it affected a few monuments in Central Iran (no. 45 for instance). The square or polygonal "canopy" type of tomb covered with a dome existed everywhere. In the earliest instances it was open on all sides and then, little by little, was transformed into a hall with a single door—or sometimes two doors—and a mihrab. Unusual plans, accessory buildings, crypts, combinations or several square halls into one ensemble, and mosque-mausoleums appear only rarely, if at all, before the middle of the 12th century, but they exist and pave the way for the great monumental ensembles consisting of a tomb and of pious or philanthropic institutions which will appear in the second half of the century. Yet the single simple "canopy" is never abandoned. The growth of the pishtaq, the high gate almost separated from the mausoleum itself, in northeastern Iran is more difficult to date; and I have preferred here a late 11th century date to the early 11th century date proposed by most Russian archaeologists, even though the apparently clearly dated example at Tim (no. 12) has complicated the problem considerably, just as it has put the question of the muqarnas on a new basis. The interest of the many instances of the pishtaq which have been listed is in showing many variants, often embryos, of a feature which was destined to become one of the most spectacular characteristics of later Iranian architecture, and whose purpose and evolution require a separate study. The point which may be of greater significance, as one deals with the physical appearance of the mausoleums, is that, even though there is clear evidence that quite early there existed constructions in cemeteries (cf. the introduction), it is only slowly that a composite building appears which united in a single architectural ensemble the manifold functions of a shrine.

While these conclusions appear to follow the evidence provided by the documents, they also raise problems, which can, at this stage, only be defined, for their solution demands investigations which go much beyond my original aim.

The first of these problems concerns certain aspects of the purpose of the mausoleums. It has been noted that two areas
of the Islamic world—Egypt and Central Asia—seem to have developed mausoleums in the 10th and 11th centuries to a much greater degree than other provinces, and that many of these cannot readily be explained as obviously religious shrines or princely memorials. The problem is to evaluate the significance of these facts and to find out whether there were certain peculiarities common to the history and civilization of these two areas which could explain the phenomenon, or whether entirely different causes led to the same results in both areas. The difficulty of the problem is complicated by the fact that much of our view of early Islamic history is based on chronicles whose concern was narrow geographically and limited in content. Furthermore, the concern of many historians, until very recently, has been in the securement of a fundamental chronology of events and in problems of doctrine rather than in the establishment of the cultural, social, and economic factors which formed the civilization of the different provinces of the Islamic world.

Thanks to Maqrizi’s *Khitat*, to the existence of good epigraphical surveys, and to the still comparatively few published *Geniza* fragments, the Egyptian situation can be better understood than the Eastern Iranian one. Even a rapid perusal of Maqrizi’s description of Cairene monuments clearly shows that the 10th and 11th centuries are characterized by the building of many religious monuments by private individuals, at times members of the ruling families acting as private believers (this is particularly true of women), more often officers, administrators, dignitaries, and even merchants. The social basis for the sponsorship of a monumental architecture widened remarkably. The result is evident in the nature of the buildings: from the few large early mosques (al-Azhar, al-Ḥakīm) and palaces, we move to many small oratories (of which only a handful remain) and to many pavilions, private houses and apartments throughout the city. Within this context, if the conclusion is acceptable that the main original impetus for mausoleums derived from religious shi’ite and dynastic royal needs, it may be suggested that quite rapidly, at least in Cairo, a sort of “democratization” of the mausoleum took place to include all who could afford and desired to have one built. In addition to its religious and princely connotations, the mausoleum became a symbol of conspicuous consumption. In many instances such mausoleums were to be related to philanthropic (schools, hospitals, guesthouses) or devotional (monasteries, *ribāts*, oratories) institutions. Whether this occurred commonly before 1150 in Egypt is still difficult to say, except in the one instance of the oratory (masjid), which may well have preceded the mausoleum in cemeteries (see above p. 10). Outside of Cairo, the only instance of mausoleums on any large scale is provided by the Aswān constructions. The explanation for them is suggested by their location in a frontier city, with

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53 Maqrizi, mainly vol. 2, esp. pp. 244 ff.

54 See the very remarkable inscription of a merchant who built a mosque and planted a palm tree for the benefit of all Muslims (*Répertoire*, no. 2173), dated 1011-12.


56 The admirable description of Nāṣir-i Khosrow is, in this respect, particularly remarkable.
a special veneration of martyrs and the leaders of the various ribâts organized for the defense of Islam.

But the historical circumstances of Egypt were not duplicated in toto in northeastern Iran. The extraordinary variety of cultures and influences which created Islamic Central Asia is only now beginning to emerge from obscurity, and the process of Islamization of Iranian and Turkish groups there is still far from clear. Of the four causes which can be proposed to explain the growth and development of Egyptian mausoleums—shî'ism, princely symbols, wider social patronage, the frontier—two are clearly present in Central Asia. It is there that we find most of the earlier instances of purely secular tombs (nos.6, 16, 27, 32), and there is little doubt that all the symbols, institutions, and allegiances which developed on the frontiers of the Muslim world were particularly acute in Central Asia. Many ribâts existed there; many were sponsored privately, and in or near some of them founders or their descendants were buried. The social history of the 10th and 11th centuries has not yet been entirely worked out, but the evidence provided by archaeology seems to indicate that there was a shift or power from landowning dihqâns to the cities with their military rulers and their numerous social and professional organizations. The passage from one to the other probably took place around the time of the fall of the Sâmânis (i.e. late 10th and early 11th centuries). It may be suggested that, in northeastern Iran, the original impetus for mausoleums derived from princely constructions, but that, just as in Egypt, the widening of the patronage and changes in religious and cultic habits (here related more precisely to the importance of semi-religious orders guarding the frontier and of social organizations with mystical overtones) led to a wider use of the monumental tomb. This explanation, however, cannot be more than a hypothesis so long as our information is so limited on the individuals who were buried in the mausoleums or the events they commemorated; and the uncertain chronology of the tombs adds to the difficulty.

There is, however, a further point which emerges from these remarks. Just as we have seen that funerary cults preceded the building of mausoleums, so it appears that the mausoleum is closely related in another way to a whole group of social and pious institutions that appeared before it, especially the ribât and the private oratory. The central feature of the latter is that it was heavily endowed and sponsored by a wide variety of people. As such the oratories reflected more than piety; they were also forms of investment and of self-glorification. These secular ideals were carried over to the mausoleums. They explain why, in later centuries, with only few exceptions (for instance the mausoleums to al-Shâfi‘î in Cairo), next to popular, almost pagan,
memorials to local saints, the characteristic domical memorial will be sponsored by and built for princes, members of their families, dignitaries, and officers. The Taj Mahal is the supreme illustration of the fact that by its origins, its sponsorship, and its growth, the Islamic mausoleum reflected secular conceptions. Next to these memorials to rulers are the great Shi'ite sanctuaries to which constant attention was given through the centuries. Sunnite shrines, however, remained few in numbers. Most of them were created in the historically and culturally tumultuous period which extended from the time of breakdown of the 'Abbâsid caliphate in the early 10th century to the Mongol conquest in the middle of the 13th. Few of them received, in the following centuries, the care and attention which was given either to 'Alid shrines or to the new secular ones. The two factors, thus, which first caused the growth of mausoleums—Shi'ism and secular glorification—remained throughout as the main sources of memorial constructions.\(^6\)

On a lower social and artistic level, the appearance of local shrines, along roads or on elevations of the ground, dedicated to local holy men and often with pagan overtones, cannot be dated precisely. None of the ones known to me are earlier than the 12th century. Even though many reflect cults of pre-Islamic origin, the evidence seems to indicate that the construction of popular qubbahs followed the growth of official shrines rather than continued a pre-Islamic tradition of small sanctuaries and mausoleums of popular origin. The facts that Islam lacked the ecclesiastical organization of Christianity and that its major developments were urban rather than agricultural also explain why these symbols of popular and peasant beliefs were not incorporated into the mainstream of the faith, as they were in Christianity. Descriptions of few of these buildings are published; some indications exist in Sarre-Herzfeld, *Archaeologische Reise, im Euphrat- und Tigris-Gebiet*, Berlin, 1911-20, and in T. Canaan, *Mohammedan saints and sanctuaries in Palestine*, Jerusalem, 1927.

\(^6\) A. Grabar, *Martyrium*, vol. 1, pp. 47 ff., 144, and passim.

\(^6\) See, however, some curious paintings in Panjikent, *Zhitopis Drevenogo Pianjikenta*, Moscow, 1954, pl. XX.

A problem of comparable complexity confronts the art historian when he tries to explain the origins of the forms used for the mausoleums. The square covered with a dome and the simple canopy are, of course, not new architectural forms: they were used in the funerary architecture of antiquity. The problem is that there is little evidence that these forms had been used for these purposes in the centuries which preceded or accompanied their appearance in the Islamic world. In the Christian empire of Byzantium, imperial sarcophagi were put in Constantinopolitan churches, but, with a few exceptions in Armenia, specific funerary architecture for individuals does not seem to have developed. In early Christian times many instances exist of mausoleums for saints and heroes which are clearly related to pagan types, but these antique funerary cults and forms were soon sublimated in the *martyrium* church, which by the 6th century had developed a large repertory of shapes and forms based on the central plan and had almost abandoned the simple types which Islam used in the 10th century; it is interesting to note, however, that some of the Egyptian examples preserved the early types much longer.\(^4\) In Iran the ancient tombs of the Achaemenids and of the Parthians were not continued in Sasanian times.\(^6\) Towers of silence and ossuaries...
were presumably the only monumental forms associated with funerary practices.\textsuperscript{63} And one cannot explain all types of monumental tombs from the impact of the Indian \textit{stupa} or of nomadic mounds form Central Asia, while an influence of pre-Islamic Arabian practices could hardly have affected eastern Iran or even Egypt to the exclusion of closer provinces. Under these circumstances the assumption by the Muslims around the beginning of the 10th century of an ancient funerary form which had not been used for several centuries for these purposes poses an important problem.

Several answers might be suggested. It may be that in parts of the Islamic world, older \textit{martyria} of simpler form were still used, as for instance in the biblical sanctuaries of Syria and Palestine, and in Egypt, and that these modest symbols served as models for the Muslims. Or perhaps the Islamic world revived for its own purposes architectural formulas which had existed for these very purposes several centuries earlier. It may be asked, however, to what extent the medieval Islamic world was conscious of the significance of the early monuments which were standing in the areas it had conquered several centuries after the conquest. Moreover, examples taken from the former Christian Near East cannot be used to explain the Central Asian buildings.

A more likely explanation of the use of the dome over a square or polygon is not its association with funerary architecture in the past, but its significance in other aspects of Islamic architecture as a sign of honor and veneration. It was common in mosques in front of the \textit{mihrāb} from the moment the \textit{mihrāb} was introduced in Medina\textsuperscript{64}; it was a common feature of throne rooms (Mshatta, Baghdad, Samarra), gates (Khirbat Minyah, Baghdad), and pavilions (better known through descriptions as in Egypt or Iran) in the architecture of palaces; it was found over fountains in palaces (Khirbat al-Mafjar) or in mosques (mosque of Ibn Ṭullūn in Cairo). The domical structure was adopted as the most common form to be used over holy spots and tombs not because of its precise funerary attribute but because of its general meaning as a sign of veneration.

This last point may also serve to explain the cloudy origins of the northern Iranian tower-tomb. There a different type of structure, whose symbolic meaning as a memorial, a tower of victory, or a beacon has often been discussed,\textsuperscript{65} was used for funerary architecture because of its abstract significance as a symbol of power or holiness rather than precisely for any funerary reason. In the case of both forms, then, it would appear, in this hypothesis, that, in its search for a monumental expression of certain spiritual and cultural needs, the Islamic world did not always invent new forms or borrow them directly from other cultural and artistic traditions, but at times adapted an existing architectural vocabulary of its own to new needs. If it happened that the final result bears resemblance to earlier, pre-Islamic monuments erected for similar purposes, it is not so much that they were borrowed directly one from the other,


\textsuperscript{64} J. Sauvaget, \textit{La mosquée omeyyade de Médine}, fig. 5 on p. 91.

\textsuperscript{65} See the references to the works of Diez under nos. 27 and 66; cf. also note 49.
but that both derived their architectural forms from the wide repertory of more or less abstract formulas which the Mediterranean and the Near East had in common since antiquity.\footnote{Cf. the analyses of the “basilical hall” made by Sauvaget, op. cit., pp. 158 ff.}

These considerations on the sponsorship and purpose of the Islamic commemorative building and on the forms it took go much beyond our original aim of gathering together a series of documents on a certain type of building. They serve, however, to illustrate some of the problems which are posed in any investigation of the manner in which Islamic civilization created the artistic forms which eventually became identified with it. It is only when detailed investigations of other architectural entities—the masjid, the ribat, the khānqāh, the khan—and of the cultural and social phenomena which led to their growth have been made that it will fully be possible to understand the way in which Islamic architecture was formed and to explain the forms it took.

APPENDIX
BY C. G. MILES

In 1940 the late Ernst Herzfeld, then at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, showed me an iron plaque in his possession bearing an inscription dated 534 H. After his death this inscription became the property of his sister, Mrs. Charlotte M. Bradford, who entrusted it to me for safekeeping. It is now in the Museum of Art at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. When Herzfeld first brought the inscription to my attention I took some brief notes on what he told me of the circumstances in which he acquired the plaque. It appears that during his residence in Iran he found and purchased the inscription in one of the Teheran bazaars. Some time later while examining a notebook of a Persian antiquarian friend of his he saw a drawing of this same inscription in situ over the door of the then un-restored “Tower of Toghrul” at Rayy. Herzfeld later verified this provenance to his own satisfaction by measurements and an examination of the restored brickwork where the tablet had formerly been fixed in the tower. Unfortunately I do not now recall what he told me of its exact position in the doorway.\footnote{The existence of this dated inscription has been noted several times, but never with any explanatory details. In Arch. Mitt. Iran, vol. 7, 1935, p. 80, Herzfeld’s list of early Kufic and Naskhi inscriptions in Iran included the entry “534, Rayy, sog. Turm des Toghrul, Eisenthür.” This is the basis of the bare mention of the date of the tower in A. V. Pope, Survey of Persian Art, London, 1938, vol. 2, p. 1022, and vol. 4, plate 346; and of my entry, 534, Rayy, tower, in Ars Islamica, vol. 8, 1941, p. 108.}

The inscription in question is cast on a single sheet of iron (about 2 mm. in thickness), measuring 80.5 cm. in length and from 12 to 13 cm. in height. Notches at the top and bottom of the righthand end give it a tabula ansata form,\footnote{See Ernst Herzfeld, Die Tabula ansata in der islamischen Epigraphik und Ornamentik, Der Islam, vol. 6, 1916, pp. 189–199.} at least at this end. The plaque is pierced by eleven circular holes, approximately 9 mm. in diameter, through which nails or bolts were driven to attach the sheet to the architectural member on which it was mounted. There are five of these holes above the upper line
of inscription and six below the lower line. The text reads as follows:

\[\text{Fečit 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Qazvīnī b. Fakhrāv \at \text{end of Rajab of the year 534 [March, 1140 A.D.]}}\]

The rather naive, quasi-Kufic characters are completely unadorned. Several peculiarities suggest that the craftsman who designed the letters was not really versed in the Kufic alphabet but that he attempted to give the inscription a Kufic appearance. For example, the \(\text{lām} \) of 'amāla does not descend below the base line, nor does the \(\text{nūn} \) of thalāthin or the \(\text{khwā} \) of salkh; the \(\text{dāl} \) of 'abd is not Kufic, the \(\text{ṣīn} \) of ḥabams, being in the medial form, should join to the following \(\text{mīm} \), but it does not; the final \(\text{ya's} \) of Qazvīnī and \(\text{fī} \) are curiously abbreviated. Despite these errors and the imperfect balance of the two lines, some thought and planning in the laying out of the inscription is evident in the spacing of letters in the upper line that permits the tops of several tall characters in the lower line to extend into the upper register.

With regard to the reading and content of the inscription there can be no doubt about the date and the name 'Abd al-Wahhāb, and very little doubt about the correctness of the nisbah al-Qazvīnī. The only problem is that of the correct reading of the proper name immediately preceding the date. Fakhrāvār, "Bringer of Glory," although evidently previously unrecorded, is a quite possible Persian name. I am indebted to Professor V. Minorsky for drawing my attention to analogous names compounded with -āvar, such as Nāmāvār, Bakhtāvar, and of course Dīnāvar. The order of the names is curious: one would expect al-Qazvīnī to follow the father's name. The unsophisticated character of the inscription suggests the possibility that the addition of the father's name, who may have been a Daylamite, with whom the inhabitants of Qazvin had frequent, not always hostile, intercourse, may have been an afterthought.

Just what it was that 'Abd al-Wahhab "made" (amāla) cannot now be determined. It is unlikely that he was the architect or the builder of the tower itself; such an individual would doubtless have recorded his achievement in a more impressive inscription. Herzfeld's implication is that the plaque was associated with an iron door. In any case there can be little doubt that the inscription provides us with a specific date for at least a part of "Toghru'l's Tower" at Rayy, a date shortly after the death of Toghru'l I, sultan of the 'Iraq branch of the Seljūqs.

\[4 \text{Cf. F. Justi, Iranisches Namenbuch, Marburg, 1895, p. 61.}\]
\[5 \text{Ibid., p. 85.}\]
\[6 \text{The first word in the second line is undoubtedly bin and not [a]bū; all the waw's in the inscription have clear open heads. Also a close examination of the plaque itself shows that no letter is missing at the beginning of the second line.}\]
LE PALAIS DE ZIRI À ACHIR (DIXIÈME SIÈCLE J.C.)*
PAR L. GOLVIN

LE PAYS

À 150 KILOMÈTRES A VOL D'oiseau au Sud d'Alger, la région du Titteri marque la transition entre les montagnes et les hautes plaines bordées, au Sud, par l'Atlas Saharien. Aux confins de la montagne kabyle, le Djebel Lakhdar étend d'ouest en Est l'écran de ses crêtes s'allongeant en lame d'épée et que prolongent celles des monts de l'Ouennougha.

La constitution géologique de ces deux massifs les différencie nettement de l'ensemble des montagnes voisines. La longue chaîne des Bibans et les Monts du Hodna sont essentiellement crétaciques, le Lakhdar et l'Ouennougha sont composés principalement d'Eogène, formation géologique relativement rare dans la région, mais qu'on retrouve cependant tout autour de la Kabylie du Djurdjura.

Contrairement à ce dernier massif ou même à l'Ouarsenis, montagnes au relief hardi, le Djebel Lakhdar n'offre au regard ni pics dentelés, ni sommets en aiguilles, il se présente sous la forme d'une muraille régulière et presque ininterrompue, profilée en lame de sabre, ce qu'exprime admirablement le terme arabe sayf pl. suyūf. Le versant méridional abrupt, difficilement pénétrable, où s'étagent très régulièrement les diverses couches de terrain, surplombe les hautes plaines où se dressent encore quelques contreforts ou buttes isolées, derniers accidents d'un relief qui se calme ensuite en une immense steppe où l'horizon s'étend à perte de vue.

Du haut de ses 1464 m. d'altitude, le Kef Lakhdar al-Chergui domine tous les environs. À quelques deux kilomètres au Sud-Est de cette muraille et parallèlement à elle, se dresse le Kef Tisemsail, sorte de barrière de protection de 1408 m. d'altitude d'où le regard plonge, à perte de vue, vers le Sud, à peine gêné par quelques sommets résiduels: Kef Delaa Hamra (1000 m.), Draa Himrane (1100 m.). L'altitude moyenne de la plaine demeure partout supérieure à 700 m. . . C'est entre le Kef Lakhdar al-Chergui et le Kef Tisemsail que se concentrèrent les hommes de la tribu de Ziri, c'est là que fut fondée Adhir ou plutôt les deux cités qui portèrent ce nom dans l’histoire.

La valeur stratégique du pays est indéniable; la ville forteresse ne se trouve pas en contact brutal avec la plaine, mais elle est protégée vers le Sud par une série de contreforts qui constituent autant de points de résistance susceptibles de retarder l'ennemi et de faciliter le repli vers la citadelle en cas de revers. Une trouée à l'Est, entre le pied du Guern (1423 m.) et l'Aïn bou Hank, semble très facile à garder par quelques factionnaires résolus. L'attaque par le Nord et par l'Ouest, est pratiquement impossible surtout après la création des cités Zirides satellites: Médéa et Miliana en particulier.

Toutefois, il convient de tenir compte également d'un élément extrêmement im-

* Pour la bibliographie voir p. 75.
portant dans ce pays: la présence de nombreuses sources et de quelques maigres oueds dont les eaux découpent les flancs du Kef Lakhdar al-Chergui en sillons parallèles et abrupts et dévalent vers le Sud, compliquant singulièrement la progression d'Est en Ouest. Par contre, le contrefort septentrional du djebel Tisemsail compte de nombreux points d'eaux qui sourdent à ras de sol.1

Le nom même d'Achir s'est perpétué jusqu'à nous, à peine déformé; il désigne actuellement, sous le vocable de Yadhir ou d'el-Yachir, un ensemble de ruines disparaissant sous les cultures. On aperçoit encore quelques traces de remparts et quelques sillons parallèles à la montagne constituant des étapes de construction. Le site est bordé au Nord par la muraille de la montagne, à l'Est et à l'Ouest par les lits profonds d'oueds desséchés. En face, à deux kilomètres au Sud, sur le flanc du Kef Tisemsail, un vaste champ de ruines mieux conservées que celles de Yadhir est connu sous le nom de Bénia.2 La muraille extérieure en est fort apparente et une photographie d'avion en révèle avec beaucoup de précision tous les contours. De nombreux hauts de murs apparaissent au ras du sol, certains constituant des ensembles architecturaux cohérents. Une sorte d'éperon prolonge la cité vers le Sud et grimpe à l'assaut du pic, du haut duquel on embrasse tout l'horizon vers le Sud.

Toute la région offre actuellement un aspect sévère; aucune forêt ne vient agrémenter le paysage nu, fortement accidenté, qui va du village actuel d'Arthur à celui de Maginot.3 La plaine est sans cesse coupée par des buttes ou des kefs que la route contournent par des lacets. Au Nord, la barre horizontale du Kef Lakhdar borner l'horizon tandis qu'au Sud la vue s'étend sur l'immense dépression qui annonce le Sahara, lorsqu'elle n'est pas arrêtée par quelque plissements, derniers contreforts de l'Atlas tellien. La montagne massive se complique de failles, d'éperons, de plis parallèles où se dessinent les couches de terrains redressés et renversés. Quelques pauvres villages de colonisation: Tleta des Douairs, Ain Boucif, Maginot, témoignent, semble-t-il de la difficulté des cultures. La région, isolée du Nord par la montagne, reçoit peu de pluies et celles-ci s'avèrent très irrégulières. En fait cette zone paraît bien avant tout être un «pays à moutons» et peut-être l'erreur est-elle d'avoir voulu en faire une région à céréales. L'eau pourtant ne manque pas dans les alentours d'Ain Boucif où sourdent un peu partout, et plus particulièrement, nous l'avons déjà dit, sur le site de Bénia, de nombreuses sources; elle est toutefois insuffisante pour permettre une irrigation des céréales. L'hiver, rigoureux et long, paralyse les activités pendant quelques mois tandis que les étés sont supportables grâce aux nuits relativement fraîches. La transition entre ces deux saisons est marquée à peine par un court printemps et un automne un peu plus long, mais que l'absence d'arbres rend moins sensible. Tel qu'il se présente aujourd'hui, le pays est extrêmement

1 Le capitaine Rodet cite six sources à Bénia: Ain Beida, Ain Bahira, Ain el-Atrous, Ain Kerma, Ain Messa'ud, Ain el-ihoud.
2 Bénia est la déformation du terme classique بنيا (Binya), pl. بني (Binan), ou بنيان (Bunyān), qui signifie édifice, construction.
3 Ce texte, écrit en 1960, conserve l'ancienne toponymie des lieux.
sèvere, et on conçoit mal qu’une vie ardente ait pu s’y manifester autrefois. Pourtant de nombreux vestiges attestent une concentration de population au Moyen Age et certains ensembles de fort belle allure, témoignent d’une vie qui pouvait aller jusqu’à l’opulence. Peut-être les conditions d’existence ont-elles évolué ? On peut supposer que ces montagnes arides furent autrefois boisées. La région de Boghar, éloignée de quelque quarante kilomètres, est encore couverte de forêts et de nombreuses collines, à l’Ouest d’Arthur, sont très verdoyantes de nos jours. Quelques colons ont planté avec succès des arbres qui semblent fort bien s’acclimater au pays : peupliers en particulier, mais il est manifeste que la raison majeure de la concentration des Ṣanhağa à cet endroit est une raison stratégique. Que ce soit sur le site de Menzeh bent es-Soltân, sur celui de Yadhir ou celui de Bénia, on domine l’immense plaine qui s’ouvre sur le désert, terre de parcours des chameleurs et des cavaliers, pays d’où l’on peut voir sans cesse venir l’ennemi. Quelques kefs avancés jouent le rôle de sentinelles ; la montagne tourmentée constitue un refuge naturel idéal où ne s’aventurent guère les nomades. Les sites divers (nous le verrons un peu plus loin) où l’on peut situer l’ancienne Adhir offrent tous ces avantages. Celui de Menzeh bent es-Soltân, est toutefois très limité et ne permet guère le développement d’une cité. Il n’y faut voir qu’un gîte de première nécessité ou un poste avancé. Beaucoup plus imposant se présente le site actuel de Yadhir que protège au Nord la haute barre du Kef Lakhdar, plateau étoilé, banquette élevée à mi-flanc de la montagne, bordée de chaque côté par des fossés naturels d’oueds au lit encaissé et tortueux.

**QUELQUES POINTS D’HISTOIRE**

Installé au cœur du Titteri, la tribu des Talkâta, de la confédération des Ṣanhağa,4 devait exercer sur les autres tribus du Ma‘grib Central une suprématie qui pourrait expliquer en partie sa densité numérique, mais qui semble davantage encore dû à la valeur des chefs qui ont su l’organiser, l’unifier, la constituer en armée prête aux grands exploits. On aimerait mieux connaître ces conducteurs d’hommes, ce Manâd b. Manqûs qui prépare la fortune de ses fils en se faisant le champion des Aglabides de Kairouan. Est-ce un chef de bande avide de gloire… une sorte de condottiere avant la lettre ? On ne peut se résoudre à imaginer ces berbères Talkâta sous les traits d’aventuriers en quête d’exploits guerriers, on les imagine plutôt, par association avec les Kabyles actuels, attachés à leur terre ou à leurs troupeaux, désireux avant tout de paix et de tranquillité, querelleurs… peut-être, mais non des guerriers-nés. La sécurité des montagnards étant menacée par des bandes de pillards nomades qui parcourent toutes les hautes plaines en frontière du pays kabyle, Manâd apparaît davantage sous les traits d’un défenseur du droit opprimé que sous ceux d’un grand conquérant. Sa tribu se trouve à l’extrême limite du pays Ṣanhağa, elle joue le rôle de sentinelle ou de garde de corps : bon gré, mal gré, il lui faut contenir la masse des envahisseurs possibles venus du Sud. Mais dans cette lutte ancestrale, qui semble souvent

4 Les Ṣanhağa occupaient tout le Nord de l’Algérie actuelle, c’est-à-dire, les Kabyles, tandis que leurs ennemis les Zanâta étaient maîtres de l’arrière pays, c’est-à-dire de la steppe.
n'être que l'opposition de deux genres de vie, les grandes confédérations, sans doute parce qu'elles ne trouvent pas en elles mêmes l'esprit de cohésion indispensable, font appel aux grandes puissances organisées, ainsi Manâd sera-t-il attiré vers le trône de Kairouan qui lui offrira beaucoup plus un appui moral qu'une aide matérielle (du moins nous le supposons). Nous avons tout lieu de croire que ce n'est ni le hasard, ni une tendance affective qui le pousse à rechercher l'alliance de la dynastie ifriqi-yenne, mais une nécessité, celle-là même qui conduira ses successeurs à épouser les querelles des Fâtimides, successeurs des Aglabides.

Ainsi Manâd ne nous apparaît pas comme un aventurier, mais comme un chef clairvoyant, conscient de l'intérêt des siens et assez prestigieux pour rassembler les énergies sous son autorité. « Son hospitalité envers les voyageurs fut si grande », nous dit al-Nuwayri, « que partout on s'entretenait de lui et que sa renommée fut portée au loin. » Ainsi Manâd fait-il figure de sage et nous voyons en lui un chef dont l'ascendant moral fera plus que la violence ou la force.

Cependant, l'heure de la célébrité des Talkâta ne sonnera qu'avec le fils de Ziri dont les hautes qualités sont indéniables. Dès son plus jeune âge, il exerce sur ses compagnons un ascendant qui en fait un chef. On vante sa haute taille et sa vigueur, son regard courbe les têtes. C'est un chef de guerre et un chef habile « à la tête de cette bande (ses parents Talkâta), il fit des incursions dans le pays des Zanâta, tuant, pillant, enlevant des captifs et du butin qu'il distribua toujours à ses compagnons sans rien réserver pour lui-même. »

Cette générosité (elle n'est pas improbable) est le fait des grands généraux, de ceux qui recherchent la popularité par des gestes ostensibles dont on se plait à exalter la grandeur. Ziri se prépare habilement une armée qui lui sera dévoué corps et âme. Il en a besoin car l'ascension des Talkâta n'est pas sans causer de vives jalousies chez les autres Šanha. Il va lui falloir porter les armes contre sa propre famille, et c'est encore certains de ses contribuables qu'il combattrà alliés aux ennemis Zanâta, dans une lutte farouche dont il sort vainqueur. Cette victoire, le butin qu'elle lui procure, en particulier de nombreux chevaux qui lui permettront de constituer une milice de cavaliers propres à lutter à armes égales contre les nomades sur leur propre terrain, la steppe, assurent définitivement son autorité. De retour dans la montagne, il est aimé ou redouté, comme un chef sait l'être. Il a conscience de sa force, « sa renommée remplit bientôt tout le Maqrib. »

On comprend alors que ses services aient pu être appréciés par les Fâtimides de Kairouan, d'autant plus que les premiers alliés Kutâma se trouvaient passablement épuisés par les luttes continues et consti-


tuaien une milice fort exigeante à la cour du Calife.

Le Mahdi a laissé Ziri accroître sa puissance au Magrib Central, al-Qa'im, le fils du Mahdi, lui laissera construire sa capitale, Achîr, lui fournissant même architectes et techniciens pour élever un château sans doute à l'image de ceux de Mahdiya.\footnote{Ibid., p. 489.}

Désormais, la fidélité de Ziri est absolue, elle se manifesterà d'une façon éclatante quelques années plus tard lorsqu'il mettra un terme à l'épopée du chef hârigîte, Abî Yazîd, «l'homme à l'âne».

Ainsi l'image nécessairement très vague qu'on peut se faire du grand chef sanbagîen, est-elle celle d'un brillant chef de guerre, généreux, habile, fidèle à ses alliances et tout dévoué à la cause qu'il défend. Elle ne manque pas de grandeur et tout laisse supposer que l'homme lui-même n'en manquait pas.

Pour compléter ce portrait, il faudrait sans doute insister sur le désir d’en imposer à ses sujets. Le fait que l’on devine à la cour de Ziri annonce, toutes proportions gardées, celui de ses successeurs à Kairouan. Les ruines du palais, construit à côté de la ville populaire, le soin apporté à l’élaboration du plan, la solidité et le fini de la construction, le style général qui s’inspire nettement de l’Art du Moyen Orient, le sobre décor des façades et de la cour centrale, attestant une certaine opulence qui contraste singulièrement avec la pauvreté des masures actuelles sans doute peu différentes de celles du dixième siècle.

Digne successeur, son fils Buluggîn\footnote{L'orthographe de ce chef berbère varie suivant les auteurs. Ibn Haldûn écrit بُلْعُغْين Buluggîn, mais d'autres tels al-Bakri ou Ibn al-Atîr semblent plus « berbère » que la précédente.} connaîtra l’honneur suprême de monter sur le trône de Kairouan. Nous ne savons à peu près rien sur la physionomie de ce chef, mais son accession à la lieute­nuance du royaume d’Ifriqiya, la loyauté avec laquelle il s’acquittera de la tâche qui lui est confiée, ses succès militaires et l’autorité qu’il exerce sur tout le Magrib nous le présentent sous l’aspect d’un véritable monarque.


Quoi qu’il en soit, bien qu’investi de la charge du gouvernement de l’Ifriqiya, Buluggîn fera construire, au Magrib central, sa propre cité; nous aurons l’occasion d’examiner les textes qui nous l’affirment un peu plus loin, mais nous aurions aimé pouvoir juger, dès maintenant, de l’opulence de cette cité voisine et rivale (sans doute) de celle de Ziri; or l’archéologie n’a pas pu nous livrer, jusqu’ici, de témoignages suffisants pour qu’on puisse en juger sainement. Les traces du murs qui apparaissent au ras du sol sont en moellons grossière­
ment liésonnés. Les ruines de la mosquée nous révèlent un oratoire de modestes dimensions; nous ignorons à quel endroit exact se trouvait le palais. Il y a lieu de supposer qu'il dominait la ville et qu'il s'en trouvait un peu isolé. Un long mur d'enceinte sur un petit plateau à proximité du Manâr qui forme une sorte d'excroissance au sommet d'un piton face au Sud, est actulement appelé par les habitants du douar voisin "Dâr al-Sultâï", pouvons en déduire que là s'élevait la demeure du fils de Zîrï?... Quelques sondages s'imposeraient.

Tels sont les auteurs de la puissance sanhaâgienne, depuis Manâd qui prépare leur suprématie jusqu'à Buluggin qui inaugure la dynastie des Zîrides de Kairouan, ils se sont fait remarquer par d'égaux qualités et par une volonté commune de prendre la tête des tribus berbères du Magrib Central. Cette continuité est beaucoup plus remarquable qu'elle n'apparaît à première vue. Jusqu'ici, les Berbères ne se sont signalés que par des coups d'éclat, des mouvements sporadiques de résistance, mais leur anarchie traditionnelle ne donne aucune suite à ces sursauts d'orgueil. Leur unité est précaire et elle est vite rompue le danger passé. Les Sanhaâga auront le mérite rare de réussir cette unité berbère, ils seront les premiers dans l'histoire musulmane d'Oc
cident à constituer une dynastie purement locale, et leur fortune ne devra que peu de chose à l'étranger, elle troublera seulement à l'extérieur un appui que l'oriente, qui pa
râft donner un sens aux luttes ancestrales et, par la même, la fortifie.

Achîr, la cité de Zîrî. Si Manâd a su s'imposer à ses contribuables, s'il a su organiser une armée et la préparer aux exploits futurs, il ne peut guère apparaître dans l'histoire que comme un chef de bande; il lui manque la pompe qui confère l'autorité royale, un palais où l'on reçoit du haut de sa grandeur, un trône d'où l'on galvanise les énergies, un centre administratif où l'on peut réunir la communauté; en bref, il lui manque une capitale, sa capitale. En fondant Achîr, Zîrî va se poser en véritable souverain, mieux même, il crée sa dynastie. Sa ville sera une capitale fortifiée et son palais aura peu à envier à ceux d'Ifrîqiya, il sera à l'image de ceux de Sabra-Mansûrîya et de Mahdiya.

La fondation d'Achîr n'est pas claire, elle pose, à travers les récits des auteurs arabes, un problème que nous allons tenter de résoudre.

Les textes dont nous disposons ne sont ni nombreux, ni très explicites. Le plus complet, celui d'al-Nuwayrî a été écris au début du quatorzième siècle et il utilise dé
verses sources qui ne nous sont pas toutes connues. Voici le passage essentiel de ce récit:

Zîrî, ayant examiné cette position, dit à ses compagnons: «Voici l'endroit qui nous convient pour résidence», et il se décida à y bâtir une ville, ceci se passa en l'an 324 [935-36], sous le règne du khâlefe fatimide El-Caïm, fils d'El-Mehdî. Il fit alors venir d'El-Mecila, de Hamza et de Tobna un grand nombre de charpentiers et de maçons, et il se fit envoyer par El-Caïm un architecte qui surpassait en habileté tous ceux de l'Ifrîkia. Il obtint aussi de ce prince une grande quantité de fer et d'autres matériaux. S'étant alors mis à l'œuvre, il acheva la construction de sa ville... Zîrî se rendit ensuite à Tobna, à El-Mecila et à Hamza en pour en transporter les principaux habitants à Achîr, de sorte qu'il peupla sa nouvelle capitale et en fit une forteresse inexpugnable. On ne pouvait approcher de cette ville que du côté de l'orient, et, là, dix hommes auraient suffi pour la défendre. Située d'ailleurs sur une montagne escarpée, elle n'avait pas besoin de muraille; elle était arrosée par deux sources abondantes d'excel-
lente eau, et comme elle se remplit bientôt de légistes, de savants et de marchands, elle devint très fameuse. A cette époque, les habitants n’employaient ni or ni argent dans leurs ventes et achats; mais ils échangeaient des chameaux, des breufs et des moutons contre les objets dont ils avaient besoin. Cet état de choses décida Zíri à battre monnaie. Il fit alors à ses troupes des dons considérables et leur affecta une solde régulière, de sorte que les pièces d’or et d’argent abondaient dans le public. Les peuplades nomades qui fréquentaient les environs consentirent à travailler la terre, et, comme Zíri les protégea contre les Zenata, il entretint ainsi l’immixte qui régna entre ceux-ci et les Sanhadja.15

Par ailleurs, dans le Bayân, on peut lire:

Quant à la ville d’Achîr, la construction en est due à Zíri b. Menåd Çanhâdjî ainsi que le prouvent les vers d’Abd el-Melik b. Aychoûn : « Toi qui t’enquiers de nos combats16 et d’Achîr, siège de l’infidélité, demeure du libertinage, habitée par des gens injustes, bâtie par l’impétit et le mensonge, sache qu’elle a été édifiée par Zíri, sur qui se sit la malédiction de Dieu! »17

Le géographe al-Bakri, presque contemporain des faits, écrit de son côté:

Achîr est une ville importante; l’on assure dans la région qu’il n’y point de place qui soit plus forte, plus difficile à prendre et plus propre à décourager un ennemi; on ne pourrait y donner l’assaut que par un endroit où il ne faudrait que dix hommes pour repousser une armée. Ce sentier est au côté oriental de la forteresse et conduit à Ain Messaud; partout ailleurs, le rocher s’élève à perte de vue et ne saurait être escaladé, ajoutez à cela que la place est environnée de hautes montagnes. Dans l’intérieur de la ville les eaux jaillis-

15 al-Nuwayrî, pp. 489 ss.

16 Le même poème du mètre rağaz est donné par al-Bakri avec une légère variante; au lieu de «nos combats», il écrit «de notre pays d’occident.»


sent de deux sources dont on ignore la profondeur; l’une s’appelle Ain Soleiman et l’autre Thalân-Tîragh.

Achîr, dont les fortifications furent construites en l’an 367 (977-78 J.C.) par Bulguquin in Youçof, fils de Zíri ibn Menad fut ruinée, postérieurement à l’an 440 (1048-49) par Youçof fils de Hammâd et petit fils de Zíri qui livra les biens et les familles des habitants à la rapacité et à la violence de ses soldats. Quinze années plus tard, la ville commença à se repeupler.18

Ces auteurs, apparemment, ne sont d’accord ni sur les dates, ni sur le nom du fondateur de la cité, al-Bakrî, le plus ancien, puisqu’il écrit au onzième siècle, devrait être le plus sûr, mais tout porte à croire qu’il n’est jamais venu au Magrib. Il travaille donc, à Cordoue, d’après des documents ou des témoignages assez précis mais non d’après ses propres observations sur le terrain.

Or, la topographie de la région révèle un emplacement qui correspond point pour point à celui précédemment décrit: c’est Bénia. De son côté, Ibn l’Idârî, auteur du Bayân, écrit au treizième siècle, soit bien après Al-Bakrî. Les documents qu’il utilise ne sont pas ceux du géographe. Il est à supposer qu’il fait allusion au site connu actuellement encore connu sous le nom de Yachir et qui se trouve à environ deux kilomètres au Nord de Bénia, au pied du Kef Lakhdar.

Quant à al-Nuwayrî, mort en 733 (1332), il exploite divers textes dont celui d’al-Bakrî, mais il mèle sans vergogne ses sources, si bien qu’il parle à la fois d’Achîr et de Bénia, ignorant vraisemblablement l’existence de deux cités distinctes fort apparentes de nos jours.

Il ne faut pas attendre plus de précisions d’Ibn Ḥaldu̲n qui, lui également,

18 al-Bakrî, p. 126.
semble ne pas concevoir deux villes distinctes construites à quelques années d'intervalle. Nous serions donc très embarrassés si nous ne possédions un texte plus clair d'Ibn al-Atîr, mort en 1233; et qui écrit à la fin du douzième et au début du treizième siècle. Voici ce texte:

Il [Buluggîn] s'avança contre eux, ce qui les fit battre en retraite, mais il entama le siège de Tlemcen, et au bout de quelque temps, les [habitants] firent leur soumission. Il leur pardonna, mais ils évacuèrent la ville d'Adhir, auprès de laquelle ils édifièrent une nouvelle ville qu'ils nommèrent aussi Tlemcen... et l'auteur donne la date de 361–62 (972–973).

Un peu plus loin, Ibn al-Atîr ajoute:

Il les conduisit alors vers l'emplacement où s'éleva Adhir, et, séduit par les nombreuses sources dont le pays est arrosé, il y fonda la ville de ce nom, où il s'installa avec ses compagnons en 364 (20 septembre 974).20

Il a pour antécédent Ziri ce qui semble être une erreur car ce serait manifestement impossible puisque nous savons, et l'auteur d'ailleurs le dit lui-même un peu plus loin, que Ziri est mort en Ramadan 361. Il convient donc de corriger le texte et de substituer Buluggîn à Ziri, à quelques années près (364 au lieu de 367), Ibn al-Atîr est alors d'accord avec al-Bakri, il est vrai que le géographe parle de l'édification de fortifications ce qui est différent de la construction de la ville qui aurait pu être par exemple créée en 364 et fortifiée en 367.

Bien des obscureités persistent encore, il faut le reconnaître. Le premier passage d'Ibn al-Atîr prête la fondation d'Adhir à des Tleméniens qui auraient donné à la ville nouvelle le nom de la vieille cité magribine. On aurait aimé avoir confirmation, par un autre texte, de cette affirmation qui peut surprendre au premier abord, mais qui n'est pas absolument improbable. Cette «Tlemcen» est-elle la Bénia de nos jours? A-t-elle pris ensuite le nom de la cité de Ziri dont on aurait transporté les habitants? Sans doute ne le saurons nous jamais. Quoi qu'il en soit, il faut bien admettre l'existence successive et peut-être simultanée de deux villes.

L'Adhir de Ziri,21 au pied du Kef Lakhdar ne possède à l'heure actuelle qu'une source, encore celle-ci coule-t-elle au Sud et à un kilomètre des ruines et ne connaît elle qu'un faible débit. Pourtant, le palais que nous allons étudier révèle certains travaux d'hydraulique qui laissent supposer que l'eau y était amenée, peut-être du sommet du Kef Lakhdar; celle de Buluggîn (Bénia), par contre, possède des sources dont quelques-unes ont gardé les noms donnés par al-Bakri.

Adhir, la cité de Buluggîn. Ainsi, en 364 ou 367 soit 974 ou 977–78, Buluggîn aurait construit une deuxième cité à côté de celle de son père. Or, à cette date, le fils de Ziri était déjà investi comme lieutenant des Fatimides à Kairouan.22 Quelles raisons le

19 Ibn al-Atîr, trad., p. 373. La texte arabe de Kâmîl est ainsi rédigé:

فرجل الیم فیریاوا واقع علی تلمان فی رسانه مداه تم زوالا علی حکم
فلت عنهم إلا آنھ قلیم علی مدریت ایشہ فی نموت مدریت سووھا تلمان


21 Il est curieux de noter qu'al-Bakri emploie cette expression, cf. trad., p. 162.

poussent à se créer une capitale au Mağrib Central? Comment ne pas être surpris de constater qu'à peine installé dans les somptueux palais de Şabra-Manṣûriya, à proximité de l'opulente Kairouan dont il est le maître, il songe encore au pays des âieux et s'y batit une cité? Ne croirait-il pas en sa fortune? Se préparerait-il un lieu de retraite en cas de retour des Fâtimides? Sans doute cette conduite troublante éclaire-t-elle le rôle qu'il entend jouer. A Kairouan, il n'est que le lieutenant des Fâtimides, à Adhîr, il est réellement souverain. En Ifriqiya, il se plie aux exigences de ses maîtres, mais il sait leur résister dès qu'ils émettent quelques préventions sur les gens de sa tribu, il est le maître absolu des Şanhâga. Enfin, la région a conservé toute son importance stratégique dans la lutte contre l'ennemi Zanàta et Buluggin n'a pas encore songé à déléguer une partie de son pouvoir à des parents pour garantir la sauvegarde du Mağrib Central.

En tout état de cause, une étude des lieux s'impose. À l'heure actuelle, une vue aérienne révèle de façon saisissante la disposition de la ville. De plan rectangulaire déformé par la nécessité de suivre les courbes de niveau, la cité est ceinturée d'une muraille très visible sur les clichés et qui parait renforcée par des pilliers contreforts disposés à égale distance les uns des autres. La longueur totale de ce rectangle est d'environ 800 m. et sa largeur 400 à 500 m. À la partie Ouest, s'ouvre une porte en dichane à laquelle devait aboutir un étroit chemin escaladant les flancs abrupts de la montagne où l'on distingue nettement les couches horizontales de terrain. Sur la face Nord devait également s'ouvrir une seconde porte beaucoup plus accessible bien qu'elle donne, elle aussi, sur une dépression de terrain assez prononcée. Le côté Est demeure confus en raison de constructions récentes qui ont endommagé l'ancienne muraille. Toutefois, celle-ci se devine assez bien encore, mais il est difficile de savoir s'il y avait une porte (ce qui est probable) et où se trouvait cette issue. Enfin, la muraille du Sud n'offre aucune solution de continuité sauf vers sa partie Est où elle se perd dans les constructions nouvelles et les terrains cultivés. Il est fort probable qu'il y avait, à cette partie également, une porte donnant passage à un second quartier de la ville constituant une sorte d'annexe, elle aussi ceinturée de murailles et montant à l'assaut d'un piton qu'elle escalade jusqu'au sommet et dont elle épouse la forme, d'où ce plan curviligne et effilé qui affecte grossièrement la forme d'un entonnoir. On peut noter, au sommet du piton, les ruines d'une tour ronde qui devait être une tour à signaux (Manâr). Les restes d'une tour ronde semblable sont également apparents à l'angle N-E de la muraille. Il semble que la ville n'ait d'abord compris que l'enceinte rectangulaire, la seconde partie ayant été ajoutée par la suite pour relier sans doute la cité à un ouvrage militaire construit au sommet du piton. Ainsi pourrait s'expliquer le fait que la muraille rectangulaire est à peu près fermée, la partie supérieure annexe venant s'y accoller. On peut encore supposer que ce nouveau quartier ait servi de résidence principale. On sait combien les chefs aiment vivre en dehors de la populace (le palais de

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23 On sait que, en 981, les Fâtimides avaient demandé à Yûsuf Buluggin de lui envoyer mille guerriers Şanhâgiens, le chef berbère refusa nettement, quoi qu'en termes mesurés, Bayân, trad., p. 349.
Zîrî illustre bien cette tendance), loin des regards curieux ou réprobateurs. Nous nous rappellerons encore que les habitants actuels de Bénia donnent à ce quartier le nom de Dar al-Sulṭân.

On croit pouvoir discerner, sur la photographie aérienne, une ligne Est-Ouest qui aurait pu être une voie principale traversant toute la cité ainsi qu’un autre axe plus confus allant de la porte Sud vers la muraille Nord. Presque à l’intersection de ces voies, on remarque le plan d’un édifice qui n’est autre qu’une mosquée. Enfin, nous signalerons l’existence de sources à l’intérieur même de l’ancienne cité.

Il est souhaitable que des fouilles sérieuses soient conduites un jour sur ce site historique et qu’elles nous permettent de mieux connaître la civilisation des Zîrides au Magrib Central. On peut craindre toutefois que les travaux soient très difficiles, voire impossibles en raison des cultures et des constructions qui couvrent toute la superficie de la ville ancienne. Seule la partie supérieure, et sans doute la mosquée, pourraient être prospectées.

La valeur du site est indéniable. Utilisant un plateau légèrement incliné du Sud vers le Nord et bordé à l’Ouest et au Nord par un ravin assez escarpé, la ville est protégée au Sud par une arête montagneuse qui s’érige en pointe difficile à escalader. Seule la partie Est paraît assez accessible, mais nous savons que, de ce côté, un peu plus à l’Est, le chemin d’accès passe entre deux sommets et que ce défilé peut être, le cas échéant, tenu par quelques hommes courageux.24

Construite par ailleurs à plus de 1000 m. d’altitude, abondamment pourvue d’eau, Achîr peut constituer une station estivale appréciable, surtout lorsqu’on sort du climat torride de Kairouan, et l’on comprend alors le désir de Buluggîn de venir y respirer, dès qu’il le peut, loin des soucis de la grande ville et de ses intrigues perpétuelles, loin des querelles religieuses ou des revendications d’une milice turbulente, loin des charges d’une mission d’autant plus du Kef Lakhdar, Rodet notait trois emplaidélicates à mener que les ordres du Caire viennent contrarier ou contrecarrer son action. À Achîr, Buluggîn se retrouve au milieu des siens, il n’est plus le provincial gauche, perdu au milieu des subtilités d’une cour raffinée et d’une bourgeoisie orgueilleuse de ses richesses matérielles, intellectuelles ou spirituelles.

LE PALAIS DE ZÎRÎ À ACHÎR

A la recherche d’Achîr. Dès le milieu du dix-neuvième siècle, quelques voyageurs ou fonctionnaires avaient signalé l’existence de ruines qu’ils identifiaient avec Achîr ou même avec les deux Achîr. Ainsi, dans une note annexée à la traduction d’al-Nuwayrî par de Slane, réédition Casanova, Berbrugger signalait que les premiers et deux Juillet 1850, puis au mois d’Août 1852, il avait eu l’occasion de parcourir le Titteri et de rechercher les ruines d’Achîr au pied de Kef Lakhdar. Il croyait pouvoir identifier la cité des Zîrides dans les vestiges visibles au sol qui se trouvaient au sommet d’un pic rocheux, emplacement connu sous le nom de Menza bent es-Soltan (sic), mais dès cette époque, Berbrugger était persuadé de l’existence de deux Achîr et il voyait la

24 al Bakrî, trad., p. 126.
deuxième cité un peu plus au Nord, à une altitude légèrement inférieure.  

Quelques années plus tard, Chabassière, en 1869, explorait à son tour la région et établissait un relevé rapide des lieux. Pourtant, la prospection la plus sérieuse fut celle du capitaine Rodet en 1908. Après avoir minutieusement examiné tous les environs du Kef Lakhdar, Rodet notait trois emplacements où apparaissaient des ruines importantes: Menzeh bent es-Soltan, Yachir ou el-Achîr et Bénia. Le premier emplacement se trouve à 10 km au N.N.E. d’Aïn Boucif, le second à 12 km. E.N.E. de la même ville actuelle, enfin Bénia à 2 km au Sud de Yachir.

Menzeh bent es-Soltan, au sommet ou plutôt sur l’arête d’un piton dressé sur la plaine et cependant dominé par le Kef Lakhdar, compte 276 m. long sur 25 m. de large. C’est manifestement une sorte de château-fort dont on aperçoit les traces d’une tour de guet. Comme l’a si bien vu G. Marçais, ce ne peut être une ville.

La superficie de Yachir estimée par Rodet serait de 15 hectares environ.

Enfin, le même auteur donnait à Bénia où il avait noté le mur d’enceinte et un bâtiment qu’il pensait être un hammâm, une superficie de 15 hectares environ.

Ces estimations semblent assez voisines de la réalité.

Rodet tirait alors de ses constatations les conclusions suivantes: Menzeh bent es-Soltan fut la première cité refuge de Zirî ou de ses fils, Yachir ou El-Achîr fut la première capitale et Bénia la seconde, la véritable Achîr de l’histoire, celle que décrit al-Bakrî.

Vers 1922, G. Marçais parcourait à son tour la contrée et dans un article qui fait toujours école, il mettait les choses au point. Admettant les conclusions de Rodet qu’il précise en serrant de plus près les textes historiques, il rectifie certaines erreurs, celle notamment de l’identification du hammâm qui n’est autre que la mosquée.

Cependant aucune fouille ne fut entreprise et sans doute les choses auraient-elles continué ainsi sans un heureux hasard qui devait à nouveau attirer l’attention des archéologues sur Achîr. Un jeune géographe, assistant à la Faculté des Lettres d’Alger, M. Tabuteau, ayant entrepris une étude approfondie de la région du Titteri devait, en parcourant attentivement à pied la montagne et la plaine, découvrir, au lieu dit Beniat al-Rahmoûn, tout un ensemble cohérent de ruines dont les hauts de murs apparaissaient nettement sur un petit plateau, à quelques centaines de mètres à l’Est de Yachir. Il effectuait un croquis rapide et dessinait une pierre sculptée, trop lourde pour qu’il ait pu la transporter et il faisait part de sa découverte à G. Marçais qui classa immédiatement ces données dans un contexte musulman. Je fus également consulté, et, accompagné de mes collègues, Le Tourneau et Tabuteau, j’allai examiner sur place la découverte. Occupé à ce moment aux fouilles de la Qal’a, je disposais de quelques crédits et d’un chef de chantier que je résolus à déplacer momentanément. Par ailleurs, je dus la bonne fortune d’obtenir le concours d’un chantier de charité.

\[Ibid., p. 31.\]
mis à ma disposition par l'Administrateur
d'Aïn Boucif, les travaux purent alors
être commencés sans perte de temps et, le 13
Mars 1954, le premier coup de pioche était
donné. Les fouilles devaient dès lors se poursuivre régulièrement, menées par une équipe
de 25 ouvriers outillés de pelles et de pioches et de brochettes aménées au prix de gran-
des difficultés, jusqu'au 31 Mai, soit pendant
deux mois et demi. Le chantier reprit en
1955, du premier Mars au 31 Mai, puis du
premier Novembre au 31 Décembre, enfin
en 1956, après trois mois de travaux, il fallut se replier et abandonner en raison des évènements. A cette date, tout le palais de
Zirî était exhumé, à l'exception d'une cham-
bre, mais, contrairement à mes désirs, aucun sondage n'avait pu être entrepris à Bénia.

Le palais de Zirî. Le petit plateau sur
lequel l'ensemble architectural en ruines a pu être découvert se trouve au pied de la mur-
aille abrupte du Kef Lakhdar Chergui. Il se compose d'une plate-forme bordée à sa partie méridionale par un degré du même genre en contrebas. Ainsi arrive-t-on jusqu'à un bouquet d’arbres et une petite ferme de fellah. A l'Est et à l'Ouest, ce terrain est étroitement bordé par le lit encaissé de deux ouedés déséchés constituant un système de protection naturelle.

Aspect général. L'ensemble des construc-
tions forme un vaste rectangle de 72 m.
de longueur sur 40 m. de largeur. A environ
30 m. de la muraille méridionale, on distin-
gue les fondations d'un mur rectiligne bor-
dant la plate forme. Peut-être s'agit-il d'une barbacane?

À l'intérieur du quadrilatère composé
de gros murs d'une épaisseur moyenne d'un
mètre, de nombreuses pièces se répartissent très régulièrement autour de cinq cours. Celle du centre A, barlonge, compte
22,50 m. sur 23,60 m., les autres B, B', C
et C', entre 9 et 10 mètres. Le mur d'en-
ceinte se découpe par endroits, et régulière-
ment, de piliers comptant de 1 à 2 m. de
largeur ou de décrochements plus impor-
tants, symétriques, répartis par rapport à l'axe Nord-Sud. Les angles se renforcent
de gros piliers carrés, massifs, de 2 m. en-
viron de côté.

L'appareil. L'appareil de la construc-
tion s'avère particulièrement remarquable. Les assises de la porte en avant-corps sont
constituées par d'énormes pierres de taille (fig. 12) qui évoquent l'appareil romain.
C'est une impression analogue que provo-
que la belle maçonnerie des murailles, sur-
tout sur la façade Sud où les pierres con-
venablement équarries, sont disposées en
couches imbriquées fort régulièrement,
constituant un très beau parement (figs. 13
et 14). Tous les autres murs sont appareillés
de moellons taillés, jointés par un bon ci-
ment de chaux et d'argile qui a ré sisté con-
venablement aux intempéries (fig. 15). En
général, les murs sont montés avec le plus
grand soin, on admirera leur régularité et
leur aplomb. Le même souci de perfection
se rencontre dans le tracé des angles, tous
de face. Généralement, le ciment affleure
à peine la maçonnerie, mais en d'autres
endroits, il forme saillie. Quelques traces de
revêtement de plâtre subsistent dans l'intérieur des pièces. Enfin, les murs de la
façade principale s'ouvrait sur la cour
étaient recouverts en partie par un placage
de pierre taillée et décorée que nous étudie-
rons plus loin.
L’enceinte extérieure. Toutes les constructions sont circonscrites par un épaiss mur d’enceinte renforcé de piliers en saillie disposés très régulièrement sur la façade principale, mais avec moins de régularité sur les autres côtés. Chacun des angles du vaste quadrilatère sont renforcés par de gros piliers carrés de 2 m. de côté. À certains endroits, on peut trouver la trace de gorges verticales disposées avec un réel souci de symétrie où pouvait passer un tuyau de descente des eaux de pluie. On note également des conduits d’évacuation traversant la façade Sud.

Au milieu de ce long mur, une porte de 2,15 m. de large avance en avant-corps de 3,30 m. au delà du mur d’enceinte. Elle s’ouvrait à l’intérieur d’un bloc de maçonnerie de 9,27 m. de largeur. On ne possède plus que les énormes blocs d’assise de cette porte monumentale; ils sont très soigneusement équarris sur leurs faces externes, mais laissés bruts vers l’intérieur où nous n’avons pas trouvé de traces de maçonnerie, mais une sorte de dallage de terre qui laisse supposer que le bloc de la porte n’était appareillé que sur les faces. L’état actuel de cette construction ne permet pas d’imaginer son aspect définitif si ce n’est par comparaison avec d’autres monuments contemporains, telle la porte monumentale de la mosquée fātimide de Mahdiya. (Nous aurons l’occasion d’en reparler.)

On remarquera sur les côtés du grand quadrilatère d’enceinte de larges décrochements rectangulaires d’environ 5 m. de large et formant une saillie de 1,50 m. sur le mur. Deux décrochements analogues et disposés très symétriquement par rapport à l’axe général de l’ensemble, forment saillies sur le mur Nord, mais la caractéristique la plus curieuse est cette vaste excroissance qui constitue une véritable pièce annexe en dehors de toutes les autres constructions. Ce bloc, inscrit dans un carré ou plutôt dans un quadrilatère, compte 8,90 m. de large pour 6,30 m. de profondeur, mais deux retraits d’environ 2 m. de large transformant le plan barlong en deux rectangles superposés, celui du dessus ne comptant que 5,20 m. de long.

L’aspect intérieur du palais. Si l’on pénètre par la seule issue, c’est-à-dire la porte en avant-corps orientée vers le Sud, on se trouve engagé dans une sorte de tunnel bordé vraisemblablement dès l’entrée par deux niches dont nous n’avons cepen- dant aucune trace puisque nous sommes au niveau extrême des fondations. Par contre, nous trouvons en place les deux portes que le visiteur voyait un peu plus loin à sa droite et à sa gauche. Ces deux issues se faisant vis-à-vis conduisaient à des sortes de cellules de 3,25 m. sur 2,60 m. Sans doute s’agit-il là de corps de garde. En avançant davantage, le visiteur aboutissait à une impasse qui l’obligeait à un retour en arrière où il avait le choix entre deux voies: celle de droite où s’ouvrait une large porte de 2,50 m., celle de gauche qui ne comptait que 0,90 m. de large. Toutes deux conduisaient à des pièces de formes identiques mais de dimensions légèrement différentes. La salle b de 3 m. de large pour une longueur de 4,50 m. donnait dans la cour centrale A par une porte de 1 m. de large; la salle b’ qui ne compte que 2,65 m. de large pour une longueur de 4,50 m. don- nait à son tour accès à la cour centrale par une porte de 1,95 m. de large. On peut imaginer que ces différences entre les larges des portes permettaient de faire pé- nétrer les cavaliers par la droite, ce qui serait plus difficile en empruntant la gauche.
Au flanc des diverses pièces précédemment décrites, deux longues salles rectangulaires c et c' comportent des piliers qui la divisent en trois parties. Il faut y voir, selon toute vraisemblance, des supports d'arcs doubleaux qui devaient soutenir un berceau. On remarquera que la salle c ne compte que deux de ces piliers tandis qu'il y en a 4 en c' ; les dimensions totales de ces deux pièces sont de 7,50 m. sur 3,40 m. à 3,60 m. Les portes d'entrée mesurant 1,20 m. de largeur. À l'intérieur, les intervalles entre les piliers sont irréguliers, allant de 2,60 m. à 1,40 m. Le sol se trouve en contrebas de 1 m. à 1,50 m. sur le niveau des autres pièces. Enfin, dans la salle c, une conduite, taillée verticalement dans la muraille et dans laquelle on a découvert des tuyaux de terre cuite, laisse supposer que ces pièces, symétriquement disposées par rapport à l'entrée, servaient de citernes alimentées par l'impulsion des toits. Les deux corridors d et d' dont la plus grande largeur ne dépasse pas 1,50 m. et par lesquels on accède par des portes de 0,95 m. conduisent à deux réduits e et e' mesurant respectivement 4 m. sur 3 m. et 3 m. sur 3,10 m. Un caniveau venant de la grande cour A et qui très vraisemblablement servait à l'évacuation des eaux de pluie, défonce le sol dallé et aboutit au fond des pièces d et d' a une banquette percée d'une saignée prolongée par un conduit souterrain (fig. 17). Il s'agit vraisemblablement de latrines. Mais les eaux d'évacuation pouvaient également être dérivées, par un canal étroit, vers les pièces e et e' dont le centre forme une sorte de bassin carré de 30 cm. de profondeur. Les eaux qui passent sur le dallage du bassin sont ensuite rejetées au dehors par un conduit qui traverse le mur d'enceinte. Les chambres f et f' de dimensions respectives suivantes: 6,50 m. sur 3,92 m. pour f et 7,85 m. sur 3,10 m. pour f' semblent compléter ce groupe de salles qu'on imagine destinées aux gardes du corps du prince.

La cour centrale, en pente assez accentuée du Nord vers le Sud, se présente sous la forme d'un vase quadrilatère bordé d'un trottoir de 0,70 m. de large sur les côtés et de 0,95 m. de large sur la partie Nord, devant la grande salle à trois portes. Ce trottoir compte une hauteur moyenne de 0,25 m. Sur la partie Sud, une galerie de 2,25 m. de large est limitée par une belle allée de douze colonnes dont nous possédons toutes les bases, quatre fûts et trois chapiteaux.

Posés sur des piédestaux scellés en terre, de 0,54 m. de côté, les socles, d'une hauteur totale de 30 cm., comprennent: une partie inférieure de section carrée comptant 0,48 m. de côté et 0,11 m. de hauteur, un tore de 0,25 m., puis un listel de 0,38 m. de diamètre pour une largeur de 0,02 m., une scotie de 0,05 m. de haut (parfois remplacée par une gorge), enfin, un listel de 0,02 m. supportant une plate bande de 0,38 m. de diamètre et de 0,05 m. d'épaisseur.

Les colonnes mesurent 2,10 m. pour une section moyenne de 0,33 m. de diamètre; elles se terminent d'un bout par un listel de 0,05 m. de largeur formant un angle droit avec le fût et, à l'autre extrémité, par un second listel semblable au précédent, mais relié au fût par un congé. Cette extrémité devait se trouver à la partie supérieure de la colonade et supporter le chapiteau dont il sera question plus loin.

Les autres pièces qui bordent la cour A de chaque côté: g et b, à l'Ouest, g' et b' à l'Est, comptent respectivement 10 m. sur 2,40 m. (grande largeur) et 2,75 m. (petite largeur) pour g, 9,65 m. sur 2,40 m. (petite
largeur 2,75 m.) pour g', 10,35 m. sur 2,50 m. (petite largeur 2,90 m.) pour h', enfin 10,40 m. sur 2,40 m. (petite largeur 3 m.) pour h'. Ces pièces comportent un décrochement sur leurs petits côtés. Elles apparaissent ainsi plus somptueuses que les précédentes et semblent constituer des pièces d'habitation, voire de réception.

Enfin, on arrive au fond de la cour A vers la très longue antisalle rectangulaire à trois issues sur la façade Sud; sur le mur du fond et en face de la porte centrale, une véritable chambre annexe s'ouvre largement par une très large porte qui a dû toujours être béante. Le plan de cette salle est des plus curieux, il affecte la forme d'une croix dont les angles vers le Nord sont adoucis par une série de décrochements où l'on peut imaginer des colonnettes engagées. Nous ne pouvons douter qu'il s'agisse là de la pièce d'apparat, de celle où le maître reçoit en véritable souverain, ce que certains archéologues n'ont pas hésité à baptiser ailleurs salle du trône.29

L'antisalle j qui possède deux niches largement ouvertes à ses deux extrémités mesure 17 m. sur 3,25 m. (grande largeur) et 2,70 m. (petite largeur). Les trois portes qui donnent accès à la cour comptent, d'Ouest en Est: 1,25 m., 1,75 m. et 1,25 m.

de large. Elles sont séparées par des intervalles de 2,85 m.

La partie k s'enfonce de 6 m. vers le Nord, elle mesure 6,50 m. dans sa plus grande largeur. L'entrée, en forme d'îwan à 5,10 m. de large, les trois décrochements qui adoucissent les angles donnent davantage d'espace libre au centre. Cette pièce cruciforme se révèle ainsi de belle dimension puisqu'elle compte une superficie de 28,750 m². Sa forme générale nous conduit à prime abord à penser qu'elle était couverte d'une coupole qui ajoutait encore à sa majesté. Nous verrons plus loin qu'en fait, il est impossible de construire une telle coupole faute de base carrée. Nous ne pouvons douter également de la présence d'un décor dont nous n'avons trouvé que très peu de vestiges en plâtre.

Comment ne pas évoquer, en présence de cette belle combinaison de salle et d'antisalle, le cérémonial qui présidait aux audiences des Califes Umayyades à Damas? Se référant comme il convient aux textes arabes les plus sûrs, voici comment J. Sauvaget nous rapporte quelques unes de ces cérémonies:

L'accès auprès du calife n'est pas libre, même pour ses familiers. Si le Prince des Croyants désire rester seul, ou faire la sieste, sa porte reste close et nul ne peut pénétrer jusqu'à lui. S'il veut recevoir, les visiteurs doivent se faire annoncer et demander à être introduits sous une forme qui permette au souverain de savoir exactement à qui il a affaire et attendre devant la porte l'autorisation de pénétrer, qui peut être refusée. Suivant son humeur, le calife réserve à ses familiers le droit d'être reçu, ou l'étend à tous ceux qui se présentent... Annoncer les visiteurs, les introduire, interdir au besoin «à coups de sabre» l'entrée à ceux qui se sont vus refuser l'audience; tel est le rôle du chambellan (hājib) qui paraît à la cour dès le temps de Mo'āwiya.

Dans la salle où il reçoit, le calife se place au fond et dans l'axe du local (ji ṣadr al-majlis), en
face de l’entrée principale. Là, il est assis sur un lit (sāwīr), à côté duquel des parfums brûlent dans des cassolettes. Il a en main une baguette (qadīb) qui se confondait sans doute à l’origine avec le bâton dont l’Arabe des premiers âges ne se séparait jamais, pas plus que le Bédouin actuel ne quitte le sien... Devant lui est tendu un rideau...

Un faste encore plus grand semble avoir présidé les audiences des Califes ‘abbāsidès et l’on sait également combien l’étiquette était rigoureusement réglée chez les Fātimides. Ce faste sera, à n’en pas douter, perpétué (et on peut même se demander s’il ne fut pas encore accru) par les Zirides de Kairouan. Sans aller jusqu’à prétendre que Zirīl dans sa montagne avait déjà établi un cérémonial comparable à celui de la cour califale, on peut supposer qu’il vit en monarque à Ādhrī, et qu’à ce titre, il est assez peu accessible à ses sujets. On admettrait très bien que seuls quelques privilégiés ont accès jusqu’à l’antisalle et que là ils attendent le bon vouloir du maître pour être admis en sa présence.

Les quatre ensembles architecturaux qui se répartissent symétriquement de part et d’autre de la cour offrent de nettes ressemblances. Les cours B et B’ ont sensiblement les mêmes dimensions: 10,25 m. de côté pour B et 9,50 m. sur 9,80 m. pour B’. Elles sont bordées au Nord par une pièce principale (I et I’) à décrochements dont un, central, forme saillie sur le mur d’enceinte. Leurs dimensions respectives: 13,15 m. sur 2,80 m. (largeur moyenne) 2,85 m., petite largeur pour I et 13,20 m. sur 2,85 m. (largeur moyenne) 2,30 m. petite largeur pour I’ leur confèrent un étrange air de parenté. La partie en saillie dans le mur Nord, mesure 1,45 m. sur 2,30 m. pour I et 1,50 m. sur 2,45 m. pour I’. A l’Ouest de la cour B et à l’Est de B’, se trouvent les chambres n et n’ qui comptent respectivement 8,30 m. sur 2,80 m. pour n et 8,20 m. sur 2,80 m. pour n’. A l’Est de B et à l’Ouest de B’, les pièces o et o’ mesurent 5,60 m. sur 2,30 m. pour o et 6 m. sur 2,40 m. pour o’. Enfin au Sud des deux cours, les pièces p et p’ complètent l’ensemble et mesurent 7,30 m. sur 2,80 m. pour p et 6,50 m. sur 2,80 m. pour p’.

On notera les réduits m (4,80 m. sur 2,35 m.) et m’ (4,95 m. sur 2,43 m.) qui communiquent avec la cour C, q (2,80 m. sur 2,15 m.) et q’ (2,80 m. au carré) tout en donnant sur un étroit couloir et qui paraissent avoir servi de latrines, r et r’ que l’on pourrait identifier comme des cages d’escalier enfin les larges couloirs s et s’ de 2,30 m. (s) et 2,38 m. (s’) qui font communiquer les ensembles B et B’ à C et C’ et à la grande cour par les couloirs t et t’ 2,28 m. de large.

Même disposition pour les cours C et C’ qui mesurent 9,25 m. sur 10,50 m. pour C et 9,40 m. sur 11,55 m. pour C’ où nous trouvons les deux grandes pièces à décrochements u et u’ de 14,85 m. sur 2,85 m. (largeur moyenne) et 2,30 m. de petite largeur pour u puis 14,60 m. sur 2,90 m. (largeur moyenne) et 2,45 m. de petite largeur pour u’, les décrochements comptant respectivement: 2,25 m. sur 1,40 m. pour u et 2,45 m. sur 1,50 m. pour u’. Correspon-

31 D. Sourdel, Questions..., pp. 121–148.
dant à p et p', nous trouvons w et w' de dimensions voisines: 5,70 m. sur 2,35 m. pour w et 6,02 m. sur 2,38 m. pour w'; par ailleurs o et o' correspondent à v (6,45 m. sur 2,70 m.) et v' (6,25 m. sur 2,80 m.); à n et n' on voit correspondre x (7,70 m. sur qu'à m et m' correspondent a et a' (2,30 m. 2,82 m.) et x' (7,35 m. sur 2,85 m.) tandis sur 4,80 m.) et qu'à q et q' correspondent z (2,80 m. sur 2,80 m.) et z' (2,85 m. sur 2,75 m.), enfin à r et r' correspondent les escaliers y et y' dont nous avons pu retrouver quelques marches.

Tout, dans cet ensemble, dénote donc un grand souci d'équilibre, une juste répartition des pièces déterminant quatre appartements en tous points semblables destinés vraisemblablement à des personnes du même rang.

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**LES CARACTÉRISTIQUES ESSENTIELLES DU PALAIS DE ZIRĪ À ACHĪR**

Plusieurs particularités confèrent à ce bel ensemble architectural, d'une symétrie singulièrement recherchée, un intérêt de premier ordre. Ce sont:

— Une enceinte rectangulaire renforcée aux angles et à intervalles réguliers par des piliers de maçonnerie.

— Une entrée en avant-corps et en chicané.

— Une grande cour autour de laquelle se distriuent diverses belles pièces dont l'une précédée d'une antaisale se trouve dans l'axe de la porte et semble constituer une salle de réception.

— Quatre cours secondaires autour desquelles s'ordonnent diverses pièces dont une principale comporte un défoncement faisant saillie sur le mur extérieur.

**L'enceinte générale.** Cette disposition, qui semble être prévue pour la défense, est courante dans l'architecture des palais musulmans au Moyen Age. On remarquera qu'aucune ouverture, en dehors de la porte d'entrée, ne vient percer ce mur d'enceinte.

Les palais 'abbasides et plus encore ceux de la période des Umayyades de Syrie se présentent sous cet aspect, mais le mur d'enceinte qui ne comprend dans tous les cas qu'une seule porte d'entrée est renforcé aux angles et sur les côtés soit par des piliers ronds soit, comme ici, par des piliers carrés; à vrai dire extrêmement rares. De telles enceintes évoquent tout naturellement les plans des forteresses byzantines dont l'Afrique du Nord nous offre tant de spécimens.34

**La porte d'entrée en avant-corps et en chicané.** À la suite des fouilles entreprises en 1908 par le Général de Beylié à la Qal'a des Banū Ḫammād, G. Marçais, d'accord avec Saladin, établissait un parallèle entre les entrées en avant-corps trouvées au Qāṣr al-Bahr et le porche d'entrée de la grande mosquée de Mahdiya.35 Nous pouvons

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pousser plus loin encore ce parallèle en partant de la porte en avant-corps du palais de Ziri à Achîr.

L’entrée de ce palais compte 9,27 m. de large et avance de 3,30 m. sur le mur d’enceinte. La porte proprement dite a 2,15 m. de large au niveau des fondations. Pour sa part, le porche de la mosquée de Mahdiya mesure 7,50 m. de large, et il avance de 2,50 m. sur le mur d’enceinte. L’entrée proprement dite compte 2,90 m. de large. On constate ainsi que le monument construit à Achîr est plus imposant que celui de Mahdiya.

En appliquant à Achîr les proportions du porche de Mahdiya on est conduit à supposer une hauteur peut-être supérieure à 11 mètres. Cette constatation, jointe à la présence d’escaliers dans chacun des appartements, semble attester l’existence d’un étage.

Un essai de restitution purement hypothétique s’inspire à la fois du porche de Mahdiya (proportions et niches), du décor trouvé sur place devant cette porte, enfin du décor du minaret de la Qal’a (début du onzième siècle).

La porte franchie, on trouve une chicane qui oblige à passer en retrait, soit à droite en $b'$, soit à gauche en $b$ pour pénétrer dans la cour. Cette disposition particulière est tout à fait semblable à celle du palais d’al-Qâ’im à Mahdiya. Ce n’est pas là un simple hasard et si l’on considère que la date de construction du palais du fils du Mahdi est à peu près contemporaine de celle du palais de Ziri, la phrase d’al-Nuwayri prend une singulièr[e] valeur. Nous croyons pouvoir affirmer que l’architecte de Mahdiya et celui du palais de Ziri ne font qu’une seule personne. Ce palais pourrait ainsi offrir un document complet sur l’architecture des Fâtimides en Ifriqiya.

Est-il possible de déceler l’origine de ce thème architectural? G. Marçais, en étudiant le beau porche de Mahdiya, avait pensé à des emprunts possibles à l’art romain local qui offre, encore de nos jours, de nombreux arcs de triomphe (Timgad et Djémila entre autres). Cette opinion de- meure toujours valable; cependant, le thème de l’avant-corps est sans doute à rechercher beaucoup plus loin en Orient, comme l’a d’ailleurs suggéré le même auteur. Nous le trouvons en particulier dans l’art des ‘Abbâsides à Uhaydir et surtout dans l’art des Umayyades de Syrie, il ne serait pas étonnant que ce thème, assoriti de la chicane, plonge ses racines dans les plus lointaines civilisations sémitiques.

Les cours secondaires. Un ensemble divisé en plusieurs appartements répartis autour de cours secondaires n’est pas un thème inconnu de l’Orient musulman. On le distingue nettement à Uhaydir où quatre appartements à peu près semblables, de part et d’autre de petites cours, encadrent une grande cour centrale qui conduit à une salle d’apparat. On le devine au palais

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38 Cf. G. Lowthian-Bell, Palace and mosque at Ukhaydir, Oxford, 1911.
40 Dans mon article, Note sur les entrées ..., j’ai signalé ce type de portes dans le palais du Telo.
LE PALAIS DE ZIRĪ À ACHIR

inachevé de Mšatta\(^{42}\) ainsi qu’au Dār al-Imāra de Kūfa.\(^{43}\)

Nous allons tenter de préciser ces parentés en examinant tour à tour les divers styles qui ont pu inspirer l’architecture de Zirī. Notre progression s’efforcerà de suivre le sens inverse de l’histoire, c’est-à-dire de passer de l’époque contemporaine des Zirides à celles des civilisations musulmanes les plus éloignées du dixième siècle.

En Égypte, le début du dixième siècle marque la fin de la domination des Ťulûnides et le retour à l’autorité des ‘Abbāsides de Bagdad.

Durant leur règne très court (36 ans), les Ťulûnides ont cependant construit à Fuṣṭāt, et nous avons laissé ainsi un important témoignage de leur art, fortement influencé par celui des ‘Abbāsides.

A Fuṣṭāt, nous trouvons des maisons à cour centrale autour de laquelle se distribuent diverses pièces dont certaines, à défoncement, semblent avoir inspiré les architectures d’Ifrīqiya. Ce type de salle n’est pas sans analogie avec celui de certains ensembles architecturaux de Mésopotamie (Dār al-Imāra, Uḥaydīr etc.). G. Marçais a cru y voir un dérivé lointain de l’īwan persan,\(^{44}\) il apparaît ainsi nécessaire de remonter jusqu’en Mésopotamie et d’analyser succinctement d’abord l’art des ‘Abbāsides.


Un monument en particulier doit attirer notre attention, c’est le palais mésopotamien d’Uḥaydīr,\(^{45}\) bâti vers 764 sous le règne du calife al-Manṣūr. À Uḥaydīr, nous allons retrouver:

— Une enceinte rectangulaire fortifiée aux murs renforcés par des piliers semi-circulaires. Il s’agit de la partie la plus ancienne du palais et non du deuxième mur qui englobe tout un ensemble de constructions et cache l’ancienne façade ainsi que l’ancienne porte.

— Une grande cour rectangulaire adossée aux murs d’enceinte.

Des cours secondaires réparties de part et d’autre de la cour principale.

— Un axe central qui passe par la porte protégée par un avant-corps à tours pleines semi-circulaires, traverse la cour d’honneur pour aboutir à un ensemble dans lequel on reconnaît aisément une salle d’honneur.\(^{46}\)

— Dans la plupart des appartements distincts, on note des salles et des antisalles en forme de T qui s’apparentent sans aucun doute à celle trouvées à Fuṣṭāt.

Les mêmes caractéristiques se retrouvent au palais dit Dār al-Imāra de Kūfa, récemment exhumé.\(^{47}\)


\(^{46}\) On lira avec intérêt la théorie de Creswell sur ce thème qu’il recherche dans l’art religieux chrétien (église à absides tréflées), *A short account* …, pp. 144-147.

Ces constructions s’inspirent nettement de la tradition iranienne. Déjà, dans l’art des Sassanides, à Firuz Abad, en particulier, on pouvait noter un mur d’enceinte renforcé, une cour autour de laquelle se distribuaient différentes salles allongées, un axe central passant par une porte, puis par la cour et aboutissant à une salle de réception s’ouvrant sur la cour par une large baie, l’îwān. 48

Si la technique de construction et le décor du palais d’Uḫayhir sont de pure tradition mésopotamienne, le reste, et en particulier les piliers ronds, l’avant-corps de la porte d’entrée et la salle du trône, semblent empruntés à l’art des Umayyades, c’est-à-dire qu’il importe maintenant de jeter un coup d’œil sur l’art de cette dynastie en Syrie.

L’art des Umayyades de Syrie. Les châteaux syriens de la période des Umayyades nous offrent tous le type d’une enceinte fortifiée épaulée de tours ou de piliers généralement circulaires, plus rarement carrés, ou rectangulaires. Une porte d’entrée, souvent protégée par un avant-corps, conduit à une cour centrale autour de laquelle se distribuent diverses pièces. Tels se présentent la plupart des bâtiments du Djebel Seis que Sauvaget croit pouvoir attribuer au règne d’el Walid I. 49 L’un d’entre eux, le bâtiment $D$, 50 présente aux deux angles opposés, des pièces oblongues coudées à angle droit (fig. 32) qui sont interprétées comme étant des cages d’escalier conduisant à un étage.


C’est peut-être cependant au Qaṣr al-Ḥarāna et au Qaṣr al-Ṭuba que nous pourrons trouver le plus d’éléments de comparaisons. Le Qaṣr al-Ḥarāna, qui est attribué à al-Walid I (vers 710), présente un étage, une cour à galeries autour de laquelle se distribuent divers appartements, pièces s’ouvrant sur une vaste salle dont le plan fait songer à des cours secondaires, une porte en avant-corps dans l’axe de laquelle on rencontre la cour et la salle d’honneur dont le fond est protégé par un pilier semi-

50 Sauvaget, ibid., fig. 8, p. 248.
52 Cf. Stern, Notes ..., fig. 1, d’ap Schlumberger, fig. 2, d’ap Baramki.
circulaire faisant saillie sur le mur extérieur.
Quant au Qaṣr al-Ṭuba, sa forme rectangulaire ne manque pas de ressembler étrangement à celle du palais de Zirī. Il est vrai, qu'en fait, il s'agit de deux palais carrés accolés.
Nous retiendrons, outre le mur d'en-contre, l'avant-corps rectangulaire des portes, les vastes cours centrales, la distribution des pièces des divers appartements autour de vastes salles pouvant jouer le rôle de cour. Cependant, il faut noter que ce palais ne comporte pas de salle « du trône. »
Nous avons dit précédemment ce que l'art des 'Abbāsides devait à celui des Umayyades, mais il serait bon, maintenant, de voir ce que ce dernier doit aux Sassanides. En fait, l'influence sasanide s'exerçait en Syrie avant même la conquête musulmane, elle se faisait sentir dans l'art chrétien de la période byzantine,53 elle ne fera que s'accroître lorsque les musulmans seront maîtres de la Syrie et de la Perse, c'est-à-dire, dès le milieu du septième siècle.
On pourra noter tout d'abord que l'axe sur lequel nous avons déjà attiré, à diverses reprises, l'attention, est, dans l'art des 'Abbāsides, à Uḥaydir notamment, beaucoup plus près de ceux des palais umayyades cités que de Firuz Abad.
H. Stern54 a marqué également la parenté des portes en avant-corps du style umayyade et de celles connues dans l'art des Sassanides, en particulier au Qaṣr i-ṣirin. Le même auteur fait encore dériver la forme des salles « du trône, » si connues dans l'art umayyade, de celles de certains

54 Stern, Notes . . ., p. 93.

palais sassanides, tels ceux de Damghan et de Kish, cette dernière n'étant pas sans ressemblance d'ailleurs avec celle du palais de Zirī. Il reconnaît cependant l'originalité du plan des palais umayyades qui, à son avis, ignorent les cours intérieures des appartements particuliers et s'appuient ainsi sur une tradition syrienne évidente.55 Pourtant, la disposition de ces appartements lui semble de pur style persan.
Il est à craindre que H. Stern ne se soit cependant laissé emporter par un évident désir de tout ramener à l'art des Sassanides. Est-ce par réaction contre les divers auteurs enclins à postuler l'originalité du style umayyade et sa tradition syrienne? Quoi qu'il en soit, nous devons constater que si, par divers aspects, notre palais s'apparente sans conteste à l'art des umayyades, il semble beaucoup plus près de l'art des 'Abbāsides, notamment de celui du palais d'Uḥaydir qui procède très vraisemblablement du Dār al-Imāra de Kūfa (638 J.C.).
L'architecte du palais de Zirī, peut-être également auteur du palais d'al-Qa'im à Mahdiya, est sans doute un oriental. Il a néanmoins su composer avec divers styles qu'il connaît apparemment. Il emprunte la forme des grandes salles à défoncement à l'art des Tūlūnides, la porte en avant-corps dont l'axe traverse une grande cour et une salle dite « du trône » à l'art des Umayyades, enfin, la multiplication des appartements distribués autour d'une vaste

55 La question de l'existence de cours annexes dans l'architecture des Umayyades n'est pas résolue. Jaussen et Savignac croient que, en raison de leurs vastes dimensions (parfois 14 m. de côté) les salles centrales se trouvaient à ciel ouvert. Stern, lui, est affirmatif, il n'y avait pas de cours et la pièce centrale était recouverte d'une voûte en briques.
cour centrale à l'art des Abbassides, voire à celui du plus ancien palais musulman connu en Mésopotamie (Dar al-Imâra de Küfa).

A ces larges emprunts orientaux n'aurait-il pas ajouté quelques traits originaux?

La porte conduisant à une impasse et obligeant à emprunter une chicane est, sauf erreur, inconnue des Umayyades, mais il est possible qu'elle trouve son origine dans l'art Mesopotamien, car, si on ne trouve pas ce thème au palais d'Uhaydir, il est très net dans celui dit Dar al-Imâra de Küfa, et nous pensons que c'est là une survivance d'une vieille tradition sémitique, mais on pourrait aussi penser à une tradition locale que nous présentent, notamment, de nombreuses maisons romaines.\(^56\) Ce dispositif devait se perpétuer au Magrib jusqu'à nos jours, la plupart des maisons musulmanes d'Afrique du Nord ayant conservé cette entrée indirecte qui dérobe l'intérieur de la maison aux regards indiscrets. L'ensemble rectangulaire s'éloigne des formes connues au Moyen-Orient, enfin les salles à décrochements affectent un plan assez original, bien qu'on y puisse retrouver les dispositions égyptiennes et mésopotamiennes.

Le palais de Zirî à Ashîr, brillant témoin de l'architecture des Fatimides d'Ifrîqiya, devait nécessairement influencer l'art des Hammâdides à la Qal'a des B. Hammâd. Cette cité, dont les ruines sont encore bien loin de nous être connues, constitue un deuxième jalon à un peu plus d'un siècle de distance.\(^57\) De Beylié a fait dresser d'excellents plans des monuments qu'il a exhumés: du Qasr al-Bahr et du donjon du Manâr.\(^58\) Des fouilles récentes, actuellement poursuivies, ont enrichi nos connaissances d'une série de documents relevés au Qasr al-Salâm et au palais du Manâr. Dans ces ensembles composés de groupes de bâtiments presque indépendants, nous pouvons retrouver la plupart des caractéristiques du palais de Zirî: porte en avant-corps, cour centrale et pièces se distribuant autour dont certaines sont à défoncement faisant saillie sur le mur extérieur, chicanes, mais aussi étrange que cela puisse paraître, il semble que l'art de la Qal'a doive davantage à celui des Umayyades qu'à celui des Abbassides.

La porte en avant-corps avec niches semi-cylindriques devait inspirer l'architecture des Almoravides. Nous la retrouvons au Tasghimout des Mesfouia,\(^59\) forteresse qu'il faut dater des premières années du douzième siècle, au moment où naît et se développe le mouvement almohade, mais où règnent encore les Almoravides.

Une entrée en saillie, des salles à décrochements formant une sorte de bastion sur le mur extérieur, ces thèmes se retrouvent dans l'art des Normands de Sicile qui, nous le savons, se sont inspirés de l'art des Hammâdides de Bougie et, dans une proportion qu'il est impossible à établir, de Mahdiya et de Tunis.

En Espagne, vers le milieu du douzième siècle, fut construit, à Monteagudo, près de Murcie, un palais actuellement ruiné, mais dont les murs on pu être dégagés. Connu sous le nom de Castillejo, il nous a été ré-

\(^{56}\) Cf. Golvin, Note sur les entrées . . .

\(^{57}\) Dans leur état définitif, les palais de la Qal'a semblent avoir été construits dans la deuxième moitié du onzième siècle.


vélu, par un plan assez complet de L. Torres Balbás.60 Le Castillejo de Monteagudo est de forme rectangulaire, il compte 61 m. de long sur 38 m. de large. Deux entrées se faisant vis-à-vis et placées dans l’axe central du palais sont protégées par un avant-corps, les murs extérieurs se découpent en saillies barlongues qui correspondent à des pièces de diverses dimensions. Enfin, sur les petits côtés, une salle rectangulaire formant saillie sur le mur d’enceinte, est précédée d’une longue antisse qui rappelle, par ses trois entrées, la pièce principale du palais Zirī à Achīr.

Ce thème semblait alors devenu courant. Il caractérisait très vraisemblablement les nombreux palais ou demeures construits postérieurement dont le souvenir a disparu. Faut-il voir là une inspiration des palais mağribins dont Achīr donnerait un des premiers jalons sinon le premier? Il manque malheureusement bien des maillons à cette chaîne. C’est ainsi qu’au Magrib même, les palais, construits entre le Moyen Age et le dix-septième siècle ont disparu et, partant, nous sont inconnus. Il nous faut donc essayer de retrouver cette vieille tradition dans les palais plus ou moins contemporains et dont la construction ne remonte vraisemblablement pas au-delà du dix-septième siècle.

Nous devons à Girault de Prangey les plans d’un palais beylical construit près de la Manouba (Tunisie).61 Cette construction ne remonte vraisemblablement pas au-delà du dix-huitième siècle. Il est curieux d’y remarquer de nombreux détails rappelant l’architecture de la Berbérie au dixième siècle. On remarquera notamment la disposition des pièces autour d’une cour centrale, l’axe qui passe par la porte d’entrée traverse la cour, pour aboutir à une salle d’honneur assez semblable de plan, à celle du palais de Zirī. On retiendra encore les grandes pièces dont le plan affecte la forme d’un T. Ceci semble bien indiquer le respect d’une tradition presque millénaire fort bien conservée dans le pays. L’architecture bourgeoise de Tunis, aussi bien que celle d’Alger et des villes marocaines, ne manque pas de nous offrir certains thèmes connus à Achīr, notamment les salles à décrochement si fréquentes dans toute la Tunisie, mais bien courantes également en Algérie et au Maroc. On notera, en particulier, qu’à Alger, ces pièces forment saillie sur le mur de façade, déterminant des encorbellements débordant sur la rue et supportés par une charpente de bois, il est vrai qu’on peut se demander si Alger ne doit pas en réalité beaucoup plus à l’art turc qu’à la tradition locale.62 Bien qu’ayant subi largement cette même influence turque, il est hors de doute que Tunis et les autres cités tunisiennes ont davantage conservé, avec une étonnante fidélité, une tradition locale suffisamment caractéristique pour qu’on puisse parler d’un art Ifriqien.

LE DÉCOR ARCHITECTURAL

La rareté des fragments trouvés ne nous permet guère d’avoir une idée bien exacte du décor du palais de Zirī à Achīr. Cette

60 T. Balbás, Crónica arqueologica, al-Andalus, vols. 1, 2, 3 (1934), pp. 366, 370; (1935), pp. 175-176.
indigence nous semble être le fait de la création de l'Achîr de Buluggin qui dut vraisemblablement transférer dans son propre palais tout ce qui pouvait être récupéré du bâtiment construit par son père. On a peine, en effet, à penser que Zirî qui a su s'assurer le concours d'habiles artisans n'ait pas songé à doter son palais d'un riche décor, inspiré de ceux d'Ifrîqiya voire de Sadrâta. Les quelques vestiges, malheureusement bien modestes que nous allons étudier semblent l'attester, mais, leur extrême pauvreté ne peut donner qu'un pâle reflet de la réalité.

Ce décor se résume à une succession d'arcs entrelacés, en relief, reposant sur des bandeaux verticaux (figs. 29 et 40), le tout obtenu par défoncement de la surface de la pierre. Le thème des arcs entrelacés est-il nouveau au Magrib ? Pour ma part, je n'en connais pas dans l'art des Al-Ôlabides, ni même dans celui des Fâtimides en Ifrîqiya (mais cela ne suffit pas à prouver qu'un tel décor y était inconnu).

Par contre, nous trouvons à la grande mosquée de Cordoue de tels arcs entrelacés, le plus souvent lobés dans l'agrandissement dû à al-Fâkal II (vers 965), ainsi que sur l'une des portes de la même mosquée dans cette même section.63 Quelques années plus tard (1999), on en ornera toute la façade de la petite mosquée dite de Bab al-Mardum à Tolède (Cristo de la Luz).64 Nous en avons trouvés à la Qal'a des B. Hammâd,65 et le fait que ce décor abonde en Sicile à la période normande,66 puis qu'il n'est pas inconnu au Maroc,67 nous conduit à penser que c'était là un thème courant dans l'art magribin au douzième siècle, aussi bien à Bougie que, sans doute, à Tunis (Banû 'Hurasân).

De gros blocs monolithes (figs. 41-44), en calcaire tendre trouvés non loin de l'entrée ont vraisemblablement appartenu à cette construction. Il y a tout lieu de penser qu'ils faisaient partie des pieds-droits de la porte. Ils sont moulurés, sur un de leurs angles, de rainures formées d'un tore et d'une rayure saillante (figs. 47 et 48) ou d'un cavet et d'un tore séparés par une rayure (fig. 43).

L'un d'eux (fig. 44), est creusé d'une cavité profonde dans laquelle est pratiqué un trou qui aurait fort bien pu recevoir l'extrémité d'un gond en bois. On suppose donc que cette pierre se trouvait à hauteur des fondations d'une des portes de l'entrée, sous les pieds-droits. Le seuil se serait alors emboité dans la partie évidée d'une face comme dans une mortaise (fig. 45).

Les dimensions de ces blocs et leur poids considérable peuvent donner une idée de l'importance de cette porte en avant-corps qui aurait sans doute supporté la comparaison avec certaines portes antiques confondues parfois avec des arcs de triomphe.

Nous avons également pu trouver quatre beaux chapiteaux de calcaire. La forme de deux d'entre eux, très simple, est bien connue des archéologues, elle se compose d'une corbeille lisse de 0,34 m. de diamètre à sa partie inférieure qui surmonte

64 Ibid., p. 167, fig. 192.
65 Di Stefano, Monumenti della Sicilia normanna, Palerme, 1935, notamment à Agrò, p. 26, fig. 43; Cefalù, p. 67, fig. 157; Monreale, p. 96, fig. 152; cathédrale de Palerme, p. 110, fig. 170.
66 De Beylie, La Kalaâ..., p. 64, fig. 48; p. 71, fig. 61.
une sorte de V largement ouvert, reste évi-
dent du caulicole antique qui engendre ici,
aux quatre angles formant le tailloir,
de larges feuilles lisses recourbées aux
angles; une sorte de cornet inversé occupe
du côté du tailloir et vient aboutir au
centre du V du caulicole. Le tailloir lui-
même diffère légèrement d'un chapiteau à
l'autre. L'un est amené par un bandeau
plat, l'autre par un tore légèrement au-
dessous du plan supérieur, tous deux sont
taillés en V largement ouvert et comptent
0,50 de côté.

De tels chapiteaux s'inscrivent dans un
contexte bien connu dont G. Marçais a
tracé la généalogie; on en trouve en effet
des semblables aussi bien à Šabra-Manṣūrīya
qu'à Kairouan. Nettement caractérisés, ces
chapiteaux ne font que perpétuer l'art Ifrī-
qiyen du neuvième siècle, lui-même pro-
bablement influencé par l'Égypte.

Un autre chapiteau de dimensions ana-
logues diffère sensiblement de décor. La
corbeille, lisse également, se développe à la
partie supérieure en feuilles lisses recour-
bées, souvenir lointain de l'acanthe antique;
sur les feuilles annonçant le tailloir, on
remarquera les traces du caulicole et, de
même, au milieu de chaque côté du tailloir,
le cornet apparaît amputé de la partie in-
férieure. Il coupe une moulure en forme de
tore. Plus travaillé que les précédents, ce
chapiteau semble annoncer ceux que l'on
trouvera un peu plus tard à la Qal'a des B.
Hammād.

Près de la porte en avant-corps, un
petit chapiteau de pierre a pu également
être trouvé, il compte 0,19 m. de hauteur
et 0,12 m. de diamètre à la base. On peut
admettre qu'il couronnait le haut d'une
colonnette engagée dans l'angle d'un pied-
droit.

Cette pièce est très curieuse, elle se com-
pose d'une corbeille ornée de sortes de
niches bordées d'une fine moulure; la partie
supérieure de cette niche forme un encor-ellement qui correspond à la retombée de
la feuille lisse des chapiteaux précédents et
détermine sur les autres faces du tailloir,
un motif évasé où l'on peut voir encore le
souvenir du caulicole; un très long cornet
inversé descend du tailloir jusqu'à la base
du chapiteau; il coupe deux listels parallè-
les. Son originalité semble évidente; on
croirait y distinguer une ébauche assez inat-
tendue des futurs muqarnas, ces composi-
tions en formes de niches disposées dans des
plans différents qui apparaîtront au siècle
suivant à la Qal'a.

Signalons, pour mémoire, que G. Mar-
çais a relevé le dessin d'un chapiteau trouvé
à Bénia. Cette pièce, sans doute incomplé-
tement épampilée, ne rappelle en rien les
chapiteaux que nous venons de décrire.

Un gros monolithe de marbre gris de
1 m. de largeur, brisé en son milieu, est très
soigneusement sculpté en forme de coquille,
où plutôt en forme de rosace dont quatre
pétales seraient profondément creusés et les
autres beaucoup plus légèrement défoncés
(figs. 49 et 50). Où pouvait-il se trouver? Nous
l'ignorons car on a vraisemblable-
ment tenté de le transporter et on a du
renoncer à ce désir en raison du poids con-
sidérable du bloc abandonné alors à quel-
que distance de la porte. Je le rapprocherai

68 Marçais, L'architecture..., p. 104, fig. 59.
69 Ibid., p. 46, fig. 19.
70 De Beylié, La Kalaa..., p. 62, figs. 41, 42,
et 43; p. 63, fig. 47.
71 G. Marçais, Ashir, Encycl. Islam, vol. 2,
d'un monolithe également sculpté dans du marbre gris, mais qui affecte nettement la forme d'une coquille trouvé à la Qal'a des B. Hammâd.\textsuperscript{72} On peut se demander si ces blocs sculptés constituaient, en dépit de leur masse, des clefs de voûte, à moins qu'il ne s'agisse d'un décor de façade scellé dans la maçonnerie.

Quelques fragments de plâtre sculpté proviennent de claustra ou de panneaux muraux, mais ils sont trop incomplets pour permettre un essai de reconstitution du décor (figs. 51 et 52).

Par contre, un petit bloc de calcaire semblant détaché d'une longue frise présente deux figures sculptées sous un bandeau saillant. Ces figures aux oreilles courtes percées de deux trous ronds, évoquent des têtes de chat (à moins que l'ornemaniste ait voulu représenter des têtes de lion, ce qui serait plus vraisemblable). Le fragment, qui a beaucoup souffert, rend toute reproduction du décor assez difficile (figs. 53 et 54).

Quelques tessons de poterie ramassés dans les décombres présentent des décors gravés dans la pâte encore molle avant le séchage et la cuisson. Ces vases, tournés au tour ont été cuits de manière convenable. Le dessin est obtenu par traçage d'un objet en forme de peigne sur la surface du vase que l'on fait pivoter sur lui-même pendant le tournage. Quelques mouvements de bas en haut ont déterminé des méandres. Plus habile est le décor de certains fragments où l'on relie, gravés à l'aide d'un outil pointu, des fleurons à cinq lobes inscrits dans des figures en forme de cœur; les vides entre chaque figure sont comblés par des fleurons à trois lobes. Un tel décor trouverait fort bien sa place dans un contexte aglabide et nous en trouverions maints exemples à Kairouan.\textsuperscript{73} Un petit tesson semble porter la trace d'un décor épigraphique, mais il est trop réduit pour permettre une étude du style de l'écriture.

Tout cela, on le voit, est bien pauvre et ne permet vraiment pas de se faire une idée bien nette du décor du palais. Nous avons pourtant tout lieu de supposer que celui-ci n'était pas aussi sévère qu'il apparaît à l'heure actuelle. Comment, en effet, imaginer que des artistes qui savaient si bien tailler la pierre pour en tirer des colonnes, des chapiteaux ou des socles de belle facture, qui savaient sculpter le marbre, dessiner des arcs entrelacés, travailler le plâtre . . . aient pu se contenter d'une maçonnerie au demeurant assez grossière? Le fait que la façade Sud a conservé une partie du placage en grand appareil qui dissimulait la laideur des moellons taillés prouve un souci d'embellissement qui devait se manifester plus largement encore à l'intérieur. Malheureusement, nous sommes condamnés à ignorer ce qu'était ce décor.

ESSAIS
DE RESTITUTION

La façade de la cour (côté Sud) (fig. 56). Nous possédons, de cette façade, tous les socles, deux colonnes, et trois chapiteaux. Ces éléments nous conduisent à un essai de restitution assez vraisemblable de la colonnade qui, compte tenu des éléments dont nous disposons, peut avoir eu quatre mètres de hauteur. Les arcs de plein cintre outre-

\textsuperscript{72} Cf. Golvin, Recherches archéologiques . . . , p. 121, fig. 39 et pl. XLII.

\textsuperscript{73} Cf. Marçais, L'architecture . . . , p. 51, fig. 25.
Fig. 1.—Region du Kef Lakhdar et du Titteri (carte au 1/200,000)—
(Les ruines de Yachir et de Benia sont cerclées d'un gros trait).

Fig. 2.—Le Kef Lakhdar.
Fig. 3. — Vue aérienne du Kef Lakhdar (on aperçoit les traces du palais avant les fouilles à l'endroit cerne d'un trait).

Fig. 4. — Vue d'avion avant les fouilles.

Fig. 5. — Vue sur le Djebel Lakhdar et sur le chantier.
Fig. 6.—Le chantier après la première campagne de fouilles.

Fig. 7.—Le chantier après la deuxième campagne de fouilles (au fond, Benia).
Fig. 9—Plan de la cîte.

Fig. 10.—Menzeh bent es-Sultan (vue d'avion).

Fig. 8.—Vue aérienne de Benia.
FIG. 11. — Plan du Palais de Zibi à Achir.
Fig. 12. — Assises de la porte en avant-corps.

Fig. 13. — Appareil du mur d'enceinte.

Fig. 14. — Appareil du mur d'enceinte.

Fig. 15. — Appareil des murs intérieurs.
Fig. 16.— Façade Sud du palais.

Fig. 17.— Façade Sud, entrée; au sol, dalles de soubassement de l'avant-corps.

Fig. 18.— Entrée de l’avant-corps vue de la cour centrale sur l’extérieur.

Fig. 19.— Entrée en avant-corps vue de l’extérieur vers la cour centrale.
Fig. 20.—Latrines.

Fig. 21.—La cour interieure (caniveau à l’angle Sud-Est).
Fig. 22.—Les colonnades.

Fig. 23.—Les colonnades.

Fig. 24.—Les colonnades.
Fig. 25.—La salle du plan circiforme.

Fig. 26.—L'antenne.

Fig. 27.—Cour centrale côte Est.

Fig. 28.—Cour centrale porte en chicane côte Ouest.
Fig. 30.—Cour centrale vue de la partie C du plan.

Fig. 31.—Cour centrale vue de la partie C du plan.

Fig. 29.—Décor extérieur du grand salon.
Fig. 32.—Plan d’un palais Umayyade (Djebel Seis) (d’ap. J. Sauvaget, Bat. D).

Fig. 33.—Msatta (d’ap. Brunnow et Domaszewski).

Fig. 34.—Qaṣr et-Tūba (pl. viii, r.r.p.p. Jaussen et Savignac).
Fig. 35a. — Qaṣr-Harāneh—Plan par terre (pl. xxiii, Jaussen et Savignac).

Fig. 35b. — (bis) Qaṣr-Harāneh—Plan de l'étage (pl. xxiv, Jaussen et Savignac).

Fig. 36. — Firūz Abad (d'ap. Reuther).
Fig. 37.—Plan des fouilles du palais dit Qaṣr al-salām à la Qalʿa des B. Ḥammād.
Fig. 39.—Intérieur d’une maison bourgeoise marocaine (Dar Sidi Said à Marrakech).

Fig. 40.—Au entrelaces.

Fig. 38.—Plan du palais dit Castillejo de Monteagudo (Espagne).
Fig. 41. — Bloc moulure.

Fig. 42. — Pierre sculptée.

Fig. 43. — Moulures.
Fig. 44.—Pierres taillée.

Fig. 45.—Essai d'interprétation du seuil de l'entrée.
Fig. 46.—Chapiteaux.

Fig. 47.—Chapiteaux.
Fig. 48.—Planche comparative des chapiteaux de l'époque Sanhâgienne.
Fig. 49.—Monolithe en marbre gris.

Fig. 50.—Essai de restitution du monolithe de marbre gris.
Fig. 51.—Plâtre sculpté.

Fig. 52.—Plâtre sculpté.
Fig. 54. — Frise à décor de têtes de lions (?).

Fig. 55. — Frise à décor animal.

Fig. 56. — Fragments de céramiques.
Fig. 57.—Essai de restitution de la porte en avant-corps.
Fig. 58 – Essai de restitution de la salle de réception.
passés supposés constituent la forme courante d'arcs en usage à cette période en Ifriqiya; ce sont ceux que l'on trouve à Mahdiya (porche de la mosquée) ainsi que dans les bases des coupoles de la mosquée Zaytuna à Tunis, ce sont encore ceux que nous trouverons un peu plus tard à Sfax (onzième siècle), et à la Qal'a des B. Hammâd.

L'emplacement des portes nous est donné par le plan des fouilles. Nous avons déjà dit que la hauteur du porche et la présence d'escaliers dans chaque appartement laissaient supposer l'existence d'un étage. Malheureusement, aucun élément ne peut nous aider à reconstituer par la pensée cette partie du palais si ce n'est ceux que peuvent nous fournir la comparaison avec des bâtiments sensiblement contemporains.

Pour déterminer les pièces de cet étage, nous avons prolongé en hauteur les murs du rez-de-chaussée. On constate alors que ces murs, perpendiculaires à la façade, déterminent des cellules d'environ trois mètres de large, sensiblement égales, et de huit mètres de profondeur. Nous supposons qu'elles s'ouvrent sur une galerie qui surmonte la colonnade et nous les couvrants de berceaux. Ce mode de couverture est en effet celui des ribâts de Sousse et de Monastir en particulier (neuvième siècle) et nous l'avons trouvé également à la Qal'a au onzième siècle. On peut évidemment imaginer ces berceaux apparents, mais également surmontés d'une terrasse comme c'est le cas des monuments précités. Deux pièces plus étroites, s'ouvrant par des portes plus basses et moins larges que les autres, encadrent ces cinq cellules, elles correspondent aux couloirs d et d' du rez-de-chaussée.

Ces chambres de l'étage pouvaient fort bien servir de dortoirs à des gardes, le rez-de-chaussée étant réservé sans doute au corps de garde, et à des communs: écuries, cuisines, latrines, etc. . . .

On remarquera que ce dispositif ne peut se répéter sur les autres façades de la court où n'existaient pas de galeries.

La porte en avant-corps (fig. 57). Il peut paraître assez aventureux de tenter une restitution du porche dont nous ne possédons que les dalles de fondation. Nous osons cependant formuler cette hypothèse en nous aidant beaucoup du fameux porche de la grande mosquée de Mahdiya, lequel, pour notre chance, est intact. Nous faisons également appel aux façades décorées de niches si caractéristiques de cette période et de celle qui suivit immédiatement.

J'imagerai donc une grande entrée en arc en fer à cheval qu'autorisent et la porte de Mahdiya et des monuments plus anciens (entrée du sanctuaire à la grande mosquée de Kairouan, porte dite des forgerons ou bâb al-Jabli à Sfax etc.). Je me suis laissé influencer par mes fouilles à la Qal'a pour imaginer les nibles à fond plat surmontées d'un arc de plein cintre identiques à celles qui ornent la façade du palais du Manâr. 78


78 Cf. Golvin, Recherches archéologiques . . ., fig. 25.
Le donjon du même Manar m'a inspiré les culs-de-four en coquille que l'on trouve également au minaret de la Qal'a et bien ailleurs en Ifriqiya.

Cependant, si le porche de Mahdiya m'a donné les proportions et le dessin général, j'ai pensé que son rôle était assez différent et que l'entrée du palais de Zirî devait être essentiellement un organe de défense, c'est pourquoi je suppose une salle à la partie supérieure et quelques archères et que je couronne les murs de merlons percés en leur centre d'archères, type architectural emprunté à la grande mosquée de Kairouan et à celle de Sfax. Par ailleurs, j'imaginerai assez bien une herse derrière l'entrée comme cela se voit dans la porte Fatimide dite Al-Saqifat al-Kahla à Mahdiya, de quelques années plus jeune que le palais de Zirî; une porte barbée de fer fermait sans doute la seconde entrée, au fond du porche.

Souvenons nous également de l'existence d'une barbacane à quelques distance devant cette entrée dont la chicane complète le système défensif. Il est possible d'ailleurs que cette chicane ait été surmontée d'ouvertures en madicouslî comme en on en voit Ribat de Sousse.

La salle d'honneur (fig. 58). J'ai dit précédemment que le plan cruciforme de la partie saillante de cette salle semblait appeler une coupole, mais que, en fait, cette construction s'avérerait impossible faute de base carrée, nous n'avons en effet, pour poser une coupole, que les points d'appui 1 à 8 de part et d'autre du défoncement en niche qui fut sans doute le lieu où se tenait le maître, mais, par contre, cette série de décrochements offre de multiples points d'appui pour une demi coupole, le centre de cette demi coupole est donné par le point de rencontre des axes 7x et 27. Elle est alors tangente aux niches Est et Ouest ce qui nous permet de la raccorder aux points 9 et 10.

Une première coupe ab nous présente la niche du fond que nous supposons en cul-de-fond comme un mihrâb. La niche ouest est coupée par le milieu, elle est supposée à fond plat et de même hauteur que la niche Nord. La coupole qui surmonte cette pièce est surhaussée afin de permettre l'ouverture des fenêtres (nous pensons en effet que ce type de coupole existe déjà, nous le retrouverons à la Qal'a, et ensuite en Sicile).

La coupe cd nous présente l'avant-corps supposé voûté en berceau, le mur nord de cette piece s'ouvre en arc sur la salle d'honneur. J'ai supposé une frise épigraphique en plâtre (on en a trouvé à la Qal'a) et sans doute peut-on également imaginer un revêtement de plâtre sculpté aux parties supérieures comme on en voit à Sadrata.

Enfin la coupe cf montre comment se raccorde la demi-coupole au mur nord du palais. On peut évidemment supposer les berceaux saillants ou noyés pour transformer la partie supérieure en terrasse (on a des exemples de ce genre à la Qal'a). J'ai imaginé un lit clos dans la partie resserrée de l'extrémité de la pièce, lit surmonté d'un débarras ce qui semble une tradition courante en Afrique du Nord.

79 De Beylié, La Kalaa..., p. 78, fig. 63.
80 Cf. Marçais, L'architecture..., p. 90, fig. 46.

82 Cf. Golvin, Recherches archéologiques..., fig. 32, p. 112.
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POTTERY AND TILES ON MOUNT ATHOS

By JOHN CARSWELL

Mount Athos is renowned for its late Byzantine art and architecture; what is less appreciated is that it is also a vast repository of the minor arts, such as carved wood and metalwork, textiles, and ceramics. As material for the historical study of these crafts, Athos is of considerable importance because many of the objects are inscribed with the details and date of their donation. To cite one instance, there are in the churches numerous mother-of-pearl and tortoiseshell inlaid wooden doors, lecterns, and other objects complete with dated dedications; a careful catalogue of them could provide a basis for a thorough study of this Levantine craft. Here it must be noted that the decorative arts often reflect the Ottoman taste of Constantinople, where most of the objects were probably made. In spite of their destination they are not to be considered as Byzantine but rather as examples of various crafts in the capital, commissioned by Christian patrons for the adornment of the Athonite monasteries.

Pottery is the subject of this article, and a quantity of pottery and tiles dating from the 16th century onward still survives on Athos, mainly because it was built into the fabric of the churches as decoration. While the majority of the pieces simply serves as an illustration of the type of pottery that was popular in the Levant—it is by no means all Turkish—some items are of more particular interest. Outstanding among these is an important series of late Isnik tiles on the walls of the main church at Lavra; these are inscribed and dated 1678 and were a gift from the Patriarch Dionysius, who ended his days in that monastery. Because of their date these tiles are useful evidence for the study of a particular phase in the evolution of Turkish pottery from the Isnik factories, and it was in order to record and photograph them that I visited Mount Athos in the summer of 1963. At the same time, a survey was made of the pottery and tiles in a majority of the other monasteries.

From the first five hundred years of the existence of Mount Athos as a monastic community, little pottery survives. The Byzantine practice of incorporating glazed tiles into the patterned external brickwork of churches, incised with crosses or some

2 As will be evident from this article, the venture was not entirely successful; although armed with written permission from Athens and Karies, the wealthier and more independent monasteries were uncooperative, and photography in the churches was out of the question. I am most grateful to Mr. David Howell, who shared the discomforts of this visit, for his valuable practical assistance in recording the tiles and pottery.
3 Including Koutloumoussiu, Karies, Vatopedi, Iviron, Stavronikita, Pantocrator, Lavra, Karakallou, Dionysiou, Simopetra, St. Paul, Xenophontos and the skite of St. Anne. Those omitted were the northern group: Kilindari, Zographou, Kastamonitou, Esphigmenou and Dochiarou; and Gregoriou. The presence of tiles at Dochiarou has been verified by a more recent traveller (see note 14, below).
4 Mount Athos in its present forms dates from the foundation of Lavra in 963 A.D. by St. Athanasius of Trebizond.
other simple motif, was apparently not common on Athos. No doubt excavation of the monastic rubbish dumps would produce many fragments of Byzantine pottery, but one would be fortunate to find an inscribed sherd that would add significantly to the chronological study of this type of ware.

However, from the 16th century onward a more secular taste in pottery is evident. Isnik plates were prized by the Athonite monks and numerous specimens of them still decorate the monastery walls. These plates have nothing special in the way of motifs or inscriptions to suggest that they were commissioned but are typical Isnik pieces with floral decoration, probably bought in the marketplace in Constantinople. In conjunction with these plates and other European and oriental pottery are many single examples of Isnik tiles incorporated in the walls, mostly dating from the second half of the 16th century. Four panels of more than 150 Isnik tiles of this same period are inside the main church at Iviron.

In the second half of the 17th century, however, Greek inscriptions on Isnik tiles and plates indicate for the first time that they were commissioned directly by Christian patrons. These plates are relatively common, and there are two damaged examples on Athos, in the monastery of Pantocrator (fig. M). The inscribed Lavra tiles belong to the same period, when the Isnik factories were falling into decline through lack of orders from their Ottoman patrons.

The rest of the pottery on Athos is a very heterogeneous collection; there are examples of 18th century Kütahya pottery, 17th and 18th century imported Italian, European, and Persian pottery, Chinese and Japanese porcelain, and a fine Hispano-Moresque lustre dish. There are also 19th century English transfer-printed plates, and peasant pottery from Cannakale, on the Dardanelles. The detailed descriptions of the pieces are listed monastery by monastery, as they were recorded, so that any future visitor to Athos can quickly rectify the omissions. The photographs of individual pieces have been grouped together, according to their center or country of origin.

Pantocrator was the first monastery containing tiles and pottery that I visited. Built on a rocky summit beside the sea, with a small port, it was founded in 1270 by Alexis Stratigopoulos, a general under Michael Paleologus. Originally modest in size, it was enlarged after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and its present plan is typical of an Athonite monastery. The main church stands alone in a paved courtyard, surrounded by the various domestic buildings and monks’ quarters, which are built against the inner face of a high wall pierced at one point by a heavily fortified gate. A few Isnik tiles are somewhat haphazardly set into the plastered walls of the church. At the southwest angle is an Isnik tile, with a greenish ground, painted with four green and cobalt pointed medallions with dark
cobalt outlines forming a diagonal cross; another tile, with similar coloring, has a composite design consisting of two Isnik floral border-patterns separated by a chain pattern (fig. F). On the south wall of the church is another similar Isnik tile with a turquoise stripe, instead of the chain pattern, separating the border from part of a floral design which must have once continued onto an adjacent tile. The colors and style of all three tiles suggest that they date from the middle of the 17th century. On the upper part of the church are two badly damaged Isnik dishes and part of a tile.

The four sides of the courtyard at Pantocrator are arcaded, and the spandrels of these arcades are decorated with patterns of long red bricks, tiles, and pottery. This is a common style of wall treatment on Athos and appears to have been specially popular during the early 18th century, a period of much building activity.

Then many of the churches gained an exonarthex, or porch, the inner walls of which were frescoed and the outer walls treated in the manner described. The brick patterns represent a late development of the traditional external wall treatment of Byzantine churches, particularly in Northern Greece. Plates commonly used as decoration on the walls of domestic houses in Greece and Asia Minor may have inspired a similar use on Athos. Perhaps, also, there was the desire to emulate, somewhat naively and with limited resources, the superb ceramic decoration of Turkish mosques and palaces. If not sent as a gift, like the Lavra tiles, the pottery was probably acquired by monks visiting the capital. Mount Athos was at least spiritually under the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Patriarch in Constantinople, and there was always a brisk traffic back and forth between the two centers. It may also have traded with the little ships that put into the monastic ports from time to time; it is significant that almost all the monasteries containing pottery are on the east flank of Athos, on the coast where such casual trade was most likely.

Along the east side of the courtyard at Pantocrator, proceeding from north to south, various kinds of pottery are set in the walls. First there are panels of Kütahya tiles; these tiles are of two types, square tiles measuring 21 cms. decorated with an eight-petaled central flower and other motifs, and rectangular border tiles with a running vine pattern interspersed with stars between narrow borders of chevrons and semicircles (fig. 1). Both types are painted in cobalt blue with grey-blue outlines. These tiles were made by Armenian potters at Kütahya in northwest Anatolia in the early 18th century, and similar examples can be found in churches decorated at that time throughout the Near East, and even in some contemporary mosques.

Further along the same wall are three Isnik dishes finely painted in cobalt blue, turquoise green, bright red, and black with a floral design; four Çannakale dishes and a

7 Several buildings have dates set in the patterned brickwork: 1711—Refectory tower at Lavra (fig. G); 1738—exonarthex at Iviron (text fig. 1); 1767—top arcade east side of courtyard at Koutloumoussiou (fig. H).

8 Except Koutloumoussiou, which is inland.

9 The border pattern derives from a Chinese pattern common on the rim of late Ming export wares of the early 17th century. There are many examples of the Chinese prototype in the Topkapu Saray Museum, Istanbul.

10 Churches in Jerusalem, Istanbul, Kayseri; mosques in Kütahya, Kayseri, Konya, etc.
transfer-printed plate, all 19th century; and an Italian, possibly modern, vase in a niche. These intrusive 19th century pieces in an 18th century arcade suggest that they have replaced broken earlier pieces; they also serve as a reminder that it is dangerous to date any pottery on Athos by the date of the wall in which it is set.

Along the west side of the courtyard, set in the spandrels of the second floor arcade, are three crosses formed from Kütahya border tiles of the type mentioned above. Twenty-eight similar border-tiles are used as a frieze just below the canopy of the fountain on the same wall (figs. J, K). Further along are various blue and white Çannakale dishes, Italian plates painted in yellow ochre, pale green, and cobalt blue, and a late Isnik plate in diffused blue and green colors. A good but damaged Hispano-Mauresque dish with a typical raised center boss is certainly early 16th century (fig. L). Also on this wall are two Isnik plates, with the date 1678 clearly visible on the rim of one of them; unfortunately, the rest of the Greek inscription is damaged (fig. M). Both plates are decorated with a fish, flanked by a knife with a curved blade, and a plant (leaves and radishes?), and are painted brown, green, cobalt blue, and dark red with black outlines on a greenish-white ground. Along the north wall of the courtyard are panels composed of the two types of Kütahya tiles and various Çannakale and other dishes.

Two miles south of Pantocrator is the monastery of Stavronikita. Today the monastery is greatly dilapidated and the monks convincingly proclaim themselves to be the poorest on Athos. On the south wall of the courtyard are a badly damaged Isnik plate and a broken Isnik jug.

The monastery of Koutloumoussiou is high up on the central slopes of Athos, a few minutes walk from Karies. The walls of the courtyard are decorated with various plates; the east wall has a date, 1767, set in the brickwork (fig. H). Of greater interest is a series of fine Isnik tiles set at intervals along the outer walls of the exonarthex of the church. These tiles range in date from the last quarter of the 16th century to the beginning of the 17th century and include some unusually finely designed and colored specimens (fig. A). Two later square tiles (fig. A nos. K 7, K 12) are almost identical with tiles in the Çinili mosque at Uskudar near Istanbul (1640) and represent the type of tiles produced at Isnik at that time.

Inside the church hangs an egg-shaped pottery ornament made at Kütahya. These typical Armenian ornaments are not common on Athos; the only other examples noted were two in the Treasury at Lavra. This late example (second half of the 18th century) is painted with three pairs of Jerusalem crosses and three six-winged angels' heads in turquoise blue and purple with greenish-black outlines.

At Iviron, the discovery that the inside of the church was decorated with fine late 16th century Isnik tiles was matched swiftly by a point-blank refusal to allow them to be photographed or even recorded.17

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11 Similar plates with raised borders to the central boss and moulded rims are in the Godman Collection: The Godman collection of Oriental and Spanish pottery and glass, London, 1901, pl. XXXVIII, no. 268, and pl. XXXIV, no. 449.

12 See Appendix A.

13 The notes given below are based on one quick visit to the church and deductions made...
The tiles (fig. R) are arranged in four panels, one on each of the curved walls of the north and south transepts. Each panel consists of thirty tiles set in three horizontal rows of ten with contrasting border tiles. The main tiles are approximately 25 cms. square and painted with tulips, other flowers, and leaves in turquoise green, two shades of cobalt blue, bright orange-red in relief, and dark cobalt outlines. The border tiles, of two types, are similar in color except for a richer dark green; the first type is decorated with red and white striped tulips and other flowers on a blue ground, and the second with four palmettes, with green borders, blue centers, and touches of red on a white ground, with a border of chain pattern along the bottom of the tile. The tiles are not inscribed; nor, apparently, is there anything in the way of a nearby dedicatory inscription which might give some clue as to the date of their installation. No doubt the monastery archives could supply the answer; the new tiles must have accompanied a general rehabilitation of the church’s interior.\(^\text{14}\)

The study of the exonarthex at Iviron through the windows. For the photograph (fig. R), I must thank Lord Norwich, who was luckier than I on a visit in 1964. He also managed to take photographs of the floor of the church at Dochiariou (figs. S, T); these show two panels of trompe-l’œil geometric tiles, in black, white, and grey (probably Italian), surrounded by various Isnik tiles of the late 16th and 17th centuries. These include a tile similar to fig. A nos. 33, 44 (Iviron); border tiles like fig. A nos. K10, K11 and part of a tile resembling fig. A no. K13 (Koutloumousiou); as well as other types not seen by the writer elsewhere on Athos.

\(^{14}\) An enquiry elicited the following reply from the MSS. Librarian: “We are not interested in Science”—which at least was honest.

was more rewarding as permission was granted to take photographs (text figs. 1, 2, and fig. N). According to a date in the brickwork at the north end, this structure was added on to the main fabric of the church in 1758. Fifty-five pieces of pottery, porcelain, and glass are incorporated with the bricks between the arches; the bricks are often arranged specially in order to frame the objects. Accepting (with the reservations made above with regard to the arcades at Pantocrator) that the majority of the pieces can be dated before 1758, the exonarthex at Iviron thus provides an excellent illustration of the type of pottery that was currently popular in the Levant in the middle of the 18th century.

The pottery has been sorted into the following groups: Isnik, Kütahya, Persian, Italian, Chinese, and Japanese porcelain, glass and European pottery. The details of individual pieces are contained in Appendix B.

The Isnik pottery dates as a whole from the 16th century (fig. B). The earliest piece is probably figure B no. 41, a typical example of mid 16th century ware, when designs became increasingly naturalistic and plates decorated with such faintly comic animals were common. A fine plate (fig. B no. 39) is of the same period, with cobalt blue, turquoise, and soft green coloring. A monochrome blue plate (fig. B no. 53), which could unfortunately only be photographed at an angle because of a protruding drainpipe, is a common Isnik design of a few years later. The three bunches of grapes surrounded by a wide border of vine leaves is a motif often used on Chinese plates from the 15th century and copied almost identically by the Isnik potters; this plate shows a slightly later adaptation of
Text Fig. 1.—Mount Athos: Outside of Exonarthex at Iviron, Position of Pottery on (Left to Right), North End, South End, and South Wall of Church.

Text Fig. 2.—Mount Athos: Outside of Exonarthex at Iviron, Position of Pottery on West Face.
the design.\textsuperscript{15} Two plates (fig. B nos. 5, 6), one with a floral design and the other decorated with abstract patterns, include a fine, strong red among their color scheme and must be assigned to the end of the 16th century. Three more plates (fig. B nos. 31, 34 and Appendix B, no. 56 [not photographed]) are loosely painted in weak colors, watery blues and greens, and are 17th century products. Two tiles (fig. A nos. 33, 44) are painted in soft green, turquoise, and cobalt blue, with a vase of tulips and carnations clasped together; they are identical with tiles used for the restoration of the Mosque of Ibrahim Aga in Cairo in 1652. Along with tiles at Koutloumousi (fig. A nos. K 7, K 12), they represent typical Iznik tiles of the mid 17th century.

An unusual Turkish dish (fig. C no. 35)—really a platter with a shallow rim—is uncharacteristic of Iznik; similar platters with the same shape and coloring are sometimes decorated in the “Golden Horn” style, with spirals of tiny leaves.\textsuperscript{16}

Less debatable are the other Kütahya pieces. Two plates (fig. C nos. 1 and 30) are decorated with patterns of marguerites against a background of smaller leaves, which can be traced back at several removes to Chinese K‘ang Hsi plates with similar flowers.\textsuperscript{17} These plates, with two other monochrome blue examples (fig. C nos. 37 and 48), may be assigned to the first quarter of the 18th century. A fifth plate of the same period (fig. C no. 49) is particularly interesting as its decoration very definitely derives from the Chinese. Chinese export porcelain of the late Ming period, well represented in the Topkapu Saray collection in Istanbul, is frequently decorated with rosettes like those in the center of this plate. The diamond-shaped motif with ribbon-like attachments at the rim is another familiar Chinese design.

The polychrome Kütahya dishes (fig. C nos. 14 and 23) belong to the first half of the 18th century, when Kütahya wares were often decorated with red dots arranged in a circle.\textsuperscript{18} Toward the middle of the century purple was introduced, and to this period belong the dishes, reproduced as figure C nos. 4, 10, 13, 15, 16, 42, and 43.\textsuperscript{19}


\textsuperscript{16} Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, no. EF 319–C 310. There is some uncertainty about the provenance of “Golden Horn” ware as a whole; the group does not fit as happily into the general chronology of the Iznik industry as Lane would suggest (\textit{op. cit.}, p. 270). Further study of the various 17th century pottery centers in Turkey may solve the problem.

\textsuperscript{17} A Persian plate in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (1715–1876), directly inspired by a K‘ang Hsi plate with radiating flowers, has an Armenian monogram at the center, and might well represent one of the transitional stages. A similar plate, with identical monogram, is in the collection of the Armenian Mechitarists, at San Lazzaro, Venice.

\textsuperscript{18} There are pictorial tiles in the Armenian Convent of St. James, Jerusalem, decorated with similar red dots, which are dated by their inscriptions, 1719. X. A. Nomikos, \textit{The Christian ceramics in the Armenian patriarchate in Jerusalem} (in Greek), Alexandria, 1922.

\textsuperscript{19} The earliest dated example of Kütahya ware with purple known to me is a bowl with a wide rim, inscribed and dated in Armenian 1744, also at San Lazzaro, Venice.
and a vase (fig. C no. 7), its body molded into hexagonal facets.

The Persian pieces are harder to date with any accuracy; figure D nos. 9, 11, 32, and 34 are monochrome dishes of similar design to the Kütahya polychrome dishes (fig. C nos. 42 and 43), with which they make an interesting comparison. They are probably also 18th century. Figure D nos. 24, 38, and 43 all betray Chinese influence, if somewhat distant, in certain elements of their designs. The dish (fig. C no. 45) is decorated with two strange animal-like motifs whose origins defy analysis. Like the "dragons" on some Swatow-ware, they betray a depth of misunderstanding of their models that is positively imaginative.

Of the several pieces of Italian majolica, two jugs with pinched lips (fig. D no. 51 and Appendix B, no. 12 [not illustrated]) are decorated with a double-headed eagle and winged motifs respectively. They are both products of a factory in the Marche, possibly Pesaro, of the 17th century, the second perhaps a little earlier. A third 17th-century jug, painted with a crowned eagle with outspread wings bearing a shield, is from Apulia, as is an 18th-century dish (fig. D no. 3) decorated with a basket of fruit underneath a tree, from the Grottaglie factory. The plates (fig. E nos. 21, 27, 28, 29) are also 18th-century; they have molded, wavy rims and are from the factories of Liguria. A fine plate (fig. D no. 36), painted with a leaping hare in blue, is a 17th-century piece from Laterza in Apulia. Initially, it might seem surprising that Oriental porcelain should form part of the collection of pottery at Iviron (fig. E); however, it must be remembered that Chinese porcelain had long been prized in the Levant. The seven pieces here represented are all 18th-century examples. The dishes in figure E nos. 25 and 26 are provincial blue and white pieces, probably from Fukien. Dish figure E no. 17 would appear to be a K'ang Hsi piece (1662–1722). The two identical dishes (fig. E nos. 18, 19) and the spouted pot (fig. E no. 20) with molded flowers are not earlier than the Ch'ien Lung period. Dish figure E no. 22 appears to be of Japanese Imari ware, probably of the Genroku period (1688–1703).

The two pieces of glass consist of an ewer and a plate (fig. E nos. 40, 50). The ewer is probably of Venetian or Bohemian origin but might conceivably be a product


20 Mr. Soame Jenyns and Mr. G. Reitlinger have kindly suggested attributions and dates for these pieces; Mr. Reitlinger is of the opinion that fig. E no. 17 is a hexagonal saucer of the period 1640–60 of a type more often supplied to Japan than to the West. I am also indebted to Mr. Reitlinger for his valuable criticisms of other aspects of this article.

21 I am grateful to Mr. R. J. Charleston for the following remarks on the glass: "A priori, I should expect glasses exported to the Levant in the 18th century to have come from Venice (though I think that more began to come from other countries, e.g. Bohemia, as the century wore on). I could not, however, say that either dish or jug was a typically Venetian-looking production. Concerning the jug... normally the Venetian lattimo is of a good clear white, sometimes perhaps with a creamy tone. As to threaded decoration of this kind, it was nobody's prerogative; it was extensively made in Hungary."
of the 19th century glass factories at Beykoz, on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus north of Istanbul. One argument in favor of the latter attribution is the oriental shape of the ewer, with its long neck and full body; also the ewer fits at present uneasily into its niche, where it touches the rim of the plate above, which might suggest that the niche was enlarged to receive it and that it is a replacement for some earlier piece. The glass plate is similar to an opaque plate of the 18th century in the Glass Museum at Murano, near Venice; its curious profile is accounted for by the fact that it is embedded upside down.

The two remaining pieces (fig. D nos. 8, 52) are most likely 18th century Dutch plates. Similar crude borders, heavily influenced by Chinese prototypes, are common on the popular Dutch plates known as boerendelftsch.

The monastery at Lavra was founded in 963 A. D. by Athanasius of Trebizond and is the oldest and most important of the monasteries on Athos. As at Iviron, the inside of the church is tiled. The tiles are set in panels slightly above eye level on the four curved walls of the transepts to the north and south of the iconostas; at Lavra, two more panels frame the openings on either side of the iconostas, including inscribed tiles. The inscriptions on the north side consist of a quotation from Psalm 5:7 and the date (see fig. O, no. 1, and text fig. 3):

I will come into thy house, and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple. [Psalm 5:7], 10th [day] of the month of September in the year 1678 [Julian—20th September 1678 Gregorian].

The inscriptions at the south side of the iconostas read as follows (see fig. O, no. 2, and text fig. 4):

26 The usual application to photograph inside the church was made and refused. However, thanks to the friendly monk who acted as intermediary between me and the monastery authorities, permission was granted for the tiles to be drawn instead.

27 I am indebted to Professor C. Dowsett for translating the inscriptions, from my drawings, and C. S. Mundy Esq., for his assistance. Professor Dowsett remarks: "The spelling of these inscriptions is very illiterate, the various i sounds of modern Greek being confused, as well as o and u, etc. Even the quotation from the Psalm is full of errors."
The inscriptions being an integral part of the general scheme, these tiles may be considered as a good example of late 17th century Isnik pottery. The panel framing the opening to the north of the iconostas is composed of two dozen tiles, 23.5 cms. square, some specially shaped to follow the curve of the arch. On the left a cypress tree beneath an arch extends over two vertical rows of six tiles, with a background of interlacing leaves and flowers, including tulips (fig. P). The border, of green, red, and white flowers and leaves on a dark cobalt ground also surrounds the inscription above the arch. The inscription is painted in black letters on a white ground, in a long panel occupying part of each of two adjacent, unequally shaped tiles. The panel has a scalloped border at each end, further embellished on the left with an inner red border. Although the inscription occupies a different proportion of each tile, it is so arranged as to be more or less in the center of the arch, suggesting that the tiles were made to measure. On the right, a single vertical row of tiles is obscured by icons, but presumably it is a continuation of the general design. Technically, the tiles are poor; the ground is a dingy off-white and the glaze is often unevenly applied and bubbly. They are painted in light turquoise green (which has sometimes misfired to a duller grey-green) deep warm green, dirty cobalt blue, and black for outlines. The red used on many of the tiles, however, is surprisingly bright for the period. Judging from those examples visible, the edges of the tiles are generally beveled back sharply at an angle of approximately 60 degrees.

The second panel with an inscription, surrounding the opening in the south end of the iconostas, consists of tiles decorated in the same colors but with a different design. The inscription is painted on a long panel with pointed ends, contiguous to other shorter, similar panels. All the panels have an inner border of dark cobalt blue framing their white ground and are reserved on a light turquoise-green ground. Apart from the longer panel containing the inscription, the panels each contain a spray of elongated dark cobalt blue flowers and curving green leaves and buds, decorated with brownish-red spots. The outlines are black.

The other panels in the church, on the walls of the two transepts, are composed of several different types of tiles; technically, they are similar to those associated with the
two inscriptions and must have been installed at the same time. The most common type of tile, 23.5 cms. square, has an off-white ground, painted with a repeating design of a feathery palmette flanked by two arabesque lozenge-shapes, accompanied by various smaller leaves and flowers (fig. Q). The border is an integral part of the outer tiles of the panel, consisting of intertwined palmette-shaped flowers and leaves; these outer tiles, containing part of the inner panel design, are a slightly different size, 24.5 by 21.5 cms. The colors are diffused turquoise green and dirty cobalt blue, outlined either in greenish black or dark cobalt; there are spots of brownish red on some of the border tiles. Another type of border tile, also 23.5 cms. square, is divided in two by a cursorily drawn border of typical Isnik chain pattern; on one side of it are curving palmette-shaped flowers and on the other side, two palmettes pointing outwards. These tiles are decorated in dark cobalt and turquoise green with black outlines. A third type of tile, unusually large, 27 cms. square, has a speckled off-white ground and is decorated with a central bouquet of flowers in a small hourglass shaped vase; at the corners are quarter circles with scalloped edges and an inner pattern; the colors are dull green, cobalt blue, dark red in relief, with black outlines. A fourth variety, also 27 cms. square, is painted with a central medallion with a serrated edge containing a spray of flowers, and quarter circles at the corners with scalloped edges. A fifth type, similar to the two tiles on the porch at Iviron, is 23.5 cms. square and painted with a vase of flowers flanked by half cypress trees in blue and turquoise. Later additions, used for patching the border of the southwest panel, include two earlier Isnik tiles of good quality and two 18th century Kütahya blue and white tiles, of the same type noted at Pantocrator.

It is difficult in a quick drawing to convey the finer points of these late 17th century Isnik tiles, but one fact is clear: a reasonably good red color survives in Isnik pottery up till the last quarter of the century. The tiles of the middle of the 17th century, such as those used for the repairs to the Mosque of Ibrahim Aga, and also to be found in the Çinili Mosque at Uskudar near Istanbul (1640), were predominantly blue and turquoise; they, however, must simply represent a phase and do not signal the complete disappearance of red from the Isnik repertoire of colors. The Lavra tiles illustrate well the last phase of the Isnik industry, which must have finally collapsed shortly after they were made. They provide a link between the earlier fine wares and the Tekfur Saray tiles made at Istanbul in the 18th century, when an attempt was made to revive the Isnik potteries in the capital.

Finally, mention must be made briefly of other pieces of pottery at Lavra. A dozen or so plates, mostly Isnik, are set high up on the southeast side of the courtyard; they include a plate, probably Majolica, painted in greyish cobalt on a blueish ground, depicting the three Graces with Cupid walking in a landscape. The walls here are dated 1866, so these older plates must have been installed relatively late. On the main building on the north side of the courtyard, dated 1910, two fragments of Isnik tiles flank a stone cross on the pediment above the doorway; earlier than the tiles in the church, the fragment on the right is the same design as those in the church at Iviron.
Several pieces of pottery can be discerned high up on the tower at the southeast corner of the refectory (fig. G). This tower appears to have the date 1711 set in bricks, below the windows to the left. The pottery includes two plates painted in blue and red, possibly Chinese; a Kütahya dish painted in dark red, green, and cobalt, and a blue and white dish, Kütahya or Persian in origin. In the treasury are several celadon plates, a Chinese export plate bearing a coat-of-arms, three majolica jugs similar to those that decorate the porch at Iviron, a Çannakale plate, an Isnik jug, two late 18th century hanging ornaments from Kütahya, like the one in the church at Koutloumoussiou, and, for good measure, a double spouted Mycenaean vase.

APPENDIX A: TILE AND POTTERY AT KOUTLOUMOUSSIOU

West wall from south to north

1. Isnik border tile. 25 by 10 cms. Bright red, turquoise green, cobalt blue, fine black outlines.
2. Isnik border tile. 29 by 11.5 cms. Tomato red, cobalt blue, turquoise, grey-black outlines.
3. Isnik tile (fragment). 16 by 13 cms. Light tomato red in relief, turquoise green, cobalt blue with darker outlines.
4. Isnik jug. 24 cms. high, 13.5 cms. diam. Light green, greyish cobalt, with dark brown in relief and greenish-black outlines.
5. Isnik border tile. 20.5 by 13 cms. Cobalt blue, rich dark green diffusing to turquoise at edges, dark red in relief, dark grey outlines.
6. Isnik border tile. 20.5 by 11.5 cms. (below no. 5). Light cobalt blue ground, turquoise green borders, bright red in relief, fine grey outlines.
7. Isnik tile. 24.5 cms. square. Turquoise blue and greyish cobalt with darker outlines; greenish-white ground.

North wall from west to east

9. Isnik border tile. 24.5 by 14 cms. Tomato red, turquoise green, cobalt blue, fine black outline.
10. Isnik border tile. 24 by 14 cms. Turquoise blue, turquoise green, cobalt blue, bright red in relief, fine grey-black outlines.
11. Isnik border tile. 24 by 14 cms. Turquoise blue, greyish green, bright red in relief, cobalt blue, fine grey-black outlines.
12. Isnik tile. 25 cms. square. Greenish ground, greyish cobalt with darker outlines, and turquoise.

Note: For parallels to nos. 7 and 12, see tiles from the Çinili Mosque (1640) at Uskudar, illustrated by O. Aslanapa, Osmanlilar Devrinde Kutahya Çinileri, Istanbul, 1949, plates 106 (identical with no. 12) and 99-101.
Fig. A.—Mount Athos: Isnik Tiles at Koutloumoussion and Iviron.
Fig. B.—Mount Athos: Isnik Pottery at Iviron and Koutloumoussiou.
Fig. C.—Mount Athos: Kütahya Pottery at Iviron.
Fig. D.—Mount Athos: Persian, Italian and Dutch Pottery at Iviron.
Fig. E.—Mount Athos: Chinese, Japanese and Italian Pottery and Glass at Iviron.
Fig. F.—Mount Athos: Isnik Tiles at Pantocrator.

Fig. G.—Mount Athos: Tower at Southeast Corner of Refectory, at Lavra, Dated 1711.

Fig. H.—Mount Athos: Arcade on East Side of Courtyard at Koutloumoussios. Note the Date in the Brickwork—1767.
Fig. I.—Mount Athos: Brick Arcades at Pantocrator, Showing Two Types of Kütahya Tiles in lower spandrel.

Fig. J.—Mount Athos: West Side of Courtyard at Pantocrator, Showing Patterned Brickwork and Canopy over the Fountain.

Fig. K.—Mount Athos: The Canopy over the Fountain at Pantocrator, with Frieze of Kütahya Border-Tiles (Detail).
Fig. L.—Mount Athos: Hispano-Moresque Plate Set in the West Side of the Courtyard at Pantocrator, Early Sixteenth Century.

Fig. M.—Mount Athos: Two Iznik Plates, Dated 1678, Set in the West Side of the Courtyard at Pantocrator.

Fig. N.—Mount Athos: Outside of the Exonarthex at Iviron, Showing the Patterned Brickwork and Embedded Pottery.
Fig. O.—Mount Athos: Inscribed Tiles on the Arches to the North and South of the Iconostas, in the Main Church at Lavra.

Fig. P.—Mount Athos: Panels of Tiles at North End of Iconostas, Main Church at Lavra.

Fig. Q.—Mount Athos: Tiles on the Transepts, in the Main Church at Lavra.
Fig. R.—Mount Athos: Isnik Tiles in the Main Church at Iviron.

Fig. S.—Mount Athos: Isnik Tiles on the Floor of the Church at Dochiaiariou.

Fig. T.—Mount Athos: Isnik Tiles on the Floor of the Church at Dochiaiariou.
APPENDIX B: TILES
AND POTTERY AT IVIRON

Cobalt blue with darker outlines.
2. Italian jug. 18 cms. high, 12 cms. diam.,
pinched lip.
Yellow ochre, blue, and dark brown.
3. Italian plate. 21 cms. diam.
Light green, two shades of yellow ochre, brown.
Yellow, green, red, purple, black outlines.
5. Isnik plate. 28 cms. diam.
Turquoise green, dark red, cobalt blue, dark grey outlines.
6. Isnik plate. 29.5 cms. diam.
Dark red, cobalt blue, with darker outlines.
7. Kutahya vase. 16.5 cms. high, 9 cms.
diam., body molded into hexagonal facets.
Yellow, green, red, cobalt blue, purple, black outlines.
8. Dish (Dutch?). 23 cms. diam.
Shades of cobalt blue.
9. Persian dish. 11.5 cms. diam.
Blue-grey with darker outlines.
Mustard yellow, green, red, purple, grey-blue, black outlines.
Blue-grey with darker outlines.
12. Italian jug. 20 cms. high, 11 cms.
diam., pinched lip.
Yellow ochre, cobalt blue, and dark brown.
13. Kutahya dish. 11.5 cms. diam.
Yellow, green, cobalt blue, purple, black outlines.
Yellow, green, cobalt, red, black outlines.
15. Kutahya dish. 11.5 cms. diam.
Yellow, green, cobalt, purple, black outlines.
Yellow, green, red, purple, black outlines.
Grey and red.
18. Chinese dish. (Broken, similar to no. 19.
19. Chinese dish. 11.5 cms. diam.
Red border, center painted in grey.
20. Chinese spouted jug. 12 cms. high,
8 cms. diam., flowers applied in relief.
Red, yellow, green, blue and purple.
21. Italian dish. 18.5 cms. diam., molded surface.
Yellow ground, cobalt blue decoration.
22. Japanese dish. 10.5 cms. diam.
Red and blue with faint traces of gold.
23. Kutahya dish. 10.5 cms. diam., slightly raised center.
Pale yellow, green, cobalt blue, red, black outlines.
Light and dark cobalt blue.
25. Chinese dish. 11.5 cms. diam.
Dull blue.
26. Chinese dish. 11.5 cms. diam.
Dull blue.
27. Italian dish. (Identical to no. 21.)
28. Italian dish. 13.5 cms. diam., molded surface.
White ground with yellow decoration.
29. Italian dish. (Identical to no. 28.)
Cobalt blue with darker outlines (similar to no. 1).
31. Isnik plate. 25 cms. diam.
Dull green, cobalt, dark red, greenish-black outlines.
32. Persian dish. 16.5 cms. diam.
Grey-blue with dark grey outlines.
33. *Isnik* tile. 25 cms. square.
Dull green, pale turquoise, greyish cobalt blue with darker outlines.
34. *Persian dish* (Similar to no. 32.)
Turquoise and cobalt blue with darker cobalt blue outlines.
36. *Italian plate*. 20.2 cms. diam.
Blue-grey decoration on a greyish ground.
Cobalt blue with darker outlines.
Dark cobalt blue.
Dull green, turquoise, cobalt blue with darker outlines.
Opaque blue-grey glass with spiraling dark cobalt blue decoration in relief.
Dull green, dark cobalt, dark red, black outlines.
Yellow, green, red, purple, light and dark cobalt blue, black outlines.
Yellow, green, red, purple, light and dark cobalt blue, black outlines.
44. *Isnik tile*. 25.5 cms. square.
(A slighter, cruder version of no. 33.)
Greyish cobalt blue with darker outlines.
Pale green, greyish cobalt blue, dark khaki brown, crude black outlines.
47. *Dish* (*Persian*?). 29 cms. diam.
Light blue-grey, light cobalt blue, dark grey outlines.
Light cobalt blue with darker outlines.
Cobalt blue with darker outlines.
Greenish-white opaque glass.
51. *Italian jug*. 19 cms. high, 11.5 cms. diam., pinched lip.
Two shades of yellow ochre, pale blue-grey and dark brown.
52. *Plate* (*Dutch*?). 23 cms. diam.
Greyish-blue with darker outlines (similar to no. 8).
53. *Isnik plate*. 31 cms. diam.
Dull green, greyish cobalt blue, black outlines.
54. *Isnik plate*. 25.5 cms. diam.
Greenish ground, pale green, pale cobalt, dark orange-red, crude black outlines.
55. *Plate* (*Persian*?). 24 cms. diam., crackled glaze.
Light cobalt blue with darker outlines.
56. *Isnik plate*. (Not photographed.)
Apple green, pale cobalt blue, dark red, black outlines.
57. *Isnik plate*. (Not photographed.)
Greenish ground, pale green, greyish cobalt blue, crude black outlines.
58. *Isnik plate*. (Not photographed.)
Markedly greenish ground, pale green, pale cobalt blue, dark red, greenish black outlines.
LE MUSÉE DU LOUVRE EST PARTICULIÈREMENT PAUVRE EN TISSUS MUSULMANS ANTÉRIEURS AU DOUZIÈME SIÈCLE.

C'est à Paris le Musée des Arts décoratifs et le Musée de Cluny qui détiennent les pièces essentielles, bien que le Département des Antiquités chrétiennes du Musée du Louvre possède une riche collection d'étoffes orientales antérieures à l'Islam et que le Musée Guimet conserve quelques spécimens originaux ou tout au moins provenant d'Asie centrale.

Ce sont en dehors du Musée des tissus de Lyon, les trésors de nos cathédrales qui renferment les tissus musulmans de date antérieure au douzième siècle.

Le tissu dit de St. Josse, justement célèbre, attribué à un atelier du Khorasan du dixième siècle est le seul qui figure à la section des Arts musulmans du Musée du Louvre qui jusqu'à présent n'avait pu acquérir aucun exemplaire de la belle série dont Gaston Wiet a publié les pièces les plus remarquables provenant de Bibi Shahr Banu, à quelques kilomètres de Rayy en Perse.

Aussi est-ce une chance inespérée d'avoir récemment pu acquérir de M. Barmaki-Domboli un beau fragment de soie (MAO 396) (fig. 1) mesurant 85 par 40 cms. dont le décor en canaïe ocre un peu passé sur fond bis représente dans deux rondeaux tangents, garnis d'une bande épigraphique en coufique légèrement fleuri deux grands aigles affrontés, un dans chacun des rondeaux. La largeur du le est complète et le décor devait se répéter verticalement d'une façon indéfinie.

Si le décor en rondeaux tangents s'apparente directement à la tradition sassanide, la description minutieuse du dessin des aigles stylisés permettra quelques observations utiles pour déterminer la date, l'origine du motif, et la provenance du tissu.

La tête de l'oiseau au bec crochu, surmontée d'une crête à double palmette, l'une à trois feuilles, l'autre à cinq, est indiquée en teinte plate ocre que ne rompt que l'indication du bec, de l'œil et du cou en réserve; les pattes et les griffes symétriques de même que les cuisses sont également unies. Mais le corps, les ailes, la queue de l'oiseau sont d'un schéma plus compliqué; le corps jusqu'au cou, jusqu'à la naissance des ailes et jusqu'à la queue est recouvert d'un empennage schématisé figuré par des sortes de petits arceaux inversés, en rangs horizontaux dont l'intérieur est garni d'une espèce de petit fleuron sur une tige.

Quant aux ailes, elles sont divisées en quatre bandes, celle du bas figurant les pennes; elle est constituée par quatre rangées d'arêtes de poissons accolées dans le sens vertical; un trait horizontal sépare ce champ du suivant qui le surmonte, un petit quadrillé en losange pointé neuble la surface qui se termine au sommet en oblique;

1 Pour la bibliographie de ce tissu cf. Répertoire chronologique, Cairo, 1931, vol. 4, p. 154, no. 1507, année 330/962. Depuis la mise sous presse de cet article deux autres fragments de tissus de la série de Bibi Shahr Banu sont entrés au Musée du Louvre.
la bande supérieure comprend l’inscription en ocre sur le fond clair du tissu, en oblique. Le sommet des ailes porte trois rangs schématisés de plumes en forme de doubles arceaux.

**Inscription:**

A—autour des roues:

المها يا أرحم ال rahim يا أكرم الأكرمين
وي نوري في كناري ويا أني في كل وحشتي
وي داخل في كل شدة ويا عابتي في كل كرية

B et C—dans les bandes des ailes:

البتر الناجح من النار

—B

والنور بالآلة طويلة

—C

**Traduction:**

A—Mon Dieu, ô plus miséricordieux d’entre les miséricordieux, ô le plus généreux d’entre les généreux, et toi qui es ma lumière en mon verbe et ma consolation en tout malheur qui m’atteint et mon assurance en toute difficulté et mon espoir en tout accident, ô toi qui pardonne!

B—Le tombeau est une sauvegarde du feu de l’enfer.

C—et l’accès au Paradis sera ta récompense.

Le texte des inscriptions appelle plusieurs observations: dans celle qui court autour des rondeaux, chaque invocation à Dieu est séparée de la suivante par la conjonction, *wa*, ce qui est tout au moins inhabituel et peut s’expliquer par l’origine de celui qui composa le texte manifestement un non arabe, probablement iranien.

Quant à l’inscription des ailes qui fait sans aucun doute allusion à la mort et à l’autre monde le dernier mot que j’ai lu *tubâka* est douteux; le plus souvent ce mot s’écrit avec un *âlif* au lieu d’un *ya imala*, lorsqu’il est suivi du pronom affixe. La graphie est caractéristique du couffique persan du onzième siècle dont les caractères a hampe sont très allongés. A noter cependant la forme originale du *ha* median qui ressemble à deux petits *min* accolés horizontalement.

On connait un grand nombre de tissus du Moyen Âge (généralement du onzième et douzième siècles), la plupart d’inspiration sinon d’origine orientale portant la représentation d’aigles héraldisés d’un type voisin de celui de notre tissu.

Falke en a publié quelques uns qu’il attribue, à notre avis plus ou moins gratuitement, à diverses régions du monde musulman ou du Proche Orient: Andalousie, Sicile, Byzance, Mésopotamie ou Perse, bien que la plupart d’entre eux soient conservés dans les collections publiques ou privées d’Europe ou du Nouveau Monde et proviennent des trésors de cathédrales ou de fouilles.


Gaston Wiet\textsuperscript{4} plus récemment en a étudié toute une série qui servirent de linceuls dans des tombes à Bibi Shahr Banu près de Téhéran qui datent du onzième et douzième siècles également.

Enfin Miss Dorothy G. Shepherd, conservateur du Cleveland Museum of Art, a vu sur le marché des antiquités de New York, il y a deux ou trois ans un fragment de notre textile ne comportant qu’un rondau. D’une façon générale, on peut affirmer que l’aigle représenté tire manifestement son origine d’un prototype ancien, né sans doute à Sumer. Il se présente d’ailleurs sous plusieurs formes: aigle monocéphale ou bicéphale\textsuperscript{5} où se remarque la même stylisation des ailes symétriques triangulaires en bandes parallèles superposées. Pourtant chacun des exemples dont nous avons pu examiner les reproductions diffère par quelques traits originaux.

En premier lieu, aucun des aigles monocéphales ne porte de poire dans ses serres alors que presque tous les rapaces bicéphales tiennent symétriquement de chaque côté un quadrupède affronté ou adossé.


La tête toujours figurée de profil, qu’elle soit unique ou double, est parfois surmontée d’oreilles ou de crêtes plus ou moins stylisées qui semblent rappeler comme le signale Baltrusaitis l’aigle élamite à tête de lion (cf. note 5). En étudiant de près chacune des figures de rapaces, peut-être pourrons-nous parvenir à dater avec quelque précision et à suivre le développement de ce thème qui se perpétue pendant une très longue période, dans des décorations des textiles à la simplification technique résultant de la répétition d’un même schéma inversé; cependant elle ne s’explique pas l’usage de ce motif sur la pierre, l’ivoire, le métal, la céramique, etc. ...A l’appui de sa thèse, on peut ajouter que les épitaphes eux aussi sont inversés. Pour la représentation de l’aigle bicéphale à Byzance cf. M. Chazidakis, \textit{Collection Hélène Statathos, les objets byzantins et post-byzantins}, Strasbourg, 1953, p. 74 et note 2 (pour la bibliographie). A. Solovyev, \textit{Les emblèmes héraldiques de Byzance et les Slaves}, Seminarium Kondakianum, 1935, vol. 7, pp. 119–164.

techniques diverses à travers tout le Proche Orient jusqu’en Europe.

C’est à l’Andalousie du onzième ou douzième siècles que Falke attribue deux tissus d’un style totalement différent. Le premier (Abb. 141) conservé au Musée des tissus de Lyon porte la représentation d’un aile bicéphale dessiné au trait clair sur un fond plus foncé; les deux têtes, surmontées chacune de deux oreilles, reposent sur le cou, séparé en son milieu, chaque encolure étant décorée de sept petits rangs de dents de scie en oblique. Le corps de l’animal unique est comme marqueté d’un petit damier; les pattes écarterées tiennent dans chaque serre de part et d’autre de la queue, symétriquement affronté un petit bouquetin; la queue triangulaire, servant de point d’appui est ornée d’un motif géométrique qui joint des petits croissants. Chacune des ailes est divisée horizontalement en deux champs: Le champ supérieur est recouvert de rangs de pennons accolés en forme d’arceaux imbriqués tandis que la partie inférieure est divisée verticalement en cinq bandes parallèles qui diminuent de hauteur à mesure qu’elles s’approchent du corps du volatile.

D’un tout autre caractère est la figuration de l’aile bicéphale du tissu de Quedlinburg (conservé au Musée de Berlin; Falke Abb. 142) que Falke considère également comme espagnol. D’un dessin plus compliqué, plus évolué et plus baroque, la vive polychromie de l’ornementation l’apparente à la série bien connue des tissages de l’Espagne musulmane. L’aile bicéphale, aux têtes soudées formant une ellipse ornée de part et d’autre de deux becs symétriques, a les yeux et la crête figurés par trois petits ovules. L’oiseau est encadré d’un rondeau que quatre galons entrelacés relient aux rondeaux adjacents qui répètent le même motif. Dans le cadre, entre les galons de chaque rondeau court une frise de quadrupèdes affrontés deux à deux. L’aigle lui-même d’une raideur caractéristique tient dans chaque serre un bouquetin; les deux cervidés s’affrontent, la tête rejetée en arrière. Le rapace repose sur sa queue terminée par deux bandes de pennons trapézoïdes; elle est reliée au corps de l’oiseau par deux rangs d’arceaux inversés; les plumes des cuisses sont schématisées par des raies horizontales claires et foncées alternativement. Le corps est recouvert de sortes d’écaillés cordiformes dont l’intérieur est meublé d’un genre de fleuron. La stylisation des ailes éployées est d’un aspect encore plus géométrique: dans la partie inférieure, six bandes parallèles verticales foncées, de plus en plus courtes à mesure qu’elles se rapprochent du corps, une bande horizontale sans aucun décor séparent la partie inférieure du sommet de chaque aile que recouvrent quatre rangs horizontaux d’espèce de grecques figurant les pennes.

Une tout autre série de textiles appartient d’après Falke à la Sicile du douzième siècle.

Le premier (Abb. 155) conservé à Siegburg nous présente deux aigles bicéphales aux têtes accolées, leurs ailes éployées se touchant presque, dont les serres tiennent par le col deux bouquetins adossés. Trois rangées d’arceaux inversés figurent les plumes de la queue tandis que celles du corps sont représentées par un carrelage polygonalement géométrique. Les ailes sont divisées en trois champs horizontaux coupés par une ligne d’épigraphes: répétition une fois inversée, une fois droite du vocable, barakah. Au dessous huit bandes verticales parallèles représentent les pennes inférieures; au sommet de l’aile des écaillés imbriquées figu-
rent les plumes. L'originalité du dessin est constituée par le cou parallèle et cylindrique de chacun des deux aigles souligné par un collier perlé. Deux V superposés meublent chacun de deux coussins tandis que chaque tête adossée est surmontée d'une crête dont les deux silhouettes symétriques forment une palmette qui se termine à la partie supérieure en volute. Sans qu'on puisse sur la seule reproduction que nous possédons juger de la couleur de l'étoffe, il semble que la gamme se réduise à un ton plus foncé sur un fond plus clair.

C'est au contraire sur un fond plus soutenu que se détache en clair le décor de l'Abb. 156 de Falke (conservé au Musée de Berlin). Les aigles bicéphales accolés aux coussins, courbés et soufflés à leur base sont surmontés de deux têtes qui portent chacune deux crétes en volutes. Le bord supérieur des ailes, le cou, le corps de l'oiseau sont cernés d'un rang de petits cercles; l'aile comme dans la plupart des cas est divisée en trois registres horizontaux, celui du milieu plus étroit porte encoufique simple le voeu de deux fois, baraka et bar... Au dessus un carrelage de pennes imprimées, au dessous sept rayures parallèles droites figurent les plumes. Le rapace tient dans chaque serre un lion adossé à l'autre, chacun des fauves saisissant un bouquet. La queue de l'aigle en partie cachée par les quadrupèdes laisse apercévoir un empennage de petits arceaux inversés dont l'intérieur porte un petit décor floral. Un décor floral égal est parfois mais assez stylisé meuble les intervalles entre oiseaux et quadrupèdes, décor dont la souplesse contraste avec la raideur héraldique de l'oiseau. Cette opposition de raideur et de souplesse se ressent d'une part dans la schématisation du rapace d'autre part dans le réalisme relatif des quadrupèdes et du décor végétal.

Quelques autres tissus du douzième siècle seraient d'après Falke de fabrication byzantine; leur caractère assez différent est évident; leur dessin plus sec est d'un aspect plus héraldique et si ce n'était la richesse et la somptuosité de leurs coloris, ils seraient plus proches du tissu récemment acquis par le Musée du Louvre qui s'en distingue par sa dichromie un peu éteinte.

Celui qui est reproduit sur l'Abb. 180 de Falke conservé au Musée de Berlin représente dans un demi-cadre constitué par des galons en arcs de cercles au dessus et au dessus un aigle bicéphale répété; le cou unique de l'oie est surmonté de deux becs, chacun tenant une sorte de croissant, héritage des images sasanides. L'oeil du rapace est schématiquement figuré par un globe environné d'un petit décor floral; le cou est recouvert d'une espèce de damier en carrés sur champ, l'intérieur de chaque carreau contenant une palmette. Dans chaque serre, l'aile tient un lion au flanc décoré de motifs géométriques et floraux, l'un s'adossant à l'autre, la tête retournée. La queue du rapace est figurée par des bandes obliques parallèles où alternent des motifs cordiformes et des arceaux renversés; enfin chacune des ailes symétriques est divisée en champs horizontaux limités par des courbes; la partie inférieure divisée en quatre bandes verticales parallèles est tapissée d'un système d'entrelacs que surmonte une frise d'arceaux inversés; un rang de pastilles sépare la partie inférieure du sommet de l'aile qui est meublé d'une grosse palmette sur tige. Le tissu reproduit par Falke sous les numéros suivants (Abb. 181 et 182) nous montre également un aigle bicéphale; faisant partie d'une chasuble à Brixen, sa
décoration se caractérise par la diversité des quadrillages employés pour recouvrir le corps, la tête, et les ailes de l’oiseau dont la silhouette est répétée côte à côte, les intervalles entre les oiseaux étant meublés de rosaces stylisées.

L’œil du rapace est figuré par une grosse perle qui se détache en clair surmontée par le trait du sourcil. Le cou du bipède est semé d’un quadrillage portant sur le fond clair de chaque carreau un petit dessin cordiforme. Le corps du volatile est recouvert d’un tissu d’arcs imbriqués en rangées parallèles soulignés par des petites pastilles; une sorte de collier entoure le cou d’une bande de pastilles foncées; les ailes comme à l’ordinaire sont divisées horizontalement en quatre champs limités par une légère courbure: au sommet des petits arceaux presque obliques remplis par des petites pastilles surmontent une bande de sept petits cercles; au dessous un rang alterné de rayures verticales sombres et claires apparaît au dessus des pennes figurées par cinq lignes verticales plus foncées parallèles entre lesquelles on aperçoit des petits triangles qui s’opposent dans le sens vertical. La queue est constituée par des bandes parallèles obliques, ornées alternativement de motifs cordiformes et d’un tréfle grosièrement esquisse, un clair, un foncé. Une des particularités de cet aigle monocéphale est l’absence de crête; de même que les autres rapaces à une tête représentés sur les tissus, cet oiseau ne porte aucune proie dans les serres simplement posées sur un socle rectangulaire meublé de petits cercles semblables à ceux des ailes. On ne peut malheureusement s’imaginer qu’imparfaitement la forme du volatile reproduite par Falke sous le numéro 183 car le fragment de tissu conservé à la Bibliothèque de Stuttgart nous a conservé qu’une aile de l’oiseau et un fragment du rondeau entoure son effigie de même que le petit socle qui le supportait sur deux rangs horizontaux de perlées superposées; l’animal sans doute monocéphale, était encadré par un rondeau contenant des entrelacs à palmettes enfermant un motif cordiforme; l’aile stylisée comporte trois champs horizontaux, le bas de l’aile est constitué par huit raies verticales parallèles, qui sont de plus en plus courtes à mesure qu’elles se rapprochent du corps; près du corps, on en aperçoit même une neuvième très courte près du corps; au dessus une bande de deux rangs superposés de perles sépare les pennes inférieures verticales du sommet de l’aile où s’étale une grosse palmette portée par une tige épaisse qui s’enroule autour d’elle; le corps de l’oiseau est recouvert d’une sorte de carapace d’écaill es en forme de doubles arceaux tandis que la queue oblique est décorée de bandes presque semblables à celles de l’étoffe des l’Abb. 181 et 182. Le dessin général est lourd et un peu pâteux.

Le dernier exemplaire donné par Falke dans cette série (Abb. 184) attribuée à Byzance et daté comme les autres du onzième et douzième siècles se trouve dans le trésor de St. Canut à Odense (Danemark). Le saint royal du Danemark fut mis en chasse en 1101 et la tradition veut qu’à cette époque, sa veuve Ethele, qui plus tard épousa le duc Roger d’Apulie, envoye de riches

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7 Le suaire de St. Germain de l’Église St. Eusèbe d’Auxerre (cf. fig. 2) dont un fragment se trouve au Musée du Bargello de Florence et un autre au Victoria and Albert Museum et que G. Migeon (ibid., p. 49) attribue à Byzance est tout à fait comparable au fragment de Stuttgart (Dutch u½t 1, Salles et Volbach, op. cit., pls. 91–92, pp. 75–76).
Fig. 1.—Tissu du Musée du Louvre.

Fig. 2.—Tissu de St. Eusebe d’Auxerre.
Fig. 3—Bronze du Musée du Louvre.

Fig. 4—Bronze du Musée du Louvre.
présents pour décorer les précieuses reliques de son premier époux.8

D’une facture plus grossière et moins raffinée que la plupart des autres tissus, le dessin est manifestement la copie d’un modèle plus soigné exécuté sans doute par des artisans plus habiles. Les rondeaux qui encadrent l’aigle monocéphale sont ovalisés et irréguliers; la symétrie du dessin n’est qu’approximative.

Mais l’aigle dessiné au trait garde des souvenirs de l’iconographie sassanide; il tient en son bec recourbé un pendentif en croissant au bas duquel pend une perle ronde et une perle ovale. De même les rondeaux qui encadrent l’oiseau, reminiscence aussi du décor sassanide, contiennent dans l’épaisseur du galon des arceaux inversés; la soudure entre les rondeaux tangents s’orne de rosettes tandis que des rosettes de dimensions plus importante meublent les vides entre chaque rondeau. Le volatile lui-même stylisé et un peu desséché a la tête décorée d’un petit ornement floral en réserve; le cou entouré d’un ruban de perles au dessous duquel des rangs horizontaux d’arceaux accolés figurent l’empennage est relié au corps par une bande à décor alternativement clair et foncé; le corps lui-même est couvert d’arceaux accolés figurant les plumes; un schéma analogue de plus petite échelle revêt les cuisses tandis que les pattes et les ailes portent des bandes parallèles verticales pour les pattes, obliques pour les ailes; des petites taches foncées assez irrégulières s’alignent sur ces bandes; les deux ailes éployées sont divisées en quatre registres horizontaux limités par un trait légèrement concave; le registre inférieur comprend six lignes verticales parallèles dont la longueur diminue à mesure qu’elles se rapprochent du corps de l’oiseau entre lesquelles s’inscrivent des petites figures géométriques assez irrégulièrement dessinées; deux bandes étroites surmontent ce registre: l’inférieure constituée par de petits arceaux inversés accolés les uns aux autres, la supérieure par un rang de petits carrés sur champ très imparfaitement dessinés à cause d’un tissage irrégulier; le registre supérieur sur fond clair est agrémenté d’une large palmette d’une composition assez complexe; mais c’est le petit socle rectangulaire qui sert de base et de support à l’aigle qui mérite qu’on s’y arrête; une suite de lettres grecques dont l’interprétation n’a pu être donnée jusqu’à présent en décore toute la surface. C’est cette pseudo-inscription qui justifie l’attribution de ce textile à un atelier byzantin. A ces étoffes, de provenance sans doute assez diverses, on peut comparer toute une série manifestement persane trouvées dans un site unique et dont il a déjà été question plus haut. Malgré quelques différences de style entre elles qui pourrait indiquer soit des dates légèrement différentes, soit des ateliers distincts, elles semblent toutes avoir été fabriquées en Perse et pouvoir être datées du onzième-douzième siècle. Les inscriptions arabes en coupfine qui agrémentent ces étoffes en sont la confirmation. Sans décrire en détail chacune d’elles, il est cependant intéressant d’attirer l’attention sur les particularités qui les distinguent du tissu récemment acquis par le Musée du Louvre, manifestement originaire du même site, bien qu’il faille sans aucun doute l’attribuer à un atelier différent. Le fragment publié par Wiet sous le numéro 10 nous

montre des aigles bicéphales aux ailes éployées, séparées par une sorte de sceptre à fleuron vertical tandis qu’à l’horizontale c’est une bande de coufique en réserve qui borne le motif. La tête de chacun des aigles est coiffée de deux crêtes formant oreilles, en demi-palmettes. Comme dans les autres tissus les ailes sont divisées en registres mais la géométrisation est ici encore plus accentuée qu’à l’ordinaire: les ailes forment chacune un véritable triangle rectangle divisé en deux registres par deux étroites bandes, l’une de petites perles sombres surmontant un rang de petites volutes en réserve; la partie inférieure de l’aile constituée par cinq bandes verticales parallèles est décorée de petits anneaux en réserve; le sommet qui est presque carré est encadré d’une inscription en coufique réservé; dans ce cadre des petits croissants imbriqués font une sorte de damier de marqueterie; au centre du corps de l’oiseau, strictement symétrique par rapport à l’axe central comme le reste du décor, un petit génie aux ailes éployées s’étend, laissant apparaître les plumes du corps de l’aigle représentées par un schéma analogue à celui de la partie supérieure des ailes; les plumes de la queue en bandes obliques sont meublées d’un mince entrelacs; des bandes horizontales avec des inscriptions coufiques en réserve séparent horizontalement les rangs d’aigles qui verticalement comportent entre chacun d’eux une tige munie d’un fleuron assez complexe, peut-être, comme le remarque Wiet stylisation de l’arbre de vie. L’oiseau qui ne tient pas de proie dans ses serres semble reposer par le centre de la queue sur la bande à inscriptions qui lui sert de socle.

Le tissu numéro 9 de même provenance, publié dans le même ouvrage, est d’une gamme de couleurs et d’un dessin très voisins. Le bis et le marron qui donnent à ce décor un ton camaïeu l’apparentent nettement à celui du Louvre. L’usage de ces tissus comme linéaux est confirmé d’ailleurs par la teneur des inscriptions dont un bon nombre se réfère à l’au-delà.

Ici l’oiseau a la tête surmontée de quatre petites piques en guise de crêtes, et sous le bec et l’œil s’allongent des excroissances qui donnent à la tête du volatile un profil de gallinacé plutôt que de rapace. Le cou de l’animal est tapisse de petits arceaux renversés tandis que tout le corps est occupé par un personnage dont les jambes se confondent avec les pattes du volatile; les ailes symétriques sont divisées en cinq registres limités par des traits en vague concaves, les quatre registres inférieurs sont meublés par des lignes verticales parallèles; mais la partie supérieure s’orne d’un oiseau adossé à celui de l’aile opposée sur un fond d’imbrications. La plus grande différence avec le tissu précédent consiste dans la forme de la queue du rapace: véritable éventail sur lequel il repose, de part et d’autre duquel s’affrontent deux petits griffons que l’animal tient dans ses serres; une inscription en coufique foncé sur le fond clair court entre les deux becs des oiseaux accolés.

La description d’un certain nombre de tissus manifestement d’origine assez diverse, bien que provenant toutes du proche et moyen Orient, mais toutes œuvres du onzième et du douzième siècles nous conduit à rechercher une origine commune au thème qui décore leur surface. Ce thème d’ailleurs, avec quelques différences dûes en grande partie à la diversité des techniques et des matières employées, apparaît vers la même époque dans l’orfèvrerie, le bronze, la pierre, l’ivoire, le verre et la céramique et même dans la numismatique.
L’aigle y est mono-ou bicéphale, d’un style plus ou moins réaliste muni ou non d’une crête, portant dans ses serres une proie ou simplement posé; cependant presque toujours la stylisation géométrique des plumes, les ailes plus ou moins symétriques divisées en registres horizontaux, enfin une certaine tendance à l’héraldique leur donne un air de famille évident.

Sans prétendre en fournir une liste exhaustive, quelques exemples nous permettront d’en juger.

Un des exemples islamiques les plus anciens que nous possédions se trouve sur un plât d’argent gravé de la période dite post-sassanide en Iran, vraisemblablement postérieure au neuvième siècle.9 Provenant de Maltchevo (gouvernement de Perm) en date de 1878, il est aujourd’hui conservé au Musée de l’Ermitage à Léningrad. L’aigle monocéphale qui porte dans ses serres un quadrupède y est représenté, la tête et le corps de profil, le bec crochu face à gauche ce qui est assez exceptionnel; la tête est semée de pointillages gravés; au ras du cou, souvenir sans doute des colliers du bestiaire sassanide, l’oiseau porte une bande étroite de petits traits verticaux; tout son corps est revêtu d’un damier en losanges chacun d’eux meublé d’une arête de poisson gravée. Mais le trait qui le rapproche le plus des tissus est la symétrie presque exacte des ailes d’éplorées divisées en deux registres horizontaux; le supérieur sans décor s’encadre d’une bande de petits points, l’inférieur comme à l’ordinaire simulant six pennes verticales, chacune gravée d’une arête de poisson; les cuisses du volatile comme la tête sont pointillées; le quadrupède que tiennent les serres du roi des oiseaux vu de profil, courant, la tête semée d’un pointillage gravé, l’encolure entourée d’un collier, réduction de celui de l’aigle, les cuisses gravées d’un décor vaguement floral sur fond pointillé; son corps est parsemé de petites bandes de traits horizontaux gravés qui couvrent aussi les pattes représentant la toison du mammifère. Le marli du plat comporte un mince décor en relief d’U renversés horizontaux entre deux listels.

Cette image de l’aigle sur un plât de métal est d’un style incomparablement plus réaliste que celle qui orne la plupart des tissus décrits plus haut et s’apparente de très près à celles peut-être un peu plus anciennes, de style encore très sassanide qui se détachent en relief sur les deux faces d’une aiguière d’argent du Musée de l’Ermitage qui vient de Kurilowa (gouvernement de Perm). Encadrés dans des rondeaux à feuilles de laurier les aigles monocéphales dont l’un fait face à droite (18.5 cms. de haut diamètre 10.9 cms.) tiennent dans leurs serres un bouquetin de profil, la tête tournée du même côté que l’aigle; comme sur les tissus, le corps de l’oiseau est recouvert d’un damier en losanges et chacune des ailes du volatile est divisée en deux champs horizontaux: le supérieur meublé de rangs horizontaux de petites perles en relief, celui du bas constitué par cinq longs traits verticaux parallèles.

Au dessous du vase d’argent court une inscription pehlevie qui date peut-être d’une période postérieure à l’époque sassanide mais qui vraisemblablement ne doit pas être plus récente que le neuvième ou le dixième siècles.10

Deux autres objets en métal, ceux ci en

9 I. Orbeli et C. Trever, Argenterie sassanide, Leningrad, 1933, pl. 31; I. Smirnoff, Argenterie orientale, St. Petersburg, 1909, pl. XC, no. 132.

10 Orbeli et Trever, ibid., no. 39; Smirnoff, ibid., pl. LIX, no. 88.
bronze, et sculptés en ronde bosse, nous rappellent aussi par la schématisation des pennes les tissus décrits plus haut.

L’un d’entre eux conservé au Musée du Louvre (Inv. 8199) a jadis été publié 11 par Gustave Schlumberger (hauteur: 9 cm.). L’attribution de cet objet à la Sicile du onzième ou douzième siècles ne me semble pas devoir être retenue pour plusieurs raisons (fig. 3). En effet au dos de l’objet sont gravées sur la surface unie du dos, des ailes et de la queue de d’oiseau deux inscriptions, l’une en caractères arabes, l’autre en caractères grecs qui bien qu’inintelligible semblaient à l’eminent savant en langue grecque d’époque byzantine. Tandis que l’inscription arabe donne sur une ligne: barakah lišāhibibi «bénédiction à son possesseur» souscrit par le nom, «Ali» qui doit être le nom de ce propriétaire; l’inscription en caractères grecs peut se lire: CXEIV PEPAN.

Le groupe des trois dernières lettres signifie en langue copte «nom», ce qui pourrait suggérer que les lettres précédentes pourraient constituer un nom propre copte.

Dans ce cas, il faudrait réviser l’attribution de Gustave Schlumberger et adopter une provenance égyptienne. Cette provenance semble admissible si on considère le style de cette petite sculpture dont on connaît quelques parallèles dans l’art copte des environs du dixième siècle.

Pourtant M. Guillaumont, consulté sur la teneur de cette inscription, se rallie à l’opinion de Gustave Schlumberger et serait tenté de lire deux mots grecs: CXEIV EPAN le premier infinitif aoriste du verbe σχέω (avoir, posséder); le second infinitif du verbe ἐφεύ (aimer).

Il faudrait se demander alors de quel pays serait originaire ce bronze ou la langue arabe voisine avec la grecque. Ce pourrait être Byzance où l’on rencontre parfois de ces inscriptions bilingues. Une autre interprétation plus séduisante encore, que le R. P. Mondesert, spécialiste des inscriptions de Syrie, ne peut admettre, voit dans cette suite de lettres grecques le nom d’une localité qui correspondrait à une graphie légèrement aberrante de Alexandr… Ce nom pourrait s’appliquer à deux villes: les deux Alexandrettes que mentionne d’ailleurs Ya-qūţ: Iskenderīnī. 12

Il s’agirait alors en tout cas d’un objet d’origine syrienne. Cependant tandis que le premier nu de l’inscription est écrit à la grecque, le nu final est en onciales romaines et comme le alpha initial manque, le doute reste permis bien que l’orthographe des noms propres soit assez flottante à cette époque tardive et que le mélange des lettres grecques et romaines soit courant.

Le Département des Antiquités Orientales du Musée du Louvre conserve aussi un objet de bronze dont on ignore l’origine représentant un aigle de plus grande dimension mais que je serai tenté à cause de son style de considérer comme syrien du sixième ou septième siècles; de fonte assez fruste et grossière, traité par masses, ses ailes époyées, presque symétriques divisées en deux registres, le supérieur nu, l’inférieur orné de bandes verticales parallèles rappellent en plus lourd, nos figurations d’aigles (KLF 44 cf. pl. 4, haut 22 cm., largeur 23 cm.).

Un autre bronze, celui-là représentant un coq acquis autrefois au Daghestan par


le comte Bobrinsky, publié à plusieurs reprises, figure dans les vitrines du Musée de l’Ermitage à Leningrad et nous donne avec ses ailes horizontales divisées en registres et son col orné de quatre rangs superposés d’écaillées une impression comparable à celle des autres oiseaux décrits plus haut; c’est d’après Sarre un pot à boire ou un pot de fumeur en bronze gravé (haut. 32 cm.) mais d’autres auteurs pensent que c’est un brûle-parfum. L’examen du détail de la décoration permet de lui donner une date approximative: le corps du gallinacé n’a comme ornement que trois petits médaillons ronds gravés, un au dessus de chaque aile, un autre de plus grand diamètre sur le bréchet; les deux médaillons latéraux représentent un simurgh entouré de quelques arabesques florales, celui du bréchet un personnage royal assis de face qu’environne un lion à droite, un faucon à gauche sur un fond également floral; le style de ces représentations qui s’apparentent à celui de la céramique est contemporain du douzième-treizième siècles. Cependant la partie la plus intéressante de ce bronze est sans contredit l’originalité dans la stylisation des plumes des ailes placées horizontalement de chaque côté du corps; ici sept registres parallèles verticaux—à cause de la position horizontale de l’aile—la divisent, séparés chacun du suivant par un mince listel: le premier champ, le plus voisin du bréchet porte neuf rangs d’écaillées imbriquées en forme d’arceaux; le second des arcs de cercles à rayures concentriques se chevauchant; le troisième trois rangs superposés de minces arcades en forme d’U renversés; le quatrième semblable au second;

le cinquième et le sixième semblables ont le même motif que le troisième mais sur un rang chacun au lieu de trois rangs superposés; enfin le septième, traditionnellement est strié de pennes longitudinales, légèrement recourbées et s’aminçissant vers l’extrémité de la queue.

Ce schéma des ailes divisées en registres, cette symétrie des ailes triangulaires ou non éployées, cet aspect de plus en plus héraldique de la représentation donne à tous ces oiseaux un air de famille évident que l’on peut noter dans quelques autres techniques où l’artisan musulman s’est sans aucun doute inspiré de sources communes. Quelques ivoires espagnols en gardent le souvenir que nous nous bornerons à énumérer et à décrire brièvement, leur reproduction existant dans de nombreux ouvrages.

Un coffret d’ivoire du Musée du Bargello de Florence probablement du onzième siècle est orné aux deux coins supérieurs de son couvercle rectangulaire de deux oiseaux affrontés aux ailes éployées au corps recouvert d’un empannage en forme d’écaillées; leurs ailes presque rectangulaires divisées en deux registres se meublent comme le corps d’un empannage inbriqué, la partie inférieure divisée par des traits verticaux parallèles figure les plumes du bout de l’aile. Le second ivoire de style plus évolué et déjà un peu décadent pourrait remonter à une époque moins ancienne; ayant autrefois appartenue à la collection Davillier, c’est un coffret rectangulaire qui est aujourd’hui exposé au Musée du Louvre. Quatre oiseaux d’un style analogue le décorent, deux sur le couvercle

13 Orbeli et Trever, op. cit., pl. 82; F. Sarre, L’art de la Perse ancienne, Paris, 1921, fig. 140.

14 Ferrandis, Marfiles arabes, Madrid, 1935, vol. 1, no. 21, pls. XXXIX, XL.
rectangulaire, deux sur la face antérieure.\textsuperscript{15}

Un coffret parallélipipédique d’ivoire de Cordoue, actuellement au Victoria and Albert Museum, porte sur ses petites faces verticales deux aigles monocéphales du même genre (Falke, Seidenweberei, Abb. 136, 137, 138; Ferrandis, \textit{Marfile\'s arabes}, no. 23, pls. XLI-XLIV) de même que le célèbre coffret de la cathédrale de Pampelune de forme analogue (sur le couvercle).\textsuperscript{16}

Des monuments de pierre ou de marbre islamiques d’époques assez diverses sont sculptés d’aigles qui nous rappellent aussi par certains caractères ceux que nous venons de décrire; cependant il semble qu’à mesure que ces figurations s’éloignent de cette période du onzième et douzième siècles leur stylisation subise des modifications sensibles que l’on verra se refléter d’ailleurs dans les autres techniques. Tandis que les aigles les plus anciens, d’époques sasanide, post-sassanide, et proto-islamique gardaient une certaine souplesse et un certain réalisme d’une symétrie très approximative ceux de la période suivante (onzième et douzième siècles) prenaient une raideur linéaire et héraldique très caractéristique.

A partir de cette époque environ, les représentations de l’oiseau royal semblent s’étoffier peu à peu du type ancien. Le dessin des ailes s’assouplit, la silhouette générale devient plus gracieuse, moins lourde et moins géométrisée et nous ferait davantage penser aux aigles héraldiques impériaux de l’Occident. Cette évolution, si elle est plus sensible dans l’art du tissu que dans les autres techniques, est cependant perceptible chez d’autres artisans que les tisserands d’Orient. Quelques sculptures sur pierre et sur marbre nous permettront d’en suivre les changements à travers les siècles et les régions du monde islamique.

Une cuve à ablutions de marbre, originaire de Madinat al-Zahrah et conservée au Musée archéologique de Madrid (datée 377/987) rectangulaire est décorée sur l’un de ses petits côtés de deux aigles monocéphales symétriques portant chacun un bouquet dans ses serres; les ailes stylisées comportent comme souvent deux registres: pennes en arcs imbriqués semblables à des écailles au sommet, grands traits verticaux parallèles à la partie inférieure; la queue en éventail surmonte deux griffons affrontés tandis que de chaque côté de la tête, au dessus de l’aile s’affrontent deux petits quadrupèdes; un des traits caractéristiques est fourni par les deux petites oreilles qui coiffent la tête du rapace.\textsuperscript{17}

Le revers d’une cuve d’ablutions de marbre de Marrakech de la fin du dixième siècle\textsuperscript{18} nous en donne une réplique presque identique, proche parente des effigies d’aigles des coffrets d’ivoire espagnols.

D’autres aigles reproduits en bas-relief sur la pierre ou le marbre, d’époque un peu plus tardive sont d’un type assez différent mais où l’on peut cependant retrouver certaines caractéristiques des rapaces précédemment décrits.

Un aigle bicéphale très héraldique mais dépouillé cependant de cette raideur et de cette géométrisation si originales et particulières aux tissus se voit à Amida avec la date 1208 figurant les armes ortoqides aux

\textsuperscript{15} Falke, Abb. 143; Ferrandis, no. 23, pls. XLV-XLVI.

\textsuperscript{16} Falke, Abb. 136–138; Ferrandis, vol. 1, no. 19, pls. XXXIII–XXXVII.

\textsuperscript{17} Migeon, Manuel, vol. 1, p. 252, fig. 86; Falke, Abb. 139.

\textsuperscript{18} Migeon, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 255, fig. 89.
UN TISSU PERSAN DU DOUZIÈME SIÈCLE AU MUSÉE DU LOUVRE

murs de cette ville. Un peu plus tard un autre aigle de style sensiblement analogue nous montre au douzième ou treizième siècle, au Musée de Konya, provenant des portes de la ville les armes des Seljouqides; deux autres aigles monocéphales presque semblables, en relief très plat sur la pierre qui sans doute décoraient un portail dans la même ville sont surmontés de l’inscription monumentale: al-sultāni (sultanien).

D’une époque voisine, 1305, un autre relief de pierre de Grenade nous montre un aigle monocéphale d’un type tout différent qui s’apparente avec son relief assez haut aux ivoires du dixième et onzième siècles. Migeon y voit d’ailleurs une copie tardive d’objets plus anciens; monocéphale, face à droite, la tête de l’oiseau est surmontée d’oreilles; sur le haut des ailes deux quadrupèdes sont affrontés tandis que chacune des serres tient un bouquetin adossé; au dessus de chaque aile, de part et d’autre de la tête deux petits lions s’affrontent.

Les arts du feu entre le dixième et le treizième siècles nous donnent aussi, bien qu’assez différents des exemples typiques des ces aigles symétriquement stylisés, héraldisés et jusqu’à un certain point géométrisés. On ne peut méconnaître que la technique et la matière elle-même ne jouent un rôle prépondérant dans les différences qui apparaissent dans la reproduction d’un schéma voisin; la céramique avec son décor flottant et peint laisse une plus grande liberté à l’artisan que le verre gravé à la meule, que l’ivoire et la pierre sculptés que le tissu qui emprisonne le dessin dans la trame régulière des fils. La souplesse de la forme des faïences, leur aptitude à se colorer des teintes les plus diverses et à se plier aux techniques variées rompra la fixité du thème dont on aura parfois de la difficulté à retrouver la source initiale. Pourtant c’est encore aux environs des mêmes périodes que l’aigle figure ici. Quelques plats et bols provenant tous de Perse en reproduisent les contours dans des techniques et des couleurs assez dissemblables. Un bol dit « ga-bri » en technique champélevé du Zendjan, conserve dans la collection F. M. Gunther du onzième siècle présente un aigle monocéphale appuyé sur sa queue en éventail; fortement stylisé et simplifié sa silhouette aux ailes symétriques presque sans décor se séparent pour former des demi-fleuons dont l’un surmonte aussi la tête de l’oiseau tournée vers la gauche; un collier à deux rangs grossièrement dessiné entoure le cou.

D’une époque sensiblement voisine mais d’un tout autre type le plat laqabi provenant sans doute de Rayy et justement célébre emprunte davantage à l’héraldique que la forme assouplie du volatile dont l’extrémité des ailes se termine en tiges florales en volutes et demi fleurons. Cependant la tête unique tournée à gauche que surmonte une crête et qu’agrémentée un barbillion sous le bec ainsi que la stylisation des ailes symétriques nous ramène plus près de l’aigle des tissus.

Enfin un grand plat de la céramique persane dite d’Amol, datable des environs du onzième et douzième siècles en vert...

19 Falke, Abb. 118.
20 F. Sarre, Seldjukische Kleinkunst, Leipzig, 1929, Abb. 5; Falke, Abb. 119.
21 Sarre, op. cit., Abb. 6.
22 Falke, Abb. 140; Migeon, op. cit., p. 253.
d’oxyde de cuivre et manganèse sur fond crèmeux nous présente une stylisation d’aigles affrontés dont le dessin a quelque parenté avec les autres représentations de l’oiseau royal que nous venons de passer en revue (inv. Louvre 8175; diam. 31 cm).  

S’il n’est parmi les beaux cristaux de roche d’époque fatimide dont quelques exemplaires nous sont parvenus aucune représentation d’aigle dont le dessin ait quelque rapport avec les aigles tissés, les verriers du douzième siècle nous présentent des effigies d’oiseaux, rapaces stylisés et symétriques qui montrent une certaine parenté avec les volatile décrits plus haut. Deux goblets de verre gravé, approximativement du douzième siècle de la série dite de Sainte Hedwige portent sur leur paroi des aigles aux ailes éployées, tous deux monocéphales.

Celui du Rijks Museum d’Amsterdam figure un rapace de profil, face à droite; les ailes symétriques décorées en trois champ horizontaux de fines striures dirigées dans différents sens, la queue en éventail et le style héroïque de la silhouette font un peu songer à l’immobilité de l’animal tissé sur la soie du Musée du Louvre. Un goblet analogue conserve au dôme de Minden nous procure un exemple très voisin de volatile.

Bien que la plupart de ces représentations d’aigles plus ou moins héroïques semblent toutes dater d’une période comprise entre le dixième et le douzième siècles, on trouve encore au treizième et quatorzième siècles dans le Proche Orient des raptures dessinés symétriquement, aux ailes éployées dont la silhouette paraît encore liée par une parenté étroite à celles décrites ci-dessus. Dans des techniques très différentes, on retrouve un schéma voisin.

Sans parler des tissus qui reproduisent fréquemment ce thème, il semble que les dynasties seldjuqides et ortoqides l’aient adopté comme un signe en quelque sorte de leur royauté; la sculpture sur pierre nous en avait déjà fourni la preuve. Mais on le verra aussi au cours du treizième siècle pour les monnaies dont quelques unes portent la silhouette de rapaces aux ailes éployées, toujours bicéphales.

Par ordre chronologique, voici celles que cite Stanley Lane-Poole dans son monumental Catalogue of Oriental coins in the British Museum, toutes au nom de l’Ortoqide Nâsîr al-dîn Mahmûd. Datées de 614/1218 trois monnaies analogues présentent un aigle bicéphale aux ailes éployées; les ailes divisées en deux sections horizontalement séparées forment à la partie supérieure un aileron recourbé en croissant au-dessous de la quelle figure une tête barbue de vieillard. La tête de chaque oiseau porte une crête; les pattes écarterées reposent sur des sortes de feuilles (frappées à Amîd). Une monnaie de 615/1219 du même souverain mais frappées à al Hisn Kayfa nous montre un aigle bicéphale mais d’un type différent: chacune des têtes est surmontée de plusieurs dents en guise de crête; l’aile est formée à la partie supérieure par un galon en colimaçon que deux galons hori-

25 Catalogue vente Jacques Doucet, 1930, no. 79.
27 Lâmm, p. 171, pl. 63, no. 1.
zontaux parallèles séparent de la partie inférieure marquée par des pennons verticaux parallèles tels qu’ils sont le plus souvent figurés sur les tissus; trois croisants, deux symétriques surmontés d’un autre plus petit représentent la queue du volatile sur laquelle il repose les deux pattes écartées.\footnote{Ibid., p. 132, nos. 349 et 350 et pl. VII.}

Enfin une troisième représentation du rapacenaute est donnée sur d’autres monnaies du même souverain.\footnote{Ibid., p. 133, no. 351, pl. VII et nos. 352 et 353.} Frappées à Amid en 617/1220 elles sont décorées d’un aile bicéphale à crête tout à fait du même genre que le numéro 346. Cependant au lieu de la tête de vieillard de la partie inférieure de l’aile ce sont des pennes verticales qui forment le bas des deux ailes symétriques; la queue en éventail entre les pattes écartées constitue deux S horizontaux sur lequel l’oiseau semble reposer. Une autre pièce du même type est citée au numéro 354, p. 134, mais la date, probablement 610, reste hypothétique et le lieu de frappe est inconnu.

L’examen de ces nombreux exemples, choisis un peu au hasard parmi tant d’autres dans l’iconographie proche-orientale nous autorise sans doute à quelques conclusions qui bien qu’hypothétiques suggèrent quelques approximations.

L’aigle monocéphale ou bicéphale aux ailes époyées procède vraisemblablement d’une origine commune. C’est l’aigle à tête de lion de Lagash qui en est le prototype. Les Sassanides en perpétuent la tradition en modifiant légèrement le type primitif qui devient plus naturaliste et semble se confondre avec le symbole royal de la chasse, ce qui en exclut toute idée héraldique. Ce sont probablement les rapports incessants de cette dynastie avec Byzance, guerres dont les captifs foulent la terre iranienne qui introduisent ce thème à la cour impériale de l’empire d’Orient; il apparaît entre le dixième et le douzième siècle sur de nombreux tissus aussi bien chrétiens que musulmans. Bouyides, Seljouqides, et Ortoqides en adoptent l’effigie qu’ils stérvissent et immobilisent de manière originale.

A partir du treizième siècle, il semble que ce soit à un esprit assez différent que se rattache la conception de l’aigle, alors presque toujours bicéphale représenté sur les étoffes verreries et autres objets.


D’autre part, l’héraldique d’Occident l’adopte en la modifiant; il redevient comme il l’avait déjà été en Orient l’emblème impérial.

On voit là les destinées mouvantes de ce thème millénaire qui tantôt s’immobilise, tantôt évolue vers un certain réalisme tout en gardant le plus souvent les caractéristiques les plus originales de son schéma.

\textit{Addenda}

Pendant le long espace de temps qui s’est écoulé depuis le moment où cet article a été remis à l’éditeur, quelques suggestions m’ont paru devoir se dégager de l’étude iconographique des tissus. Il semble bien que ce soient les mêmes ateliers, tout au moins des artisans ayant eu des relations les uns avec les autres qui aient exécuté ces œuvres. Espagne, Italie, Égypte, Syrie, Perse et Byzance,
tout autour de la Méditerranée travaillèrent pour leurs souverains respectifs ou pour leurs grands personnages, à titre officiel ou privé. L'iconographie reste si voisine qu'elle explique en grande partie les doutes et les hésitations des archéologues sur la localisation des fabriques.

D'autre part un autre fragment du même tissu plus petit puisqu'il ne comprend qu'un rondeau a été publié, depuis la rédaction de mon article par Gaston Wiet (Art et littérature en Iran, Aspects d'hier et d'aujourd'hui, ouvrage publié sous le patronage de la Revue Orient avec le concours de l'Association France-Iran, Paris, sans date, p. 53 et pl. en face de la p. 70).
Plaited Kufic on Samanid Epigraphic Pottery

By Lisa Volov

Samanid epigraphic pottery has often won the praise of the art historian, probably more so than any other class of Islamic decorative arts. To the Western eye, unaccustomed to the acrobatics of the Arabo-sesquial—a hallmark of Islamic art—the pottery of Samarkand and Nishapur offers a welcome respite. It has often been remarked that these amazing products of the Samanid world derive from aesthetics that are foreign to Islamic art. In place of the totally covered surface or so-called horor vacui we find a refreshing and remarkable appreciation of the empty space. Instead of a profusion of vegetal and geometric forms, it is the Arabic alphabet that serves as the major source of decoration. Bold, rhythmic Arabic inscriptions parade around the sloping inner walls of large bowls and shallow plates with the precision and confidence of a victorious army. Even the occasional designs which supplement the epigraphic decoration do not clutter the surface. It preserves a distinct, almost "Western," sense of void space.

But Samanid epigraphic pottery presents a many-faceted challenge—to the cultural historian as well as to the historian of art and the epigraphist. The cultural problem arises out of an apparent contradiction between the character of the art and the character of the dynasty which produced it.

The Samanid dynasty (874–999) is well known for its sponsorship of the first renaissance of Iran in Islamic times. The Persian flavor of this renaissance is evident in the growth of a new Persian literature which recaptures the glory of ancient Iran in history and in legend, culminating in the great epic of Firdawsī, the Shāh-Nāma. This predominance of Persian elements has often been interpreted as a reaction against the Arab culture which was imposed on Iran by the Muslim conquest. Yet Samanid pottery has also been called the highest expression of Muslim art, one which would have developed within a milieu favorable to the Arab-Islamic element.

Regarding this class of pottery, one scholar has remarked: "Their beauty is of the highest intellectual order; they hold the essence of Islam undiluted."1 This form of artistic expression is Islamic, however, only in a very specific way which must be defined here. Before we attempt to explain how a Muslim art was created in the very "theater" of the Persian Renaissance, we must ascertain to what extent this pottery represents a purely Islamic phenomenon. The two most obvious features of the pottery attributable to the influence of Islam are the absence of figural representations and the use of Arabic. The first harks back to an Umayyad practice of avoiding images in the decoration of religious and imperial monuments, such as the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (691) and the Mosque of Damascus (706–715). The second may be related to the importance of the Arabic language—as the language of the Quran and the Islamic state. With regard to these

1 Arthur Lane, Early Islamic pottery, London, 1958, p. 18.
two points, Samanid epigraphic pottery could be considered a product of an Islamic milieu. The validity of this judgment should be questioned, however, for the absence of images and the use of Arabic could also be related to another phenomenon.

At about the same time that the Umayyads laid the foundations for a prohibition of images in religious and imperial monuments, an aniconic attitude exerted its force on the coinage of the Caliphate. The Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik replaced the images on coins with a purely epigraphic format (around 693). Consequently, the inscription was made to convey the same type of message as the imagery of coinage in the non-Islamic world. This historical precedent was to have an indelible impact on Islamic art. It gave rise to a new form of artistic expression, one that was to draw its vocabulary of motifs from an alphabet of letters. It assigned a highly prominent role to epigraphic decoration.

There is probably no art in the world that exploited its writing in the same manner and as extensively as did the Muslims. Inscriptions, whether meaningful or purely decorative, pervade Islamic art. They make it distinguishable from any other, not simply because the writing is Arabic or Persian or Turkish, but because of the very existence of a decorative inscription on the object. In Islamic art the inscription must participate in the total decorative effectiveness of the object.

Whether we relate the decoration of Samanid epigraphic pottery to the religious sanctions of Islam or to a historical phenomenon that arose within an Islamic context, these objects can still be considered products of a uniquely Muslim climate. The historian of Islamic culture must therefore explain how such a brilliant “Arab” art could have flourished in the midst of a presumed reaction against Arab-Islamic culture. Three approaches to this problem may be suggested.

It could be explained in terms of a restricted market. Perhaps the Samanid potters catered to an Arab aristocracy residing within Samanid domains, or appealed to the tastes of a highly moralistic class of frontier warriors serving as Defenders of the Faith on the borders of the Dār al-Islām. Many of the inscriptions on Samanid pottery contain moralizing aphorisms, praising the virtues of patience, work, intelligence, knowledge, generosity, and so forth. Such a class would not have been involved in a Persian Renaissance.

On the other hand the “paradox” may be more apparent than real. We may be forced to reinterpret the concept “Persian Renaissance” as a general flowering of culture in Iran, with the Islamic element far more significant than has usually been conceded. Or we may discover that the specifically Islamic overtones of this art—the absence of figural imagery—represent a positive appreciation of epigraphical decoration on its own merits. It is possible that the choice was motivated by an aesthetic preference rather than by religious compulsions.

2 I wish to thank Dr. Oleg Grabar for this suggestion and for his helpful guidance during the preparation of this paper, Dr. Andrew Ehrenkreutz for general comments, and the respective museums for photographs used in figs. 1–4 and 8–11. Photographs for figs. 5 and 7 (courtesy of the Rabenou Collection) were made available by D.S. Rice, and fig. 12 is from the Herzfeld Archives, Freer Gallery, Washington, D.C.

3 See the Appendix for translations of the pottery inscriptions published in this paper.
The historian of culture will eventually have to clarify most of these points, but the art historian can assist by defining more precisely the character of the art in question. He is challenged to fit this ostensibly "anomalous" class of pottery into the broader context of Islamic aesthetics through examining the process by which an alphabet was transformed into an effective type of decoration. This task he must share with the epigraphist.

The pioneering analyses of decorative monumental inscriptions by S. Flury serve as a cornerstone for all subsequent studies of epigraphic art. A talented draftsman as well as a scholar, with great artistic sensitivity and a keen eye, Flury created a system that proved to be a milestone in the methodology of Islamic art history. Through the simplicity of this system he blazed a trail for the understanding of a highly complex field of decorative art.

For each inscription that he studied, Flury drew up charts of letters (e.g. fig. 10). These were essentially alphabetical but avoided duplications. Since the twenty-eight letters of the Arabic alphabet can be written in only seventeen types of characters, it was not necessary, for example, to illustrate the letters ĵm, ḫāʾ, and ḥāʾ by three separate figures because they share one form.

As he described the peculiarities of each inscription, Flury observed that a variety of clichés or devices seemed to belong to the purely decorative aspects of the inscription rather than to the epigraphic. Among these he distinguished between two types of ornament: motifs that were independent of the actual letters, such as vine scrolls which formed the background of the inscription, and devices that were clearly attached to the letters. He pointed out that true "decorative epigraphy" involves ornament of the second type, that the letters themselves must undergo a transformation.

By eliminating the independent decoration of the background and by arranging the letters in a standard order, the charts facilitated the comparative study of inscriptions. Using these charts one can easily observe the essential differences in the treatment of one specific letter.

The assumption implicit in this method is that each letter or group of letters has a "Basic Form" which then becomes subject to a variety of transformations. Each decorative version of the letter represents a departure from a well-defined Basic Form. The theoretical Basic Form includes only the essential components of a letter—no more and no less than is necessary for it to be recognized as a symbol for a particular sound.

Any modification of the essential parts and all additions to them belong to the decorative aspects of the epigraphy and may be called "decorative Devices." For example, the tail of the letter ṭāʾ is essential because it belongs to the theoretical Basic Form of the ṭāʾ (Table, IV-4). If
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BASIC FORMS*

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* * * Column A was compiled from a series of early Islamic inscriptions: Nilometer, Island of Rōda (Flury, *Syria*, I, pl. XXII); Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, Ta'if Dam (58/677–8) from F. Day, *Archeologica Orientalia in Memoriam Ernst Herzfeld* (1952), p. 57, fig. 22.

Table: Five-Form Kufic Chart. Basic Forms and Decorative Transformations.
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the tail extends above the baseline of the word, the letter then exceeds its Basic Form (IV–3). The tail has actually been elongated, and in this case we might call the particular decorative Device a "Rising Tail" (Flury’s hochgezogene Ende or queue remontante).

Flury’s charts recorded seventeen Forms (eighteen, including the läm-alif ligature), but Flury also recognized that among the seventeen different Basic Forms certain groups shared common secondary attributes. For example the dāl-dhāl and the kāf (II–1-2; II–3) were both based on rectangles. The wāw, rā’-zā’, and final nūn (IV–4; IV–1-2; IV–3) all had tails that made a clockwise turn below the baseline of the word. In highly decorative inscriptions, such as those of Amīdā, the three Basic Forms of these letters, which are totally different in cursive script, would become almost indistinguishable from one another.

Although Flury often alluded to these secondary groupings, he never exploited his discovery. This tendency of letters to resemble each other in Kufic is related to the decorative inspiration of this form of script. There is a basic contradiction in Flury’s approach to the study of Kufic inscriptions. His primary interest was in the decorative aspects of the inscription, but his frame of reference was essentially a paleographic one. There are significant differences between each of the seventeen forms in a cursive script, but in decorative Kufic this is not the case. Flury’s system was constructed for measuring the changes in writing, yet his object of study was less a form of writing than it was a mode of decoration. Decoration, unlike script, is subject to certain principles of design, and a paleographic system is not equipped to deal with these effectively. This observation calls for an adaptation of Flury’s method. The revised system will be described below and used in my analysis of the inscriptions on Samanid pottery.

If we group the Basic Forms according to their secondary attributes, the decorative Kufic alphabet can be reduced to five Basic Forms, rather than seventeen (see Table).

I. Vertical Letters: The sole element of the letter is a vertical staff [tall Vertical Letters: alif, lām; short Vertical Letters: bā’-tā’-thā’, ʿin-shīn, and initial-medial nūn and yā’].

II. Rectangular Letters: The rectangle may be open on the left [dāl-dhāl, kāf] or closed [ṣād-dād, ṭā’-zā’].

III. Round Letters: The body of the letter is circular [fā’-qāf, mīm, final hā’, (ṭā’ marbūrah), wāw] or consists of two circles [initial-medial hā’].

IV. Low Letters: All of these have tails that extend below the baseline in a clockwise direction [rā’-zā’, wāw (which thus belongs to two groups); and the final forms of nūn, yā’, ʿin-shīn].

V. Oblique Letters: The body of the letter is constructed from oblique lines [ʿain-ghain; jīm-hā’-kha’]. These letters have two other peculiarities: the initial forms often have a baseline extending horizontally to the right and the final forms have tails which move in a counter-clockwise direction below the line.

The seventeen forms of the Arabic alphabet have been grouped here according to their more general characteristics.

There are certainly important details which differentiate the members of a single group from one another, but these differences are not significant for our purposes.
One of the most characteristic features of decorative Kufic is that the secondary grouping was treated as a unit.

Decorative Devices are usually more “appropriate” to one type of letter than to another. There is no reason why the Rising Tail, for example, should have been restricted to the wa’w since there are four similar forms to which this Device could have applied. Consequently, whenever the Rising Tail makes its appearance in an inscription, it tends to affect all the members of the Low Letter group. Other Devices in their simplest forms also seem to be identified with a particular secondary group. The Interlace was frequently used on Samanid pottery for the body of Rectangular Letters (Table, II–8). It was not confined to any one of the four different Basic Forms which belong to this group, whether they are open or closed on the left. The minor variations from one Basic Form to another give the impression of a multiplicity of decorative themes, but often there are only a few Devices involved. The Five-Form chart allows us to disregard these variations. Unless all of the letters belonging to a single group are placed side by side for comparison, we may not be aware that they were all affected by one and the same Device.

Decorative Devices not only work within complete groups of letters but also tend to be confined to particular groups. In certain classes of Samanid pottery the Rising Tail is associated only with members of the Low Letter group and the Interlace is restricted to Rectangular forms. For reasons which will be discussed below, this class of pottery comes relatively early in our chronology and suggests that such Devices actually originated within the groups to which they were first confined. The Five-Form system therefore permits an immediate grasp of the “parochial” character of Samanid epigraphic ornament and sometimes directs us to the actual “birthplace” of particular Devices.

In what appears to be a later class of Samanid pottery, ornaments that in some way resemble the Rising Tail of the Low Letter begin to occur elsewhere in the inscription. On a plate in the Atkins Museum of Fine Arts, Kansas City, Missouri (fig. 4), the final bā’ has a “Rising Tail” appended to its horizontally extended terminal (Table, I–10). The same process affects the Interlace. On this same plate the Interlace appears not only in a Rectangular Letter but also in two ornaments (Key for fig. 4: nos. 10, 34). In such an inscription we are no longer dealing with “parochial” devices but with abstract decorative themes that can be worked into a variety of situations. It will therefore be helpful in defining types of epigraphic ornament to describe Devices in as abstract terms as possible.

The abstract term gives us a basic “Theme” rather than one or another manifestations of this Theme. The Rising Tail, for example, is actually a manifestation of the Theme which may be called Elongation. The tail, which is an integral part of the Basic Form, has been extended or elongated. The same principle governs the very drawnout forms of the Rectangular Letter on many examples of Samanid pottery (Table, II–7; e.g. fig. 2). In this case, Elongation takes place, or manifests itself, within the horizontal bars of the letter.

Decorative Devices are manifestations of particular themes, but this relationship does not imply a sequence of evolution. On the contrary, as we have indicated above,
the Device may precede the existence of the Theme. It requires a fresh spurt of inventiveness to abstract the theme from the Device, to allow its migration into other areas of the script, and to adapt the theme to new situations. The new Devices that emerge from this process, like the artificial Rising Tail of the final ba mentioned above, are “derivative” Devices. A Device may therefore appear in one of two stages of its evolution: the original, or restricted form; and its thematic, or derivative form. It is often possible to determine the “age” of certain epigraphic ornaments.

Both the restricted and thematic forms of a Device may affect a Basic Form in three different ways representing “degrees of transformation.” The first degree of transformation requires no radical change in the Basic Form (Table, column B). The proportions of the essential elements are altered but the relationship between them remains the same. For example, the horizontal bars of Rectangular Letters become subject to Elongation, yet their parallel orientation is unimpaired. The Device of Elongation is an example of Natural Transformation.

Transformations of the second degree also occur internally, that is, within the confines of the Basic Form, but the relationship between its parts is modified by a Device that comes from a nonepigraphic vocabulary, such as the geometric or vegetal worlds (column C). The foliate form of the initial ‘ain (V–8), foliate terminals (I–7), knotted staffs (I–9), and interlaced Rectangular Letters all involve the internal reorganization of a letter by a process that was borrowed from the world of geometric and vegetal forms.

The same vocabulary is used for the third degree, but these motifs are used as appendages which do not affect the internal organization of the Basic Form. They are often very elaborate ornaments (column D)—complex interlaces, foliate scrolls—superimposed on the Basic Form or emerging from the ligature between two letters (e.g. Key for fig. 4: no. 19). The first and second degrees involve some kind of distortion of the Basic Form, while the third consists of additive elements.

We have adapted Flury’s method here in order to concentrate on the purely decorative aspects of epigraphy and to disregard the minor variations which are more the concern of paleography. It was therefore necessary to make a series of generalizations about Kufic script which were suggested by the principles of design that Samanid Kufic seems to have observed. The Five-Form system, with the corollaries discussed above, illustrates the degree to which the decorative Kufic alphabet was actually an artificially contrived set of symbols—a repertory of standard “building blocks” from which an effective design could be created while at the same time convey a verbal message. The letters of the alphabet were treated as geometric forms belonging to the vocabulary of art.

This standardization of the alphabet was to produce a very specific type of design—one in which rhythm was a major concern. For any chance combination of letters required by the verbal message automatically would form a design which is rhythmic. Five-Form Kufic provides a natural alternation of tall, vertical letters and low angular or round forms. The tall perpendicular strokes set up accents throughout the line, dividing it into “measures” in which the first “beat” receives the
emphasis. Decorative Kufic provides a graphic form of music. When flourishes and decorative Devices begin to intrude, they affect whole groups of letters simultaneously. As each member of the group occurs periodically in the inscription, it is accompanied by its ornament and the consistency of the rhythm is preserved. Consequently, these flourishes tend to reinforce the rhythmic quality of the whole.

The seven principles of design, which are summarized below, were characteristic of Kufic in Northeastern Iran during the Samanid period. Some of them may have been operative over a wider span of time and space, but this possibility has yet to be systematically explored.

1. Decorative epigraphy was treated more as a mode of decoration than as a form of script or writing.

2. The seventeen Basic Forms of the Kufic alphabet were divided into five secondary groupings on the basis of affinities with certain geometric shapes.

3. The geometricization of the alphabet made it possible for any chance combination of letters to form a design which was automatically rhythmic.

4. Basic Forms were modified through decorative Devices.

5. Such Devices tend to take root within one of the five secondary groups and to affect all the members of that group simultaneously.

6. Devices affected the Basic Form in three ways. Natural Transformation occurs within the essential components of the Basic Form and works with the natural capacities and peculiarities of each one. Internal Modification infuses the Basic Form with qualities that are not “native” to it and thereby alters its internal organization. Superimposed Ornaments attach themselves to the Basic Form but do not affect it internally.

7. All three types of transformation involve the application of abstract decorative Themes to specific situations. Decorative Devices are manifestations of these Themes. A Device may enter the decorative repertory of an inscription before its thematic implications are recognized, or it may make its appearance as a form derived from a Theme.

A series of inscriptions from Samanid pottery have been selected for analysis. The examples were chosen for their relevance to the history of a remarkable type of script, known as Plaited Kufic. All of the inscriptions contain plaited or interlaced forms. Our analysis proceeds with two objectives in mind: to establish a chronology for the pottery group on the basis of the epigraphy, and to study the evolution of Plaited Kufic using the inscriptions on pottery as well as comparative material from monumental inscriptions. The first objective deals with the problems of a specific group of objects, while the second is concerned with the independent history of its decorative themes. Although the basis for the selection was the use of plaited forms, a few general observations may be made about the pottery group.

The inscriptions always consist of several words arranged in a continuous band rather than in isolation. In one instance (fig. 8) two isolated words appear on the rim of a plate, but there is also a continuous inscription which cuts across the center along the diameter of the plate. The background of the inscription is always void, although occasionally an ornamental band
appears above or below the inscription (figs. 4 and 9). The most common supplementary motif, occurring in the center, is a small whorl or rosette. Only in one instance is the entire central area devoted to an elaborate major composition (fig. 5). More often, the epigraphical decoration stands alone, unchallenged.

An angular type of Kufic script has been used exclusively. Its straight vertical staffs run perpendicular to the baseline of the inscription, and a uniform thickness is maintained throughout all of the lines. This angular Kufic should be contrasted with the more cursive system that appears on other pieces of epigraphic pottery and which never show interlaced forms (fig. 1). The stroking is much freer than in the angular type. Verticals tend to become diagonal and curving lines appear with greater frequency. A thick-to-thin graduation takes place within the line. In contrast to the flowing quality of cursive Kufic, the inscriptions on our selected examples give the impression of having been executed by mechanical means. Often the fine line of separation between parts of a letter was attained by scratching through the solid painted area.

The inscriptions were painted on a cream background in a brownish-black underglaze with occasional use of a second color, tomato red. With the exception of the more carelessly executed inscriptions, the epigraphy is always legible. It contains blessings for the owner and moralizing aphorisms.

Aside from these characteristics of the epigraphical decoration, the objects in our group show a great deal of diversity. The decoration of the surface has been composed in a variety of ways. The style of ornamentation and the choice of motifs as well as variations in the quality and technique of the object suggest the existence of several centers of production. These aspects of style and technique have already been treated by other scholars and are not immediately relevant to the objectives which have been proposed here.

While there are still great gaps in our knowledge of the significance of variations in style and technique, we are in a position to learn more by concentrating on variations in the epigraphy. This approach was chosen because it permits the use of dated comparative material. The most important documents come from numismatic evidence which will provide a series of datable “landmarks” for the evolution of Plaited Kufic. Together with a stylistic analysis of the inscriptions on ceramics and on dated monuments, this numismatic evidence will establish a chronology for the pottery. At the same time, the chronology will allow us to describe the evolution of Plaited Kufic, to follow it through the various stages of its development.

Before turning to the inscriptions which include plaited forms, we shall begin with

a group that illustrates certain decorative principles which were operative in the simplest interlaced inscriptions. The design on a plate in the City Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri, which belongs to what we shall call the "first series," is particularly effective in its simplicity and purity (fig. 2). The staffs of the tall Vertical Letters pivot around an imaginary point in the center of the plate. Like spokes of a wheel, locking the rim to the hub, they emerge at measured intervals from the lower zone of the inscription. These intervals, however, were not the work of chance. They were attained through the Device of Elongation, working in the horizontal ligatures [spaces between letters as, for example, between the first and second letters of qabl (nos. 8, 9)] or in the horizontal bars of Rectangular Letters [first, fourth, and sixth words (nos. 4, 20, 26)]. The elongations in the lower zone were calculated in such a way that the extensions of the three initial alif's curving to the right interrupt the strictly horizontal pace of the lower zone at approximately equal intervals (nos. 1, 11, 23).

This plate is remarkable for its high aesthetic achievement, but it also illustrates another significant point regarding the artist's attitude toward his work. At the end of the last word there is a superfluous letter, a kāf, which does not belong to any word. Generally, one might suggest that

the kāf was used to fill a space leftover because of poor planning. But the precision of execution and the harmonious proportions between letters points to a master craftsman who would not have made such an error. Here the inscription itself offers an explanation:

الذمار الَّذِي الَّذِي يُملِمكَ مِن الْعَمَّةَ كَ... 

"Planning before work protects you from regret! K..."

The "K" has been added to illustrate what happens when you do not "plan before work"—you find yourself with insufficient space to finish the inscription, which should probably conclude with the same phrase as the similar inscription in figure 1:

الذمار الَّذِي يُملِمكَ مِن الْعَمَّةَ كَ... 

"...; Patience is the key to comfort."

The message of the St. Louis platter reminds one of the placards posted in offices today with the advice:

[PLAN AHEAD]

The painter of this plate therefore shows a remarkable sense of humor, quite unexpected in so sober and stark a decoration.

The major decorative Device used in the first series, for which the St. Louis plate served as an example, is Elongation. This Device brought about a natural distortion of certain Basic Forms. Its function here was to heighten the rhythmic effect of the inscription, for the rhythm is dependent on the Elongation of horizontal and vertical forms.

Two other Devices appear in the St. Louis plate. Diacritical points accompany

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6 For other examples of this group see O. G. Bolshakov, *Arabic inscriptions on ceramic fragments of Central Asia, IX–XII c.*, Epigrafika Vostoka, vol. 16, 1963, p. 41, Table 3; a plate in the Freer Gallery, Washington, D. C. (no. 52.11), which has two inscription bands on the rim, both containing the same words; fragment in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Acc. no. 40170.472) (see text fig. 1).
some of the letters and contribute to the liveliness of the design as well as to the legibility of the inscription. The second Device can be seen in the extensions of the lower bar of final kaf’s where the bar was separated from its finial by a very thin joint (nos. 20, 28). This joint also occurs on other examples of Samanid pottery in letters which have finial or initial extensions (e.g. text fig. 1). Although its major purpose was to mark the separation between the body of the letter and its extension, it breaks the monotony of the line and heightens the decorative interest of the letter.

The intrusion of interlaced forms in the next series of examples did not disrupt the basic purity of line and rhythmic interest. In all other respects these inscriptions resemble the first series, using elongated forms to attain balanced intervals between the vertical strokes.

The Interlace, which distinguishes the second series from the first, occurs only in the body of Rectangular Letters. A bowl in the Brooklyn Museum (fig. 3) shows two variations of plaited Rectangular Letters. In the sixth word the upper bar of the dal crosses over the lower one and ends up in its place, while the lower bar passes behind the upper one and becomes the topmost line (Key for fig. 3: no. 22). The horizontal bars are “twisted” together once. But in the seventh word they cross each other twice (no. 23). The plaiting in this ta’ is actually a double twist.

Other examples of Samanid pottery with simple and complex plaited Rectangular Letters exist in the Louvre and the Victoria and Albert Museum. On the London plate there are three twists in the sad. Except for the Interlace all of the Devices in inscriptions of the second series consist of transformations of the first degree. Basic Forms are distorted internally and there are no appended or extraneous ornaments. It is significant that the simplest form of the Interlace should appear in a relatively simple style of Kufic script.

The occurrence of the Interlace, however, seems to have been fortuitous. It never affects all of the susceptible forms in one inscription, but it is not restricted to any one of the seven letters which belong to the Rectangular group. Because it is not used consistently throughout the group, the Interlace does not contribute to the rhythm.

Text Fig. 1.—Inscription on Fragment, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (40.170.472).

mic quality of the inscription and must have served some other purpose. Perhaps, like the Device of Jointing in the first series, it breaks the monotony of elongated forms.

The most puzzling aspect of the interlaced Rectangular Letter is its fortuitous occurrence in a relatively unembellished style of Kufic script. The whimsical character of the plaited form contrasts with the sobriety of the whole design and even with the moralizing content of the inscription. (The aphorism on the Brooklyn plate advocates Silence as a guarantee for Peace.) It is almost as if this contrast were intended, perhaps, as a sort of joke or trick, a tour de force which took the fancy of epigraphers. It enjoyed great popularity in other media as well, as for example in the word Muḥammad on coins and occasionally on objects of metalwork. An exceptional, fanciful form, the plaited letter, must have signaled the attention of observers, like a centerpiece or perhaps even a conversation piece. Perhaps, like the superfluous kāf of the St. Louis plate, the plaited letter injected a humorous note which offset the solemnity of the decoration and its message.

The origins of this remarkable motif are obscure, but there is evidence which may help to date its appearance in northeastern Iran. In fact, the plaited Rectangular Letter provides the major clue for dating the second series of pottery. We are fortunate that Samanid coins reflect the tremendous artistic creativity of contemporary major works and can provide us with dated information about the decorative uses of epigraphy.

The Samanid die-cutters were the first in the profession to consider the coin as a minor work of art rather than as a purely utilitarian object. It is surprising to find, for example, that such developments as Floriated Kufic are not reflected on the coinage of the Fatimids and do not begin to affect the coinage of Egypt until the Ayyubid period, even though Floriated Kufic was used in Egypt since the ninth century.

The earliest evidence for the plaited Rectangular Letter appears on a Samanid coin of al-Muqtadir (928–932) in the word Muḥammad. It next appears on a remarkable dinār minted at Rayy (al-Muhammadiyah) in 324/935–36, to which we shall return (fig. 14 and text fig. 5). During the course of the tenth and eleventh centuries, the plaited letter occurs on the coins of Iran: of the Samanids, Buyids, Ghaznavids, Ilek Khans, and Seljukids. It was primarily used for the word Muḥammad, then toward the end of the tenth century in the names of rulers. By the third decade

9 E.g., brass bowl published by R. Ettinghausen, The Wade Cup, Ars Orientalis, vol. 2, 1957, pl. 4, fig. 13; a silver vase of Abū al-Abbās Walkin b. Harūn (G. Wiet, L’Exposition persane de 1931, Cairo, 1933, no. 13, p. 20 and pl. 2, below, center); a list of coins in the collection of the American Numismatic Society, New York (ANS) will be found in note 11, below; see also a cylindrical flask of crystal in Lamm, Mittelalterliche Gläser, Berlin, 1929–30, vol. 2, pl. 73:4.

10 Mint unknown, AE (ANS). The remarks on numismatic epigraphy are drawn from a survey of the decorative uses of writing on Islamic coins made by the writer during the Summer Seminar in Numismatics (1963) at the American Numismatic Society in New York. The writer wishes to thank the staff of the Seminar for this opportunity and to acknowledge the kind assistance of Dr. George Miles, who has also provided photographs of the coins published here.
of the eleventh century, it appears in marginal inscriptions.\textsuperscript{11}

The frequency of its occurrence attests to its great popularity in Northeastern Iran, especially in the first half of the tenth century. In a few instances, the die-cutter even took the care to depict the double-twisted variation that occurs on the Brooklyn plate (fig. 3: no. 25). The word \textit{Muhammad} on a \textit{dirham} minted at al-Shaš in 330/941-42 contains a \textit{dal} with two double twists (fig. 13). Yet because die-cutters tend to be conservative, this numismatic evidence must be considered as an index of well-established tastes. The earliest numismatic evidence for plaiting dates from the early tenth century, but it is conceivable that the coins reflect a fashion which had been current for a longer period of time. The second series of pottery, which shows the introduction of the plaited Rectangular Letter, could therefore date from the last decades of the ninth century and the first series may even be earlier.

The full implications of this fashionable decorative Device were realized in the inscriptions of our next series of Samanid pottery (figs. 4 to 9). The group as a whole shows less homogeneity than the first two series. The diversity of styles, techniques, and quality of these pieces calls for fuller comment than we can offer here. In some of them the precision and fineness of drawing is unmatched (figs. 4 and 5).

Compositions range from purely epigraphic decoration of the inner walls like the examples of the first two series (figs. 6 and 7), to inscriptions accompanied by ornamental bands of interlace (figs. 4 and 9) to the total filling in of the central area (fig. 5). In a few examples the height of the inscription band was reduced so that two

\textsuperscript{11} Plaited Rectangular Letters appear on the following coins (ANS):

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Year & Location & Style & Date
\hline
295-320/908-932 & Samanid & al-Muḥammadiyyah & AE
324/935-36 & Samanid & Samarqand & AR
328/939-40 & Samanid & al-Shaš & AR
330/941-42 & Samanid & & AR
351/962-63 & Buyid & Rayy & AR
354/965 & Buyid & Arrajān & AR
383/993-94 & Simjurid & Nishāpur & AV
389-421/998-1030 & Ghaznavid & & AE
388-403/998-1013 & Ilek Khanid & & AR
391/1000-01 & Ghaznavid & Nishāpur & AV
392/1001-02 & Ghaznavid & Nishāpur & AV
397/1006-07 & Hasanwayhid & Sābūrkhwāst & AV
419/1028-29 & Ghaznavid & Nishāpur & AV
(in margins) & & & \\
420/1029-30 & Ghaznavid & Rayy & AV
(432-460/1040-68) & Ilek Khanid & & AE
481/1088-89 & Seljukid & Rayy & AV
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}
bands fit on the walls alone. In another the inscription spans the diameter of the object, denying its circular format (fig. 8). The palette varies from the brownish-black on cream ground to the addition of tomato red (figs. 4, 8, and 9).

Within the epigraphy itself a wealth of new ornaments appear—sometimes very controlled (figs. 4, 5 and text fig. 6), sometimes growing wild like unattended gardens (figs. 7 and 8). The motifs are borrowed from the vocabulary of vegetal forms and geometric figures such as the Interlace, the Knot, and the Arc. All of the inscriptions, regardless of quality, style, and technique share this expanded vocabulary.

The complexity of the epigraphic decoration is the one feature that unifies the third series. The inscriptions seem to confront us with a total bedlam of illegible forms concealed within an “undergrowth” of extraneous ornament. If we count the number of forms that occur within one word, the tally far exceeds the average number of letters in an Arabic word. Without knowing how to interpret a particular combination of forms, we can see immediately that some of them could not possibly correspond to letters of the alphabet. They must be purely decorative insertions, as for example the third form in the word al-‘ilm on a plate in the Atkins Museum of Fine Arts, Kansas City, Missouri (Key for fig. 4: no. 10), a densely interlaced knot arising from the horizontal ligature between the ‘ain and the lām.

The imaginative and varied use of superimposed or additive ornaments distinguishes this group from the first two series of pottery. Equally as characteristic of the third series is the expansion of the decorative vocabulary. We have met with the Devices of Elongation and Plaiting before, but two new decorative themes now come into play—Foliation and the Arc. The history of Foliated and Floriated Kufic is extremely complex and we shall not attempt to review it here. The additional evidence which may be provided by Samanid epigraphy does not seem to clarify any of the problems presented by other scholars. The sudden appearance of the second new Device, however, should be investigated since it is directly relevant to the evolution of Plaited Kufic.

The Arc is a common feature of the third series and was manipulated in a remarkable variety of ways. A pair of Arcs appear in the Vertical Letters of a plate in the Rabenou Collection (fig. 5). An interesting effect has been achieved in the staffs of the article alif-lām by turning the Arcs back to back. A fragment excavated at Nishapur (text fig. 2) shows another variation of this device. The staff of an alif is looped three times, forming three Arcs on alternate sides. On a second plate in the Rabenou Collection (fig. 6) this “oscillating” Arc moves through ligatures between letters and through the tails of Low Letters.

The mobility of the Arc and the versatility with which the Samanid calligraphers adapted it to a wide variety of situa-


tions ad forms suggests that in the third series the Arc had already entered an advanced phase of its development. We would expect to find that, like the Interlace, the Arc was introduced into the vocabulary of decorative epigraphy as a simple Device before reaching such a highly thematic stage.

But there is no evidence for such an introductory stage in the history of the Arc on the pottery series. If we turn, however, to monumental inscriptions, to metalwork and coins, we catch a glimpse of its earlier moments. In the inscription of the early tenth century Mosque of Nayin the Arc appears in the baseline of the word *Allah*, inserted into the ligature between the two *lām*’s (*text fig. 3a*). It also occurs in the upper bar of Rectangular Letters (*text fig. 3b*). A similar use of the Arc can be seen in the inscription of a silver ewer inscribed with the name of Shāikh al-Fadl b. ‘Alī (*text fig. 3c*). Neither of these inscriptions is dated.

The information derived from the numismatic evidence is more precise. Some Samanid and Ghaznavid copper coins show the Arc inserted in the baseline of the word *Allah*, as at Nayin, and the earliest example is dated 316/928-29 (*fig. 15c*). In one instance this Arc was monumentalized (*text fig. 3d*) and in another the Arc was twisted to form a loop or eyelet (*text fig. 3e*).

These examples represent the earliest dated occurrences of the Arc in the epigraphy of Iran, but the Arc had a much earlier history in the Western Islamic World. Dr. George Miles has traced its development on Egyptian tombstones of the ninth century. One of the earliest ornaments to appear was a series of Arcs inserted in the unusually elongated ligature of the word *mā’at* (one hundred) in the date 190/805-06 (*text fig. 3f*). In the next decade the Arc occurs in the staffs of Vertical Letters and in the horizontal bars of Rectangular Letters. In Egyptian lapidary inscriptions of the early ninth century the Arc had already reached a thematic stage and could be used in a variety of ways.

In fact it was a Device frequently employed by die cutters of the West at least as early as the second half of the ninth century. On Umayyad copper coins from Spain and Tulunid *dirhams* from Egypt the Arc assumes the form of a small dot set into the ligature between the *rāʾ* and *ṣīn* of the word *rasūl* [Messenger (of Allah)] (*fig. 15a-b*). More fanciful compositions were devised for inscriptions on papyrus. A Rectangular Letter appearing on a ninth-century papyrus has semicircular and triangular “Arcs” inserted into both of its hori-

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Horizontal bars (text fig. 3g). The Arc was therefore a versatile and popular Device, familiar to the ninth-century artist of the West, working in a wide variety of techniques.

In all probability the Arc originated in the West and traveled eastward toward the end of the ninth century, when it begins to appear on Samanid coins. But the point that is significant is the stage of development which the Arc had attained before it reached Iran. The Device had already been transformed into a Theme before the Samanid calligraphers adopted it. Yet, despite the century of evolution that preceded its importation to Iran, it was in Northeastern Iran that the Arc was to be given a new life and underwent the most remarkable phases of its history.

The Arc and Foliation were significant additions to the decorative vocabulary of the third pottery series. Working in conjunction with the older Devices—Elongation and the Interlace—they provided a larger repertory of ornament that makes the inscriptions of the third series appear much more elaborate than the others. But the complexity of this series consists of more than an expanded decorative vocabulary. At the same time that new Devices made their debut, a new means of transforming letters came into use. Basic Forms became subjected to the third degree of transformations, which opened new vistas for decorative effects.

In the very decorative epigraphy of a plate in Kansas City (fig. 4) letters undergo all three degrees of transformation. Belonging to the first degree are the elongated bodies of Rectangular Letters (see Key for fig. 4: nos. 5, 34) and the Rising Tails of most of the Low Letters. Transformations of the second degree include the bifurcation of terminals, the insertion of...
Arcs and Knots in the staffs of Vertical Letters (nos. 1, 23, 30), and the plaiting of the Rectangular Letter (no. 34). Round Letters appear undistorted. The natural and internal modifications in this inscription are relatively few and undramatic.

The artist reserved his creative energies for transformations of the third degree. Here he displays the full range of his talents. What gives the impression of great complexity in this inscription is a marvelous series of additive ornaments—the extraneous insertions (nos. 10, 19, 26), the superimposed elements, and the “metamorphosis” of extensions. The most frequent and conspicuous motif is the tail or neck which bends in a “swan’s neck” curve backward, to the right, and becomes a circular foliate scroll (Table, I-10). An amazing variety of other additive ornaments calls into play the whole repertory of Devices. An interlaced ornament springs from the back of a Rectangular Letter (Key for fig. 4: no. 34). A complex knot and a lyre-shaped foliate scroll emerge from the ligatures between two letters (nos. 10, 19, 26) An ornament resembling the Rising Tail rests on the horizontal extensions of the final mūm and bā' (nos. 12, 36).

The extensive use of additive ornaments—transformations of the third degree, offering new potential for the development of complex epigraphic compositions—and the expanded decorative vocabulary contribute to the complexity of inscriptions on the third pottery series. But the epigraphy of this series is complicated in yet another way—far more significant and subtle.

If we begin to identify the Themes in any one specific decorative motif on the Kansas City plate, we find that no single term is adequate to describe it, but that each motif represents a compound of several Devices and Themes. The interplay of Themes can best be observed in the most common decorative motif on this plate—in the circular foliate scroll (Table, I-10 and IV-9), which is a combination of five major Themes. The tails or necks to which the motif is appended are elongated. They bend backward in a very specific type of curve, the so-called “swan’s neck” curve. This then terminates in a foliate motif, a circular vine scroll. The first three Themes (Elongation, Swan’s Neck Curve, and Foliation) give the letter its general shape. The next two Devices are involved in the elaboration of the foliate scroll. A small Arc, similar to the one used in the staffs of Vertical Letters, and a single Loop were inserted in the vines of the scroll. Despite the subtlety with which these five Devices and Themes were integrated into the motif of the foliate scroll, it is possible to identify each one as a decorative idea that had an independent history. Here, however, there was a creative interplay between Devices and Themes, a sort of “cross-pollination” which involved the coming together of several decorative ideas in a single ornament. By this process a whole series of new derivative Devices were invented.

This interplay necessitated the abstraction of Themes from Devices. The most remarkable development in inscriptions of the third series was the progress of the Interlace. On the second series it appeared in a restricted form—in the body of the Rectangular Letter. Now the Interlace becomes a true Theme, finding its way into new situations. Wedded to the Arc, it becomes a small Loop or Knot (Table, I-9; Key for fig. 4: no. 30). On a plate in the
PLAITED KUFIC ON SAMANID EPIGRAPHIC POTTERY

Freer Gallery the traditional plaiting of the Rectangular Letters is replaced by a looping of the horizontal bars (fig. 8; see Table, II-9). But the Interlace also takes over some of the functions of the Arc. The dense knot which emerges from the line of ligature assumes a position that was originally held by the inserted Arc (Key for fig. 4: no. 10). The Theme of Plaiting has also transformed the ornament springing from the Rectangular Letter into an Interlace (no. 34). This "Springing Ornament" in inscriptions of the early tenth century was either an Arc or a foliate form or a juxtaposition of both (text fig. 3b and 3b). Even the manner by which ornaments attach themselves has been affected by the Interlace. The ligature between the 'ain and qaf of al-'aql (Key for fig. 4: no. 26) looks like part of the twisted vine that emerges from the base line to form the lyre-shaped scroll. We are hardly aware that a conscious process of amalgamation is at work, the final effect appears so organic.

This interplay of abstract decorative Themes heightens the complexity and effectiveness of the design. It is particularly important in the creation of additive ornaments, which appear in great proliferation. Devices which had served to modify the body of a letter now operate within the ornaments. The Interlace leaves its original "habitat," the Rectangular Letter, and helps to create a variety of extraneous insertions and ornamental crowns. It also serves as a minor theme within the larger context of the foliate scroll. Similarly, the Arc which had evolved as a means of internal transformation was absorbed by the ornamental superstructure.

But this shift in interest from the Basic Form to the additive ornament was concomitant with a new concern for the upper zone of the inscription. All of the additive ornaments are confined to this area. The concentration of interest in transformations of the third degree and in the decoration of the upper zone is of great significance. It represents a major departure from the attitudes expressed in the first two series where a rhythm was generated through the meaningful elements of the script, the Basic Forms. But in the third series the shapes of Basic Forms become relatively unimportant. The design is dominated by additive ornaments. They initiate a secondary rhythm, sometimes echoing the rhythm of the Basic Forms, sometimes in syncopation with it, and sometimes totally obscuring it.

While the Kansas City plate epitomizes the characteristics of the third series, the precision of line, the balance of proportions, and the clarity and symmetry of its ornaments find no close parallel among the pieces which have come to my attention. More common are the styles which appear on two other groups of this series.

Two easily distinguishable foliate motifs identify the first group (figs. 5, 7–8; text figs. 2 and 4):16 1. A winged half-palmette ornament, located in the upper zone of the inscription, attached to extended necks, ligatures, and horizontal extensions (Table, II–9); and 2. a series of short curved lines, resembling a "clump" of grass, located in the lower zone, usually on the horizontal extensions of initial or final letters (e.g. text fig. 2; fig. 5: no. 13). The

16 See also 7000 Years . . . ., loc. cit.; Bolshakov, *Epigrafska Vostoka*, vol. 12, 1958, p. 37, Table VI b-g; vol. 15, 1962, p. 86, fig. 15; vol. 16, 1963, p. 42, Table IV 2.
fingers of the winged half-palmette leaves often tend to droop in comma-like forms, resembling and reflecting the shapes in the Clump ornament (text fig. 4).

The same principles of design operative in the Kansas City plate can be seen here. Also a similar range of Devices was used, and one plate (fig. 7) showing a winged half-palmette ornament superimposed over a scroll like the ones on the Kansas City plate suggests a very close relationship. The essential differences between this group and the Kansas City plate are ones of style and technique. Throughout the group the stroking is much freer, perhaps more careless, and the drooping forms lend a more organic flavor to the ornament. Generally, the inscription is still legible, but in a few cases the design consists of a repetition of groups of letters (figs. 6 and 7).

A plate in the Seattle Art Museum serves as an example of the second group (fig. 9). With regard to its composition and palette it can be related to the Kansas City plate: the use of ornamental interlaced bands, the small dot in the center of the plate, and the introduction of a second color. But the decorative motifs of the second group are derived from those of the previous group. Here, the winged half-palmette ornament assumes a very pronounced V-shaped form, and the leaves are made into compact triangles and circles. Much of the organic flavor of the first group is lacking.

The really significant difference, however, is that one can no longer determine which parts of the inscription were intended to be actual letters. Sets of interlaced, looped, and twisted forms occur at intervals, set off by the Vertical Letters. Yet these forms are unintelligible. Like some of the examples from the previous group, the designs are based on a repetition of certain combinations of forms which were derived from letters. None of the examples of this group seem to have legible inscriptions.

This repetition of meaningless syllables represents still a third method for creating a rhythmic design. It is by far the most artificial and contrived. Moreover, it is a derivative method, dependent on the developments which contributed to the highly complex structure of the Kansas City inscription. We may therefore assume that the second group follows the Kansas City plate in our chronology.

Up to this point the Chronology of the three series has remained rather vague. The first and second seem to date from the late ninth century to the early tenth. We have no way of knowing how long these continued and whether they overlapped with the third series. It should be noted, however, that the third series presupposes prin-
ciples that were operative in the first two, but the first two were not dependent on the third. They utilize a much smaller vocabulary of Devices, show no transformations of the third degree, and develop rhythm through the natural alternation of Basic Forms. In the third series additive ornaments dominate and create a secondary rhythm in the upper zone. The third series would therefore seem to represent a further development of the first two. It remains to determine the precise chronological limits of the third series.

The monumental inscription of the tomb-tower at Râdkân (dated 411/1020–21) illustrates the direction in which Plaited Kufic was moving during the first decades of the eleventh century (figs. 10 and 12). Does it show a more or a less advanced stage than the pottery series? When Flury studied this inscription as the first dated example of Plaited Kufic, he remarked that it represents a rather well-developed stage of this epigraphic style rather than an initial one. Does the testimony of Samanid pottery clarify the significance of this inscription?

We should compare the two styles of Plaited Kufic in terms of the decorative vocabulary and the ways in which it was used. No decorative Theme that appears on the pottery was excluded from the inscription at Râdkân. These themes may be identified on Flury’s chart of letters (fig. 10): the Rising Tail (5; 13g–h; 14d–i; 16);

the Arc (e.g. 1a–c; 4; 5a; 9d); the Loop and the Knot (e.g. 1d–f; 4e–g); the Plaiting of Basic Forms (6e); the interlaced Springing Ornament (7; 9c, e–f); variants of the Swan’s Neck curve (e.g. 3g–h; 4); foliate terminals and ornaments (4a; 5d; 7a; 13f; 15c, e–f; 16g). Most of these Themes and Devices affect only the additive ornaments, and decorative elements are concentrated in the upper zone of the inscription as in the third pottery series.

The difference between the Râdkân and the pottery inscriptions is chiefly a matter of degree. The same decorative vocabulary was employed by both but to greater and lesser extents. The theme of Foliation, for example, has been reduced to a bare minimum at Râdkân, whereas in the pottery series foliate Devices played a considerably prominent role. On the other hand, the Interlace at Râdkân appears in an even more thematic stage than on the pottery. It is the predominant motif.

The Interlace acquires a totally new vocation at Râdkân. Pairs of letters tend to overlap (e.g. 1 o–p) and are often hooked (3d) or knotted together (e.g. 3e) by their tails, necks, or staffs. The pairing of letters in sequence, such as the article alif-lâm (1 h–i), is quite common, but the letters need not always be situated next to one another. Often a lower letter intervenes and the pair must cross over it in order to be joined (1 n; 3 e–f). The adaptability of the Interlace to a variety of new situations at Râdkân attests to a very advanced stage of thematicization, a stage which represents a further development of what occurs on the pottery.

In fact, the Interlace has become so abstract that it makes a final exit from its original restricted form, the Rectangular Letter. We have only to compare the sâd-
dād of Rādkān (7) with the dḥāl of the Kansas City plate (Key for fig. 4: no. 34) to appreciate the significance of this change. Both Rectangular Letters have plaited ornaments springing from the back of the Basic Form and an Arc inserted in the lower line. On the plate the body of the letter is also interlaced, but at Rādkān it retains, or perhaps reverts to, its Basic Form. We have tried to demonstrate that chronologically the plaited body preceded the plaited ornament. When the ornament does appear it works in conjunction with the plaited Rectangular Letter. The absence of the restricted form of Interlace at Rādkān should be interpreted as a “loss of interest” in the lower zone, to which the restricted form belongs. In this monumental inscription there is a tendency to lift out decorative Devices from this lower area and to concentrate them in the space above, in the upper zone. This tendency appeared in the pottery inscriptions but is carried to an extreme at Rādkān.

Most of the decorative elements here are additive ornaments. The heightened potential of the Interlace made it possible for this Theme to affect these ornaments to an unprecedented degree. It is not surprising to find that foliate motifs become sparse, for it seems that vegetal ornament had to defer to the compelling encroachment of the Interlace. The Interlace completely dominates the inscription, transforming it into a tightly woven fabric, converting every conceivable ornament into intricate knots.

The inscription of Rādkān does not stand alone in this respect. Two contemporary monuments bear inscriptions which display the same minimal use of foliate ornament and heightened activity of the Interlace: the Pir-i Ālamdār of Dāmghān (418/1027–28)19 and the painted inscription at Sangbast (387–419/997–1028?).20 But this highly thematic form of Plaited Kufic was not reserved for monumental inscriptions. Five unglazed jugs, now in various American collections,21 provide a unique parallel to the Rādkān inscription (figs. 11 a–c). The inscriptions on these jugs are identical, and all five bear the signatures of two artists (fig. 11 b): Muhammad b. Ahmad of... (illegible; perhaps ʿAlu-ʿ) and Mahmūd b. Muhammad. All of the peculiarities of the Plaited Kufic inscription at Rādkān are reproduced on these jugs. This very fashionable epigraphic style exerted its power and charm on a wide variety of techniques—in the monumental and minor arts alike.

These inscriptions dating from the first decades of the eleventh century show a very clear and distinct relationship with our third series of Samanid pottery—with regard to the decorative vocabulary, its uses and functions, and the thematization of the Interlace. Plaited Kufic of the early eleventh century presupposes all of the elements that contributed to the complexity

19 F. Sarre, Denkmäler persischer Baukunst, Berlin, 1901–10, vol. 2, pl. 84 left; Survey, vol. 4, pl. 339 B.
21 Two in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (acc. nos. 62.227.1 and 62.227.2); two in the Philadelphia Museum of Art (acc. nos. 19.652 and 19.647); one in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (acc. no. 33.622). The nisbah should perhaps be read: al-sarraj (“the saddlemaker”). Dr. Miles has suggested to me the possibility that it may be an “amusing” reference to the style of the script since the stem s-r-j can mean “to plait” or “to braid.”
of the third series and, in addition, shows a further development of these ideas. The inscriptions of Rādkān and related monuments are dependent on the type of epigraphy that characterizes Samanid pottery. In view of this dependency, we may safely assume that the pottery represents the initial phases of Plaited Kufic—of an evolution that spanned the entire tenth century.

Of the three series of pottery discussed here, the last shows the greatest affinities with the inscription of Rādkān but is certainly less developed. Using the date of Rādkān as an upper limit for the third series (411/1020–21) and the numismatic evidence as a lower limit for the first two series (c. 908 A.D., appearance of first plaited letter), we have yet to pinpoint the most crucial moment in the history of Plaited Kufic—the moment at which the Interlace becomes a Theme and the third series becomes possible.

A lower limit for the third series may be obtained from a remarkable piece of numismatic evidence. A unique Samanid dinār minted at Rayy (al-Muhammadiyah) in 324/935–36 offers a rare opportunity for the epigraphist to gather information about the styles of major works of art (fig. 14 and text fig. 5). It is unusual that a coin provides such information, but there are a number of peculiarities regarding this Samanid coin that justify its use as an index of up-to-the moment developments.

In view of the history of numismatic epigraphy, the Samanid dinār is precocious in several ways. Highly decorative features appear in its inscriptions about three-quarters of a century before they become common on other coins. The plaited Rectangular Letter occurs twice on the Reverse. Vegetal ornaments are used extensively: as a Springing Ornament over the Rectangular Letter (Obverse and Reverse: third line); as internal modifications of ḥāʾ and rāʾ (Reverse: first and third lines), in the first case, transformed into a virtual palm tree; as ornaments added to vertical staffs

**Text Fig. 5.—Dinar, Rayy (al-Muhammadiyah), 324/935–36, (ANS).**
There is no evidence on the coin for the introduction of the Arc and for the interplay of plaited ad foliate motifs. The Sprunging Ornament is still foliate structure, but on the Kansas City plate its form was interlaced. We know that the Arc had been used on Samanid coins almost ten years earlier, but the absence of this very significant Device on the dinar suggests that it was still restricted to specific usages, such as the ligature in the word Allah. Because the coin lacks two of the most characteristic elements of the third series, yet employs both plaited and foliate Devices, it seems to correspond to a stage immediately preceding the thematicization of the Interlace. It provides a lower limit for the third series of 324/935–36.

It is possible that this transitional stage can also be identified on a small group of pottery. The inscription of the jug in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (text fig. 6) shows the same “defects” as the dinar. The Arc is missing, and the foliate and interlaced motifs do not join forces. They perform in isolation. This is surprising since all of the other examples of the third series mobilize the complete repertory of motifs simultaneously—the Interlace, the Arc, and Foliation. In each case there is always some fusion of these Themes.

If there was such a gradual transition from the second to the third series as the dinar and the jug seem to suggest, we may draw some conclusions about the process of evolution of Plaited Kufic. Since both the Arc and the thematicization of the Interlace do not occur in this presumed transitional stage, the two phenomena should be related. The history of the highly thematic plaited alphabet seems to have been closely
linked with the introduction of the Arc. The interplay of decorative Devices was a process that an expansion of the decorative vocabulary served to accelerate, if not to initiate. The search for new Devices, such as the Arc, was part of the same experimental attitude that led to the use of Devices in an abstract way, to the thematization of foliate Devices as well as the Interlace.

The highly thematic and complex stage which Plaited Kufic attained in the inscription of Rādkān was preceded by a whole century of experimentation with this uniquely Islamic form of art. The epigraphy of pottery and coinage from
Northeastern Iran provides the evidence which was not available when Flury wrote concerning the inscription at Rādkān: "...les matériaux antérieurs à l’an 1000 faisant défaut, il est impossible d’établir la chronologie de ce style." The "chronology of this style" can now be established on the basis of the pottery sequence.

Toward the end of the ninth century the artist still adhered to the principles of calligraphy, but shortly thereafter an amazing development was to take place. The plaited Rectangular Letter made its debut, perhaps as a humorous note in an otherwise staid and sober design. In the second and third decades of the tenth century the creative genius of Northeastern Iran searched for new means of transforming Kufic script into a purely abstract form of art, unshackled by the conventions of calligraphy. New motifs were borrowed and older ones were "mined" for the richness of their decorative potentials. A series of foliate ornaments began to fill the empty upper zone, and gradually the Interlace in collusion with the Arc encroached upon the foliate ornament, eventually driving it away.

The most amazing feature of this evolution was the remarkably systematic way that it proceeded. A series of cliché ornaments runs consistently through the many stages of development—the Rising Tail, the Springing Ornament, the extended neck, and so forth. Whether we see them as foliate Devices in the inscriptions of the early tenth century or as plaited structures in the inscription of Rādkān, these clichés can always be identified as members of the same "clan" despite the lapse of generations.

The history of Plaited Kufic is therefore an extremely logical one. The character of the most highly developed stage differs in significant ways from the initial phases—in the range of its decorative vocabulary, the manipulation of Devices and Themes, and the motivation behind the design. Yet, one can almost say that the conclusion of this development was foreseen at the very beginning—in the geometrization of the alphabet and in the elementary modifications of given forms to achieve certain decorative effects.

Decorative epigraphy is not only one of the highest forms of Islamic art in terms of its cultural implications, but it is also a major component in the scheme of Islamic decoration. It is equally as significant a form of art, subject to certain principles of design, as the ubiquitous Arabesque.

The position of Samanid epigraphic pottery within the general framework of Islamic art is therefore not as anomalous as might be assumed. The pottery serves as a vehicle for an extraordinary type of design, having peculiarities that belong to epigraphic decoration in general. It poses as a purely "Islamic" form of art not by virtue of the absence of images but because it continues a tradition related to the function of inscriptions in art—a tradition which was established in early Islamic times.

Epigraphic decoration shares with the rest of Islamic ornament a very conscious adherence to principles of design. But the peculiarity of the epigraphic format and its greatest fascination is the dual purpose which it was forced to serve. Inscriptions have two functions: to inform and to decorate. These functions are bound to work at cross purposes, for the more decorative.

22 See note 18 above.
Fig. 1.—Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York (L 56.9).

Fig. 2.—City Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri (37–283:51).

Fig. 3.—Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York (L 59.3.2).
Fig. 4.—William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art. Atkins Museum of Fine Arts, Kansas City, Missouri (54–80).
Fig. 5.—Foroughi Collection.

Key: Fig. 3.

Key: Fig. 4.
Fig. 6.—Rabenou Collection.

Fig. 7.—Rabenou Collection.

Fig. 9.—Seattle Art Museum, Eugene Fuller Memorial Collection, Seattle, Washington (Is 26.19).

Fig. 8.—Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C. (54.16).
Fig. 11.—Unglazed Jug. Philadelphia Museum of Art (19–632).

Fig. 12.—Rādkān, Detail of Inscription on Tower-Tomb.

Fig. 10.—Rādkān, Alphabet of the Inscription from the Tower-Tomb (411/1020–20). After Flury, Syria, vol. 1, pl. 4.)
an inscription becomes, the more difficult it is to read. The way in which this double role was handled constitutes the central problem of epigraphic designs.

The conflict between legibility and decorative effectiveness was certainly felt by the painters of Samanid pottery, but they managed to resolve it in a most unusual way. It was precisely the logic and consistency of the method developed for elaborating the script that made possible the creation of a highly effective design which would also convey a message. The whimsical characters, the organic play of foliate forms, and the serpentine antics of the Interlace added to this yet another dimension—that of comic relief. Humor is certainly among the more significant elements that underlie the evolution of Plaited Kufic.

APPENDIX

Figure


2. City Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri.


5. Foroughi Collection, Teheran.


Text Figure

1. The reading of this inscription was suggested by Dr. James Bellamy.


Blessings! Knowledge is an ornament for the youth and Intelligence is a crown of gold. Happiness!"

5. Foroughi Collection, Teheran.

"Knowledge is the noblest of virtues and Manliness is the most intricate of lineages. Blessings to (?)"

8. Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C. (54.16)

Preserve for yourself your modesty, for only modesty points out the action of a noble man.”

The same inscription appears on a plate from Nishapur (BMMA, vol. 20, 1961, p. 115, fig. 25).

This translation was suggested by Dr. Bellamy, who also points out that this is a tawil verse, “somewhat garbled,” and probably should read “fi’li al-Karimi (text: al-Karami) al-hayā’u.” He adds that another less satisfactory reading may be obtained by considering the word hayā’u as serving both the former and latter parts of the verse.

The jug was published on the cover of BMMA, vol. 20, 1961.
AJANTĀ AND GHATOTKACHA: A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS*

BY WALTER SPINK

All of the mahāyāna caves at Ajantā appear to have been created during or shortly after the reign of the Vakātaka king Harishena, who ruled in the last half of the fifth century A.D.¹ Cave 16 at Ajantā contains an inscription stating that Varahādeva, Harishena’s minister, presented the cave “with devotion to the community of monks.” The vihāra at the nearby site of Ghatotkacha also contains an inscription of this Varahādeva, and thus belongs to the same general period.²

As we shall try to demonstrate, Cave 16 is one of the earliest of the twenty-four Mahāyāna caves at Ajantā, whereas the vihāra at Ghatotkacha reflects developments which took place in the latest caves of this same series. Thus the Mahāyāna phase at Ajantā was one of remarkably intense patronage, and remarkably swift development from evidence supplied by a newly discovered inscription from Vatsagulma, which will be published in the forthcoming issue of Indian Archaeology: A Review, Dr. B. C. Chhabra and Dr. M. K. Dhaivalikar kindly called my attention to this important new find. The inscription proves fairly conclusively that Devasena (the father of Harishena) was ruling in A.D. 454. Thus it would seem unlikely (although admittedly not impossible) that Harishena could have been ruling as late as A.D. 510.

Addendum: Further study has convinced us that the suggestions made in Footnote 3 below are correct, and that work continued on certain Vākātaka caves for a few years after Harishena’s death. However, it has not been possible to emend the present article accordingly. We now believe that Harishena died ca. A.D. 490 instead of ca. A.D. 495, and that his son ruled until Vākātaka power and patronage came to an end in ca. A.D. 500. Varahādeva, the donor of the Ghatotkacha cave, probably continued to serve as minister after Harishena’s death, as evidence in the Daśakumaracarita would imply. Thus he may have inscribed the cave during the reign of Harishena’s son.

¹ See V. C. Majumdar, ed., The classical age, the history and culture of the Indian people, Bombay, 1954, vol. 3, pp.181–188. Harishena is generally considered to have reigned from A.D. 475 to ca. A.D. 510. However, we have suggested previously, on the basis of evidence derived from a study of Buddhist and Hindu monuments of this general period, that Harishena’s reign must have ended by A.D. 500 at the latest, and have suggested A.D. 460 to 495 as more appropriate approximate dates. (See the author’s paper History from art history: Monuments of the Deccan in Summaries of Papers of the 26th International Congress of Orientalists, R. N. Dandekar, ed., New Delhi, 1964. The full papers presented at the 26th International Congress of Orientalists are also being prepared for publication by that organization.)

This hypothesis has recently gained some

² See V. V. Mirashi, Vākātaka inscription in Cave XVI at Ajantā, Hyderabad Archaeological Series, vol. 14, Hyderabad, 1941. See also V. V. Mirashi, The Ghatotkacha Cave Inscription, with a note on Ghatotkacha Cave Temples by P. Sreenivasachar, Hyderabad, 1952. Vākātaka inscriptions...
ment, for analysis shows that virtually all of the caves fall between these two poles, and consequently belong to the same regnal period as Cave 16 and Ghatotkacha.³

(See Time Chart: fig. i.)

The validity of this hypothesis must depend entirely upon the application of a particular art historical methodology, involving a precise analysis of the development of forms. Application of this technique of analysis rests on the implicit assumption that given a sufficient body of material with which to work the art historian can prove beyond any reasonable doubt that developments had to proceed in such and such a way, and not in any other. Taking the specific case of the Mahāyāna phase at Ajantā, he must be able to show that the caves, or elements within the caves, developed in a particular sequential manner.

One must obviously be ready to adjust his opinions or even to abandon them if they do not mature. Most important of all, one cannot work with too limited a selection of elements or too restricted a set of considerations. Any study of a period's or site's or even a single cave's stylistic development must be a composite study.

In the present essay we shall do exactly

³ Possible exceptions are certain caves, such as Cave 11 and Cave Lower 6, whose plans seem somewhat less developed than that of Cave 16, and which therefore may represent slightly earlier conceptions. However, they connect so closely with caves such as Cave 16 and Cave 17 in so many details of style and iconography, that one must assume they were still underway when the latter caves were started. Consequently, one could properly suggest that Caves 11 and Lower 6 actually inaugurate (rather than stand apart from) that great phase of patronage which we associate with Harishena's reign—or more specifically with the tenure of his minister Varahādeva.

It should also be mentioned that there may have been a few final years of disturbed and hasty Vākātaka patronage even after Harishena's reign. Harishena's great kingdom, although it was increasingly attacked and eroded by rival powers, probably did not break up at once but passed into the hands of a weak successor. For a convincing discussion of this hypothesis, which derives from admittedly somewhat disputable literary evidence, see V. V. Mirashi, Historical data in Dandin's Dasakumaracarita, in Annals of the Bhandardar Oriental Research Institute, vol. 26, 1945, pp. 20–31.

If Vākātaka power (and a degree of Vākātaka patronage) did indeed continue during the troubled period just at the end of, and immediately following, Harishena's reign, it would help to explain the somewhat anomalous character of certain late and hasty undertaken excavations such as Caves 14, 3, and 25 at Ajantā. It would also explain why such caves as (for instance) Ajantā 4, Ajantā Upper 6, and Ghatotkacha show various signs of haste, confusion, and (occasionally) changes of plan in those portions which were undertaken last. (For instance, at Ghatotkacha and Ajantā 4 it appears that the main Buddhās were painted even though all of the carved details of the shrines and shrine vestibules were not completed.)

Thus evidence from the excavated monuments of the Vākātaka period would seem to confirm Mirashi's hypothesis, by suggesting that a troubled and very minor period of patronage continued directly upon that great phase of work which is connected with Harishena's reign. But if indeed any work at all was done in these declining years of power and patronage, it was hardly impressive either in quality or amount.
what we have just inveighed against. We shall concern ourselves with only a very limited set of factors in an attempt to establish the sequence of development of the Mahāyāna caves at Ajantā. Such a limitation is necessitated by lack of space, but it is also purposeful: it provides an example of an approach which when enlarged in scope can lead to a resolution of the type of problem which confronts us here.

Actually a limited analysis of the present type can, and often does, lead to the correct conclusions. But we should not be too hasty in assuming that such conclusions are correct. They should be questioned, and hopefully supported, by analyses of as many other factors as possible, and the results of all these strands of investigation should be woven together into a complex fabric. Any probable sequence of development suggested by the analysis of one element may have to be slightly—or even drastically—revised when we collate these results with the results of further investigations.

What we shall attempt to do in the present paper is to establish a “basic sequence” of excavations starting in the early Mahāyāna phase and continuing into the late Mahāyāna phase. Afterwards, by referring back to this basic sequence (which comprises Caves 16, 17, 1, 2, 21, 23, 24) we should be able to show how some of the more problematic caves (e.g. Caves 4 and 6) fall into a better perspective. Furthermore, such a basic sequence should be useful in establishing tentative developmental sequences for a whole variety of motifs which appear within the caves considered.

The factors which we have so arbitrarily selected here are all factors which can be discussed by sole reference to the plans of the caves, or to the plan of the site. We shall concern ourselves here with the relative location of the caves, their state of completion, and their ground-plans only. Such a limitation may seem rather artificial; but it should have a particular interest insofar as it suggests how much can actually be determined even when our materials for analysis are so drastically limited. It would be an unwise student who did not look beyond these limitations before arriving at any final conclusions; but he would be equally unwise if, given these imposed limitations, he did not analyze them at least as completely as we shall attempt to do here.

We know that the very earliest excavations at Ajantā, the Hinayāna Caves 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, and the more recently discovered cave 30, are found at the approximate center of the curving scarp which forms the setting for the site as it finally developed. (We assume general agreement regarding the early dating of these six caves.) It would seem logical to suppose that, as the site developed under Mahāyāna patronage in later times, the first of the Mahāyāna caves would have been placed near this old nucleus, and that excavations would gradually have been added farther and farther out along the scarp on either side of this central group. The scarp apparently offered adequate surfaces for excavations along most of its present face, except for the area immediately to the west of Cave 20 (that is, between Caves 20 and 21) where a seasonal waterfall appears (figs. 2 and 3).

However, no one would pretend that such a gradual “spreading out” should be used as an absolute criterion. The rock may have been less solid or subject to seepage in certain portions; proximity to an area
where a cistern could be sunk may have sometimes seemed desirable; orientation toward a specific direction may also have been a factor, for the gorge is curved; proximity to one of the chaitya halls may have been particularly desired by certain donors; patrons with political or financial authority may have “reserved” central areas which for some reason or other were not immediately utilized. Certain groups or families may have opted to excavate a series of caves too numerous (or a single cave too large) to be cut into the prime central areas; others may have been willing to crowd a smaller cave into a cramped but still available central spot or to have chosen spots above the general level of excavation where central space was more available; even the demonic creatures for which the site was known may have drawn benefactions to, or driven them from, certain available locations. These are factors which do not obviate our general hypothesis but must be allowed consideration. We can only be more absolute when other factors have been considered; “location” can be a useful but not an infallible criterion for our purposes.

In the same way, we cannot be too dogmatic in setting up “state of completion” as a criterion. It could be possible that the finished caves are all relatively late, and that some or even all of the unfinished caves were the first ones started. Seemingly this would not make sense, but history has ways devious as well as obvious.

These observations notwithstanding, there does seem to be a more or less logical pattern of activity visible at Ajantā. Many of the caves in the less central and less choice locations are unfinished, while most of those clustering closest to the center are complete. This correlation between “completion” and “location” is suggestive enough to provide a tentative working hypothesis, which we shall hopefully be able to sustain, even though we shall certainly expect to modify it.

We shall tentatively assume, then, that the completed and centrally located caves such as 16 and 17 will fall early in Ajantā’s Mahāyāna sequence; that the completed caves such as 1 and 2 (lying well to the east but along the same uninterrupted main area of the scarp) are somewhat later, while the unfinished caves such as 21, 23, and 24 at the so-called western—actually southwestern—extremity of the site (over beyond the waterfall which appears at the monsoon season) were added later still, in those final years of activity when the more accessible locations had already been preempted (fig. 4).

For many reasons an analysis of cave ground plans should provide us with a manageable and fruitful mode of approach with which to test and adjust the tentative hypothesis which was proposed as a result of the apparent correlation between “completion” and “location”.

A brief preview of the plans of the seven caves chosen for chief consideration (Caves 16, 17, 1, 2, 21, 23, 24) will substantiate their potential usefulness. No two are alike, but (equally important) all of

4 It would seem that the locations chosen for such caves as 14, Upper 6, and 3, all of which are placed somewhat above the general level of excavation, were so chosen because more ideal areas had already been utilized. It is significant that caves such as these three are unfinished, as are various small unnumbered caves which are also to be found in such «low-priority» locations.
them do have certain clear points of relationship (see figs. 5-11). We will not be trying to relate materials for which there is no common comparative ground. Furthermore, there seems to be prima facie evidence of “evolution,” in view of our preliminary hypothesis, for the plans of Caves 16 and 17 (which we have tentatively suggested are the earlier caves) are obviously not only very similar to each other, but are clearly distinguishable from the plans of the unfinished (“later”) Caves 21, 23, and 24 at the western extension of the site.

Of all the factors which we might consider, the plans of the caves are probably least subject to the objection that external developments could confuse the evolutionary sequence which we suggest. They are relatively “influence-free,” for nothing like them had been developed in this region at the time of their excavation. Indeed there were very few contemporary excavations being carried on anywhere in India at this time.

With rock-cut forms we are in the unique position of knowing exactly where we stand with regard to immediate sources which may have influenced them. Unless certain sites have been completely destroyed or remain undiscovered—both possibilities obviously very remote—all of the important rock abodes of India are known. And there are none (either earlier or contemporary) which either provide a key to, or else confuse the picture of, the overall sequence of plans which we shall consider at Ajantā. To study Ajantā’s gradual development—the subject of our concern—we must look chiefly to Ajantā alone, or to those few nearby monuments at Ghatotkacha and at Aurangabad (Caves 1 and 3) which belong to exactly the same phase of patronage.5

We could not, of course, be so arbitrary were we dealing with structural rather than rock-cut forms; for in such a situation important landmarks and “connecting-links” might have completely disappeared, and they could have existed in any part of the sub-continent.

But as the Ajantā architects sought (compelled by a variety of reasons) to evolve a somewhat different plan for each new vihāra, they were literally working into the unknown, developing plans never used before, and (we now can see) never to be used again. Although structural vihāras, made of brick or stone or wood provided the general format for the caves, rock-cut forms called for definite innovations because of the peculiarities of their situation within the solid rock. Windows and doors had to be planned, and the columnation adjusted, according to the need for light, which also affected the arrangement of the total decoration; since the interiors were open only on one side, inordinate emphasis had to be placed upon

5 The Hindu caves at Udayagiri in Bhopal are many decades earlier, and very much simpler in layout. Only the caves at Bāgh and Dharasen belong to the same general period, and neither of these sites would seem to have been begun before the Mahāyāna phase at Ajantā, or to have significantly affected the forms developed there.

Of course the foundations of structural vihāras of the same general period, which are still to be seen at sites such as Sārnāth and Sāñchī, bear a number of relationships with our rock-cut examples, and should be given consideration in this regard.

For a brief reference to the relative position of various caves within the sequence of monuments of this general period, see Spink, op. cit.
the single porch, and correspondingly upon the treatment of the façade. Decisions concerning the method of treating such elements as pillars, pilasters, beams and brackets (which at best would only mimic structural forms) had to be made. And beside the problems caused by the encumbrances of the structural tradition as it faced a necessary adjustment, the potentialities of the rock-cut forms, which had been only tentatively explored in the Hinayāna period, were clearly eliciting interest. Adjustments of plan, involving the main and subsidiary shrines and cells, which would have been unthinkable or awkward in structural forms, could be newly conceived and executed, affecting or affected by developing ritual needs.

We shall begin our considerations of groundplans with Caves 16 and 17 which, as we have suggested, may well be the earliest of our group, due to their relatively central location and their completed state. Both of these caves were the lavish donations of very important persons, courtly officials who in their inscriptions take pride in recording their own illustrious genealogies along with that of the kings whom they and their ancestors had long served. The "community of monks" at "the best of mountains" to whom these "palace-like" caves were presented had certainly seen nothing like them before; but it was only a foretaste of what was to come. In retrospect we can see that Caves 16 and 17 were indeed "formative," and that their basic layout (to say nothing of their decoration) is subject to much change. But for their time they must have seemed remarkable and decisive architectural formations. Indeed they father all those later excavations at the site which gradually spread out from this roughly central point.

The plans of both Caves 16 and 17 are orderly and uncomplicated (see plans). We can see that from the shallow court in front one enters through a colonnade of six pillars and two pilasters into a porch which extends the width of the cave and contains a single cell door at either end. In the rear wall of the porch a central door, two side doors, and two windows open into the main hall of the cave, which contains six more cells like those of the porch on either side. This central area contains twenty monolithic pillars which create a large square central space and aisles at front, rear, and sides. A wide entranceway containing two pillars (which in the case of Cave 17 is flanked by two pilasters) leads into the shrine area from the center of the back wall. Two simple doorways on either side of this shrine entrance lead into four more plain cells in Cave 17.

In Cave 16 there are also four simple doors in the rear wall of the interior; two lead into cells, while the other two lead into shallow aisles on either side of a unique type of image chamber. From these left and right aisles in the shrine area one could look between paired pillars into the larger area where the huge monolithic Buddha sat. Worshippers could (if custom permitted) approach this impressive image directly; or they could circumambulate it, just as one could circumambulate the stupa in a chaitya hall. Indeed, the plan of the shrine of Cave 16 must have been suggested by the somewhat similar arrange-

6 These pillars fronting the shrine of Cave 16 are not very clearly defined on our groundplans, but can be recognized by the fact that they show no crosshatching.
ment of the traditional chaitya hall, where
the worshipper could enter down the left
aisles and, keeping the sacred chaitya on
his right, move behind and around it in his
ritual of pradakśhina and exit on the oth-
er side. We are near the beginning of that
development which witnessed the gradual
evolution of the monastic residence or vi-
hāra into a place of worship, an evolution
which presaged the decline of the Buddhist
chaitya hall and spurred the development
of the characteristic rock-cut Buddhist and
Hindu shrines of the next century. 7

In Cave 17 also, one could circumamb-
ulate the image, but here the treatment of
the cells at the rear and the layout of the
shrine relates it more closely to the caves
we placed later in our tentative sequence;
this is but one of the many reasons to be-
lieve that Cave 17 is slightly later than
Cave 16. 8

7 In Cave 11, which probably represents a
slightly earlier conception than Cave 16 (and
which is located in the very midst of the older
Hinayāna nucleus), the shrine chamber actually
included a monolithic stūpa. The Buddha figure
is carved against (or from) this stūpa, which can-
not be seen until one moves around behind the
image.

8 The Buddhist shrines of the latest phase at
Aurangabad (notably Caves 6 and 7), and many
of the earlier Buddhist caves at Ellora (such as
Caves 2 and 3) are clearly derived from the ear-
er vihāra type. The same connections are found
in numerous of the earliest Hindu caves at Ellora,
although cells for monks are naturally omitted.
These developments at Aurangabad and Ellora
begin by the middle or the last half of the sixth
century.

9 Cave 17, although a slightly later concep-
tion than Cave 16, was certainly begun while
Cave 16 was still in course of excavation. It is
neither necessary nor very reasonable to assume
that the caves at Ajantā were done “one at a
time”; and, of course, it is inconceivable that this

The main door in the rear wall of Cave 17 enters upon a shrine vestibule somewhat
wider than the adjacent cells, and from
this shrine vestibule a further door leads
back into the image chamber proper. All
four of the other doors in the rear wall
lead into cells, differing in this regard from
Cave 16. Less light could enter the shrine
than in Cave 16 but the effect of the mys-
terious presence of the Buddha must have
been thereby enhanced, while the awe of
pradakśhina was magnified as one groped
his way around into the dark passage be-
hind, and finally back toward the light.

One further connection we could make
between Cave 16 and 17, from the evi-
dence provided by their plans, involves the
pattern of the pillars in their interiors. The
two central pillars of the front row and the
rear row have bases which are square
in cross-section; all of the other pillars
supporting their central halls have bases
of an octagonal design. The porch pillars
also have bases of an octagonal design.

As we shall see, none of the later caves
in our basic sequence include octagonal-
based pillars within the main area of the
central hall, and only Cave 2 has octagonal-
based pillars in its main porch colonnade.
(We shall discuss this interesting feature of
Cave 2 below.)

The cave which, on the basis of its plan,
would appear to fall next in our basic se-
could be the case if it is true that the whole Ma-
hāyāna development took place during the course
of approximately one generation. In the same way
Cave 1 was certainly started while Cave 17 and
certain other early caves were still underway, as
can be strongly suggested by a comparison of
their decorative motifs. Discussion of these mat-
ters will be taken up in a book now being pre-
pared for publication.
quence is Cave 1. Like the adjacent Cave 2, it lies at the eastern extremity of the main scarp. This is the area toward which we assume activity spread once the more centrally located caves were underway—just as we assume that the caves at the western extremity of the site, beyond the waterfall which separates it from the main scarp during the monsoon season, are later still.

The general layout of Cave 1, from the porch colonnade back to the region of the Buddha shrine, is almost exactly that of Cave 17. The size of the caves (approximately 64 feet by 64 feet) and the disposition of the pillars is approximately the same, and except for the omission of a simple cell at either end of the rear aisle—an anomalous feature—the cells and cell doors are similarly arranged.

Within Cave 1 there is only one crucial plan change from the Cave 17 type and this involves the shrine. One approaches the preaching, cross-legged Buddha through a shrine vestibule very similar to that of Cave 17 and into an inner chamber of similar size. But the image is now actually attached to the shrine's back wall and cannot be circumambulated, as was possible in Caves 16 and 17 and, indeed, in all of the earlier Mahāyāna caves at the site. An important change in ritual requirements seems evidenced here, for if our proposed sequence is correct there is no later Vakātaka vihāra where pradakshina was possible. Looking at these curious "dead end" passages at the sides of the Cave 1 Buddha,

Cave 16 was excavated first (see plans). One approaches Cave 16 from the right (east); that is, from the general direction of the old nucleus of the site. One also approaches Cave 17 from the right; that is, from the direction of Cave 16, which lies between Cave 17 and the old nucleus. In terms of structural and decorative details, Cave 17 is also very much more closely related to Cave 1 than is Cave 16, but we are not including such points of evidence in the present paper.

The omission of the two cells does not suggest a basic shift in conception since they are present in Caves 16 and 17, which are earlier than Cave 1, and equally in all caves which are later than Cave 1. We might note that occasional omission of cells is common in the caves slightly earlier or contemporary with Cave 1, and so it is not surprising that it occurs here. None of the later caves, which are notably more "standardized" in plan, shows such apparently gratuitous omissions.
one cannot but feel that the circumambulatory path may have been originally conceived but never completed. As we can infer from the plan, it would have been a simple matter to have provided a means of going around behind the image: the fact that this was not done might suggest that a change in attitudes regarding modes of worship was taking place just at this moment in time, and that the Cave 1 shrine arrangement has preserved for us a tangible record of this. Or, less ingeniously, we hypothesize that the decision to omit the pradaksinā passage had already been made by the time this shrine chamber was begun, and that the image was planned to project in this way only in order to bring it out into the approximate center of the shrine chamber.

In any case, this change of shrine layout is a significant one, with regard to which Cave 1 stands as a kind of link between Caves 16 and 17, on the one hand, and all of those which appear later in our proposed sequence, on the other.13

A more immediately obvious innovation in Cave 1 involves the elaborate treatment of the front of the cave and the arrangement of the court. But this is a less crucial change for us to consider, in trying to develop our basic sequence, for the simple reason that neither the earlier vihāras (Caves 16 and 17), nor any of the later caves with which we are presently concerned, show this somewhat unusual feature.14

Cave 2 provides us with an interesting problem. On the basis of its plan, it proves to have a number of significant features which suggest that it is a later conception than Cave 1. The image adheres closely to the rear wall of the shrine chamber, as is true in all other later caves, and important developments in cell types also first make their appearance here, as we shall see. But if it really is a later conception than Cave 1, then we shall have to try to explain why it lies somewhat (even if only slightly) nearer to the center of the site than its neighbor. For as we have mentioned pre-

13 As we shall suggest below, the lower storey of Cave 6 antedates Cave 1 and, like Caves 16 and 17, provides a pradaksinā passage; whereas the Upper Storey of Cave 6 (like the rear portions of Cave 4) does not antedate Cave 1 and has an image which is attached to the rear shrine wall. Images in all the latest Vākātaka caves, and indeed in all subsequent excavations throughout the sixth century, are always similarly attached. The pradaksinā passages in caves such as Caves 6 and 7 at Aurangabad and Cave 8 at Ellora enclose the whole shrine chamber, not just the image within it, and reflect precedents established in Hindu excavations, the earliest example probably being the East Wing of the Main Cave at Elephanta. To relate such arrangements to the arrangements found in the earliest Mahāyāna caves at Ajantā is misleading, and would suggest (for instance) that Cave Lower 6 is one of the latest rather than one of the earliest of the Vākātaka caves (See K. V. Soundara Rajan, Beginnings of the temple plan, Prince of Wales Museum Bulletin, no. 6, 1957—59, pp. 74–81).

14 The inclusion of the entrance portico as well as the incorporation of pillared cells facing onto the court area suggests a direct stylistic link with Chaitya hall 19, which includes both of these features. Numerous structural and decorative details could be mentioned which prove that Caves 1 and 19 are particularly closely related but this would go beyond our present purpose. The fact that Cave 19 is almost certainly the “gandhakuti” mentioned in the donative inscription of Cave 17 would lead one to the further assumption that Cave 1 cannot be very far removed from Cave 17 in time, and a comparison of various motifs (e.g. porch door designs) in Cave 1 and Cave 17 strikingly confirms this view.
viously, the relative placement of the various caves along the length of the scarp does seem to be a significant consideration, which would lead us to expect that Cave 2 would have been begun before Cave 1.

We might hypothesize that the original surface of the scarp presented a more ideal surface where Cave 1 is excavated, and that the area finally utilized for Cave 2 was therefore passed over at first. Or possibly the area chosen for Cave 2 had been previously spoken for, and yet work on the cave was only begun somewhat later.\(^{16}\)

However, in this particular case there seems to be an explanation which is even more satisfactory. If we note the plan of the porch pillars of Cave 2 we can see that their bases are octagonal in cross-section, and thus conform with the precedents established in the early Caves 16 and 17. The bases of the porch pillars of Cave 1 are square in section, as are those of the later caves (Caves 21, 23, 24) of our basic sequence. Furthermore, the intercolumniations of the porch colonnade of Cave 2 are all equal, as is the case in some of the earliest excavations; whereas the two central pillars of the Cave 1 porch colonnade are more widely separated than any of the others, and this is a characteristic feature of all later caves.\(^{16}\) Such considerations would allow us to come to the admittedly rather ingenious—but not for that reason necessarily incorrect—conclusion that Cave 2 was indeed begun before Cave 1; or they may have been started at the same moment, with Cave 2 at first reflecting a slightly more conservative mode than its neighbor. After all, if it is true that Ajantā’s total Mahāyāna development took place in about one generation, it would hardly be surprising to find that Caves 1 and 2, so proximate in location and so similar in many ways, were begun at practically the same time by contemporary architects who may well have worked at somewhat different rates of speed.\(^{17}\) Possibly there was a slight determination from the fact that Cave Upper 6 and Cave 2 (both of which were certainly begun after Caves 4 and 17) still show equal intercolumniations. However the widening of the central intercolumniation does appear to be an invariable feature at Ajantā from the time of Cave 1 onward (see Caves 1, 3, 5, 14, 16, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28). This would suggest that the porch of Cave 2 (like Cave Upper 6) was quite probably undertaken before that of Cave 1.

\(^{15}\) In this regard it would not be difficult to present evidence in favor of the view that the “spreading out” tendency was never absolute at Ajantā. The “expected” procedure was reversed in a number of cases. For instance, Cave 7 was probably started after Cave 6, Cave 5 after Cave 4, Cave 3 after Cave 1, Cave 14 after Caves 16 and 17.

\(^{16}\) The idea of widening the space between the two central pillars of the porch colonnade began with Caves 17 and 4 but did not become an invariable feature until somewhat later, as we can

\(^{17}\) Both Cave 1 and Cave 2 have very close connections with such important earlier caves as 17, 19, and 20, which can be seen as their immediate sources, at a moment when stylistic conventions were not yet fixed. We have referred above (see footnote 14) to some of the connections which Cave 1 bears to Caves 17 and 19. In the same way not only the porch pillars but also the demi-pillars (or, in a loose sense, “pilasters”) at the left and right ends of the porch of Cave 2 bear a striking connection with the types found in Cave 20; and Cave 20 was almost certainly begun very shortly after Cave 17 and Cave 19 and must be approximately contemporary with them.

It is evident from even the most limited study of the Mahāyāna phase at Ajantā that this was a period of extremely dynamic stylistic change, when the encumbrances of tradition and convention were worn very lightly. The excavators of the various caves constantly borrowed ideas from
delay or slackening of work on Cave 2 once excavation had started and had progressed as far as the outer elements of the porch.

Assuming that Cave 2 was begun slightly earlier than Cave 1 (or at least in a contemporaneous but somewhat more conservative style), by the time its interior—indeed even the inner portion of its porch—was excavated, it was patently a more advanced conception. It clearly provides an immediate prototype for all of the still later caves of our basic sequence.

Cave 2 is considerably smaller than Caves 16, 17, and 1, having only about half their square footage. It has twelve rather than twenty pillars in the hall and correspondingly fewer porch pillars. The number of simple cells on either side of the main hall is reduced to five. There is only a single porch door instead of three.

These minor changes all seem to be determined by nothing more than the fact that Cave 2 is relatively smaller than Caves 16, 17, and 1. But at the rear of its interior, a very important and unprecedented change in layout occurs. Two relatively wide chambers, fronted by paired pillars and pilasters, replace the simple abode cells which are to be found in these areas in the earlier caves. In Cave 2 images of the immediate past, but they were hardly bound by them. We could add weight to these hypotheses by certain other considerations, but they would lead us somewhat away from our present purpose, which is to confine ourselves to a discussion of the plans of the seven caves in our basic sequence.

Caves 16 and 17 have six cells along the side walls of their interiors. Cave 1 actually has only five, but as we have pointed out above (see footnote 12) its layout is anomalous in this regard and a sixth cell could easily have been added.

are carved into the back walls of these two pillared cells. Of equal importance, a notable change appears in the layout of its porch, at the lateral ends of which a type of elaborate “doubled-and-pillared” cell appears. Such doubled-and-pillared cells become a characteristic feature in the porches and interior halls of all the later caves of our basic sequence (i.e. Caves 21, 23, and 24) but do not ever appear in these areas in the earlier ones (i.e. Caves 16, 17, and 1).

Such doubled-and-pillared cells apparently had their ultimate origin in the rather similar units which were placed at the sides of the court of Cave 1; the conception may have been first developed by the architect who planned that court and façade. Such complex cells are not normally

19 The presence of these figures is not actually suggested on the groundplan reproduced here, although they properly should (or could) be, since the presence of carved groups is apparent in other plans (see Upper storey of Cave 6 and the various shrine-chamber plans).

20 Of course if we recognize that Caves 1 and 2 were started at practically the same time, we might assume that their architects played contemporaneous roles in developing the form and determining the use of this type of complex cell. The fact that different types of such complex cells are used in Cave 2 might be cited to suggest that the form and function of such units had not yet been standardized (compare their appearances in Caves 21 and 23); while the fact that the left court cell of Cave 1 is different from the right court cell also suggests this. (Furthermore the left court cell of Cave 1 contains not one but two contiguous cells at its rear, a fact which also suggests that the character of the element was still somewhat unsettled.)

The pillared court cells of Cave 19 should possibly be considered as prototypes for such later units; but there is reason to believe that they were not excavated until Cave 19 was well underway.
found in the court areas of later caves but instead are utilized very commonly, and characteristically, at major focal points within these later porches and interiors, as we shall see.

A study of the plans of Caves 21 and 23 strongly confirms the assumption that they (together with the quite unfinished Cave 24) should take their place next within the site’s evolutionary pattern. We shall begin by considering them as a related group, before attempting to define the specific position of each within our basic sequence.

Caves 21 and 23 are both relatively small caves, approximately the same size as Cave 2, with a corresponding number of pillars, cells, and doors. The doubled-and-pillared cells which are first utilized in the porch ends of Cave 2 (replacing the simple cells which appear at these points in Caves 16, 17, and 1) again appear in these areas in both Caves 21 and 23. (They shall also appear in Cave 24, as we shall see.) Furthermore, such elaborate double-and-pillared cells also appear at either end of the rear wall in both these caves; their placement at these positions was almost certainly also suggested by the previous example of Cave 2, although their form is now somewhat more “standardized.”

and, for this reason, may actually postdate the court cells of Cave 1. Explanation of points such as this obviously requires rather detailed analyses, which cannot be undertaken here but will be included in a more extensive study of the site.

This view would be clearly confirmed by a comparative analysis of their various structural and decorative motifs, but this would go beyond the arbitrarily-defined limitations of the present paper.

Whether these special cells were reserved for the more important monks, whether they were not.

The same kind of doubled-and-pillared cell also appears at the center of each of the side walls of Cave 21; and its appearance in this position may be taken to represent one culminating step in the elaboration of the plan of the vihāras of Harishena’s period. But it does not appear in this position in Cave 23 (or 24), which might seem to suggest that Cave 21 is later than the latter, were there not so many overriding arguments against such a view. What seems to have happened is that a tendency toward simplification of plan occurs just after this “highpoint” in Cave 21; complex cells in this position may have been found to be functionally superfluous and were therefore eliminated.

As we might anticipate, the main pillars of the interior and of the porch in both Caves 21 and 23 have bases which are square in section, following the precedents established in the interiors of Caves 1 and actual shrines intended for painted (or movable) images of which there is now no trace, or whether they had some special function for the ritual, is uncertain. In certain cases at Ajantā we do find Buddha groups carved in them; see court cell of Cave 24; see also Cave Upper 6, but in the latter case, when images are located in these areas, the plan of the cell reverts to a simpler pattern.

A thorough analysis of decorative and structural motifs makes it clear that Cave 21 is certainly an earlier conception than Caves 23 and 24. But unless such an analysis were to be undertaken, this somewhat anomalous feature of Cave 21 might well confuse the issue, even though the location and the almost-completed state of the cave favors placing it earlier than Caves 23 and 24. It is noteworthy, in this respect, that the same motif (i.e. the sidewall cells) appears in Cave Upper 6 and at Ghatotkada, both of which were certainly planned before Caves 23 and 24. Cave 3 at Aurangabad also has a somewhat related form. (See Time Chart for relative dates of these caves.)
2, and in the porch of Cave 1. Further evidence of the relatively evolved character of these two caves (and also of Cave 24) is to be seen in the fact that the widening of the central intercolumniation of their porch colonnades (already a "late" characteristic) becomes even more pronounced than in Caves 17 and 1.21

When we turn to an analysis of certain other elements—and again we shall limit ourselves to evidence available by consideration of groundplans alone—we can begin to ascertain the specific position of Caves 21, 23, and 24 within our overall basic sequence.

We have noted that the Buddha image in the shrine chamber of Cave 2 adheres closely to the rear wall, and have suggested that this represents a later conception than that in Cave 1 where the image projected very strongly. In Cave 21 this presumed "later" tendency is carried even further, for the image group is even more closely connected with the wall out of which (or into which) it is carved. Turning to Cave 23 we have what may be taken to represent an even later trend, for the rear wall of the shrine chamber has been defined by excavators but the Buddha image has not even been begun (see plan). From the excavator's (or excavators') point of view, the image was clearly going to be an addition to, rather than an integral part of, his own undertaking; whereas in such caves as Cave 16, 17, 1, and perhaps even in 2 and 21, he would have been required to take account of the image's potential projection, even though some other artisan or artisans may well have carved it.

In Cave 23 not only the Buddha but numerous other elements in the rear of the cave as well as a portion of the doubled-and-pillared cell at the right end of the porch were never finished (see plan), and it is important for us to note this fact. We might also note (although it is not actually evident from the plan shown here) that the shrine door and shrine vestibule pillars of Cave 21 are also incomplete, although the cave as a whole is somewhat more finished than Cave 23.

If our assumption is correct that excavating activity only progressed to the western extension of the site (which contains Caves 21, 23, and 24) after the prime locations along the main expanse of the scarp had already been utilized, it is significant that Cave 21 is more nearly finished than Cave 23. It is understandable that the first patrons who had to utilize this more distant, or at least less accessible, area would locate their cave as close as possible to the main body of earlier excavations. Thus we would expect the location of Cave 21 to be the first selected and Cave 21 to be the earliest of this later group. The fact that it is the most nearly finished of these three "later" caves in our basic sequence goes far to confirm this view.

In this same regard, it is particularly interesting to note that the inner chamber of the pillared cell at the right end of the

21 The porch pillars of Cave 21 are almost completely destroyed and normally not shown on plan, but field notes taken by the author state that they were square-based. The square-based character of the Cave 21 porch pilasters would also suggest this to be the case, since in each of the immediately antecedent Caves 1 and 2, and the immediately subsequent Caves 23 and 24, bases of the porch pilasters correspond with the bases of the porch pillars in general format.

Regarding the mode of intercolumniation of the various Ajantā porch colonnades, see footnote 16.
porch of Cave 23 was never finished; this seems particularly surprising when we consider that all of the other porch cells of Caves 21, 23, and even of the very-incomplete Cave 24, were finished. But the explanation is simple, as we could immediately see if the site plan which we have reproduced (fig. 4) were drawn with more accuracy. Through some error, Caves 21 and 23 were placed in too close proximity to each other. The excavators could not complete the inner chamber in question because the already-completed cell at the left end of the porch of Cave 21 was in the way. They were certainly not aware of this problem at first—indeed anyone standing in front of the caves today would admit that there seems to be plenty of room between them—and they must have been quite sobered when after one too many taps of the chisel they discovered they had broken through into Cave 21: the hole still can be seen today.

The fact that Cave 24, lying even farther to the west than Caves 21 and 23, is the most incomplete of any of these caves equally argues our case. Indeed its half-finished state, while providing fascinating evidence as to how the Ajantā excavators worked, stands as eloquent testimony to the troubled times which were responsible—as we shall suggest below—for the disruption of activity at the site. Its donor, though he had little control over the weakening of inspiration which its standardized format and its forms convey, had certainly intended that it rival the grander dedications across the gorge. If his goals were never realized it was the fault of history and not his own.

evacuation proceeded relatively swiftly due to its importance as the chaitya hall servicing the vihāras which soon sprang up around it. It may have been placed quite far to the west, with the idea that a number of vihāras could easily be grouped around it; or the scarp may have been better suited at this point for the cutting of its high façade and elaborate court.

Cave 27 should not be considered as a separate cave. It is properly only an elaborate “wing” of Cave 26, opening onto the left side of the latter’s court; another somewhat smaller “wing,” now largely obliterated, opened onto the right side of the same court. Both appear to have been completed and must have been undertaken at approximately the same time as the main portion of the chaitya cave itself; certain stylistic considerations, as well as the fact that they are located in the façade area of Cave 26 (and are pendants of it), would suggest this.

Certainly all the caves in this western extension of the site are closely contemporary. The problem of just when each was begun and how fast work progressed upon each excavation involves a more lengthy analysis than can be undertaken here.

25 Cave 25, which lies still farther west, is also very incomplete and Cave 28, the farthest west of all, even moreso. Cave 29, a chaitya hall which has barely been begun, is another of this very latest group of undertakings and lies high up in the scarp above the general level of the rest of the caves in this area. Various other small incomplete (and unnumbered) caves, showing late features, also appear among the other excavations at the western extremity of the site.

Cave 26 presents a special problem. Although it lies very far to the west, it is essentially complete. Stylistic considerations, which we are not discussing in the present paper, suggest it was begun during the “heyday” of the site, perhaps just after Caves 1, 2, and 21 were inaugurated. Its
Fig. 1.—Time Chart showing approximate dates of excavation of the mahāyāna caves of the Vākātaka period at Ajanta (Caves 1–7; 11; 14–29), Ghatotkacha (Caves A, B, C), and Aurangabad (Caves 1 and 3). The dates (A.D. 460–495) suggested for Harishena's reign are also approximate. Patronage perhaps continued on a very reduced scale for a few years after Harishena's reign (see discussion in footnotes 1 and 3).
Fig. 2.—Ajantā. The caves seen from across the ravine.
Photo Asian Art Archives, University of Michigan (cited hereafter as AAA), F 11620.

Fig. 3.—Ajantā. Caves 18–28 (at far left). Note waterfall between Caves 20 and 21.
Courtesy Nelson Wu.
Fig. 4.—Ajanta. General plan of the site. Published in J. Burgess, *Report on the Buddhist Cave Temples, ASW1*, vol. 4, London, 1883, pl. XIV.
Fig. 5.—Ajantā. Plan of Cave 16. Published in J. Ferguson and J. Burgess, *The Cave Temples of India* cited hereafter as *CTI*, London, 1880, pl. XXXIII.

Fig. 6.—Ajantā. Plan of Cave 17. Published *CTI*, pl. XXXIII.
Fig. 7.—Ajanta. Plan of Cave 1. Published CTI, pl. XL.

Fig. 8.—Ajanta. Plan of Cave 2. Published CTI, pl. XLIV.
Fig. 9.—Ajanta. Plan of Cave 21. Published ASW1, vol. 4, pl. XXXIV; the nearly-obliterated porch pillars are omitted in the plan. They were disposed like those of Cave 23.

Fig. 10.—Ajanta. Plan of Cave 23. Published ASW1, vol. 4, pl. XXXIV.
Fig. 11.—Ajanta. Plan of Cave 24. Published ASWJ, vol. 4, pl. XXXIV.

Fig. 12.—Ajanta. Plan of Cave 4. Published CTI, pl. XLVI.
Fig. 13.—Ajanta, Plan of Cave 6 (upper storey).
Published C71, pl. XXXII.

Fig. 14.—Ajanta, Plan of Cave 6 (lower storey).
Published C71, pl. XXXII.
Fig. 15.—Ghatotkacha. Plan of the main vihāra (Cave "A" on Time Chart). Published CTI, pl. LII; the porch pillars were omitted in the drawing as published, and have been added here. (It should be noted, however, that recent measurements received by the author suggest that the intercolumniations of the porch pillars are all equidistant.) For convenience, certain of the following photographs are located by angles on the plan.

Fig. 16.—Ghatotkacha. Transverse section of the main vihāra. Published ASW1, vol. 4, pl. XXXVII.
Fig. 17.—Ghatotkacha. Main vihāra. General view of exterior. Photo Spink, 6209.

Fig. 18.—Ghatotkacha. Main vihāra. Porch, left end. Photo AAA, F 11772.

Fig. 19.—Ghatotkacha. Main vihāra. Main door of porch. Jamb at lower left. Photo Spink, 6218.

Fig. 20.—Ghatotkacha. Main vihāra. Main door of porch. Photo AAA, F 11776.
Fig. 21.—Ghatotkacha. Main vihāra. Left side of pillared cell at left end of porch (base of pillar reconstructed). Photo AAA, F 11540.

Fig. 22.—Ghatotkacha. Main vihāra. Right side of pillared cell at left end of porch, and left side of nearby aisle door. Vakātaka inscription appears beneath the projecting concrete canopy. Photo AAA, F 11541.

Fig. 23.—Ghatotkacha. Main vihāra. Detail of pilaster seen in fig. 22, with adjacent inscription. Photo AAA, 11775.

Fig. 24.—Ghatotkacha. Main vihāra. Looking out past pillar and pilaster of pillared cell at right of porch, toward door into right aisle. Photo Spink, 6226.
Fig. 25.—Ghatotkacha. Main vihara. Interior, view of front right corner. Photo AAA, F 1534.

Fig. 26.—Ghatotkacha. Main vihara. Interior. Buddha figures in right front corner. Photo AAA, F 11762.

Fig. 27.—Ghatotkacha. Main vihara. Interior. Left aisle, seen from rear of cave. Photo Spink, 6871.

Fig. 28.—Ghatotkacha. Main vihara. Interior. Detail of pillar fronting pillared cell at midpoint of left aisle. Photo Spink, 6879.
Fig. 29.—Ghatotkacha. Main vihāra. Interior. Unfinished pillared cell at midpoint of right aisle. Note the beginning of work on the doorway of the center of the rear wall of the cell. Photo AAA, F 11766.

Fig. 30.—Ghatotkacha. Main vihāra. Interior Details showing first stages of work on unfinished cell door (near center of photograph). Photo AAA, F 11765.

Fig. 31.—Ghatotkacha. Main vihāra. Interior. Pilaster near rear end of left aisle. Photo AAA, F 11514.

Fig. 32.—Ghatotkacha. Main vihāra. Interior. Right aisle, looking toward rear of cave. Photo AAA, F 11767.
Fig. 33.—Ghatotkacha. Main vihāra. Interior. Pillar and pilaster of shrine vestibule. Looking out toward right aisle of cave. Photo AAA, XR-7.

Fig. 34.—Ghatotkacha. Main vihāra. Interior. Shrine vestibule seen from main hall. Photo Spink, 6874.

Fig. 35.—Ghatotkacha. Main vihāra. Interior. Shrine door, left jamb. Photo AAA, F 11506.

Fig. 36.—Ghatotkacha. Main vihāra. Interior. Shrine and shrine vestibule. Photo AAA, XQ-36 A.
Fig. 37.—Ghatotkacha, Main vihāra. Interior. Shrine, Buddha image. Photo Department of Archaeology, Gort of India.

Fig. 38.—Ghatotkacha, Main vihāra. Interior. Shrine. Worshipping figures at base of Buddha’s throne; group at the left. Photo AAA, F 11504.

Fig. 39.—Ghatotkacha, Main vihāra. Interior. Shrine. Guardian at right of Buddha. Photo AAA, F 11498.
The porch of Cave 24 returns to the six-column and three-door plan of Caves 16, 17, and 1.\footnote{27} We should note that Cave 24 has seven cells on a side instead of six. This is a solidly thought out increase which would have brought the cell doors into better alignment with the intercolumniations; it would seem to be a logical adjustment of plan and thus suggestive of a more advanced conception.

The intended treatment of the back wall of Cave 24 must remain in doubt, for only  

to explain why in such a cave as Cave 4, which we shall discuss below, the rear portions of the cave have a somewhat later stylistic character than the porch or other areas nearer to the front.

We might also note that in Cave 24, once the deeper portions were reached, the more important elements received attention first; note that work had actually been begun on the cutting of the shrine vestibule, but not on the adjacent cells. In a number of other unfinished caves we can again see that the shrine area, as we might expect, received attention before certain other lesser elements in the rear of the cave.

We might note in passing that there is no evidence of painting having been undertaken in Cave 24, even in its porch area, where its excavation was essentially complete. Cave 23, which was much more fully excavated than Cave 24, does show traces of a mud “ground” having been applied in its porch area, obviously in preparation for painting. Cave 21, which we have placed even earlier in our sequence, has a considerable amount of painting; only the unfinished shrine and shrine vestibule and right rear pillared cell show no traces of either painting or of a preparatory mud “ground.” Slightly earlier caves, such as Caves 1 and 2, are mostly painted, as of course are Caves 16 and 17. Thus, although it would involve going beyond the restricted limits of the present study, we can see that a consideration of such matters might well aid in further establishing the validity of the general outline of the site’s development which we have proposed. It would also help to  

the shrine door was begun, and that but barely. We can only assume that the shrine would have been like that in the adjacent Cave 23, for in numerous ways the caves (which must be closely contemporary) reflect the same creative intuitions and abilities.

In our review of plans we have developed a sequence (involving only certain caves for the moment) which places the excavations in the following probable order: 16, 17, 1, 2, 21, 23, 24. As we have suggested, a consideration of the caves’ varying degrees of completion suggests this view: 16, 17, 1, and 2 are finished; 21 nearly so; 23 slightly less so; and 24 (except for its nearly completed porch) is very unfinished indeed. Their location is also pertinent: 16 and 17 are central; 1 and 2 are farther out but still lie relatively close to (or at least easily accessible to) the earliest excavations; whereas 21, 23, and 24 (in that order) spread out at the western extremity of the site along with the majority of the other uncompleted caves.

suggest that the painting of the caves and the excavation of the caves were both part of the same phase of patronage. This latter matter is discussed at some length in a book on Ajantā now prepared for publication, in which a case is made for assigning all of the Mahāyāna paintings at the site to the late fifth century.

\footnote{27} The fact that Cave 24 is (like Caves 16, 17, and 1) much larger than Caves 2, 21, and 23 shows that size is not a consideration which can be used in determining the relative dates of the Ajantā caves. Difference in size must have been due to a variety of factors—patron’s funds, availability of space, practical housing needs, etc.

At Aurangabad also, we find that Caves 3 and 1, which must both belong to the later years of Vākātaka patronage, vary considerably in size.
It would be gratifying if all the caves at Ajanta took their place in as comprehensible a sequence of evolution as those we have just discussed. But this is not the case; indeed it would be too much to expect in a site sponsored by a great number of different patrons in a period of such dynamic change.

However, having established a pattern of development on the basis of our arbitrarily selected “model” examples—examples which obviously fit our purposes—we are in a position to move to a consideration of a few of the more problematic caves, of which there are many. In certain of these cases the plans lack uniformity of design and it appears that their layout was subject to considerable change once they were underway. This is particularly noticeable in Caves 4 and 6 which, not only in terms of their layout but in numerous decorative, structural, and iconographic details, prove to have been excavated very slowly and to have been strongly affected by other developments at the site while work progressed upon them.

Although one should analyze such caves from every point of view to support this latter statement properly, it is not our intention to do this here. We have so far limited our discussion to plans alone in order to emphasize how instructive a study of even a single feature can be when approached in a fairly exhaustive manner. Therefore we shall continue this arbitrary procedure in briefly referring to the interesting cases of Cave 6 and Cave 4.

On the basis of our previous discussion it should be evident that the Lower Storey of Cave 6 (fig. 14) contains all of the features which we have suggested are “early,” while the Upper Storey of the same cave (fig. 13) contains many of the features which we have suggested are “late”. It appears that this two-storied cave was among the very first begun during Ajanta’s Mahayana phase, and that it was still underway during the final stages of activity at the site. Excavation did not proceed here in what is generally considered the “normal” way, *i.e.* from upper to lower portion; indeed it seems clear that the excavation of the Upper Storey had not been anticipated (or at least had not been worked out) when the Lower Storey was first begun, since the constructed stairway which leads up to it from the front aisle of the Lower Storey blocks one of the latter’s porch windows. Cave 6 was probably begun before either Cave 16 or Cave 17, although the excavation of its interior progressed rather slowly. The manner in which the pillars of the Lower Storey are disposed (on a grid pattern) may be due to its relatively greater dependence on structural prototypes; or it is possible that by the time the interior hall was actually undertaken the decision to excavate an upper storey had been made and such extra columnar supports were felt to be necessary. In any case, reduction of the number of supporting pillars in the later caves and their mode of arrangement (by virtue of which the aisles are clearly set off from the central space) enhanced the total axial focus of the interiors and provided a much more open and visually effective layout.

The main pillars of the interior hall of the Lower Storey all have octagonal bases, being even “less developed” in this respect than Caves 16 and 17, while all of the pillars of the interior hall of the Upper Storey have square bases, as is the case in all caves that
which we have placed later in our basic sequence.  

Cave 4 lies in the same level of the scarp as Caves 1 and 2 but is nearer to the central area of the site (figs. 2 and 4). If, as we suggested earlier, the course of work at the site tended to progress from the area occupied by Caves 16 and 17 toward that occupied by Caves 1 and 2, then we should expect Cave 4 to have been somewhat earlier than the latter. Indeed, such an hypothesis would seem to be confirmed by the plan of the porch (fig. 12), which naturally had to be the portion of the cave upon which work was first undertaken. Like Caves 16, 17, and 1, Cave 4 has simple single cells at the ends of the porch, whereas the later caves of our sequence have porches characterized by doubled cells fronted by paired pillars and pilasters.

But proceeding into the interior of Cave 4 we can see by even a cursory reference to the plan that this relationship with Caves 16, 17, and 1 no longer holds. Not only does the interior arrangement show clear evidence of confusion and incompleteness, but we find that complex pillared cells have been begun in the rear. Such pillared cells are a feature of all the later caves (Caves 2, 21, 23, and 24) in our sequence and do not occur in Caves 16, 17, or in the porch or interior of Cave 1. In the same way, the disposition of the Buddha image in the shrine suggests that this portion of Cave 4 was also finished later than the same portions of Caves 16 and 17 (where one could circumambulate the image), or the same portion of Cave 1, where the image projects out very strongly from the rear wall of the shrine.

Thus the plan of Cave 4 “developed” as excavation progressed from the exterior toward the rear of the cave; and it is clear from the plan that, even after the shrine itself was finished, work was continuing on various other elements of the cave up until such time as excavating activity was disrupted.  

One small feature of the plan of Cave 4 which might easily be overlooked is the rather surprising inclusion of a square-based pillar (second from the left) in the rear row of pillars in the interior. Not only does it suggest the disorderliness which is

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28 It should be noted that the porch colonnade of Cave Upper 6 has equal intercolumniations, which suggests that (like Cave 2) its excavation was begun relatively early, even though the development of certain features of its interior continued rather late. For all of its obviously very late features, the Upper Storey was conceived and begun while the Lower Storey was still underway (see Time Chart). For instance, the fact that the pillars of the main hall of the Upper Storey are all of the same type, rather than varied according to a “late” hierarchical scheme (see footnote 30) suggests this. It is in the deeper and the “peripheral” parts of the Upper Storey that we encounter its many specifically “late” features.

29 This explains why some writers have judged this cave to be a very early one, while others have judged it to be a very late one. For the former view see P. Stern, Ajantā, Ellora et l'évolution des styles gupta et post-gupta de l'Inde, Actes du Congrès International des Orientalistes 21, 1948. For the latter view see R. S. Gupta and B. D. Mahajan, Ajantā, Ellora, and Anrangabad Caves, Bombay, 1962, p. 71.

Even the porch of Cave 4, which has a characteristically early layout, has a number of later features which prove that work continued on it over a relatively long period. The decoration of its windows, of certain of its pillar capitals, and the well-known Avalokitesvara panel at the right of the main door could be cited as cases in point.
also characteristic of certain other aspects of the plan (for there is no corresponding square-based pillar on the right), but it hints at the eclectic nature of the whole excavation. Instead of making the rear row of pillars conform in its general pattern with the front row of pillars, the architect allows himself to be somewhat influenced by the new style found in Caves 1 and 2, which were probably underway at this same point in time (see Time Chart: fig. 1).

Before leaving our consideration of the plans of Caves 6 and 4, we might mention that both of these caves were apparently originally approached from the direction of the original nucleus of the site, rather than from the direction of Caves 1 and 2. Although not evident from presently available site plans, this is suggested by the orientation of the still extant old rock-cut steps which lead up to their courts from the west.

For all of the fact that much evidence regarding the original approaches to the caves has been obscured by erosion, rockfalls, and reconstructions, this is at least one further suggestion that the site first developed toward Caves 1 and 2 (both in time and in space) rather than from them. That Caves 1 and 2 may then have been completed much more rapidly than their rather lethargically executed neighbors is beside the point.

The examples of Caves 4 and 6 show that our basic sequence of plans provides us with a key which can be used in solving, or in helping to solve, the puzzles presented by some of the more problematic caves at the site. This same key can aid in solving some even larger problems regarding the position of Ajantā's Mahāyāna phase and its sponsors—the Vakatakas—in Indian history. We turn to a consideration of the vihāra at Ghatotkacha, a cave eleven miles from Ajantā, to show how this can be the case. This isolated vihāra at Ghatotkacha is clearly related to the vihāras at Ajantā in terms of its plan—as well as in terms of other features which we shall not discuss here. Indeed, as we have argued elsewhere, it reflects the developments of Ajantā's very latest phase. If this hypothesis is valid then the whole of Ajantā's Mahāyāna development must have ended by late fifth century; for an inscription in Ghatotkacha's porch proves that the vihāra was created during the time of Varahadeva, minister of King Harishena.

31 The last four lines of the twenty-two line Ghatotkacha inscription are obliterated, but it is generally recognized that it is undeniably a Vākataka inscription. Both King Harishena and his minister Varahadeva are actually mentioned near the end of the record. The object of the inscription is unclear, for its final lines are gone, but it seems likely that it recorded the gift of the vihāra by Varahadeva, who is glorified in the last few extant lines. See Mirashi, op. cit.

Of course, it could be argued that the presence of the inscription in the porch does not prove that the interior is also necessarily of Harishena's period. However, since the porch itself directly relates to the latest phase at Ajantā (and since the inscription is actually in the porch) one could, if necessary, develop the same hypothesis by reference to the porch itself.

The vihāra at Ghatotkacha was almost cer-
We can test this hypothesis by a consideration of the plan of Ghatotkacha in relation to the plans of the Ajantā caves discussed in our basic sequence.

In every way the plan of the vihāra at Ghatotkacha proves to be connected with the plans of the latest caves in our Ajantā sequence and clearly distinguished from the plans of the earlier ones.

The most obvious point of relationship with Ajantā Caves 2, 21, 23, and 24 is the appearance of the doubled-and-pillared cells at the ends of the porch and at certain major points in the interior. In this regard it most nearly approximates Cave 21, particularly if we assume that the pillared cell at the center of the right wall of the interior was to have an inner cell attached to it and further cells on either side of it, as does the one in the opposite left wall.32

Certainly begun while Cave 17 at Ajantā was still underway, but at a time when many later caves were already begun (see Time Chart). One might note that (like Cave 2 at Ajantā) it has porch pillars with octagonal bases; this must be considered one of its few retardatory features. A more extended discussion of Ghatotkacha and a discussion of the evidence which suggests that the interior does indeed belong to the same phase of patronage as the porch is in course of preparation.

Because of the importance of Ghatotkacha, and because it is relatively little known or published, a number of photographs of the main vihāra are included here (see figs. 17–39). For convenience, a number of these photographs are located by angles on the plan (fig. 15).

32 This was almost certainly the architect’s intention, since the rest of the cave is bilaterally symmetrical. As can be seen by careful reference to the plan, this central cell remains unfinished; some of the rock between its left pilaster and its left pillar was never completely cut away.

Furthermore the treatment of the back wall of this cell (see fig. 29) suggests that an inner cell was almost certainly intended. Had the cave been

The doubled-and-pillared cells entering on the right and left ends of the rear wall are also characteristic of the late caves at Ajantā, being found in both Caves 21 and 23 and (one assumes) planned for Cave 24. They clearly reflect the developments which took place slightly earlier in Cave 2, where single-celled, but pillared, shrines with yakshas sculpted on their rear walls occupy these same positions.33

In Cave 2, because of the small size of the cave and the relatively great width of these important yaksha shrines, it was brought to completion as originally planned, an additional cell would have been added on either side of this central cell in the right side wall. The space allotted here is admittedly small, and such additional cells would have been very narrow; but one such narrow cell appears in an equivalent position in the left wall, and there is clear evidence (see fig. 30) that a similar cell was started in exactly the same position on the right wall. (In the final, and perhaps hurried, stages of work on this never-finished cave, the architect may have decided not to carry out the excavation of these two minor cells in the right wall; this could account for the somewhat wider dimension of the pillared cell in the center of the right wall.)

In Caves 23 and 24, which were presumably begun shortly after Cave 21 and Ghatotkacha, the doubled-and-pillared cells at these particular positions (i.e., in the sidewalls) are eliminated; perhaps they were found to be superfluous. The Upper Storey of Cave 6 is more like Cave 21 and Ghatotkacha insofar as it includes cells at the center of the sidewalls. Indeed the Upper Storey of Cave 6 was probably begun considerably before Caves 23 and 24; among other factors, the form of its porch pillars suggests that it was begun at approximately the same time as Cave 2 (see Time Chart: fig. 1).

33 It may be more than a mere coincidence that even the lateral (unfinished) cell leading off from the left wall of the left rear cell at Ghatotkacha directly reflects a similar “extra” cell at this position in Ajantā Cave 21.
not feasible to add any additional simple cells in the rear wall of the cave. In Caves 21 and 23, which are also of small dimension, such extra cells were also necessarily excluded. But at Ghatotkacha we have a curious and probably significant situation. Here there was plenty of room to add extra cells in the rear wall, immediately adjacent to the shrine. The fact that it was not done is probably one more piece of evidence suggesting that the architect of Ghatotkacha was rather eclectically and illogically following the plan-precedents established at Ajantā in such a cave as Cave 21, which in so many ways (plan and otherwise) forms a source for his own very derivative conception.

Turning to a consideration of the disposition of the seated Buddha in the shrine at Ghatotkacha, we can see a similar connection with late developments at Ajantā. In Caves 16 and 17 the image was placed in the center of the shrine chamber and one could circumambulate it; in Cave 1 the image still was located at about the central point in its chamber, due to the manner in which it projects out from the rear wall; but in Caves 2 and 21 and at Ghatotkacha the image adheres closely to the rear wall of its chamber. As we have pointed out above, the Buddha in the shrine of Cave 23 and that in the shrine of Cave 24 would certainly have been treated in this same “late” way had these two caves been finished.

The very fact that Caves 21, 23, and 24—the latest caves in our basic Ajantā sequence—were not finished provides another suggestive point of correspondence with the situation at Ghatotkacha, which also was never finished. It would appear, from the evidence we have considered, that all of these unfinished caves, as well as the unfinished Upper Storey of Cave 6 and the unfinished portions of Cave 4, were underway at the same time. We have determined (because Ghatotkacha provides our terminus ante quem), that none of these caves postdates the end of the Vākātaka period. But it is equally evident that this late phase of work at both Ajantā and Ghatotkacha must have taken place quite late in Harihāna’s regnal period, and that this regnal period must have been a long one; for Harihāna was already ruling when the first cave in our basic sequence (Cave 16) was excavated, and other large and elaborate caves such as 17, 1, and 2 had all been begun and brought to completion before work at the site was interrupted.

The evolution of the Mahāyāna caves at Ajantā was obviously a remarkably short one, and the cessation of excavating activity at Ajantā and Ghatotkacha was abrupt and final. There is no evidence that unfinished caves such as 21, 23, 24, 4, Upper 6, or the main vihāra at Ghatotkacha

34 That there was no “ritual” reason to exclude cells at these points, between the shrine and the pillared cells in the rear wall, is proved by the fact that such cells are indeed included in Cave 4. In fact, at Ajantā, with very few exceptions, cells are placed at all points of the interiors where space was available.

35 Cave 24 is so incomplete that only the briefest cuts were made in the rear wall of the cave where the shrine was to be placed. However, we can probably obtain some idea of how the shrine image of Cave 24 might have been disposed by referring to the treatment of the Buddha and his attendants carved in the inner chamber of the small doubled-and-pillared cell facing onto the left side of the court of the cave. As we would anticipate, they adhere closely to the wall surface in which they are carved (see plan).
were ever worked on again; and the same could be said of numerous other Vakätaka caves at Ajantä, Ghatotkacha, and Aurangabad, which we have not discussed here, but which are also unfinished and appear to have been underway at exactly the same moment in time as Ghatotkacha and the contemporaneous excavations of Harishena's later years at Ajantä (see Time Chart: fig. 1).

During its brief flowering, with its monks and artisans and donors and devotees filling its caves, Ajantä must have been a remarkable center of activity. Yet perhaps a sense of doom, of the ending of an era, of a need for haste, was already in the air. Surely the decline—one should better say the traumatic ending—of this startingly short era of Mahâyâna patronage is directly linked to the fate of the Vakätaka dynasty, of which Harishena was the last great king.36 After Harishena's reign, we hear nothing of the Vakätakas as a dominant power in India again; and after Ajantä's final years there are no monuments to Buddhism created in this region or anywhere else in the Deccan for some decades to come.37

36 It should be noted that some scholars believe that a marriage alliance took place between a Vakätaka queen and a Vishnukundin king (Madhavavarman I) in the mid-sixth century. See D. C. Sircar in The classical age, p. 206–207. However this is much disputed. K. A. N. Sastri (ibid., p. 224) and others believe that this alliance took place in the mid-fifth century and that this queen may have been a daughter or a sister of Devasena (the predecessor of Harishena). This matter is discussed at some length in the volume cited, where reference to further writings on the matter is given.

The dramatic cessation of work at Ajantä, occurring at or near the end of Harishena's reign and suggesting the sudden decline and possible disruption of Vakätaka power at that time, would lend support to Sastri's view. If the Vakätakas had indeed remained powerful after Harishena's time, it is curious that there are no other (and more certain) references pertaining to them.

37 We have noted previously (see footnote 3 above) that there is some reason to believe that the Vakätakas continued as a minor power for a short time after Harishena's reign, and that during this brief period sporadic patronage may have continued at Ajantä and related sites. But the heyday of Ajantä had certainly already passed and its doom sealed.

When Buddhism came back into its own in the somewhat later sixth century caves at Aurangabad (Caves 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 9), and in certain of the Buddhist caves at Ellora (Caves 1 through 10), it had already been strongly affected by the burgeoning of Hinduism in this and nearby regions. In a multitude of ways—not least in their plans—these later Buddhist caves reflect the authority of such great Hindu shrines as Jogeshwari, Elephanta, and the Râmâvaram at Ellora.
YAKSHA AND YAKSHĪ IMAGES FROM VIDĪṢĀ

BY PRAMOD CHANDRA

In contrast to Maurya sculpture, most of which consists of large figures carved in the round, the second and first centuries B.C. reveal a decided preference for relief sculpture, as can be seen, for example, in works adorning the stupas at Bharhut and Sāñchī. The earlier Maurya tradition nevertheless continued in the several large, freestanding images of Yakshas and Yakshīs, whose importance in the history of early Indian art has been adequately realized. Of the images so far discovered, the Mathurā region has yielded the largest number, including the colossal Yakshas from Pārkham and Baroda, a seated Yakshi from Jhing-kā-Nagra, and the Yaksha and Yakshi from the village of Noh. In eastern Uttar Pradesh, Yaksha images have been found from Partābgahr and the village of Deoriya, both not far from the present day Allahābād, and at Rāighāt and Sārnāth near Banāras. Yaksha images have also been recovered from other parts of India, notably Dumduma, close to the Udayagiri-Khandagiri caves near Bhubanēswar in Orissa, Amarāvatī in Āndhra Pradesh.

It is apparently the same image whose “discovery” was later announced by C. D. Chaturvedi, Yaksha and wife from Bharatpur, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1947, pp. 151, pl. 15. Professor J. LeRoy Davidson, who has recently conducted excavations at the site of Noh very kindly informs me of the discovery of yet another Yaksha image, unfortunately headless, carved in the typical spotted red sandstone of Mathurā.

For the Partābgahr image, which is now headless, see S. C. Kala, Sculptures in the Allahābād Municipal Museum, Allahābād, 1946, p. 21; the Dooriya image is reproduced in Ananda Coomaraswamy, Origin of the Buddha image, Art Bulletin, vol. 9, 1927, fig. 47; the Sārnāth Yaksha, also headless, is of the Atlantes type and is reproduced in F. E. Oertel, Excavations at Sārnāth, ASIAR, 1904–05, p. 86. The Rāighāt image actually consists of three dwarf Yakshas, back to back, with arms raised above the head as if to support a weight overhead. For a brief discussion see V. S. Agrawala, Four new Yaksha statues, JUPIS, vol. 24–25, 1951–52, pp. 189–190.


4 C. Sivaramamurti, Amarāvatī sculptures in the Madras Government Museum, Madras, 1942, pl. 18, figs. 2, 3.
and Pitalkhora in Maharashtra. The latest in point of time are the Yaksha Manibhadra from Pawāya and the lower half of a Yaksha image now in the National Museum of India, in all probability found not far from Bombay.

The three Yaksha and Yakshi images we propose to discuss here all come from the ancient city of Vidiśā (modern Besnagar-Bhilsā), a little distance from Sāndhī, and one of the most active centers of Indian art. As early as 1875 Cunningham had noticed a “colossal female statue” which he considered to be unique and ascribed to the age of the Bhārhut sculptures on the basis, among other things, of the “decency of its clothing.” This image, later transferred to the Indian Museum, Calcutta, is well known as the Besnagar Yakshi (fig. 1) and remained for a long time the only known image of its type from the Vidiśā region. It was only in 1945 that another image was discovered, with only the head and the torso preserved, and now housed in the Gwalior Museum (figs. 2, 3). As chance would have it, only a few years later two more images (figs. 4, 5, 6), this time complete and in a comparatively good state of preservation, came to light due to a fall in the level of the Betwa River in the course of an unduly hot and long summer. These sculptures are of the greatest importance but, surprisingly enough, remain unpublished. It is these three images that form the subject matter of the present article.

To take the Yakshi torso first (figs. 2, 3), though it is somewhat weather-worn and much the worse for vandalism, with a deep gash where the nose once was, it is sufficiently well preserved for us to realize that it must have been an image of the most exceptional quality. The posture is frontal, the face ovaloid, and the breasts as well as the body below the neck covered with twelve concentric strings of beads. Each of these has a large cylindrical spacer in the center, gradually increasing in size with every succeeding string. Over these massed necklaces is thrown a longer necklace reaching to a little below the breasts and consisting of eight strands secured by two rectangular clasps. The distended earlobes are adorned with earrings but their shape is no longer clear. The forehead is undecorated, with no circular ornamental plaques as we often see at Bhārhut, but the hair is covered with a plain cloth that conceals the back of the head and the nape of the neck entirely. Over it is flung a decorated band that passes over the shoulders and is looped over the back. The two heavy pigtailed are seen to emerge from below this headdress.

The image is clearly a work belonging to the pre-Mauryan style discovered at Bhilsā, Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, vol. 8, 1945, pp. 20–22.
to the early Indian school of sculpture, the ornaments both of the head and the neck, in particular, recalling motifs seen at Bhärhut. The form of the image, however, is considerably more advanced, the modeling full and sensitive, in striking contrast to the more generalized and linear work characteristic of the latter site. This is especially noticeable in the gentler contour of the face, with its soft, swelling form, and in the more voluminous treatment of the longer necklace, which does not adhere stiffly to the body but falls gracefully over the breasts, carrying its own weight. The same perception of the weightiness of objects is to be seen in the bands of the headdress which swing rhythmically in bold downward sweeps (fig. 3). The back of the head, conceived in pure and austere terms, is enlivened by subtle modulation, depriving it of any inertness. The work as a whole betrays the hand of a skilled master and is endowed with a freshness and vitality that is often missing in the average products of the workshop.

The characteristics noted above would suggest that the Yakshī torso is later than Bhärhut or, more properly, the neighbouring Stūpa II at Sāñchi, which is of about the same date. As a matter of fact, the soft contour we notice in the Yakshī torso may have its roots in the latter site, where it is distinctly present, in contrast to the linear tension of Bhärhut.

At the same time it should be equally obvious that the Yakshī torso must be earlier than the torana sculptures of Stūpa I at Sāñchi or the railing fragments recovered from Vidiṣā itself. The female figures at Sāñchi are not decorated with numerous necklaces that we see in this image, wearing usually a single strand of beads (Marshall, Monuments of Sāñchi, pl. 25), and the flat and heavy embroidered bands of the headdress have given place to braided ropelike strands (ibid., pl. 31). What is more important, the Yakshī image lacks the fleshiness and the almost overpowering sensuousness that is so distinct a feature of Sāñchi. Even in its present state of preservation we can notice the stiff outline of the waist, and of the trunks and the limbs, not outlined with the sharp cut and vertical chiselling of Bhärhut." In spite of this observation he surprisingly enough considers Bhärhut to be later than Stūpa II at Sāñchi. Actually there is much evidence that would seem to indicate that the opposite is the case, most notably a slightly advanced sense of perspective and generally more symmetrical composition. Not to labor a point, in the present state of our knowledge it is best to regard sculpture from Bhärhut and Sāñchi Stūpa II as roughly contemporary, the differences to be explained as local peculiarities.

12 Cf. Ananda Coomaraswamy, La sculpture de Bhärhut, Paris, 1916, figs. 44, 49. We may note incidentally that at Bhärhut the shorter necklace is always seen over the longer one, while here the reverse is true.

13 Discussing the sculpture of Stūpa II at Sāñchi, Sir John Marshall, Monuments of Sāñchi, London, 1940, p. 101, notes that the contours have been “softened and moulded to the rounded form of the trunks and the limbs, not outlined with the sharp cut and vertical chiselling of Bhärhut.”
the chest is covered with heavy ornament, as though the artist were at pains to conceal the voluptuous flesh that the Sānchī sculptor was only too eager to reveal. It would thus be appropriate to place the Yakshi torso between Bharhut and Sānchī Stūpa II on one side, and Sānchī Stūpa I on the other, marking an intermediate stage of development between the two. If we accept a date of about the middle of the first century B.C. for Sānchī Stūpa I, I would suggest a date in the second half of the second century B.C. as approximately correct. It is neither possible nor desirable to be more precise in the present state of our knowledge.

The colossal Yaksha and Yakshi images now standing outside the compound wall of the State Guest House at Vidiśa (Bhilsa) were discovered a few years after the Yakshi torso and constitute a unique group. The figure of the Yaksha (figs. 4 and 5) in particular, is a masterful work and although a little water-worn, is in a comparatively excellent state of preservation; the only damage of any consequence is a missing left hand, broken off at the wrist. The posture is erect and frontal, the weight of the body being evenly thrown on both legs. The dhotī is secured at the waist, just below the gently protruding belly, by a massive rope-like girdle. It is knotted in the center, and the two ends which terminate in knobbed tassels are allowed to fall over the legs. The dhotī itself reaches to the calves, clinging to the right leg so as to reveal its shape clearly, and falls over the left leg in two narrow, pleated projections. A third projection, apparently the end of the dhotī drooping from behind, touches the ground between the feet of the image. The torso is crossed by a gathered scarf, which also crosses the back, and falls almost to the knees after forming a knot just over the left shoulder. The necklace, forming a broad loop over the chest, is secured behind by a large stud, while a smaller rosette can be seen in front. Its two sides are connected by a thick upper strand and a row of three beads lower down, the corners being decorated by two rearing animals, too worn to be recognizable. The shoulders are heavy and broad, the clenched fist of the left hand touches the thigh where it holds a large bag, while the right hand is broken. The armlets consist of a simple band surmounted by what may be called a fleur-de-lis motif, made up of a central petal flanked by two petals with bent tips. The forearm is decorated by five bracelets, each consisting of cylindrical beads alternating with two rosettes. The neck is short and the nose of the great head is slightly damaged but must have once been hooked and powerful. The eyes bulge outward from the sockets beneath shadowed brows. Heavy spiral earrings are inserted in the lobes of both ears. The ear itself is of peculiar shape, the top portion being animal rather than human. The hair is gathered up and tied into a massive but simple lateral knot, placed slightly to the left side of the forehead.

The Yakshi (fig. 6), which was found together with the Yaksha, is appropriately enough of less height and a little more the worse for wear, particularly in the face and

15 We can be reasonably sure that it did not hold a chaurī, the outline of the break precluding any such possibility, nor do we see any fly whisk strands on the shoulder. The Parkham Yaksha also did not hold a chaurī though a bag is present.

16 It is this top knot that finally evolves into the kaparda-like ushnīsa of the Buddha. See J. E.
Fig. 1.—Yakshi from Vidisa. Indian Museum, Calcutta.

Fig. 2.—Yakshi from Vidisa (rear view of Figure 2). Gwalior Museum.

Fig. 3.—Yakshi from Vidisa (rear view of Figure 2). Gwalior Museum.
Fig. 4. — Yaksha from Vidisā. State Guest House, Vidiśā.

Fig. 5. — Yaksha from Vidisā (rear view of Figure 4). State Guest House, Vidiśā.

Fig. 6. — Yakshi from Vidisā. State Guest House, Vidiśā.
The image is also broken at the knees and the waist and has been roughly reconstructed, which may account for some of the awkwardness of posture. The legs are slightly apart, the left hand rests on the thigh holding what is apparently a mango branch with leaves and numerous fruits, while the right hand, clenched near the breast, holds an object that is not recognizable due to damage. It does not, however, appear to be a chauri, for though the lower part resembles a handle, the shape of the break would seem to be too small for a whisk, nor do we see hair strands on the shoulder. The rows of bracelets, each consisting of flower-and-bead motif, are identical with those of the companion Yaksha. The lower garment, which is quite diaphanous, is secured at the waist by a girdle consisting of several strands of beads. A sash is also tied loosely over the waist and knotted in the center, the loose ends falling over the beaded girdle and the thigh. Between the legs must have been the narrow projection of cloth with conventional folds, its lower end, which touches the ground between the feet, being still visible behind the heel. The Yakshi also wears an ornamental piece (parvastaka) between the legs which has broken off at the level of the knees, but which must have originally touched the ground to judge from the stump visible between the toes. The feet are adorned with several rows of beaded anklets fitting tightly to the legs, while over them is a heavier circular anklet, worn more loosely and adorned with a boss to the side. The armlets are simple bands, with a circular medallion in the center. The necklace is secured by a large stud in the form of a rosette seen over the left shoulder. It falls between the breasts, the two sides connected by several strands and beaded loops which cover the chest as though by a net. Among these one can clearly discern a loop with circular pendants near the neck and below it a large bead flanked by two other ornaments of peculiar shape, consisting of an inverted prong surmounted by a round bead. The necklace and the waist are marked by conventional folds of flesh and the face is rounder than that of the Yakshi torso discussed previously. It is much abraded but the protruding eyes must have originally been like those of the companion Yaksha. The distended ear lobes seem to be adorned with bead-shaped earrings, and the hair is combed back in strands and braided into a large pigtail falling over the shoulder. It is decorated by a circular band of cloth draped over the forehead and reaching barely to the nape of the neck. In addition, the line of the hair on the forehead and over the ears is bordered by a thick braid.

Beads of this type occur frequently in early Indian sculpture but hardly ever in the torana sculptures of Sānḥi I and III or later works. For examples see Coomaraswamy, *La sculpture de Bhārhat*, figs. 44, 47; N. G. Majumdar, *A guide to the sculptures in the Indian Museum, Calcutta*, Part I, Delhi, 1937, p. 86, which is a Yakshi image found at Sānḥi but in a style resembling the Bodhgaya railing; V. S. Agrawala, *A New Yakshi Image*, JUPHIS, 1951–52, pp. 190–191, where the top bead resembles a human head, and M. N. Deshpande, *Rock-cut caves at Pitalkhōrā*, pl. LVI, p. 81, where we see a similar ornament.
that swings downward to form a loop over the ears and falls over the pigtails. It is clearly visible over the left ear but damaged and indistinct on the right.

The image immediately puts us in mind of not so much the Yakṣī torso discussed previously (fig. 2) but the well-known Besnagar Yakṣī of the Indian Museum at Calcutta (cf. fig. 1). The latter image is in a much poorer state of preservation, both the hands being missing and the face almost totally worn out, but the similarities between the two, in spite of the few differences, are quite striking. The rounded shape of the face and the netlike treatment of the necklace, including the peculiar pronged beads, are identical, as is the frontal posture and stiff form that has begun to wake only recently to the sensuousness of living flesh. The Indian Museum Yakṣī is more lavishly adorned, with necklaces crossed at the front and back (svavarṇa-vaikākshaka), but it lacks the ornamental paryāstaka between the legs that we see in figure 6. The edges of the dhotī also flare out gently at the knees, but these features do not in any way affect the essential identity of style. Here again the priority of the two images to the torana sculptures of Stūpas I and II at Sāñcī is apparent, for they lack totally its free plastic articulation, even though the presence of large studs at the shoulder reminds us of motifs that occur there. Nor can they be much later than the Yakṣī torso previously discussed (fig. 2) in spite of the undeniably archaic nature of the several rows of beaded necklaces. One would thus be on safer grounds in assigning the two images to the same period as the Yakṣī torso, between the earlier style as represented by Bhārhat and Sāñcī Stūpa II and the later style as seen in Stūpas I and III at the same site.

A date similar to that of the above images is suggested for the Yakṣa by virtue of its close association with the Yakṣī and this surmise is confirmed by the style. If we compare it to Bhārhat, or more appropriately to the great Yakṣa from Pārkhām, also a free-standing image, we find instead of the more emphatically stiff and cubical form of the latter the beginning of a process of relaxation, so that a certain warmth, however mild, begins to suffuse the modeling. The prominent belly of the Vidiṣā Yakṣa, for example, is not superimposed upon the body abruptly, meeting the girdle almost vertically; instead there is a trace of plasticity and a feeling for the soft and resilient surface of the flesh, however hesitating, begins to replace the tenser contours of Pārkhām. Even the various ornaments, noticeably the necklace and the girdle, participate in this evolution.

It is also interesting to note that though several ornaments on the Vidiṣā Yakṣa survive from the period of Bhārhat, notably the fleur-de-lis armlets, the spiral earrings, the rows of bracelets, and the girdle (even though these are more voluminously rendered), the prominent projection of cloth between the legs with several rows of stylized pleats seen at Bhārhat and also in the Pārkhām Yakṣa are not found here; instead the dhotī falls in two angular points over the legs, a feature also found in the male figure at the entrance doorway.

18 The Vidiṣā Yakṣa is thus much closer to the Yakṣa from Noh, where a similar sense of plastic vision is in evidence. For a reproduction see Chaturvedi, Yakṣa and wife from Bharatpur, pl. 15.
to Cave IV at Pitalkhôra.\textsuperscript{19} Other motifs common to Pitalkhôra and the Vidiśä Yaksha are the heavy sarpakundalas (which seem to be a favorite of Yaksha figures, occurring at Parkham, Baroda, and Noh) and the fleur-de-lis armlets which are shared with Bhärhut. One iconographical feature we find in the Vidiśä Yaksha seems to be particularly preferred by the Western Indian sculptor, namely the šāṅkukäraṇa to which we have drawn attention earlier. Ears of this type occur at Pitalkhôra and in the large surviving head on the façade of the chaitya at Kondâne,\textsuperscript{20} and emphasize influences from Western India in the Mâlwa region at this period. These are even more obvious if we consider the close similarity of the Yakshas on the Western Gateway of Sâñêhî and the Yaksha from Pitalkhôra,\textsuperscript{21} the former being obviously inspired by the latter, even in details like the šāṅkukäraṇa. Nor should this be a matter for surprise, for the presence of artisans of the Sâtvâhana king Sûri Sâtakarnî is attested to by a well known inscription at Sâñêhî.\textsuperscript{22}

On grounds of style thus, the Vidiśä Yaksha would fall in the same period as the Yakshî images, being later than Bhärhut, Sâñêhî II, and Pitalkhôra, the form not quite possessing linear stress to the degree seen in sculpture at these sites, nor having the ease and grace of the sculptures at Sâñêhî I and III. Other sculptures from Mâlwa that could also be assigned to this time would be the dwarf caryatid Yakshas now in the Sâñêhî Museum,\textsuperscript{23} the kalpadruma capital of the Indian Museum found in close proximity to the Besnagar Yakshî,\textsuperscript{24} and the elephant with headless rider now in the National Museum of India at New Delhi.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{19} Cf. Deshpande, Rock-cut caves at Pitalkhôra, pl. LVIIa. In North India I can recall comparable treatment of the dhoti only in a railing figure from Bodhgayâ depicting perhaps a Yaksha: see Coomaraswamy, La sculpture de Bodhgayâ, pl. XXXIX.

\textsuperscript{20} Cf. Deshpande, Rock-cut caves at Pitalkhôra, pls. LVI, LVIIa, and G. Yazdani, History of the Deccan, Oxford, 1952, vol. I, pt. 8, pls. 4, 5. The only example of this kind of ear that I can trace outside of Western India is in a fragmentary yakshî.\textsuperscript{21} Cf. Deshpande, Rock-cut caves at Pitalkhôra, pl. LVIIa, and Marshall, Monuments of Sâñêhî, pl. 57.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid. p. 342.

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., pl. 104 d, f.

\textsuperscript{24} Cunningham, ASR, vol. 10, p. 44.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 40.
DIAPER BACKGROUNDS ON CHINESE CARVED LACQUER

BY SIR HARRY GARNER

INTRODUCTION

The Chinese carved lacquers of the early 15th century form a group which is consistent and easily recognizable. It is in fact the only early group about which there are no serious differences of opinion among authorities in China, Japan, and Western countries. It provides, therefore, the most satisfactory starting point for the study of carved lacquer. But we are at present completely in the dark as to how these lacquers were developed. As in so many of the decorative arts of China, there seems to have been a burst of activity which rapidly brought the carved lacquer to a higher standard of design and execution than was achieved at any other time. For parallels we need only refer to two contemporary developments, the porcelain of Ching-tê Chên 景德鎮, with its magnificently painted decoration in underglaze blue and red, and the cloisonné enamels.

All these artifacts of the early Ming dynasty show signs of having been made under close supervision from the original conception of the design to the final stages of manufacture. In lacquer, F. Low-Beer has suggested that, in the pieces decorated with dragons, cartoons were issued to the craftsmen; and he has pointed out the close similarity between the dragons in carved and inlaid pieces of lacquer.1 There can be no doubt, to those who have studied close-


ly the pieces decorated with landscapes, that cartoons were similarly available to the carvers of these pieces, although they seem sometimes to have been cartoons of details, such as clouds, rocks, trees, and pavilions rather than of the whole scene. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the first studies of these pieces the conclusion was reached that they were all made in official factories working exclusively for the imperial court.2 This conclusion seemed to me, however, to be too sweeping, and I suggested that lacquer of good quality was made throughout the 14th and 15th centuries at a number of factories spread over a wide area of China.3 A more recent and closer study of the "official" early 15th-century group reveals that even here there are differences which suggest that some of the pieces were made in minor factories in which some relaxation of official control had taken place.

Three very similar 15th-century boxes of carved lacquer decorated with sprays of pine, bamboo, and plum (the "three friends") on the top and with floral borders have been closely studied by Low-Beer.4 He concludes that the finest of the three, belonging to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, was made in an imperial factory in the early 15th century, while the other two boxes, made round about the

2 Ibid., p. 145.
middle of the century, may have been made at non-imperial factories.

In recent years studies have been made in China of the early Ming records in order to trace the industrial relationships of employers and workmen. The results of the studies are now being digested and supplemented by western workers and a much clearer picture of how the manufacture of lacquer, porcelain, and other materials was organized in the 15th century is beginning to emerge. The workmen were bound by a feudal system, similar to that of contemporary Europe, under which they were compelled to devote part of their labor to the state or to an individual overlord. Although as a general rule they were working in official factories, they were allowed to work on their own when official demands slackened. Under these circumstances it is easy to see how the workmen could carry away from the official factories a tradition of design and execution which would be relaxed, in varying degrees, according to the individuality of the craftsman and the requirements of the patron. If we look at the lacquers of the 15th century in relation to this background we can see that some pieces, while generally conforming to a regular pattern, show deviations in certain details.

The objective of this paper is to deal with one aspect only of the characteristics of carved lacquer, the diaper backgrounds. The paper concentrates mainly on the use of diapers in landscapes, although diapers used in floral and other designs are also studied. As these designs originated in the 15th century or a little earlier, it is natural that a large part of the paper should be devoted to this period, but the development of the later diapers down to the time of the Ch‘ing dynasty is examined fairly completely. In presenting the facts about the diapers some assumptions are made on the dates of the pieces, but I have tried to keep within the usually accepted assumptions. An attempt to say precisely which diapers were used in particular periods would be far beyond the scope of the present paper and would in fact need a complete treatise on carved lacquer; for of course the diapers form only one, although an important one, of the factors that arise when one makes assessments of dates.

A short section is given on the way in which the diapers may have originated, with brief references to examples in paintings, wood engravings, and architectural details. A much more thorough study is needed than I feel qualified to give, and this will call for a critical assessment of the literary evidence, often derived from later editions in which the details of the original work may have been considerably modified.

The final part of the paper deals with the dating of carved lacquer, with particular reference to that ascribed to the 14th and 15th centuries. As compared with the earlier part of the paper, which deals with facts which I hope are reliable and fairly comprehensive, this latter part is conje-

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5 Ting I丁易, Ming tai t‘e-wu cheng-chi 明代特務政策 (Government by secret police methods in the Ming dynasty), 1951; Ch‘en Shih-ch‘i 陳詩啓, Ming tai kuan-shou-kung-yeh ti yen-chiu 明代官手工業的研究 (The official handicraft industries of the Ming dynasty), 1958.

tural. The various alternative possibilities in the development of the diapers are presented and other stylistic points have been considered. The conclusions reached must be regarded as tentative. This conjectural approach seems to be worthwhile, because the heart of the problem of identification of carved lacquer lies in this period and little progress can be expected generally until it is better understood.

THE DIAPERS ON LANDSCAPE DESIGNS

The use of special diaper backgrounds to delineate air, water, and land in carved landscapes on lacquer is familiar to students of the subject. Low-Beer has drawn attention to the diapers, particularly those of the 15th century. They are well worth further study, not only for their intrinsic interest but also because the designs may enable us to assign the pieces of carved lacquer to their different periods. In the first half of the 15th century the backgrounds conform closely to specific patterns and the three diapers are always related to each other in the same way. A typical piece of this period, a box belonging to Mr. Marcus Linell, is shown in figure A. The air and water diapers, at the same low level of carving, are separated by a horizontal line. They are carved just above the band of yellow lacquer that is applied to all 15th-century pieces in this group. The land diaper, at a higher level, is separated from the water by a fence or palisade. The design of this fence and many other features conform to standard patterns.

I have mentioned that there is evidence to support the view that the carved lacquer of the early 15th-century was made under close supervision and have referred to two examples of this, the design of dragons and the layout of certain details in landscapes. The floral borders that appear on many of the pieces suggest a similar control. Generally the flowers are arranged in pairs, sometimes to form a continuous scroll like those found in many blue and white dishes of the period, and sometimes in separate pairs. Although there are sometimes variations from a set pattern, we generally find the same order of flowers in the upper and lower parts of boxes, and in some dishes the order of the flowers on the upper and lower surfaces is the same. But surprisingly, in the dishes the order is reversed, i.e., a clockwise arrangement on the upper surface is associated with a counterclockwise arrangement on the lower. This suggests that transfers were used which, for some reason or other, were inverted when used to lay out the design for the lower surface.

The rapid development of carved lacquer in the Yuan and early Ming dynasties presents an interesting problem. The Ko ku yao lun suggests that carved lacquer was first made in the Yuan dynasty, and it is possible that the introduction of the diaper backgrounds owed something to Western ideas brought to China by the Mongols. This question is discussed briefly

7 F. Low-Beer, Chinese lacquer of the early fifteenth century.
8 This 15th-century feature, which rarely occurs in the later lacquers, is of considerable importance in the history of carved lacquers. It is discussed in some detail later.

later in the paper, but it needs more study than I have been able to give to it.  

Although we have no direct knowledge, at present, of the methods used by the lacquer workers of the 15th century in laying out their designs, we can see that all the background diapers are based on trellis patterns of intersecting lines. In the land diapers the lines are set at right angles and the design is based on eight-pointed stars, enclosed in a series of double squares which are formed with their sides set at 45 degrees to the horizon (fig. B). The water diaper, in the form of waves, is based on two sets of lines cutting at an acute angle (fig. C). The air diaper, when viewed on the normal scale (fig. A) consists of what appear to be simple “stars” set on intersecting lines that cut at an acute angle. The apparent simplicity of the design of the air diaper is misleading, as we shall see later. The air diaper is shown on an enlarged scale in figure D.

Some idea of the methods adopted by the Chinese lacquer carvers can be gleaned from an unfinished piece made in the eighteenth century (fig. E). This elaborate piece of finely carved lacquer, in the form of a boat with dragons and waves depicted on the hull and fitted with numerous compartments in the superstructure, is complete except for the upper decks, which are left undecorated. It was evidently intended to cover these with incised designs of inlaid lacquer. The framework of the design, lightly incised, with a small part of the incised design finished but not filled in, is shown in figure F. No doubt similar methods were used in the 15th century for laying out the designs of carved lacquer, but we are not likely to be so fortunate as to come across direct evidence such as we have in this 18th-century piece.

Before we consider the diapers in detail, it will be useful to survey broadly how the designs of the diaper were developed between the 15th and 18th centuries. We shall then consider the development of the air, water, and land diapers separately, and finally try to draw some conclusions by bringing the evidence from all three types together.

A feature of the lacquer of the first half of the 15th century is that the three diapers are almost always confined to landscape designs. The only exception is in the land diaper, which is used on a few occasions to replace the normal plain yellow ground in designs of flower sprays, dragons, and phoenixes. Variants of the land diaper are also used for the centers of flowers. Land diapers in landscapes are also used to decorate the inside walls of pavilions as well as the ground.

The strict use of the diapers for the delineation of air, water, and land began to be relaxed by the end of the 15th century. The dating of carved lacquer made during the late 15th and early 16th centuries is not easy, in the absence of reliable dated examples, but there are a number of pieces which we may ascribe to the period between the end of the reign of Hsiian-tê (1435) and the ascent to the throne of Chia-ching (1522), although we cannot date

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10 See John Pope, An early Ming porcelain in Muslim style, Aus der Welt der Islamischen Kunst, Festschrift für Ernst Kühnel, Berlin, 1959, for connections between eight-pointed stars in early Ming porcelain and Near Eastern designs.

11 Arts of the Ming dynasty, No. 239.


13 Arts of the Ming dynasty, No. 236. This box is now in the collection of H.M. The King of Sweden.
them at all accurately. Some of the landscape pieces use the three diapers, not very much modified, in the normal way, but we soon find 16th-century pieces in which the number of diapers is reduced to two and, in some cases, one, which may be air, water, or land, used as a background for the whole landscape. The diapers were also used in great variety as backgrounds for floral subjects. Indeed the opening up of the floral designs, so close-knit in the 15th century, made the plain yellow ground impracticable and forced the designers of carved lacquer to cover the large areas of background exposed with decoration. Similar changes in design are to be found in the decoration of cloisonné enamels. 

The imperial Chia-ching and Wan-li carved lacquers were confined, in the main, to the delineation of dragons, phoenixes, emblems, and similar subjects and only rarely to landscapes. The few known examples, although they show considerable differences in detail, make use of the three diapers in the conventional sense. The non-imperial lacquers of the 16th and early 17th centuries, on the other hand, are often decorated with landscapes, but it is rare to find the three diapers represented in their correct arrangement. There are even pieces in which the land diaper appears at the top of the picture and the air diaper at the bottom. The significance of the representation of air, water, and land has been entirely lost.

THE AIR DIAPERS

Let us now look at the air diapers and start by considering the early 15th-cen-

tury design shown in the enlarged detail of figure D. A close study shows that this diaper is by far the most complex of all the diapers and the question of why such a design should have been chosen is a fascinating one. The first point which emerges from the study is the surprising fact that the lines of stars lying approximately northwest to southeast are steeper than those lying from northeast to southwest. The lack of symmetry does not seem to offend the eye and indeed does not seem to have been noticed by previous students of the diapers. In fact, the slope to the left is half again as steep as that to the right. The detailed sketch in figure 1 shows more clearly than the photograph of figure D how the diaper is constructed. The lines in the sketch represent the ridges of the carving which are, basically, closely spaced horizontal lines and the stars are formed where the lines turn downward and intersect or touch. A simple way of describing the diaper is in terms of the number of horizontal lines, or ridges, which have to be crossed in moving from one star to the next. In figure 1 six lines have to be crossed in moving from one star to the next above it on the left (e.g., from A to B) and four in moving to the next above it on the right.

(from A to C). I have called this diaper the "six-four air diaper." On some of the early 15th-century pieces the slopes are reversed, being steeper to the right, and I have called the diapers on these pieces the "four-six air diaper." Of the dozen or so early 15th-century pieces recorded with landscape designs about half belong to one class and half to the other.

There must be a reason for the adoption of this complicated unsymmetrical arrangement, but it has not, so far, emerged. It is quite possible, as we see in the air diaper of a 16th-century piece (the box shown in fig. G), to get a simple symmetrical arrangement of stars which seems to be as effective as the asymmetrical one adopted in the earlier lacquers. This diaper may be called the "four-four air diaper," in the terminology that has been adopted. A possible reason for the adoption of the complicated design may be that the aim of the designer was to arrange the threads, represented by the ridges of the carving, to run continuously from the top to bottom of the picture. We shall see, later on, that a number of different types of air diaper were developed in the 16th century and later, but we may anticipate by saying that it is not possible to get a satisfactory symmetrical air diaper with continuous threads. Is it possible that the development of the earliest forms of air diaper owes something to textile weaving?

The complication of the air diaper can perhaps best be realized if the reader poses himself the problem of how he would set about constructing it. The water and land diapers are straightforward. The basic intersecting lines are simple to construct, and once they are drawn on the smooth surface of the uncarved lacquer, any skillful carver could be expected to fill in the details, the waves of the water diaper and the eight-pointed stars in double squares of the land diaper, without much difficulty. A glance at figure F indicates how the craftsman would set about his task. In the air diaper there are no such simple methods. It would seem that the carver would need the closely spaced horizontal lines as well as the diagonal intersecting lines before he could start carving. He would then have to follow the design carefully, thread by thread. It is remarkable that, in spite of the complexity of the design, errors of carving are very rare, even near the edges of the piece or where some detail of the landscape encroaches on the diaper. The craftsmen must have been under close supervision for this accuracy to have been achieved.

Let us now look at some other types of air diaper. The first variant that seems to occur is similar to the early diaper in every respect except that the lines do not intersect. This variant is shown in figure 2. The lines, as before, run continuously from top

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15 Reference has been made to the possible inversion of transfers in the laying out of the designs of floral borders on the undersides of dishes. It looks as though a similar inversion may have taken place in the layout of some of the diapers.
to bottom. I shall call this the “non-intersecting type” to distinguish it from the earlier “intersecting type.” As far as we can tell at present, this type of diaper had become established by the first half of the 16th century.

The symmetrical arrangement followed in the air diapers of most of the later lacquers is of the form shown in the box of figure G, which belongs to the late 16th century. A detail of the air diaper is shown in figure H and the diaper is shown diagrammatically in figure 3. It is based on double ovals, the outer of which intersect or touch each other. In the more common alternative form the ovals are replaced by non-intersecting rectangles as shown in figure 4. This is the type of diaper invariably found in the Ch'ing lacquers. Both these arrangements, being based on closed figures, give no continuity of line from top to bottom of the picture, such as there is in the earlier diapers. If an attempt is made to obtain continuity of line with a symmetrical diaper we find that an unattractive arrangement is obtained (fig. 5). This can be broken down to a closed loop form, consisting of single ovals (fig. 6) and this form is sometimes found in lacquer, although rarely. It is not as effective as the arrangement of double ovals or double rectangles shown in figures 3 and 4, by far the most common diapers in the later lacquers.

If the tentative suggestion given for the adoption of the six-four or four-six diapers is correct, we can see why the symmetrical arrangements were not adopted in the earlier lacquers. We may, however, ask ourselves whether there are any simpler arrangements which would enable the pattern to be constructed by continuous threads. Leaving on one side the symmetrical arrangements which could be produced by the combinations two-two, three-three, and four-four, we find that the only
combinations simpler than the six-four are the three-two, four-two, and four-three. These are shown diagrammatically in figures 7, 8, and 9. The first two show the stars too closely spaced to be effective, especially in the vertical direction, while in the four-three diaper the threads turn back, traveling sometimes upward and sometimes downward. The same characteristics also occur in the five-four arrangement (not reproduced), but this diaper is actually more complicated than the standard six-four diaper. No diapers of these intermediate types have been found in Chinese lacquer. They are quite hypothetical. All the air diapers that have been examined, more than one hundred, fall into two categories, the six-four type (including the four-six) on the one hand, and the symmetrical type on the other, except for a few irregular diapers which seem to have been made with no definite pattern in the mind of the carver. We shall discuss the small group with irregular diapers later.

While there is only one form, fundamentally, of the six-four diaper—the differences between the diapers of figures 1 and 2 are merely in detail—there are many varieties of the symmetrical air diaper. By far the most common is the non-intersecting type shown in figure 4. Occasionally diapers based on the three-three or two-two arrangements are used, often with additional horizontal lines to spread out the stars in a vertical direction. Four of the more unusual arrangements are shown in figures 10 to 13. The first (fig. 10) is based on a key-fret design and the second (fig. 11) is an unusual four-four diaper. The diaper in figure 12 is basically a two-two arrangement with additional horizontal lines, while that of figure 13 is a five-five design in which some of the threads run from top to bottom. In this the conglomeration of lines has removed any resemblance to the original diapers, with simple stars set along diagonal lines. There are many other variants of the symmetrical air
diaper, particularly in pieces belonging to the late Ming and Ch'ing dynasties.

The accuracy of construction of the air diapers of the early 15th century has already been commented on. The same high standard was not often maintained in the later Ming pieces, although we note, in the imperial pieces of the 18th century, which were no doubt made under close supervision in the imperial factories, a very high standard once again. The inaccuracies, generally confined to the edges of the design or where the carver is cramped by the contiguity of details of the landscape, are not generally very serious. But there is a small group of pieces in which the air diaper is carved in a markedly casual manner, with no attempt to conform to a regular pattern. This group includes the famous David dish bearing an incised date corresponding to 1489. A detail of the air diaper is shown in figure 1. The dark patches, formed where the diaper has broken away, exposing the dark green ground, tend to confuse the eye, but the irregularities in the diaper are very evident. The three other pieces in the group so far recorded, all of which have similar air diapers, are a round box in which the treatment of the landscape as well as the diapers is very close to that of the dish, an octagonal box with landscapes around the sloping and vertical sides as well as on the top, and a round box, also with landscapes on the borders as well as on the central panel. The border scenes on this box are inscribed with eight poems. We shall see that similar irregularities occur in the other diapers and the group will call for further discussion later.

THE WATER DIAPERS

The water diapers, as we might expect, are all based on representations of waves. The diaper of the early 15th century has already been described and is shown in figure C. This type of water diaper, of "humped wave" form, in its many var-

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16 *Arts of the Ming dynasty*, No. 244.
18 Ibid., pls. 41, 42.
19 *Arts of the Ming dynasty*, No. 245.
SIR HARRY GARNER

The method of construction of the 15th century is shown in figure 14a. It is based on continuous wavy lines containing the elements of parallel curved lines that constitute single waves. In a variant, found in Wan-li imperial wares, the containing wavy lines are replaced by narrow bands (fig. 14b). Sometimes the boundary lines are straight, as in figure 14c. This is the most usual form in the Ch'ing lacquers. The basic trellis lines, which intersect acutely in the early lacquers, intersect at right angles in the later ones and the resemblance to waves has almost disappeared (fig. 15a). In a few of the coarser pieces the wave is inverted, as in figure 15b.

Reference has been made to the much freer treatment of the waves in the small group of pieces typified by the David dish. The use of construction lines has been discarded and each wave is laid down separately by the carver (fig. 1). This kind of treatment is rarely found in the lacquer of the Ming dynasty, although it was revived in a group of exceptionally fine large panels of the Ch'ing dynasty, evidently carved for some special occasions and entrusted to a group of highly skilled artists. In most Ch'ing pieces, however, the method of construction of the water diaper is just as closely controlled as it is in the Ming lacquers.

There is another quite different type of water diaper which, instead of being formed of humped waves, is of eddying form, based on a framework of horizontal lines. A typical example is found in a black and red dish, formerly in the David Collection and now in the British Museum,\(^{20}\) which

\(^{20}\) *Arts of the Ming dynasty*, No. 242.
probably belongs to the late 15th century (fig. K). The diaper is shown in detail in figure N and a diagrammatical representation is given in figure 16. The diaper only occurs rarely, but it is of great importance because it is found in pieces which claim to belong to the 14th century. The most important of these is a small box recently excavated from a Yüan tomb. Full particulars of this box are not yet available and the color photograph provided by the Chinese Government in postcard form is not clear enough for all the details to be visible. The water diaper, however, is sufficiently clearly defined for us to be able to say that it is similar to that of figure K. A number of small boxes, some with the mark of Chang Ch'êng 張成, one of the famous Yüan lacquerers, also has this type of diaper, treated more freely than in figure 16. It also occurs on some pieces belonging to the 17th century, including one in which it appears as an air diaper of the usual humped form. Indeed the form of the diaper is close to that used to depict clouds in blue and white porcelain of the middle of the 17th century.

Fig. 17

A third form of the water diaper, which occurs in Chia-ching lacquer, is shown in figure 17. It is fitted into a square framework like the land diapers, but the elements are clearly based on waves. It is generally found in the decoration of fruits in a well-known Chia-ching group with peach sprays. It occurs as a water diaper on only one piece known to me, a square vessel in the Metropolitan Museum of New York, in which the air and land diapers conform to the normal 16th-century forms.

THE LAND DIAPERS

There are many more types of land diaper than there are of water and air diapers, but, as in these latter, the forms of the land diapers in the carved lacquers of the early 15th century are strictly prescribed. The main land diaper is based, as we have seen, on squares formed by parallel lines set at angles of 45 degrees to the horizontal. Inside the double squares are set eight-pointed stars or florets (fig. B). The diaper is shown diagrammatically in figure 18a and a simple variant, in which the double squares are replaced by single ones, is shown in figure 18b. The latter does not seem to occur in landscapes until the 16th century. Another variant of the diaper does occur, however, in early 15th-century lacquer to a small extent, that shown in figure 18c, in which the eight-pointed stars

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21 Kiangsu shêng ch'u-t'u wen-wu hsüan-chi, 江蘇省出土文物選集 Wên Wu Publications, 1963. For further details see footnote 43.

22 F. Low-Beer, Chinese lacquer of the middle and late Ming period, pl. 10, fig. 67.

23 Ibid., pl. 8, figs. 63, 64; this diaper also appears as an air diaper in another vessel, pl. 7, fig. 61.
Fig. 18 (a–h)
are set in single interlocking circles. This diaper is used only to decorate the upper parts of the inside walls of pavilions. It is not always easy to see it, because the walls are often obscured by figures and furniture placed in front of them. The examples shown in figure L, taken from a dish with foliate edge, are fairly free from obstruction and show the arrangement of the design clearly. The upper part of the walls, in panels, is decorated with the circular form of diaper while the lower part, unpanelled, has the ordinary type of diaper, as used for the ground outside. It is remarkable that this arrangement is followed so meticulously in most of the early 15th-century pieces, in view of the extremely small areas of background generally visible. The only exceptions known are on a box formerly belonging to the late Mr. H. R. N. Norton and now in the collection of Mrs. Walter Sedgwick, in which, for some reason, the carver has apparently depicted the figures in front of the outside shutters of the pavilion, and on a foliated dish belonging to Mr. F. Low-Beer.

Although the two diapers of figures 18a and 18c are the only ones that occur in the landscapes of early 15th-century lacquer, a number of other diapers of the "land diaper type" were used, to a limited extent, to form the centers of single flowers, such as the chrysanthemum, or daisy, and camellia. In the floral designs of this period the centers of the flowers are sometimes naturalistic, showing the stamens in detail, and sometimes formal, with diapers based on square, rhombic, or hexagonal frameworks. Sometimes, particularly when the flowers are small and the carver has little space, the diapers are simplifications of the fully developed diapers, but at other times one finds well-developed diapers of the types illustrated in figures 18c and 18b (often with a rhombic rather than a square framework). More rarely hexagonal frameworks are found. A floral box decorated on the top with camellias shows as many as four different diapers (fig. M 1, 2, 3, 4), corresponding to those of figures 18c and b, 23c and e. Similar diapers are used in a small dish decorated with chrysanthemums belonging to the Chinese National Government in Formosa. The hexagonal diapers do not appear on landscapes of the early 15th century and we shall discuss them later. But it may be mentioned here that the diaper of figure 23c also occurs in a box decorated with Buddhist lions playing with a brocade ball, in my collection, and in the decoration of the edge of a small dish with a landscape formerly belonging to Mr. Russell Tyson and now in the Art Institute of Chicago, both of which belong to the 15th century. It should also be recorded that the diaper of figure 18c is to

24 *Arts of the Ming dynasty*, No. 232.
25 F. Low-Beer, *Chinese lacquer of the early fifteenth century*, pl. 7. But here there are no figures associated with the pavilions, and we may assume that we are looking at the outside only.
26 It is convenient to use this term for diapers resembling the land diaper of the early 15th century. Their features are a star or floret, or some other decorative element set in a rectangular, rhombic, or hexagonal framework.
27 *Arts of the Ming dynasty*, No. 228.
29 The box in the collection of the author has not been published; however, the dish referred to appears in the exhibition catalogue of *Ming-Ch'ing*, Art Institute of Chicago, 1964.
be found in the decoration of the edge of a 15th-century floral dish belonging to Lady David.\textsuperscript{30}

We do not know exactly when new types of land diaper were introduced into landscape representations, but we find some in pieces thought to belong to the late 15th or early 16th centuries. By the 16th century large numbers of new diapers were in common use and we may find five or more in a single piece. We also find them used for other purposes than landscapes, as in the decoration of fruits such as lichees, peaches, and pomegranates. The well-known 16th-century boxes decorated overall with sprays of lichees\textsuperscript{31} generally have the fruits covered with four or five different land diapers as well as one showing the natural texture of the fruit. It would be too laborious to give particulars of all the types of land diaper used for carved lacquer which, particularly in the elaborate screens and panels of the Ch'ing dynasty, were developed in great profusion. The most important diapers, however, especially those of the Ming dynasty, are described below and illustrated in figures 18 to 23.

We have seen that the square framework was used exclusively in the land diapers of the early 15th century. Inside this framework, which is on a smaller scale than the later diapers, are set eight-pointed stars, as we have already seen in figures 18a and c. In the 16th century, as far as landscapes are concerned, the square framework was still used a great deal, but the stars became more complex, with twelve, sixteen, and

\textsuperscript{30} Arts of the Ming dynasty, No. 239.
\textsuperscript{31} F. Low-Beer, Chinese lacquer of the early fifteenth century, pl. 27, fig. 40.

Fig. 19

even more points. The stars may be enclosed in either single or double squares or, alternatively, in single or double circular arcs derived from the simpler form of figure 18c. Examples of twelve-pointed stars in four different frameworks are shown in figures 18d, e, f, and g. When stars with sixteen or more points are used they are generally enclosed in rhombic figures rather than squares, as in figure 19. Another type of diaper based on a square framework is shown in figure 18h. This consists of lenticular elements arranged in a form which can be derived from eight-pointed stars set in single squares.

Another type of diaper based on a square framework consists of swastika elements set inside single or double squares. Variants of this are shown in figures 20a, b, and c. In Chinese art the symbol is found in Buddhist sculptures and is a variant of the character \textit{wan}, meaning "myriad" or "ten thousand." The swastika symbol was developed into more complex diapers in the late Ming dynasty, where it is found in blue and white porcelain. In the Ch'ing dynasty a background diaper, used often in inlaid lacquer although also found in carved lacquer, was developed in which the threads of the design, incorporating swastika symbols, run from one side of the
piece to the other. This diaper, shown in figure 21, is the one we see being incised in its early stages in figure F.

Two other diapers in a square framework may be mentioned. One, consisting of a series of concentric squares (fig. 20d), is sometimes found in Ming lacquer of the 16th century but is much more common in Ch'ing lacquer. An unusual design with squares containing lines hatched in different directions, found in the previously mentioned box excavated from a Yüan tomb, is shown in figure 20e. This design has not, up to the present, been found in any other piece of Chinese lacquer.

The hexagonal land diaper, arranged in a honeycomb pattern, does not appear, as far as we know, in 15th-century land-

\[32\] See footnotes 21 and 43.
scapes, if we except the unusual design of the David dish bearing the date corresponding to 1489, which is shown enlarged in *figure* O. But the diaper became popular in the 16th century, and from then on it appears almost as frequently as the square pointed stars set in interlocking circular frames (*fig. 23c*). This corresponds to *fig. 18b* in the square framework. Hexagonal frameworks are common in Japanese carved lacquer in which square frameworks do not often appear. Hexagonal diapers in

diaper, although its use as the main land diaper is restricted. It can be constructed by a network of lines set at 60 degrees to each other, as shown in *figure* 22. The stars, with six, twelve, or eighteen points, are set in double or single hexagons (*figs. 23a, and b*) or, more often, frameworks formed of interlocking circular arcs (*figs. 23c, and d*). Another diaper, based on lenticular elements, consists virtually of six-

Japan go back, in the *makie* type of lacquer, to the 12th century. In Japan the diaper is associated with the arrangement of the scales on the turtle.

There are also a few other diapers which occupy a relatively minor role in landscape decoration. Reference has been

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Fig. A.—Top of Box. First half 15th century. Diameter 9.3 inches.
Marcus Linell Collection, London
Fig. B.—Detail of Land Diaper from Figure A.

Fig. C.—Detail of Water Diaper from Foliated Dish. Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh
Fig. D.—Detail of Air Diaper from Figure A.

Fig. E.—Figure of a Boat in Carved Red Lacquer. 18th century. Length 27.0 inches. Messrs. Spink and Son, London
FIG. F.—Detail of Upper Decks of Boat from Figure E.
Fig. G.—Top of Multiple Box. Second half 16th century. Width 5.8 inches.
Sir Harry and Lady Garner Collection, Beckenham, Kent

Fig. H.—Detail of Air Diaper from Figure G.
Fig. I.—Detail of Air Diaper from Dish Dated 1489.
Lady David Collection, London

Fig. J.—Detail of Water Diaper from David Dish (Figure I).
Fig. K.—Dish of Carved Black and Red Lacquer. Late 15th Century. Diameter 17.0 inches. British Museum, London
Fig. L.—Detail, Two Types of Land Diaper, from Foliated Dish. First half, 15th century.
Sir Harry and Lady Garner Collection, Beckenham, Kent
Fig. M.—Details of Camellia Flowers Showing Four Different Land Diapers, From Box, First Half 15th Century.
Sir Harry and Lady Garner Collection, Beckenham, Kent
Fig. N.—Detail of Water Diaper from Figure K.

Fig. O.—Detail of Land Diaper from David Dish (Figure I).
Fig. P.—Engraving from the "Miao-fa Lien-hua-ching"
(Marvelous rule of the lotus sutra). Yüan dynasty or earlier.
Fig. Q.—Engraving Showing One of the Processes in the Manufacture of Salt. Yuan dynasty or earlier.
made to the fence which is almost always used to separate the land and water in the early 15th-century group. The construction of all the fences in this group follows a set pattern. Three sets of horizontal rails stretch between the upright posts and the spaces between are decorated with a key-fret diaper for the upper pair of rails and a diaper based on an elongated land diaper for the lower pair. In later carved landscapes the construction of the fence changes and there may be intermediate verticals which serve as supports for panels. The decoration may consist of key-fret or land diapers or both, sometimes in the reverse order to that of the earlier pieces. The arrangement for the early 15th century is seen clearly in figure L.

Key-fret borders are also occasionally used for the borders of early 15th-century carved lacquers, as well as for a series of Ming boxes decorated on the top with landscapes; the Yüan box 34 is the prototype. A study of these borders, which show considerable variety, is outside the scope of the present investigation.

POSSIBLE ORIGINS OF DIAPER DESIGNS

This paper has so far dealt with the various diapers found on carved lacquer without going very closely into the dates of manufacture of the pieces themselves. Some of the dates are generally accepted, such as those of the so-called “early 15th-century group,” the Chia-ching and Wan-li imperial wares, and the vast amount of Ch’ing lacquer, sometimes bearing the nien hao of Ch’ien-lung. The dating of pieces outside these groups is often extremely difficult, particularly of pieces thought to belong to the period between the mid-15th and 16th centuries and of those belonging to the middle years of the 17th century. Nor is it possible to say yet wheth-

34 See footnotes 21 and 43.
er some of the pieces are of Japanese rather than Chinese manufacture. Equally difficult and even more important, the period before the 15th century when, according to the Ko ku yao lun, the carved lacquers were first developed must be given close study.

Before we discuss the various stages of development of carved lacquer it is worthwhile to say a little about the possible origin of the diaper designs. There is no evidence that lacquer with landscape designs was made before the Yüan dynasty and it is reasonable to look for the origins of the carved backgrounds in other branches of the arts round about this period. The water and land diapers do not lack possible forerunners and indeed difficulty may lie, as far as the land diapers are concerned, in deciding which of the many possible elements of decoration were followed. The air diaper, however, presents particular problems. Quite apart from the curious asymmetry which the diaper always assumes in the early lacquers of the 15th century (see fig. 1), the use of simple stars set on sloping lines does not seem to occur in any earlier forms of landscape decoration. We seem to find the nearest parallels in wood engravings. Two of these are shown in figures P and Q, taken from a collection of wood engravings of the T’ang, Sung, and Yüan dynasties. The first (fig. P), from the Miao-fa Lien-hua-ching 妙法蓮華經 (Marvellous rule of the lotus sutra), shows at the top of the picture sets of horizontal lines in which are placed simple cloud forms at regular intervals. These also lie along diagonal lines in a similar way to the stars in the air diaper, but in a symmetrical arrangement. The second parallel, not so close, occurs in an engraving showing one of the processes in the manufacture of salt (fig. Q). In this the water is represented by waves similar to those found in lacquer, and above are horizontal lines which clearly represent the air. They have no cloud elements like those of the Sutra engraving.

It cannot be claimed that these representations of air taken from engravings are very close to the air diapers of carved lacquers and it is possible that closer parallels will be revealed by a more thorough study than has yet been made of early engravings.

The type of water diaper found universally in the early 15th-century lacquers is based on humped waves arranged in a trellis framework of parallel lines cutting at an acute angle (fig. C). An example of the type of wave has already been noted in the engraving of figure P, but here there is no regular framework. An interesting use of a framework very similar to that of the water diaper in lacquer is to be found in a painting by the 14th-century artist Chao Meng-fu (1254–1322). This painting, Dragon king worshipping the Buddha, in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, shows the

36 From the Yin-shan chêng-yao 饮膳正要, (Essentials for eating and drinking).

37 Kojiro Tomita and Hsien-Chi Tseng, Chinese paintings, Yüan to Ch’ing periods in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Boston, 1961, pl. 5.
diagonal framework without any details, an unusual convention in a painting otherwise rather naturalistic in style.

Thus there is no difficulty in finding early representations in paintings and engravings which could have led to the typical water diaper of the early 13th-century lacquer. The other type of water diaper, which for convenience we may call the "horizontal type" (fig. N), seems to have closer affinities with clouds rather than waves on water. But a painting, In a boat at sea (now considered to be an illustration of Su Tung-P'ō's Red Cliff), attributed to Li Sung (1166–1243)38 shows this type of design clearly, associated with the ordinary humped waves. The importance of the horizontal or eddying type of water diaper, in spite of its rare occurrence in Chinese carved lacquer, has already been stressed.

When we come to the land diaper, we can find plenty of examples of similar diapers used for the decoration of buildings. The manual of building construction, the Ying-tsao fa-shih 營造法式, originally compiled by Li Chieh 李诫 in 1091, shows many examples of stars or florets placed within square, hexagonal, or octagonal borders, although there does not seem to be one exactly like the pattern in the land diaper of the early 13th-century lacquers (fig. B). But the Ying-tsao fa-shih has had a chequered career and no printed copies of the early editions have survived. A modern edition, published in 1925, is based on parts of manuscripts and printed versions that have survived, with some illustrations reproduced and others added. A study of some of the dragon designs, which have definite Ming and even Ch'ing characteristics, does not lend confidence toward accepting the diapers as being original Sung design.

A study of the decorations of ceilings of some Sung and Yuán buildings that have survived shows once again a great variety of diaper decorations, although none that agrees closely with the actual land diapers of figures 18 to 23. We find, perhaps, closer parallels in the paintings and engravings of the Yuán period. In a painting by Wang Chen-p'eng (active ca. 1312–20) of Mahāprajāpati holding the infant Buddha there is a hexagonal diaper with stars enclosed in double straight line borders.39 Except that the boundaries are hexagonal rather than square, this is as close a resemblance to the land diaper on early 13th-century lacquer as we could expect.

Before we leave this brief survey of the origins of the diapers a reference should be made to the possibility, particularly in the land diapers, of Islamic influence on the designs. The importance of the eight-pointed star, often constructed from two squares set at angles of 45 degrees to each other, is well known in Islamic decoration. John Pope has explored some aspects of the connections between Islamic and Chinese symbolism, with particular reference to the cosmic significance of the eight-pointed star.40

38 W. Cohn, Chinese painting, London, 1948, p. 77, pl. 120; J. Cahill, Art of Southern Sung, Asia House, 1962, p. 55, no. 22. This painting is now in the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, Atkins Museum of Fine Arts, Kansas City, Missouri. The clouds in the painting (footnote 37) also resemble this diaper.

39 Tomita and Tseng, op. cit., pls. 9, 10.
40 John Pope, op. cit.
THE DEVELOPMENT OF CARVED LACQUER, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE EARLY MING PERIOD

A study of all the features of design, and not only those of the landscape diapers, is needed before one can sort out the many difficult problems in the attribution of carved lacquer. This must be supported by technical investigations, which are likely to be of considerable importance. To undertake this overall study at the present time would be far too difficult and the following limited study, based largely on the diapers—although some attention is given to other stylistic points—must be regarded as a useful preliminary to the more exhaustive treatment which will have to be undertaken eventually.

Let us start with the “early 15th-century group.” As I have said, this group has been accepted generally as belonging to the first half of the 15th century. Although I regard the Yung-lo and Hsüan-tê marks that are found on many of the pieces as unreliable, I think that these extremely accomplished lacquers were made under official supervision during a period that spanned the first half of the 15th century but may well have spread over some years before and after this period. It would certainly be rash to conclude that the lacquers were confined to the short period bounded by the reigns of Yung-lo and Hsüan-tê, and particularly rash to assume that carved lacquer of fine quality ceased to be made after the death of Hsüan-tê. This kind of view was held at one time about blue and white porcelain. But we are now beginning to find strong evidence of a continuous supply of fine blue and white through the whole of the “interregnum period” between 1436 and 1465. I think we shall find the same state of affairs for other artifacts, including lacquer.

There is one technical feature of the early 15th-century group which is of significance in its bearing on the development of carved lacquers. The method of application of the layers of lacquer on all pieces of this group follows the same pattern. After the ground filling of siliceous material has been prepared, layers of yellow lacquer are applied, to be followed by red layers, the black band generally known as the “guide line,” and finally by the main thick band of red lacquer. The yellow ground, exposed in the floral borders that are almost always found with landscape decoration, adds greatly to the effectiveness and beauty of the floral designs. But from the point of view of the landscape decoration, the yellow ground is an unsatisfactory feature. It is situated just below the air and water diapers, which are carved so that the bottoms of the furrows just reach the yellow band. The yellow is hardly visible except through a magnifying glass and certainly does not add to the effectiveness of the design. The presence of the yellow band, while it may assist to some extent the precision of the carving, must be a considerable handicap to the carver generally. But the worst feature is that the junction between the yellow and red layers is not very secure, so that the delicate diapers are liable to break away at

41 Medley, op. cit., pp. 14–18.
42 In some later pieces the carving is arranged to show the ground clearly, so adding a decorative feature.
that point. In some pieces we find extensive repairs where damaged diapers have been replaced, and others are disfigured by showing the yellow background where the diapers have broken away. In later pieces in this style, including some thought to belong to the late 15th century, the use of a yellow ground for the landscape section is abandoned, although it is retained for the floral border. This complicates the process of applying the layers but results in more satisfactory technical qualities.

I have said that there is evidence to support the view that these lacquers were made under close supervision at every stage of manufacture. It seems likely that the structural manufacture of the vessels and the application of the many layers of lacquer, producing plain undercoated pieces, took place in one factory or group of factories and the pieces were sent to another factory to be carved. It would simplify production if the boxes intended to be decorated with floral borders were made in the same way, irrespective of the decoration on the top, and indeed we know of boxes which are identical in size and have similar floral borders, some of which have landscapes and others floral designs on the top. This may explain why the method of using a yellow ground for all the boxes persisted, in spite of obvious disadvantages.

Let us now look at two pieces in China which are claimed, by Chinese authorities, to belong to the 14th century to see if we can find any connecting link between them and the early 15th-century group. The more important of the two is a box said to have been excavated at Ch'ing-p'u Hsien 青浦縣 in Kiangsu province from the tomb of a member of the family of the painter Jên Jên-fa 任仁發 (early 14th century). There are nine tombs in all, the dates of which cover the period 1338 to 1351, and the box came from one of these, not specified. The landscape on the top of the box has a seated figure holding a staff, with an attendant offering him a plant or bunch of flowers in a globular pot. There are rocks, pine trees, shrubs, and a curious structure which seems to consist of palings lashed to a rustic post. The background diaper which covers almost the whole scene is the water diaper of horizontal type (see fig. 16). As we have mentioned, this type of diaper is rare in Chinese lacquer and does not occur at all in the early 15th-century group. A small amount of a second diaper, based on a framework of squares containing lines cut in different directions, is just discernible inside the primitive building. The diaper is shown in figure 18f.

The other box, which bears the Chang Ch'êng mark, has a landscape on the top with a sage standing on a terrace and viewing a waterfall, with two attendants behind him. The landscape has numerous rocks and trees of different species. The land diaper of the terrace is of the usual early 15th-century form (fig. 17) and the water diaper, like that of the excavated box, is of the horizontal type. Above this is an air diaper whose details cannot be discerned clearly in the illustration.

1) Kiangsu shêng ch'u-t'u wên-wu hsüan-chi, op. cit. The box is illustrated in side view as no. 204. Another lacquer piece, a foliated four-tiered box, from the same group of tombs, is illustrated as no. 205. The details of the diapers are not visible in the side view but are taken from a colored picture postcard issued by the Peking Museum.

4) Illustrated in Wên-wu ts'an-k'ao tzu-liao 文物參考資料, 1956, No. 10 (inside back cover).
The two boxes, at first sight rather similar, are in fact different in most of the details. Unfortunately the photographs available are not sufficiently clear for the details to be visible precisely, but the variations generally are quite clear. The treatment of the rocks is quite different, those on the excavated box being angular in outline and flat in treatment, decorated with incised scorings, while those of the box with the Chang Ch'êng mark are more rounded in outline and more three-dimensional, with numerous holes carved through them. The rims of the boxes are different, that of the excavated box being simply rounded, while that of the other is deeply grooved. This difference extends to the key-fret borders.

The box with the Chang Ch'êng mark is similar in many respects to a number of boxes in Western collections, some of which also bear this mark. These boxes in turn form part of a larger group, all with landscapes on the top and key-fret borders, which were made over a long period. While some appear to be of late Japanese manufacture, belonging to the 19th century, others can confidently be ascribed to the Chinese Ming dynasty. The box published in the Wên wu, like some others, may possibly be as early as the late 15th century, but a study of such material as is available in the West seems to rule out a 14th-century attribution.

The excavated box presents a more difficult problem. If we accept the evidence on the excavation as sound—and we have no valid reason for not doing so—we must face the fact that the box, although it has a superficial resemblance to the group of boxes with landscapes and key-fret borders, differs from them in many details. The comparison already made between the excavated box and that in China with the Chang Ch'êng mark illustrates the differences. Yet in spite of this it seems likely that the excavated box is the prototype from which the group of boxes was developed, although we cannot on present evidence identify pieces belonging to the early 15th century, to say nothing of the 14th.

The landscape boxes with key-fret borders seem, in their turn, to have no close connection with the early 15th-century official lacquers, with their standardized decorative motives. Our difficulty in the dating of these boxes may partly arise from the habit we have developed of judging them by the standards of the official wares, a habit which is not at all logical. We cannot expect to find, in these non-official lacquers, probably made in factories stretching over a wide area, the same degree of uniformity as we find in the official wares made in Peking.

There is indeed a large amount of non-official lacquer belonging to the 15th and 16th centuries that needs much more attention than it has been given. The quality of the lacquer rarely approaches that of the early 15th-century group, but it is often superior to that of the Chia-ching, Lung-ch'ing, and Wan-li imperial lacquer. The non-official lacquer can be divided into groups with similar stylistic and technical qualities. A few of the groups have been studied by Low-Beer, but there are others, and these are very important because they provide links between the earlier and later lacquers, which have been largely ignored.

45 F. Low-Beer, Chinese lacquer of the early fifteenth century, and Chinese lacquer of the middle and late Ming period.
These include a group of dishes with landscapes and floral borders with similar borders underneath, a type well represented in the early 15th-century group. Sometimes the floral border underneath is replaced by a classic scroll border, of which at least one example is known in the early 15th century. The treatment of the landscape in these dishes is similar, in varying degrees, to that of the early 15th-century group and it seems that we can trace a development from the late 15th century to the mid-16th or even later. On this assessment, the earliest examples are those in which the diapers are identical with those of the early 15th-century group and the land and water diapers are separated by a fence, although the design of the fence is somewhat different. In the later examples the diapers have changed and we often find that one or more of them are absent. It may be, however, that some of these dishes are earlier than we have supposed and are contemporary with the official wares but made in private factories. This would explain the differences in certain details and the somewhat inferior quality.

Another small group consists of nests of boxes with a landscape on the top and floral borders on a yellow ground. These have similar characteristics to those of the dishes and some of them may also overlap the official group.

All these pieces have one feature in common. The air diaper is invariably of the "six-four" type, in contrast with the official Chia-ching and Wan-li lacquers in which a symmetrical air diaper is always used. In fact there are, as far as I know, no official wares from the reign of Chia-ching onward in which anything but a symmetrical air diaper is used. The persistence in retaining the complicated asymmetrical air diaper is remarkable and indicates a strong tradition in a group of factories, unaffected by the simpler arrangement that had become firmly established in the official wares. As for the other diapers, the land diaper tends to become more varied as time goes on, the scale of the framework becomes larger, and the central stars are twelve- or sixteen-pointed instead of eight-pointed. The use of hexagonal in place of square frameworks and the use of two or three different diapers for different parts of the landscape become prevalent. Instead of the division between the water and land diapers being provided by a fence, we find land diapers with their own outlines in the form of banks overhanging the water, as we see in figure G. This feature probably came in during the 15th century and indeed is to be found in a small dish, a gift of Mr. Russell Tyson to the Art Institute of Chicago, which in every other respect conforms strictly to the conventions of the early 15th-century group.

In none of the pieces I have examined does the yellow base of the floral borders extend to the landscape, as it does in the early 15th-century group. This could be regarded as either a change of method adopted towards the end of the 15th century or, alternatively, to the continuance of a tradition stretching back to the 14th

47 Ming lacquer, figs. 5, 6.

48 See footnote 29. I am inclined to think that this dish belongs to the second half of the century.
century, which had been temporarily broken by the adoption of strict production methods in the early 15th-century official wares.

There is one further group of landscape pieces which needs to be considered. This is the small group which contains the well known David dish bearing the date corresponding to 1489. This dish and the other pieces in the group are entirely different from the early 15th-century group and, were it not for the date of 1489 on the David dish, it might be difficult to accept the view that this delicate carving could be so early. A critical study of the inscription is therefore necessary. The inscription is on a beam above the entrance to one of the pavilions. The beam is decorated with a diaper in which is reserved a panel containing the inscription. All the work has the appearance of being contemporary with the rest of the carving and the inscription can be accepted as being contemporary with the piece.

We have seen that the pieces in this group all have diapers which are constructed on no definite plan. In two of the pieces the land diaper is built up on a hexagonal framework, the earliest use of this framework in landscape diapers although it occurs in earlier floral designs (fig. M).

The group can only be regarded as one outside the ordinary development of Ming lacquer. Although the conventions of the early 15th century are followed broadly, the complete departure in detail from the earlier lacquers and the skill and brilliance of the carving support the view that these pieces were made by a group of artist craftsmen working to their own individual requirements. The landscapes, with their elaborate pavilions, have some affinity with paintings of the Sung and Yüan dynasties and it is possible that this small group of pieces was made by a school of painters working in a second medium.

SUMMARY

This preliminary study has necessarily had to start from the one well established official group of early carved lacquers decorated with landscapes. I have then endeavoured to bring in the other known pieces with landscape decoration. The characteristics of the early official group are remarkably consistent. Outside this group there are many pieces which have some features in common with it. In some the resemblance is close, e.g. the pieces have the same three diapers representing air, water, and land arranged in the same way, but in others the divergences are more notable than the resemblances. In the past there has naturally been a tendency to regard the latter pieces as later and inferior offshoots of the early 15th-century official group.

The recent excavation of the landscape box from a Yüan tomb in Kiangsi, which differs greatly from the pieces belonging to the early official group, throws some doubt on this approach. The reluctance among Western students to accept this box as a genuine piece of the Yüan period was natural at first because its acceptance involves a reorientation of all our ideas on the early development of Chinese carved lacquer. If we accept it, the obvious relationship between this box and many others suggests that there was a continuous line of development, although there are, at present, few if any pieces of the non-official group which can be confidently ascribed to the 15th century. There
are, however, many pieces belonging to the 16th century and it is reasonable to suppose that the missing links between these and the Yüan box will be found as a result of further study.

Starting from the Yüan box, which appears to have only one main background diaper, and conjecturing on the way in which the depiction of landscape in carved lacquer was developed, we may well conclude that a good deal of experimentation in design, including variations in the background diapers, took place in the late 14th century and that one result of this was the emergence of the early 15th-century group, with its uniform features strictly prescribed by strong official control. If this is so we see the early 15th-century group as an offshoot of a more general development which went on side by side with it and continued after the early 15th-century group began to decline.

This conjectural approach is based entirely on the acceptance of the Yüan box. To base a theory on a single piece, and particularly on one which has not been fully described, is clearly a rash thing to do, and we badly need more evidence on this piece and on any similar pieces which may be excavated in China, however fragmentary they may be.

The group containing the David dish dated 1489 may be regarded as an interlude in this general development. Splendid as these pieces are, they seem to have had little influence on subsequent carved lacquer. Even the Chia-ching and Wan-li imperial wares do not seem to have had much influence on the lacquer that was being made outside the official factories.

This study has been confined to landscape pieces almost entirely. A similar study of floral and other pieces might yield important conclusions. Here mention must be made of the group of carved lacquer dishes, some black and some red, decorated with birds against a floral background. They have no clear connection with the early 15th-century group. They have been given, by many Chinese and Japanese authorities, a Yüan attribution, and it is possible that they may show another line of independent development, similar to that derived from the Yüan landscape box.
MATURE

The first part of this study was concerned with the earliest stages of Yüan Chiang’s artistic career, and with Li Yin, his close associate throughout this early period; with the adoption by both painters, around the beginning of the 18th century, of a new manner featuring nervous lineament and curious distortions, purportedly based on the style of Kuo Hsi; and with Li Yin’s forcing of this manner into excesses that must, one feels, have brought about an even earlier abandonment of it than its inherent weaknesses and shallowness would in any case have led to. The last work of Yüan Chiang in this manner is from the year 1712 (Part I, Fig. 21). Now, moving back some eight years, we proceed to the next phase, and Yüan’s maturity as a painter.

This “maturity” is not easy to identify or define. Trying to do so raises the question of just what, under all the antique manners, the experimenting, the contrived effects, is the real Yüan Chiang? Chinese critics circumvented the problem, simply identifying his sources of derivation, as if to do so were to dispose of him. The brief accounts of him in biographical-critical collections usually remark that he “studied [or imitated] Sung painters”; several add that he “acquired, in his middle years, an anonymous [album of?] study sketches after old masters,” and following these in his own work, improved greatly. Another source states that he imitated the Southern Sung Academy artist Liu Sung-nien, and still another that he began as a follower of Ch’iu Ying. No where is there any suggestion that he fashioned out of all these borrowings something that was thoroughly his own, “establishing a separate school,” as the Chinese phrase has it. Nevertheless, as we shall see, he did so, creating a new mode of landscape painting as distinctive as that of any other artist of his time.

In the case of a painter like Yüan Chiang, who does not so much set his own artistic problems as have them thrust upon him—who inherits them, that is, by appearing at a problem-ridden stage (frequently late) in the course of a school or tradition—maturity can be said to be reached with a satisfying blend of originality and technical assurance, in works that offer not only novelty, escape from outworn conventions, but also a serviceably solid formal basis for


3 Li Yü-fen 李玉芬, Ou-po-lo shih shu-hua kuo-mu k’ao 歐泊絡室書畫圖目考, preface dated 1897, ch. II, p. 30b. The same in Ch’ih-hung-hsüan so-chien shu-hua lu 迟鴻蕖所見書畫錄, ch. I, p. 134a; however as Yü Shao-sung points out in his Shu-hua shu-chou chieh’i (ch. I, p. 31), this book, published under the name of Yang Hsien 楊隲 and with a preface dated 1873, is virtually identical in contents to Li Yü-fen’s book, and internal evidence points to Li’s as the original work.

4 Yang-chou bua-fang lu; see above, note 2.
further development. In the early works of Yüan Chiang, and in the paintings of Li Yin, there are continual flashes of originality, along with the derived elements; but it is usually a forced originality, often tinged with sensationalism; lacking in sureness of purpose, and hardly indicative of artists who have “found themselves.” Most of the styles essayed in this first period had been false starts; none had proved truly viable. The mode of landscape that Yüan creates in his middle period, on the other hand, sets the course for the remainder of his career and for virtually the entire output of his school; it is the origin of the standard image that his name has evoked ever since.

Readers of the first part of this study who are familiar with that image will have been struck by the fact that no picture so far has conformed to it. We have seen no “typical Yüan Chiang,” no lyrical scene of a palace at dusk, perhaps, surrounded by walkways and gardens, with blossoming trees or willows, and low hills in the distance. The earliest dated example of that type is in the Shanghai Museum, the “Palace by a River in Spring,” dated 1704 (fig. 1). According to the inscription, it is in the manner of the 10th-century master of architectural drawing (ch'ien-hua), Kuo Chung-shu. In view of the fact that Yüan himself was considered the foremost Ch'ing dynasty practitioner of this same specialty, such a note of homage seems quite in place; and the composition has some distant relationship to a landscape-with-palace format sometimes connected with Kuo Chung-shu. But in all other respects the painting is thoroughly in the Southern Sung Academy mode. The lamplit palace, the simple but precisely drawn figures, the rocks and trees, all have their closest counterparts in Academy painting of the 12th century, for example in a fan-shaped album leaf in the Palace Museum, Taichung, representing (according to Mr. Li Lin-Ts' an) Emperor Ming-huang and Yang Kuei-fei’s departure for Shu, and attributed—not coincidentally—to Kuo Chung-shu, but belonging rather to the stage of the Li T'ang tradition within the Academy represented by the works of the Yen brothers, Tz'u-p' ing and Tz'u-yü.

The painting follows the Southern Sung Academy mode also in portraying a tranquil and secure world, and the absence of tension from the scene is matched in the style. Nothing is here of the tortured quality of so many of Yüan’s other landscapes, both earlier and later—no calculated instabilities or dynamic thrusts. What instabilities the painting exhibits result from the absence of a continuous ground plane and the failure of the further shore to move back to its proper distance, instead of seeming to hang in the air; and these features reflect more the ultimately unbridgeable gap between Southern Sung and Ch'ing than any deliberate expressive device of the artist, whose aim was surely a static composition, with all its parts at rest. Pale washes of ink and muted colors add to this air of calm, suggesting the stillness of twilight. Since no other painter in recent centuries had practiced this special kind of mood-painting with such skill, and since it had never (in spite of the severity

3 See, for example, the painting attributed to him in the former Abe Collection, Sōraikan Kinsbō, pt. I, no. 9; or another in the Freer Gallery, unpublished, Reg. no. 19.128.

of the critics) quite lost its appeal, we can
surmise that it must have won Yüan Chiang
a good part of his worldly success; it must
have sold well. But its artistic merits were
another matter, as Yüan and the more per-
ceptive among his audience surely realized.
The painter, in evoking an image from a
vanished age, has suppressed rigorously
the distinctive traits of his own style with-
out injecting those of anyone else; it is
one thing to imitate a master of powerful
individuality such as Kuo Hsi and another
to reincarnate in one's self, so to speak, at
five centuries' remove, one of the faceless
figures of the Hangchow Academy. The re-
sult is a further dilution of a style that had
been homogenized by such lesser figures al-
most from its inception. Beside the best
Southern Sung painting of this type, such
as the superb "Banquet by Lantern-light"
which may well be a work of Ma Yüan,7 it
seems diffuse and decorative, offering
charm instead of poetry, a correct render-
ing of an antique mode in place of true feel-
ing. This is a less defensible kind of deriv-
tion than we find in some others of Yüan's
landscapes, as irrelevant to the art of its
time as the courtly subject was irrelevant
to the lives of the merchants and officials
of bustling Yangchow. If such painting had
in its original form been open to the charge
of constricting its angle of vision to exclude
all but the ideal, now it was sheer escapism.

The balance is not yet achieved; Yüan
Chiang has given up the perilous inven-
tiveness of his earlier works to gain a more
secure position, but at the expense of origi-
nality. We must recognize here a distinc-
tion which, although sometimes subtle, is
nonetheless real and essential to an under-
standing of later Chinese painting: be-
tween outright imitation, as Yüan prac-
tices it in this picture, and quasi art-histor-
ical allusions, which appear in others of
his works. In the former, a pre-existing
style is incorporated into the very sub-
stance of the painting, replacing in large
part the artist's usual style in order that the
subject may be presented in what he be-
lieves to be a particularly effective or at-
tractive way, worthy of imitation. In the
latter, the antique style that is his point of
reference becomes part of the theme of the
picture, which is "about" the Kuo Hsi tra-
dition as well as "about" mountains and
trees; the allusions need not (and ordinarily
should not) be too literal, but only recog-
nizable; they can be exaggerated to the
point of becoming the most conspicuous
features of the picture; they do not make
it better as a picture but add an extra di-
mension to it, calling forth certain associa-
tional responses from connoisseurs who rec-
ognize them for what they are. This sec-
ond kind of "imitation" is not inconsistent
with originality; the first is.

Fortunately for Yüan Chiang's future as
an artist, he was not yet willing to settle
into the comfortable production of such
decorative and derivative pictures. His
"Kuo Hsi style" landscape of 1712 and
others in different styles from later years
betray his continuing interest in varieties
of painting that emphasized surface elab-
oration and unusual brush-manners. He
was still occupied, moreover, with a third
type, the one with which he had begun: the

7 Chinese Art Treasures: a selected group of
objects from the Chinese National Palace Muse-
um... exhibited in the United States by the Gov-
ernment of the Republic of China at the National
Gallery of Art, Washington; the Metropolitan
Museum of Art, New York... 1961–62, Wash-
ington, 1961, No. 56.
monumental landscape, with a strong element of the fantastic in it. His earlier versions of this landscape type (Part I, figs. 5, 9, 11) had been based on a Northern Sung landscape format, with a centrally located mountain, a high and relatively distant viewpoint, and only limited penetration into depth. By 1708, the date of his "Isle of Immortals at P'eng-lai" (fig. 2), this has been replaced, in keeping with the new leaning evidenced in the palace scene of 1704, by a format with Southern Sung antecedents: a diagonal division of the composition, the upper segment opened into an expanse of sea stretching to an undefined horizon (a feature interestingly paralleled even in the "Kuo Hsi" landscape of the previous year, Part I, fig. 20); a huge boulder at the base of the composition, serving as repoussoir as well as foundation; a stronger focus of interest in one portion of the picture, in this case the middle ground. The surge of the sea is continued in the rocky masses, which are charged with the inquietude of metamorphic beings; an ostensible confrontation of stable and fluid is overlaid with ambiguity—the waves as if carved, the rocks as if flowing. These ambiguities paradoxically make the picture more convincing, rather than less, unifying it into an organic cosmos in which earth and ocean, like two states of a single substance, are alike subject to a vast ebb and flow. Nothing in painting of the centuries immediately preceding Yüan Chiang provides any clear prototype for such a conception of landscape; Wu Pin, who might at first come to mind, was far less concerned with such illusionistic rendering of mass and space as this picture depends on. Perhaps, to find a true parallel, one would have to go all the way back to the great "Early Spring" of Kuo Hsi—a painting far greater and profoundly different in other respects, but similar in its compelling fusion of mundane and visionary, and in its presentation of natural forces through depiction of landscape forms that bear, powerfully exaggerated, the impress of their workings. Here, surely, we find the mature Yüan Chiang, transcending the limitations that qualify the success of his earlier works, overcoming in large part the weaknesses that had afflicted them: the too-far-out experimental, the overly mannered, the decorative, the derivative. While retaining the visual excitement of the fantastic landscape mode, he has purged it of obvious artifice; the scenery now seems a mysterious extension of reality, beyond the familiar world but not outside the realm of the possible, bearing the imprint of the artist's mind but possessing a degree of independence, of objective existence.

So distinctive is this new style, so striking the advance it represents over such a superficially similar work as the "Yangtze River Gorges" of 1698 (Part I, fig. 11), that we cannot mistake it when it reappears in a huge landscape in the Freer Gallery of Art, once attributed to the Northern Sung artist Wang Shen (fig. 3)—a picture which, recognized for what it is, at once assumes its rightful place as one of the masterworks of Yüan Chiang. His hand is evident at every point—in the formation and texturing of the rocks, in the pines, in the frozen turbulence of the water. Compositional similarities to the painting of 1708 are obvious. The scene is here viewed, however, from closer up—another reflection, no doubt, of the new "Southern Sung" orientation, as is the composition, along
with such a characteristic motif as the man seen in a kiosk in the lower right, gazing out across the water. But one would find it hard to imagine that the vista he gazes over will serve to still his mind, as scholars in Southern Sung landscapes could expect of their surroundings. The effect Yüan Chiang seeks is the reverse of the tranquilizing; it is rather to stir the feelings and bemuse the eye. Far from reducing and simplifying the forms of his picture, Yüan allows them to proliferate and erupt, unifying the composition through a complex interlocking of equally-weighted parts rather than by providing any strong point of focus to which all else relates. He indulges in his beloved spatial ambiguities here and there—for instance, in the way the right edge of the rocky pinnacle seems (until one looks closely) to flow into the upper surface of the pointed, oddly "folded-over" projection that occupies the center of the composition, implying a continuity quite incompatible with the space that must lie between them, since the one is behind, the other before the villa in middle distance. The dramatic, unnatural contrasts of light and dark on the rocks, the smooth shading along their contours to render receding surfaces, are to be seen also in the "P'englai" of 1708 and elsewhere in Yüan's work; the curling-stroke texturing, suggestive of the pitted surface of volcanic rock, will reappear, broadened and relaxed into calligraphy, in some later landscapes. Here, both devices are still basically naturalistic in intent; like Li T'ang six centuries before (and very few other artists after the Sung period), Yüan gives a strong illusion of substance to his rocks through a combination of lighting to define the shape and texture to define the surface. The shapes and sur-

faces he depicts, one hastens to add, are unlike any in nature; yet they can claim strong ties with the visible world through their quasi realistic treatment. The matter of the picture is fantastic, or visionary, but the style is fundamentally representational. These pictures of Yüan's middle period are thoroughly persuasive; the scenes they present belong to the world of dreams, but daydreams rather than the nightmares of, for example, the later fantasies of Li Yin. However imaginative, they are never so alienated from our familiar surroundings that they fail to draw us into them, if we will submit to their attraction. Perhaps, instead of "fantastic," we should call the works of this new manner "romantic," in the sense in which the term is applied, for example, to the landscapes of Salvatore Rosa. But whatever we call them, we must recognize them as brilliant and highly impressive achievements.

Less obviously related to identifiable Yüan Chiang works of this period, but fitting more comfortably here than anywhere else in the history of the school, is another fine but misattributed painting in the Freer Gallery, this one with a spurious signature of none other than Ma Yüan (fig. 4). The choice of this master as the purported artist was prompted, one is forced to assume, by the slight resemblance of the composition to Ma's "one-corner" design, and of the rounded mountain to those in the backgrounds of paintings by or ascribed to him, such as the famous "Landscape with Willows" fan in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The subject is a

picnic among flowering trees, and while no Southern Sung version of just this scene is known, or at least well known, the theme is surely Southern Sung in flavor. Among the distinctive elements that argue for an attribution to Yuan Chiang are the pine trees, with their decoratively knotted trunks, and heavy applications of tien along their dark outlines (compare those in the landscape of 1711, fig. 5); the band of mist encircling the mountain (cf. figs. 2 and 3); and, most of all, the mountain itself, basically a simple mound in shape but eroded with clefts and hollows and with rows of flat-topped, darker projections ascending its slopes. The path winding upward through one of the clefts is nicely paralleled in both of the two paintings just considered, as well as in the Stockholm landscape of 1707 (Part I, fig. 26) and in the next we shall see. In the texturing of the rocks, and even in such a minor element as the dotting of tien as grass or “moss” along their edges, the execution matches closely that of the “P’eng-lai” of 1708. But seen as a whole, the painting is far milder, more stable; except for the bizarre sculpturing of the mountain, little trace of the fantastic remains. The size and proportions of the picture, unusually broad, suggest that it may originally have been affixed to a screen—a possibility to be considered also for at least one of the paintings of Li Yin, which seems to be a surviving portion of a larger composition (Part I, fig. 24). Another possibility is that the composition was adopted from an album leaf, for which these proportions would be normal.

A fourth masterwork of this middle period is a huge painting in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, signed and dated 1711 (fig. 5). The composition is reminiscent of the Stockholm landscape of four years earlier in being dominated by a long diagonal movement, with sharp turns at each end. These diagonals are meant to be understood as recessions, even though, like the curving, “receding” shorelines of the early works, they tend to be read as parallel to the picture plane, or nearly so. It would appear that Yuan Chiang, turning away from the reduction to surface evident in some other works of his own and more markedly in those of Li Yin, is intent on creating a strong sense of depth, and particularly of continuity between middle ground and background. The device, while not notably successful in that aim, gives the composition dramatic emphasis and freshness.

For the texturing of his rocky masses, Yuan uses a variety of the “axe-cut ts’un” developed by Li T’ang and his followers. The complex formation of the mountain peak is based on a Northern Sung type, seen in the main mountain of the Kuo Hsi “Early Spring” and recurring in countless variations in later landscapes.9 Yet, like

9 The logically inexplicable opening between the cliff in center right and the border of the picture is probably to be understood as an echo of a remarkable passage in the same Kuo Hsi landscape, likewise located in the right center of the composition; there, however, it betrays a last minute change of plan, somewhat awkwardly covered up, rather than appearing as an integral part of the original design. A more literal repetition of this odd passage occurs, transposed to another part of the composition, in an unpublished landscape by the 15th century Ma Shih in the Palace Museum, Taichung (MV 41). It would appear that this particular Kuo Hsi painting was known to Ma Shih and perhaps to Yuan Chiang, and that we have here a fascinating example of a mistake become part of a tradition.
off to the left. The rocky mesa above, while impressive in itself and answering the foreground boulder, does not continue and consummate any movement begun below, as in the best of the earlier pictures, and a loss of continuity and organic unity results. The dark projections on the cliff above the waterfall, looking as though they had been squeezed out of a plastic mass, likewise fail to relate to any consistent program in the composition and seem merely perverse, betraying a similar lack of clear purpose. Something of the formal control and power of conception that gave the earlier works in this manner their air of conviction and reality has dissipated.

From the previous year, 1717, is a painting in the Art Institute of Chicago (fig. 7), continuing the lyrical “Southern Sung” mode of the Shanghai landscape of 1704 (fig. 1). It is one of the loveliest of Yüan Chiang’s pictures of this type. Here one feels no lack of compositional unity: a long, curving inward-and-upward movement, of the kind Yüan was partial to, begins with the leaning trees in lower right, follows the spines of the ornamental rocks, is diverted into two diagonal directions and gathered up again in the central trees, and finally is carried up the slope of the hill to its crest by a typical series of dark outcroppings. Countering this movement is the perfectly stable horizontal of the buildings. The branches and twigs of the trees set up a lacy surface motive which is carried on in the decorative lineament of the rocks and in the playfully pinched-out excrescences on the hillside. All this seems relatively light and fanciful here, with little of the sense of nervous energy that inspires the shaky linear drawing in Yüan’s earlier landscapes. The surfaces of the

10 For a translation, see Ch’en Shou-yi, Chinese literature: A historical introduction, New York, 1961, pp. 174–175.
rocks are not textured with ts’\textquoteleft un but rather, for sleeker appearance, are elegantly modelled in areas of pale wash, with streaks of highlight left between these areas to render raised ridges and bumps. Some precedent for this attractive reserve technique, which Yüan also uses in others of his works, can be seen in paintings of the Southern Sung period.

**“NORTHERN” AMATEURISM IN A SOUTHERN PROFESSIONAL**

Surely there is enough constancy in human taste, the popular at least, to allow us to conjecture that the kind of painting represented by the Chicago landscape accounted for a major part of whatever prosperity Yüan Chiang enjoyed in his lifetime; it has a direct appeal that would make it popular anywhere, in any age. He probably could have settled back at this point and made, through the production of such pictures, as comfortable a living as a professional painter could hope for at that time. Large, imposing pictures were always in demand for hanging in the reception halls of mansions,\(^\text{11}\) and for these the more conservative works of Yüan Chiang were ideally suited. But paintings made specifically for such a purpose were reduced, in Chinese eyes, to the level of the merely useful. True art had no such clearly defined function; it was for aesthetic contemplation, through which the artist might properly evoke a wide range of responses—but not, or at least not overtly, if he hoped for a respected status in the loftier art circles, the simplest and most straightforward responses: admiration for technical skill, sensuous enjoyment of visual beauty, emotional participation in the scene depicted. And these were the very feelings that Yüan Chiang’s paintings were most likely to call forth. To dismiss the Chicago painting of 1717 as decoration would be unkind but not totally unjustified; to do the same to the powerful paintings of the previous decade would be grossly unfair to them. But there is no indication that the distinction was ever made. That the merits of Yüan’s major works went unrecognized is indicated, quite aside from the lack of sympathetic comment in the literature, by the fact that the owners of two of the finest of them (figs. 3 and 4) felt obliged to remove Yüan’s signature (assuming, as I do, that they were originally signed by him) and add attributions to earlier and more respected masters, in order to make them into objects of value.

We must keep always in mind, moreover, the situation outlined at the beginning of this study: the dilemma of the professional artist working in a period and a place dominated by the amateur, the eccentric, the nonconformist; faced by critics who, for the most part, accepted wholesale Tung Ch’i-ch’ang’s system of the “Northern and Southern Schools” of painting, and his castigation of the former; and by an audience bored with orthodox styles and demanding novelty. It would be illuminating if we could know how far down, from the critical and intellectual heights, this set of attitudes had sifted—what separated the people who bought Yüan Chiang’s grandiose paintings from those

\(^{11}\) For a thorough explanation of how and where hanging scrolls were displayed in a Chinese house, see R. H. van Gulik, *Chinese pictorial art as viewed by the connoisseur*, Rome 1958, pp. 15–26.
who scorned them?—but this question, like similar ones throughout Chinese art history, is practically unanswerable. We must continue to make what we can of the paintings; and these, when their sequence and interrelationships are properly understood, present us unmistakably with the case of a painter who at times deliberately disavows his own strengths to emulate those of others, or even the weaknesses of others. That Yüan Chiang did this entirely out of a genuine feeling of dissatisfaction with his more accustomed manner of painting is hard to imagine; we must assume, I think, that pressure of outside opinion and the nature of the demands he strove to supply accounted for a large part of his motivation.

We have already observed one instance of such deviation from the mode of painting in which he was most assured, one such break with the thoroughly finished, professional mode, in the group of paintings that he and Li Yin produced from the late 1690's, characterized by nervous brushwork and a mannerist manipulation of ground planes and space. Yüan's last picture in this manner, as noted above, is the “Kuo Hsi style” landscape of 1712. This is the most “literary” among the works considered so far, a painting in which activist brushwork and intricacies of surface take precedence over pictorial considerations of a simpler order. Three years later, in a picture titled “A House on Mt. Lu” (fig. 8), we find him setting off on another foray into the territory of the amateur, renouncing the firm and skillful drawing seen, for example, in the Boston painting of 1711 (fig. 5) in favor of another mode that emphasizes execution over image: in the pronounced heaviness of contour and uniformly compact clusters of needles on the trees, in the schematic depiction of the smaller rocks, most of all in the cliffs and mountain. The basic forms are still his old ones—note, for instance, the row of dark protrusions on the slope of the mountain—and the repeated curling strokes applied to some surfaces, especially in the lower part of the composition, are derived from the kind of rocky texturing seen in the “Wang Shen” landscape in the Freer Gallery (fig. 3). Here, however, they have little to do with the surfaces of rocks; and the even more densely applied tien, or dots, produced by patting or jabbing the brush tip against the silk (or paper?) along contours or over whole areas, have even less. Both serve essentially the same aim that the shaky lineament of the bizarre “Kuo Hsi style” did earlier: they deny to the landscape forms the natural textures and bulk that would make these convincing as rocks, or as masses of earth, diverting the emphasis rather to lively and interesting surface which serves no descriptive end but becomes its own end.

These features relate the picture clearly to styles current in the amateur tradition. There is, however, more to the matter than that. The amateurs, when they ventured into a “pointillist” manner, turned ordinarily to the “Mi School” tradition of the Sung dynasty masters Mi Fu and Mi Yuen, in which (at least in its later phases) the tien are used as a kind of stippling, making up, together with washes, the actual substance of the forms. Here, by contrast, they are used as an overlay on forms already clearly defined. Moreover, “Mi Style” landscapes were ordinarily composed of rolling hills in mist, never of vertical cliffs and a narrow ravine such as we have here.
For the sources of both the surface treatment and the composition, we must turn to a group of artists much later than Mi Fu.

These are the late Ming dynasty painters whom Sirén calls “traditionalists from the Northern Provinces”—Mi Wan-chung (1570–1628), Wang To (1592–1652), Tai Ming-yüeh (active in the 1640's and 1650's—his name usually given erroneously as Tai Ming-shuo), and—although they are properly Southerners, both being from Fukien Province—Wang Chien-chang (active ca. 1625–50) and Wu Pin, whose role in the formation of Yüan Chiang's style has already been noted (Part I, pp. 267–268), and who was a friend of Mi Wang-dung.12 The pairing of Mi Wan-chung and Tung Ch'i-ch'ang in the catch phrase of the time, “Tung in the South and Mi in the North,” implied more than a geographical distinction: these artists made up the only articulate opposition to Tung’s “Southern School” aesthetic.13 Wang To, in a letter to Tai Ming-yüeh, complained of the works of Ni Tsan that they were “dry and weak, like a sick man who is gasping for breath. They may be called airy and elegant, but how thin and uninspired they are!”14 A judgment more contrary to Tung Ch'i-ch'ang’s could hardly be imagined. And Tai Ming-yüeh himself wrote on his best-known landscape (fig. 9): “The manner of the Northern Sung masters has not been transmitted for a long time. I have now had a try at it, in opposition to the Sung-chiang manner”—which is to say, the following of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang.15

This last statement provides a key to the whole movement, if we can call it that: these (geographical) Northerners, while probably not quite willing to identify themselves with Tung’s much-disparaged Northern School, dissociated themselves from the Southern, and to some extent opposed it openly. The Southern School, with its amateur bias and exaltation of the unimpressive, must have seemed to some of Tung’s contemporaries to threaten the standardization of landscape painting into a restricted range of approved styles by discrediting all that lay outside that range. Their reactions to this threat took several forms.16 Wu Pin’s creation of the fantastic landscape mode, as we have already suggested, was a means of reviving, although in vastly altered guise, the long-neglected monumental landscape, and of preserving therein some of the values of the professional tradition, in compositions against which the charges of orthodoxy and sterility could scarcely be leveled. Mi Wan-chung, Wang To, and Tai Ming-yüeh, all amateurs, and all artists of far less ability

12 Sirén, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 56, quoting from Wu-sheng-shih shih.

13 Readers unfamiliar with the issues involved here may be confused by the various North-and-South distinctions referred to: the geographical (between North and South, i.e. East-Central, China); the chronological (between the Northern and Southern Sung periods); and the purportedly stylistic (between the “Northern and Southern Schools”). For this situation the Chinese are to blame, and not the present writer; the terms are so universally employed that to avoid them would only lead to even worse confusion.

14 Sirén, op. cit. vol. 5, p. 57.

15 Adapted from ibid., p. 78.

16 Opposition to the “Southern School” in the literature is a separate subject deserving of study; some of the relevant passages are gathered in Yü Chien-hua, Chung-kuo shan-shui hua ti nan-pei tsung-lun (The theory of the Northern and Southern schools in Chinese painting), Shang-hai, 1963, especially ch. 9, “Defenses of the Northern school.”
than Wu Pin, likewise looked back to Northern Sung landscape, which lay (in practice if not in theory) somewhat outside Tung Ch’i-ch’ang’s set of canonical models; but their aim was rather to adapt it to the uses of the amateur.17 They appear, that is, to have countered Tung’s virtual equation of the Southern School with the amateur tradition by attempting to create a kind of amateur’s Northern School. The attempt was not wholly successful—the disparity between their models and their own capacities was simply too great—and it proved to be far less influential on later painting than the achievements of Tung Ch’i-ch’ang, although its effect can be seen in certain works of the Nanking masters, of Shih-t’ao, and of some others.

It is this movement to which Yüan Chiang now appears to be harking back in his “House on Mt. Lu.” The method of texturing the earth and rock surfaces (ts’un-fa) is in fact a late, free version of the Northern Sung technique seen in the paintings of Fan K’uan and Yen Wen-kuei, the so-called “raindrop ts’un”; the emphasis on verticality in the composition, the waterfall shrouding the base of the cliff in mist, have the same ultimate source, with such works as Tai Ming-yüeh’s (fig. 9) intervening. Recognizing this allows us to suggest another aspect of Yüan Chiang’s response to the artistic issues of his time: it was not merely a passive acceptance of exclusion from the more fashionable “Southern School,” but, it would appear, a conscious espousal of the “Northern,” in his choice of models (Li Chao-tao, Li T’ang, Kuo Hsi, the Southern Sung Academy masters) who were generally consigned to that current, and even in his preference for a “Northern” amateur mode in those of his works that encroach on the styles of the scholar-amateurs. Where a slightly earlier professional who likewise worked in a variety of old manners, Lan Ying, had seemed unconcerned over the whole “North and South” question, doing a “Huang Kung-wang” picture one day and a “Li T’ang” the next, Yüan Chiang takes a decided stand and stays with it consistently.

Our suggestion that the style of Fan K’uan is the correct early referent for this painting of 1715 is given greater weight by the existence of another landscape, dated 1718, in which the derivation is more straightforward (fig. 10). The present whereabouts of the painting is unknown, and the plate that is our only evidence for it, badly reproduced from a bad photograph, permits no close scrutiny. Even so, it is apparent that this is another essay in the “pointillist” manner, in which the cliffs and rocks are covered evenly with small, more or less uniform strokes. The trees are painted with the same homogeneity of execution. What sets this picture apart from the “Mt. Lu” of 1715 is the far more complex formation of the mountain, sculptured in Yüan’s familiar fashion, with ridges tapering to narrow spines and deep hollows penetrating the masses. As an example of the persistence of certain forms that made up Yüan’s personal repertory, we may note the bluff in center left overhanging the hostel; the odd and structur-

17 For examples of relevant landscapes by Mi Wan-chung, see Tô Sô Gen Min meiga taikan, 359, or Siren, op cit., vol. 6, pl. 305; for Wang Tô, Tô Sô, 375 (perhaps, however, not a reliable work), Shen-chou ta-kuan III, or Kokka, 496. Another artist in this group is Yün Hsiang; see his landscape “afer Hsü Tao-ning,” So Gen Min Shin meiga taikan, 239.
ally ambiguous overlay of a dark shape on a lighter one, with their line of juncture continuing illogically to the upper contour, is paralleled in the pointed boulder just to the right of the house in the “Wang Shen” landscape of the Freer Gallery (fig. 3). The central position of the mountain, and its shape—the top flattened and slanting—refer to Northern Sung monumental landscape painting; the constricted openings to each side of this central mass, the threading of anecdotal detail through the lower portion (this is another “Road to Shu” scene), all have the same source, this time with less evident intervention of the late Ming styles.

To illustrate the furthest reach of Yüan Chiang’s exploration into this unpromising mode, we introduce another unsigned painting which is in fact provided with a nonsensical attribution to Tung Yüan (fig. 11). Many elements in it seem to betray the hand of Yüan Chiang: the clouds are rendered in the same distinctive manner as in the 1715 “Mt. Lu,” the trees are merely translations of those in the Freer “Wang Shen” landscape into a deliberately loosened style, and the formation of the bluff follows a familiar pattern—for instance, in the mass that curls around the right edge, a device traceable all the way back to the Nelson Gallery landscape of 1696 (Part I, fig. 9). The attribution to Tung Yüan, besides being chronologically off the mark by a full eight centuries, misses the point even as to tradition: the curling strokes and dots are not related to the “hemp-fibre ts’un” of the Tung Yüan manner at all, but rather to the texturing seen in Yüan Chiang’s landscape of 1715 (fig. 8), especially as it is employed in the lower part, above the figures and below the pines across the stream. Here it is exaggerated into an obtrusive mannerism; the painting can scarcely be seen as anything but a demonstration of an aberrant technique. What Yüan was trying for, presumably, was a vibrant and exciting surface; what he may have had in mind, as a model, was some such painting as the superb Tao-chi landscape in the Shanghai Museum (fig. 12). But no comparison could better illustrate the unsuitability of this manner to Yüan Chiang’s special aptitudes; his unfeeling, mechanical rendition, with the dots applied in uniformly spaced rows, induces a fatal monotony, which Tao-chi avoids through endless technical versatility and the continual operation of a sure aesthetic sense. The Chinese critics, presented with this same comparison, would remind us loftily that “it is this sort of thing that separates the scholarly tradition from the various others”\(^\text{18}\); and in view of the persistent record of failure, in later Chinese painting, whenever professional artists of conservative leanings attempt to adopt the amateur styles and values, their argument is difficult to counter.

Another excursion has ended in total disaster. If we could plot Yüan Chiang’s artistic career in graphic form, it would by now begin to resemble, in its devious course, one of his own compositions; or perhaps a kind of maze, in which most of the turnings open to him prove to be blind passageways, but in which the one option not open to him is that of moving straight from one point to another. What we have found in the works of Yüan Chiang, up to

\(^{18}\) Ch’in Tsu-yung on Hsiao Ch’en; see part I, p. 262.
now, has been a far cry from a proper stylistic development; nor does it strike one as simply the heterogeneous output of a painter with an experimental or merely quixotic turn of mind. Behind the surface unrest of his compositions, which is powerfully moving at times but only decorative at others, there lies, we begin to sense, something deeper: a feeling of desperation.

**FURTHER DIGRESSIONS**

In a painting dated 1719, only one year after the Fan K’uan style “Road to Shu,” we observe him once again, driven by whatever motives or pressures, setting off on another tack unlike any of those he had already tried and discarded (fig. 13). The subject and composition are standard: a villa among trees, a waterfall, a mountain rearing out of mist in the background—but the execution is now deliberately sketchy, featuring swift-moving line and a fluidity that is quite new. Nothing seems so substantial as before; the rocks have neither the heavy shading nor the carefully applied textures of his old manners. There is still some ambiguity in the formation of the principal mountain, with concavities insufficiently distinguished from convexities, but this seems here less calculated than accidental. Most of the picture conveys an air of improvisation and spontaneity, whether real or feigned. The old technical dexterity is to be seen only in the architectural drawing; the rest suggests a deliberate relaxing of technique.

A small landscape-with-villa scene in the Freer Gallery, dated 1722, reveals the artist, in the now familiar pattern, pushing further in this new direction (fig. 14). Even the architecture is now rendered in a rather perfunctory way, with exaggeratedly heavy line compensating for an all-over simplification, and the figures are drawn in summary fashion. The trees, in both the sinuous, repeated inclination of their trunks and the routine area-filling of the bare twigs, are devoid of individual character. Little attempt has been made to relate the background mountain to the nearer scenery; the long, straight horizontal of the wall, and the rooftops seen over it, are only minimally effective in establishing a middle ground. The real interest of the artist, and what little there is in the picture, lies rather in the loose, calligraphic brushwork used for the rocks and hill. Here, surely, is still another essay at amateurism: this time an informal, “draft script” style, in which the brushstroke is forever wavering, changing in width and direction, breaking into shredded, “worn-out-brush” sweeps, showing scant regard for form or texture, except that created by brushstrokes on a surface. The rock in the left foreground is, in fact, offhand to the point of incoherence.

Anyone unacquainted with Yüan Chiang’s previous digressions from technical discipline might be inclined to see in this picture the telltale signs of failing powers. With the understanding of him that we have reached by now, however, we may wonder whether the apparent ineptitudes are not in fact deliberate, at least in part, and will look once more beyond his own paintings to those of predecessors and contemporaries for some clue to what he is aiming at. Such a clue can perhaps be found in the work of another Yangchow artist, Huang Shen 黄慎 (fig. 15). Huang, although actually a professional painter, was an accomplished and original callig-
raper and poet as well and eventually came to be included in the predominantly amateur company of the "Eight Eccentrics" of Yangchow. He had settled in that city by 1723 and his work could easily have been known to Yüan Chiang in 1722. (The painting from which our detail is taken is undated but appears to be fairly early.) On the other hand, the subject and composition of his picture, a palace in a mountain gorge, might well have been inspired by works of Yüan Chiang. Leaving aside, however, the question of any possible influence of either painter on the other, we introduce this passage from Huang Shen's landscape only as an accomplished performance in a brushmanner closely akin to what Yüan Chiang is attempting. And again, the comparison reveals what has gone wrong in Yüan's handling of it: Huang, in brushwork that anticipates the feathery touch of his later style, turns his rock into a fanciful tangle of curling strokes; Yüan Chiang—whose virtues had never included any notable lightness of touch—remains heavy-handed and earthbound. His mountaintop (fig. 16) is neither good picture nor good calligraphy, but falls between the two.

If we still doubt—the painting, however we may explain it, is not very good—and need proof that Yüan Chiang's hand was really as sure as ever at this time, we have it in a huge landscape in the Nü Wa Chai Collection, likewise painted in 1722, even in the same month, the twelfth of the lunar year (fig. 17). This is another scene of P'eng-lai, one of the mythical Isles of Immortals in the Eastern Sea. It is similar in composition to the painting of 1708 (fig. 2) but even grander in scale and more complex in design. At the same time, it is far less dynamic and its forms less substantial; in place of a heaving of ponderous masses, the movement is now confined chiefly to the surface. This is true not only of the convoluted, twisting shapes of earth and rock, but also of the sea, where the surge and swell of the earlier version gives way to a repeated, more decorative wave pattern. In the palace as well, linear design supplants three-dimensional structure. The outstanding quality of the Nü Wa Chai painting, however, is only partly visible in the reproduction. It is a new finesse in execution. Yüan Chiang's experiments with distinctive varieties of brushwork, abortive though they were in themselves, have not been totally fruitless. He now returns to an old subject with an increased softness of touch and ease of manner. The contours of the rocks are no longer so dramatically emphasized, the washes are more restrained and subtle, the texturing used economically but effectively; the convolutions of the earth masses are striking and interesting but not bizarre; throughout, there is less evidence of striving for effect. Yüan Chiang has overcome, to a large degree, the slickness and hardness that often afflicted his more orthodox style but without relinquishing that control over technical means that made up its chief strength. Where previously he had seemed obliged always to make an unequivocal choice for one side or the other—a concern with inherently interesting execution, the fabric of the painting, or else with impressive and moving subjects, the "grand manner"—and to carry each to extremes, now he achieves a synthesis: a scene of true grandeur, painted with almost unprecedented sensitivity. It may seem a bit tame and dilute beside some of the earlier pictures,
and we may in the end prefer them; but by Chinese standards it is a triumph, partaking of the best of both worlds.

Such a landscape—or, more properly, the fusion of alternatives accomplished in it—could have marked the opening of a new era in Yüan Chiang’s painting. But the two dated works we have from the years immediately following show little if any sign of continuing in the direction it sets. A twelve-panel screen of 1723,¹⁹ of which only a single panel has been reproduced (fig. 18), is an entertaining performance in his familiar manner, perhaps a bit broader in execution than usual, but only insofar as the decorative intent of the picture allowed such a relaxed treatment. The rocks are again painted in playfully calligraphic brushwork, recalling once more the style of Huang Shen, but all the rest is as academic as ever.

A winter landscape dated 1725 (fig. 19), known to me only through a photograph, is even less related to the new orientation of the Nü Wa Chai painting of P’eng-lai (fig. 17). In certain features, in fact, it is a throwback to his earliest period. The central mass is eroded with deep fissures, and constructed with undercut, narrowing, and splaying forms that seem resurrected from his works of the 1690’s (e.g. Part I, fig. 9).

¹⁹ The date does not appear on the painting, nor is it mentioned in the caption to the reproduction in Chung-kuo hua, 1959, no. 11, where it is designated only as one panel of a twelve-fold screen. I am assuming that this is the screen listed under the year 1723 in Hsü Pang-ta, Li-tai lin-chuan shu-hua tso-p’ in pien-nien piao 歷代流傳書畫作品編年表, Shanghai, 1963, p. 427; and also, although here listed as a six-fold screen, in Kuo Wei-ch’ü 郭煒偶, Sung Yüan Ming Ch’ing shu-hua-chia nien-piao 宋元明清書畫年表, Peking, 1958, p. 328.

The strong diagonal movements across the picture surface, the curving shoreline, the high and remote viewpoint, all recall the early style. There are, however, significant differences. The “main mountain” of the early compositions is now brought forward to the middle ground and thereby reduced in scale; to balance it, a much more realistically depicted mountain is introduced in the distance. This distant passage and the recession toward it are handled with surprising realism, so much so, in fact, that the fantastic formation towering over the villa in the middle ground seems a jarring imposition. Without it this would become one of those spacious vistas that have called forth the suggestion of Western influence in Yüan Chiang’s landscapes.

The best example of such a vista known to me is in the “Green Wilderness Hall” (Lu-yeh T’ang), an undated work that can be provisionally assigned, through its affinity with the winter landscape of 1725, to a fairly late period in Yüan’s œuvre (fig. 20). This may, again, be a section of a screen. ²⁰ It presents the mildest of scenery in a lovely, unassuming way, with no slightest intrusion of the dramatic, the fantastic, or the calligraphic. The individual elements in it are standard enough, for Yüan Chiang; what is unusual is rather how they are arranged and represented. The ground plane, first of all, is unusually level, and the recession convincingly handled. Also, except for

²⁰ An eight-fold screen by Yüan Chiang with the same title (Lu-yeh T’ang), dated 1720, is in the Kyoto National Museum; see Werner Speiser, Roger Goepper, and Jean Fribourg, Chinese art, vol. III: Painting, calligraphy, stone rubbing, wood engraving, New York, 1964, pl. 80, and color detail, pl. 33. The second panel from the left is similar in composition to the painting under discussion.
the foreground trees, which are drawn in the conventional straight-on view, nearly everything in the painting is shown more or less as it would be seen from a single viewpoint; we seem to look down on the foreground, less sharply down in the middle ground, and straight into distance. This is in contrast to the customary Chinese landscapists’ practice of representing objects throughout the composition in simple side view, even though their distance from the viewer and their position on an understood ground plane imply that they should be seen from varying angles. To eyes accustomed to Occidental painting, Yüan Chiang’s departure from this convention may not seem very remarkable or wholly successful; but in the Chinese context, it can only be seen as an attempt at something like Western perspective. The upper half of the picture, particularly, exhibits a quite un-Chinese illusionism (fig. 21).

Once the question of Western influence has been raised, we may wonder whether it might not be detected elsewhere in Yüan Chiang’s works—for instance, in the strong chiaroscuro used for rocks in the paintings in his “romantic” manner (figs. 2–4). There is no need here to meet the suggestion of Western influence with distrust—as there is, generally, when it is made of Chinese painting much more than a century earlier than this—since by the first decades of the 18th century, semi-Westernized landscapes were being painted by several known artists and must have been familiar to a great many more. Some traces of contact with Occidental styles are evident in the works of artists of the late Ming period, including Wu Pin, who was followed in this aspect of his art, as in others, by Fan Ch’i. Chiao Ping-chen 焦秉貞 had practiced this new style at the imperial court under the K’ang-hsi emperor; his scroll depicting an imperial progress to the south, probably painted shortly before or after the turn of the century, exhibits a similar handling of recessions and misty distance (fig. 22).

The format of the handscroll destroys from the start any chance of establishing a successfully single, unified viewpoint, but the intent is clear. Lang Shih-ning’s (or Castiglione’s) magnum opus, the “Hundred Horses” scroll, painted in 1728, was in itself a textbook of Occidental illusionism; and Ch’en Mei 陳枚, another landscapist using a mixed Chinese-Western style, was also serving in the Imperial Academy by that time. Western-style painting was, in fact, largely confined to the Court Academy painters, with a few professionals outside the court imitating them. No self-respecting scholar-painter succumbed to such beguiling barbarian trickery; an appraisal of Chiao Ping-chen written by Chang Keng around 1735 can be taken as representative of the official literati attitude: “Mr. Chiao caught the idea (of Western painting) but altered it somewhat. However, this (style) isn’t worthy of refined enjoyment, and no one who respects antiquity will adopt it.”

Yüan Chiang respected antiquity, but not enough to pass up what looked like a good thing. Along with a few of his contemporaries—and like Hokusai, who was

21 Published in full in Kokka, no. 687, with descriptive note by Yonezawa Yoshiho, who states that the painting may depict any one of six journeys to the south made by the Kang-hsi emperor between 1684 and 1707.

22 Kuo-ch’ao hua-chêng lu, ch. II, p. 76. Quoted by Yonezawa Yoshiho in his “Chügoku kinsē kaia to seiyō gāhō” (Western style in recent Chinese painting), Part III, Kokka, no. 688, p. 193.
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born into a similar artistic predicament a century later in Japan, and who was forced by it into similarly restless, wandering artistic paths—Yüan Chiang tried his hand at the Western style as yet another means of injecting freshness into the conservative tradition of painting.

The works we have been considering, three of them dated from 1722 to 1725 and the fourth probably of that period as well, do not in fact add up to any consistent "new direction" at all. On the contrary, they indicate that Yüan Chiang, at least thirty years after the outset of his career, is still occupied with experiments in new styles and techniques, still unresolved as to which course, of those open to him, might lead to some ultimate fulfillment of his artistic destiny. At this point, if we were composing a work of fiction instead of the sober scholarly study this is, we might feel justified in injecting a note of suspense: will Yüan Chiang's quest come at last to an end? Will he, going beyond the Freer Gallery picture of 1722 (fig. 14), turn into a Yangchow eccentric, like Huang Shen? Will he achieve some brilliant synthesis of traditional Chinese and Western styles? Or will he, following what was perhaps the most promising direction of all, that seen in the Nü Wa Chai landscape of 1722 (fig. 17), win a place of respect in Chinese painting by executing his awe-inspiring compositions in a personal and admirable brush-manner?

YÜAN CHIANG AS COURT ARTIST: THE LAST YEARS

Our story has a happy ending, of a sort, but none of those. Some time during the reign of the Yung-cheng emperor (1723-1730), Yüan Chiang received the high honor of being called to the Imperial Court and given the position of chih-hou "painter-in-waiting," in the Yang-hsin Tien 炳心殿, the section of the palace where the studios and workshops of artists and artisans were located. 23 There, he may have been put to work painting decorative screens, or wall panels, or perhaps even making designs for lacquered objects or some form of "applied art." We have no way of knowing what he did, since there is apparently no record of his activity there, 24 and none of his production as a court painter has been published or recorded. He seems to have taken no part in any of the collaborative projects in which

23 The rendering of chih-hou is Alexander Soper's; see Kuo Jo-hsü, T'u-hua chien-wen chih (Experiences in painting), translated and annotated by Alexander C. Soper, Washington, American Council of Learned Societies, 1951, p. 131, note 210. This was the second of four ranks, below the tai-chao. Information on the imperial workshops and the painters who worked there can be found in Roger Goepper, T'ang-tai, ein Hofmaler der Ch'ing-Zeit, Munich, 1956 (mimeographed), pp. 4-16. The Kuo-ch'ao hua-cheng hsü-lu (cf. note 2) states that Yüan Chiang was given the position of chih-hou in the Yung-cheng court; the Hua-jen pu-i 畫人補遺, an anonymous compilation of the Ch'ien-lung era published in the Harvard-Yenching volume, Ch'ing hua-ch'uan chi i san-chung 清畫傳 輯佚三種, reports that he served in the Wai ("outer") Yang-hsin Tien. I have not been able to ascertain the significance of this "outer". The Yang-hsin Tien was a subdivision of the complex of buildings called the Ju-i Kuan 如意館, located south of the Ch'i-hsiang Kung 啓祥宮 in the Forbidden City.

24 A more thorough search of Ch'ing dynasty palace records than I have been able to carry out may turn up further information; my research has been limited to standard sources.
other court painters engaged during this period. He may still have been working in the early years of the reign of the Ch'ien-lung emperor (1736–96), who, as an amateur painter and connoisseur, kept a close personal watch over the output of his Academy and chose the finest paintings to be recorded in the imperial catalogues, Shih-ch'iù pao-chi and Pi-tien ch'u-lin. Not one of Yuan Chiang's works is so recorded. Nor, stranger still, is any listed, under his name at least, in the thorough inventory of the Ch'ing palaces taken from 1925 to 1930. One might surmise that the paintings had been presented by Ch'ien-lung or subsequent emperors to relatives or people outside the palace, but no work dated to this period or signed as a court painter would sign (the signature preceded by the character ch'en 臣, "your servant,") is to my knowledge in existence. The implication of all this is that his paintings or designs, whatever form they took, were unsigned, and thus presumably did not belong to the category of objects that were considered self-sufficient works of art, on which the maker could properly put his signature to identify them as his personal creations. This supposition is the best we can make at present; it can be verified or altered only when the palaces in Peking are once more accessible, and we can search for traces of his hand in painted panels in walls or furniture, perhaps, or in some other place where an artist reduced to the status of artisan might be made to exercise his craft. Until then, this period of Yuan Chiang's life must remain a blank.

We can speculate, however, from what we know of the situation of painting in the Academy at this time, about Yuan Chiang's position there. The Jesuit Lang Shih-ning, or Castiglione, was a leading figure, painting the Emperor's favorite animals and executing ambitious illustrative scrolls in collaboration with other court painters. Ch'en Mei, the leading pupil of Chiao Ping-chen, was also working in a conservatively, technically finished Chinese manner with some admixture of Occidental style. It is quite possible that Yuan Chiang first came to the notice of the court as a practitioner of this hybrid mode and used it in his works for the palace. The dominant faction among the Yang-hsin Tien painters, however, was the so-called Lou-tung 聯東 School, the following of Wang Yuan-ch'i, and the most favored artist of all was T'ang-t'ai. The K'ang-hsi emperor had called him the foremost among painters; the Ch'ien-lung emperor composed a poem

25 See John C. Ferguson, ed., Li-t'ai chu-lu bna-mu (Catalogue of the Recorded paintings of successive dynasties), Nanking, Chinling University, 1934, Supplement I, for a listing of these. Some of them are described at the end of Ku-ch'ao yüan-hua lu 國朝院畫錄, a work on the Ch'ing dynasty court painters compiled ca. 1817 by Hu Ching 胡敬.

26 Goepper, op. cit., p. 5. As Goepper notes, there was strictly speaking no true "Academy" in the Ch'ing palace, but the term is in such general usage that I have continued to employ it instead of some more accurate designation such as "Imperially-sponsored Painting Workshops."


28 On p. 260 of Part I, the assumption was made that "hundreds of works" of Yuan Chiang and Yuan Yao must have existed in the Ch'ien-lung emperor's palaces. This suggestion should be qualified in line with the present discussion. These works may not have been in the form of hanging scrolls at all; and they may in fact have been few in number, but of a kind that represented extensive periods of work.
Fig. 1.—Palace by a River in Spring, By Yuan Chiang. Dated 1704.
Shanghai Museum.
Fig. 2.—Isle of Immortals at P’eng-lai, by Yuan Chiang. Dated 1708.
After Chiang-kuo hua, 1959, no. 4.
Fig. 3.—Mountain Landscape with a Pavilion, by Yuan Chiang (formerly attributed to Wang Shen). Freer Gallery of Art.
Fig. 4.—Landscape with a Picnic Under the Trees, by Yuan Chiang (false signature of Ma Yuan). Freer Gallery of Art.
Fig. 5.—Landscape with a Villa, by Yüan Chiang. Dated 1711.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
Fig. 6.—The Paradise of the Peach-Blossom Spring, by Yüan Chiang. Dated 1718. The Art Museum, Princeton University.
Fig. 7.—Landscape with a Villa, by Yüan Chiang. Dated 1717.
The Art Institute of Chicago.
Fig. 8.—A House on Mt. Lu, by Yuan Chiang. Dated 1715. After Sō Gen Min shin meiga taikan. Formerly Yuan Sun-ch'u Collection.

Fig. 9.—Landscape in Northern Sung Style, by Tai Ming-yüeh. After Tō Sō Gen Min meiga taikan.
Fig. 10.—The Road to Shu, by Yuan Chiang. Dated 1718.
After (Tōkasha) Shina meiga-shū.
FIG. 11.—LANDSCAPE WITH PINES, PROBABLY BY YÜAN CHANG (FORMERLY ATTRIBUTED TO TUNG YÜAN). AFTER NANSHI IHSATSU.
Fig. 12.—Landscape, by Tao-chi.
Shanghai Museum.
Fig. 13.—Landscape "in Old Style," By Yuan Chiang. Dated 1719.
After Kokka, 584. S. Kobayashi Collection.
Fig. 14.—Palace Scene at Dawn, by Yüan Chiang. Dated 1722. Freer Gallery of Art.
Fig. 15.—Detail from Landscape with Palace, by Huang Shen. After Nani jü meiga-en, 25.

Fig. 16.—Detail from Figure 14.
Fig. 17.—Mt. P'eng-lai, by Yüan Chiang. Dated 1722. Nü Wa Chai Collection.
Fig. 18.—Landscape with Palace, by Yüan Chiang. Panel from a screen, dated 1723. After Chung-kuo hua, 1959, no. 11.

Fig. 19.—Winter Landscape, by Yüan Chiang. Dated 1725. Private Collection.
Fig. 20.—The Green Wilderness Hall, by Yuan Chiang. Private Collection.
Fig. 21.—Detail from Figure 20.

Fig. 22.—Imperial Progress of the K'ang-hsi Emperor (section), by Chiao Ping-chen. After Kokka, 687.
Fig. 23.—Landscape with Storm, by Yüan Chiang, Dated 1740. Ching Yüan Chai Collection.

Fig. 24.—River Landscape by Yüan Chiang. Leaf from an Album(?) dated 1743. Formerly Manchu Imperial Household Collection.
Fig. 25.—Landscape in the Manner of Kuo Hsi, by Yuan Chiang. Leaf from the Same Album as Figure 24.

Fig. 26.—Mt. Peng-lai, by Yuan Chiang. Leaf from the Same Album as Figure 24.
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for one of his landscapes in which the artist was elevated to the company of Fan K’uan, Ni Tsan, and T’ang Yin. 29 Seeing his paintings today, we can only concur in Sirén’s judgment of them as “depressingly empty.” The truth is that T’ang-t’ai’s commanding position was not so much earned as inherited; he was the official heir to the lineage of Wang Yu’an-ch’i, which went back further to Wang Shih-min and still further to Tung Ch’i-ch’ang himself. The barrenness of T’ang-t’ai’s brush was thus of minor consequence beside the unassailable correctness of his artistic ancestry. The atrophy of the main-line “Southern School” tradition of Tung Ch’i-ch’ang and the Four Wangs among the Yung-cheng and Ch’ien-lung court painters, pseudo-amateur academicians working in strict conformity to what had once been a non-conformist mode, might have amused Tung Ch’i-ch’ang. Yu’an Chiang, we may be sure, was not amused. Having escaped from one amateur-dominated situation, he found himself in another. Now, however, he could not try his hand at competing with them in their own game, partly because it was a game for which he had neither liking nor aptitude—through all his stylistic excursions, he had consistently shied away from the styles of the Four Wangs and their followers—but also because the choice was in any case no longer his. Whatever his function in the palace workshops may have been, it surely made no allowance for free explorations into unfamiliar stylistic ground.

We do not know how many years he remained at court. From a chance clue, however, we know that by 1744 he had left the capital and returned to the south—perhaps, as was common practice, pleading old age as an excuse for retirement. In the mid autumn of that year, another landscape painter who later served at court, Chang Tsung-ts’ang, wrote an inscription on one of his own paintings, concluding with the words: “In the chia-tzu year of the Ch’ien-lung era [1744], mid autumn, painted in the spirit of [Tung] Pei-yüan at Yu’an Chiang’s Duckweed Flower Library [P’ing-hua Shu-wu 萍華書屋]; *Chang Tsung-ts’ang of Wu-chün.*” 30 At this time Chang was still living in the Wu District, the region of Soochow, where he had learned painting from Huang Ting 翁鴻; it was not until 1751 that he caught the favor of Ch’ien-lung on one of the emperor’s trips to the south and was invited to court. 31 Yu’an Chiang’s “Duckweed Flower Library” may have been in that same area, or he may have returned to Yangchow, less than a hundred miles away, where Chang Tsung-ts’ang could easily have visited him.

The designation of his studio as a “library,” shu-wu, if not merely conventional, suggests a literary bent not evidenced earlier in his life—he had never, for instance, written more than very brief inscriptions on his paintings. The “Duckweed Flower” might connote something like “the rewards of an unsettled life,” since the free-floating duckweed is often used as a metaphor in China for a rootless existence. If so, the image is apt; it had indeed been a long and drifting career. Exactly half a century separated Chang Tsung-ts’ang’s visit from the autumn of 1694, when Yu’an painted the landscape in Kuo Hsi style that

29 Sirén, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 216, quoting from Kuo-ch’ao yüan-hua lu, ch. I, p. 3b.
31 Ibid., p. 7b.

* See correction: has 1744, July, following p. 178.
is now his earliest extant dated picture (Part I, fig. 9); if we suppose that he was then at least twenty years of age, he would now be seventy or over.

From his last years we have two works: a hanging scroll dated 1740 and a set of twelve vertical landscape compositions, presumably mounted as either a screen or a large album, dated 1743. The painting of 1740 (fig. 23) is inscribed with a verse of poetry: “The mountain rain will soon arrive, wind fills the upstairs rooms,” along with the date and signature. The writing is not in Yüan Chiang’s usual hand, and may well be an interpolation. If, however, as would appear to be the case, this is one panel of a screen, or one of a series of hanging scrolls forming a continuous composition, of which only one was signed, it would be normal for the signature, and perhaps the date as well, to be copied onto the unsigned panels when the series was broken up. Such interpolated signatures are frequently met with also on stray leaves from albums that have been dispersed, in which only the last leaf was originally signed. The weakness of the calligraphy, then, need not positively disqualify the painting, which seems in itself acceptable as a late work of Yüan Chiang. The scenery is laid out in the same broad, fairly loose manner as the palace scene of the 1723 screen (fig. 18), with the assurance of a master who no longer needs or cares to expend much effort on making the parts of his picture take their assigned places. The rendering of murky atmosphere and wind-ruffled water, the shifting ground planes created by diagonals meandering up to a slanting horizon are evocative and not without skill. But much of the drawing is perfunctory—the willows, in particular—and the picture as a whole seems rather shallow and decorative in intent. Quite apart from the uncertainty of the date and even the ascription, it gives no clear indication of any new concerns occupying the painter at this time.

The twelve-panel screen or album, from which we reproduce three panels or leaves, is his last known work, dated 1743 (figs. 24, 25, 26). With an image in mind of the aged artist in retirement, escaped from the imperial court and living out his remaining years in the south, we might hope for some final summing up, a mellow and retrospective survey of his accomplishments. If so, the reality is a caricature of our expectations. All the main varieties of painting Yüan Chiang had practiced at different stages of his life are indeed represented, but in such stereotyped and unfeeling renditions that they seem like parodies of their predecessors. The fantastic rockeries of the “Kuo Hsi” manner become ponderous and grotesque (fig. 25), the “Southern Sung” river landscape is devoid of atmosphere (fig. 24), and the concluding scene of the “Realms of Immortals at P’eng-lai” (fig. 26) is as hard and stiff as a woodcut, or a design executed for the hundredth time on a porcelain vase.

And this last may in fact be the truth of the matter. Perhaps these pictures had best be seen not merely as works of an artist long past his prime—old age need not diminish the powers of a painter at all—but rather as those of one who has wasted years of his life in the routine performance of some simple decorative function that required no freshness or sensitivity and now tries to return to his old calling, only to find that he has prostituted his art too long—that the creative act, like the pro-
creative, can be reduced by constant forced repetition to a mechanical and unfelt exercise. Until other late works of Yüan Chiang that may alter our interpretation of this last period come to light, we are forced to number him in the unhappily fortunate company of artists who have been ruined by success.

CONCLUSION,
WITH REMARKS ON METHOD

The principal conclusion of this study was anticipated near the beginning and can only be reiterated now: that the surviving work of Yüan Chiang, seen as a whole and in sequence, proves to be of more interest and significance to the history of Chinese painting that any single picture by him would lead us to suppose. It remains only to suggest what this significance might be.

First of all, the course of his career as a painter (and all the foregoing indicates why we can speak only of a course, not of a progress or even a development) reveals the complexity of interrelationships in Ch'ing dynasty painting and warns us against trying to treat any artist or school in isolation. The sequence of his works would, I believe, remain totally unintelligible if considered purely as the outcome of spontaneous artistic impulses or a natural evolution. It must, on the contrary, be seen in a context that includes not only other painting of his time but relevant productions of earlier periods, as well as critical attitudes and aesthetic preferences that were operating in his environment. Proper account must be taken, that is, of outside factors that may have affected his choices. Moreover, the events of his life, little as we know of them in the case of Yüan Chiang, must have played some part also in determining the directions his painting took. Whether or not the factors we have introduced (admittedly rather speculatively in some cases)—the continuing influence of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang and his ideas, the opposition to these by the “Northern amateurs,” the development of the fantastic landscape mode of Wu Pin and others, the ascendancy in Yangchow of the individualists and eccentrics, the demand for novelty, the practice of a hybrid Chinese-Western style among court artists, Yüan Chiang's own service at court—whether or not these are the right ones, and whether or not they affected his works in just the ways we have suggested, some such approach must be adopted if we are to understand and assess those works.

Secondly, the example of Yüan Chiang must impress upon us forcibly the degree to which the operation of these same factors, along with the most important of all, the artist's free choice, will inevitably disrupt any neat stylistic sequence that we might expect the paintings to exhibit. Yüan Chiang's works, by virtue of being dated in most cases (a situation highly uncommon among professional painters), can be arranged in chronological order and seen as a series, which proves in the end to have a certain logic: themes introduced in one work are developed in later ones, devices used in moderation at first are thereafter carried to extremes of mannerism, certain types of landscape occupy the artist at certain stages of his career. But one may wonder what the result would be if the paintings were undated, and we were to attempt to establish their sequence on
stylistic grounds only. Lacking any knowledge of when and how such external circumstances might have deflected that sequence, or when the artist became convinced that he had exhausted one line of stylistic inquiry and abandoned it for another, perhaps radically different, we would have no choice but to try to arrange the pictures as if their direction had somehow been internally dictated throughout; and we would probably go badly wrong.

The particular circumstances we have outlined are of course applicable only to Yüan Chiang himself and to some of his contemporaries. But similar sets of circumstances operated in other circles and other periods, increasingly so after the Yüan dynasty, as the possibilities of stylistic choice open to painters became ever broader, but also, although to a lesser degree, in still earlier centuries. Moreover, the likelihood of such stylistic diversity as we have seen in Yüan Chiang's output is even greater in the works of the scholar-artists, who were more inclined than the professionals to shift styles frequently, or to employ a variety of manners at one time. While it is quite possible in most cases to perceive common traits among paintings by a single artist in different manners—we have noted, for instance, the presence of characterizing features of Yüan Chiang's style in strikingly dissimilar landscapes—the connection between a given pair of paintings, representing the artist's extreme points of departure (e. g. figs. 11 and 20), can be very tenuous, and any criteria formulated so as to include everything of which he was capable are likely to be so broad or vague as to be of questionable value. This is not to argue that the problem of determining authenticity or sequence in such cases is a hopeless one, but only that one's perceptions must be refined to a point where they cannot always be reduced to neat formulations. And conversely, if one insists on neat formulations, these cannot be expected to be valid for more than a fraction of the material. For when such marked diversity, down to basic features of style, can exist in the work of a single master, the error of supposing any greater homogeneity in a school of painters or a whole period of painting is self-evident. The task of determining the latitude of the repertory of styles practiced by a Chinese painter or within a circle of painters, at the same time recognizing and rejecting what lies outside its furthest limits, is not an easy one and will not produce such immediately persuasive results, perhaps, as the simpler one of establishing a group of works with easily perceived relationships and discarding everything else. Nevertheless, it is the former task that must in the end be accomplished. Later Chinese painting is a rich and varied terrain, as the example of Yüan Chiang has surely shown, with the paths through it manifold and sometimes devious. But to grow impatient and begin to cut superhighways is to miss a good part of the scenery.

(A concluding installment will deal with Yüan Yao, Yüan Hsiüeh, and a few anonymous works of the school.)
STUDIES IN JAPANESE PORTRAITURE: THE STATUE OF VIMALAKİRTI AT HOKKE-JI

By JOHN M. ROSENFIELD

Preserved in the Hokke-ji 法華寺 nunery near Nara is an ancient wooden statue of Vimalakirti (figs. 1 and 2), one of the largest and oldest freestanding images of this subject found in East Asia.1 Carved in an unusually naturalistic manner, its sense of characterization is so close to that of a distinct individual that it is often included among the early examples of Japanese portraiture.2

Vimalakirti is the central figure of a Mahāyāna treatise composed perhaps in the second century A.D.3 In this, he is described as a layman who lived during the lifetime of Śākyamuni and possessed such deep religious insight that, among all the Great Bodhisattvas and Disciples of the Buddha, only Manjuṣrī felt able to converse with him.4

is preserved only in fragmentary citations in later works; the complete text is found in the Tibetan and Chinese versions. The oldest known Chinese translation was made in A.D. 188 at Lo-yang but is now lost. The most influential translations were those of Kumārajīva in A.D. 406 and Hsüan-tsang in A.D. 650. The former is number 475 of the Taishō Daizōkyō; English translation by Izumi Hōkei in Eastern Buddhism, vol. 3, 1924, pp. 55-69, 138-153, 224-243, 336-349; vol. 4, 1925-28, pp. 48-55, 177-192, 348-360. The latter is number 476 of the Taishō Daizōkyō; French translation correlated with the Tibetan version in the Kanjur by Étienne Lamotte, L’enseignement de Vimalakirti, Bibliothèque du Muséon, vol. 51, Louvain, 1962. For an analysis of the date, translations, and contents of the text, see the introduction to Lamotte’s translation, pp. 1-95; also the review of this by Jacques May, T’oung Pao, vol. 51, 1964, pp. 85-98.

Vimalakirti is described as a wealthy member of the influential Licchavi clan living in the city of Vaiśālī in northern Bihar. There is little reason to believe, however, that he was an historical person, even though he was considered such in China. Chinese pilgrims to Vaiśālī were shown places identified as the ruins of his house, and Wang Hsüan-ts’e 王玄策 even measured his room; but Lamotte has pointed out that these sites were probably inventions of the Indian guides to satisfy the meticulously factual historical curiosity of the foreigners (L’enseignement, p. 81; see also Vincent Smith, Vaiśālī, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1902, pp. 267-288).

1 Classified as an Important Cultural Property, the statue is 92 cm. high. The surface was originally polychromed, but wear and flaking have transformed it into a ghostly, chalky white.

2 Robert Paine in R. Paine and A. Soper, The art and architecture of Japan, Baltimore, 1955, p. 28; Langdon Warner, Japanese sculpture of the Tempyō period, Cambridge, 1959, p. 65, pls. 150, 151; Hasumi Shigeyasu, ed., Könin, Jogan jidai no Bijutsu 遠賀寛信, 弘仁貞観時代の美術, Tokyo, 1962, p. 235. The portraits with which it is linked: Ganjin Wajō 龍真和上, at Tōshōdai-ji datable from shortly after A.D. 763 (Pageant of Japanese Art, Tokyo, 1952, pl. 26); Gyōshin Sōzu 行信僧都 at the Yumedono, Hōryū-ji (ibid., fig. 34); Gien Sōjo 龍真僧正, at Okadera 亮寺, datable about A.D. 800 (Sekai Bijutsu Zenshū, Tokyo, 1961, vol. 4, pl. 74); Dōsen Risshō 道深律師, also in the Yumedono, Hōryū-ji (ibid., pl. 75).

3 The Vimalakirti-nirdēsa (the instructions or discourse of Vimalakirti) was composed in Sanskrit by the second century A.D. at the latest. It is one of the oldest of the developed Mahāyāna sūtras and is closely connected with the early Prajñāpāramitā literature. The Sanskrit original

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Theologically, Vimalakīrti was considered "a sage who had reached the height of spiritual enlightenment. In his person he was identical with the Ultimate Entity (Bhutatathata)." By the canons of classical Indian Buddhist art, spiritual attainment of this order had been expressed in terms of the perfection or idealization of the human form. The individuality of a saint or the signs of his mortality were not fit themes for an artist, and genuine portraiture was totally absent from Indian Buddhist sculpture. The Hokke-ji statue reflects an inversion of these aesthetic values and is a symptom of the ways by which Indian traditions had been adapted to the customs and tastes of the Chinese and Japanese. Moreover, it is no coincidence that the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sūtra itself, one of the most influential of the Mahāyāna sūtras in the East, expresses clearly many of the concepts by which this revolution of aesthetic standards became Ideologically possible in China and Japan.

**STYLE AND DATE**

The Hokke-ji statue is faithful to the details in the sūtra which tell that Vimalakīrti feigned an illness in order to aid in the salvation of others: that is, he sought to attract visits of sympathy from the dignitaries and citizens of Vaiśālī to set a suitable stage for a sermon on the infirmities of the human flesh—

Gentlemen, the human body is transient, unstable, unworthy of confidence, and weak; it is without solidity, is perishable, of short duration, is filled with sorrow and unease, filled with ailments, and subject to change.... The wise man trusts it not.
alized cult imagery—smoothed and flawless surfaces, harmonious proportions, symmetry, and quasi-geometric forms for the head or eyes or neck.

The statue is neither inscribed nor mentioned specifically in antique records. Without such external aids to its dating, there have been marked differences in the views of Japanese scholars concerning its date. The most reasonable attribution is to the late Tempyō or early Heian periods, between A.D. 775 and 825, even though there are voices raised in strong dissent. If the former view is correct, the statue would have shared directly in the spirit of naturalism which was widely current in the Buddhist arts of T'ang China and Nara in Japan (discussed below).

Of the four early Japanese statues of Vimalakirti still extant, the Hokke-ji version is by far the least conventionalized. The one in Höryū-ji is older (fig. 3), dating from A.D. 711, and is part of a large panoramic group of dry clay images depicting the interview between Vimalakirti and Mañjuśrī placed on the ground floor of the Five-Story Pagoda (fig. 6). It shows Vimalakirti as bearded, a feature which is faithful to the Chinese tradition—in fact, the entire group is the only equivalent in early Japanese art of the many elaborate scenes of the interview in Chinese sculpture and painting of the Six Dynasties and

7 The tradition at Hokke-ji holds that the statue was made for the ceremonial reading of the VKN at the temple during the last half of the eighth century (Hokke-ji Okagami, Nanto Jūdai-ji Okagami, vol. 19, Tokyo, 1934, pls. 17-20). This is accepted as accurate by Kobayashi Takeshi, 小林剛, Nara no Bijutsu, Sogen Sensho, vol. 269, Tokyo, 1963, p. 83.

8 Supported by the recent research of Kuno Takeshi, 久野健, Hokke-ji to Butsu-zō, Nanto Bukkyō, vol. 6, pp. 111-116; Hokke-ji Yuima-zō Bukkyō Geijutsu, vol. 18, 1953, pp. 22-27; and his analysis of X-ray photographs of the statue in Kōgakuteki Hōbō ni yoru Kobijutsushin no Kenkyū (studies of old art through optical methods), Tokyo, 1955, pp. 110-111, figs. 11, 12, pl. 10. X-ray studies show that the statue is made of assembled blocks of wood covered with a hempen cloth; some surface details were modeled in a paste mixture of sawdust and lacquer which varies greatly in thickness. The interior of both the head and body is hollowed out; the head and chest section is made of two pieces joined vertically along the ears. The body is made of at least three blocks: the knees and pelvis are one piece, the stomach and lower chest are of two pieces joined front to back. The two arms are attached separately; the hands are separate and later additions. This construction technique is similar to that used in the Amida Trinity in the Dempō-dō at Höryū-ji or the Yakushi Nyorai from Kōzan-ji, 華山寺, now in the Tokyo National Museum.

9 The strongest is that of Kanamori Jun, 金森俊, Hokke-ji Yuiakōji-zō kō, Gsetsu, vol. 12, 1938, pp. 907-916. Chiefly on grounds of details of construction, he holds that it is a work of the late 9th or early 10th century. He feels also that it is clumsy and unimaginative, lacking the vitality and competence of the full realism of the Nara period. He was joined in the opinion by Dōtani Kenyū, 東谷鑑勇, Yuiakōji-zō, Bukkyō Geijutsu, vol. 9, 1950, p. 80, who was disappointed with the figure because it stops aesthetically at the level of representing an average, ordinary person. The essays of Kuno Takeshi cited in note 8 are a convincing refutation of these views.

10 Höryū-ji Okagami, Nanto Jūdai-ji Okagami, vol. 4, Tokyo, 1932, pls. 7-24; Kuno Takeshi, Höryū-ji no Chōkoku, Tokyo, 1958, pp. 85-91. These clay figures have been subject to changes and repairs over the centuries, but the group of Vimalakirti and Mañjuśrī is thought to be the best preserved of the four sets, which include the Pari nirvāṇa of the Buddha on the north, the division of the relics on the west, and the appearance of Maitreya on the south.
T'ang periods. The small scale and position in a complex of statues have deprived the figure of Vimalakīrti at Hōryū-ji of intensity and individuality of expression.

Two other versions in wood belong to Tendai temples in Shiga Prefecture, and there is much evidence to indicate that the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa was closely read and studied in Tendai temples in the 9th and 10th centuries.11 The figure from Ishiyama-dera 石山寺 (fig. 4) must date from the late 9th century.12 It was made from a single block of wood, hollowed out in the center, and originally painted. Judging from its squat proportions and block-like solidity, its sculptor may have been close to native Japanese craft traditions; it is moreover, not unlike small Shintō figurines popular in the late Heian-early Fujiwara periods. On the other hand, the statue at Seiryō-ji 青龍寺, a sub-temple of Enryaku-ji 延暦寺 on Hiei-zan 比叡山, is hieratic in spirit and projects a strong sense of exhortation or teaching (fig. 5).13 It is rather symmetrical and frontal, the surfaces of the face have been smoothed, the wrinkles and folds of flesh have been converted into semi-geometrical elements. The costume is more florid and ornate than usual and may have resulted from a rather naïve attempt of the sculptor to depict Vimalakīrti as a demi-god. This unusual statue is also difficult to date closely, but it probably belongs to the late 9th or early 10th century.

12 Nippon Kokubō Zenshū, vol. 32, pl. 622.

RITUAL USE OF THE VIMALAKĪRTI STATUES

Because no record exists as to when the statue of Vimalakīrti actually entered Hokke-ji, there is a possibility that it came from another temple. Many works were transferred from one temple to another in the Asuka-Nara area as fires and economic changes caused ancient sanctuaries to be abandoned. The presence of this statue, however, is at least a reflection of the fact that Hokke-ji was the site of the grand ceremonial reading of the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sutra on several occasions during the last half of the 8th century.

The Yuima-e 綾摩會 was a very stately, formal ritual which should be distinguished from the recitation of the text for reasons of study. It became one of the three main annual religious functions of the Japanese court and was closely bound up with the fortunes of the powerful Fujiwara family. The early records of the ceremony in Japan are not without inconsistencies; but according to pious tradition, it originated with the reading of the fifth chapter of the sutra by the Korean nun Hōmyō 法明 from Paekche in a.d. 656.14 This was done for the benefit of Nakatomi no Kamatari 中臣鍔足, founder of the fortunes of the Fujiwara family, who was gravely ill. The minister miraculously recovered, and from that time on the family sponsored the annual ritual. It was held first in the temple at Yamashina 山階, near Kyoto, where Kamatari had a villa; then it was moved to

Fig. 1.—VIMALAKIRTI. Nara, Hokke-ji. Height 92 cm.
Photograph courtesy Cultural Properties Protection Commission.
Fig. 2.—Detail from Figure 1. Head of Vimalakirti. Photograph by Nagano Rokumei-so, Nara.

Fig. 3.—Detail from Figure 6. Vimalakirti. Photograph by Asuka-en, Nara.

Fig. 4.—Vimalakirti. Shiga Prefecture, Ishiyama-dera. Height 51 cm. Photograph courtesy Kadokawa Shoten.

Fig. 5.—Vimalakirti. Shiga Prefecture, Seiryō-ji. Height 34 cm. Photograph courtesy Kadokawa Shoten.
Fig. 6.—INTERVIEW OF VIMALAKIRTI AND MANJUSRI. Nara, Hōryū-ji. Five-Story Pagoda, east side. Photograph by Asuka-en, Nara.
Fig. 7. — Ceremonies of the Yuima-e, Lecture Hall, Kōfu-ji, Nara. From the Kasuga Genshin Gekki, scroll 11.
Photograph from Tanaka Chikashū, Nippon Emakimono Shōsetsu, vol. 4, Tokyo, 1935, pl. 103.
various temples in the Asuka district. The ritual was neglected for some 32 years but was restored in A.D. 706 by Kamatari’s son Fubito 下比等, who succeeded his father as head of the clan. It was held from October 16th (the day of Kamatari’s death in 669) to the 16th for the benefit of his soul. After the transfer of the capital to Nara, the ceremony was moved to Kōfuku-ji, the grandest of all temples patronized by the family. This finally became the fixed location of the Yuima-e, being so designated by the Emperor Kammu in A.D. 802; and for over four hundred years (until A.D. 1236), the ceremony was performed every October without fail, despite all the vicissitudes which afflicted the temple.

Still extant at Kōfuku-ji are statues of Vimalakirti and Manjusri which may have been used as the honzon of the ceremony. These works were carved in 1196, when the temple was restored following its destruction during the Gempei wars; but they were the successors of images which date back to the 9th century. A section of the handscroll illustrating the Kasuga Gogen Genki 春日権現縁起, dedicated in 1309, depicts the ceremony in the Kōdō (lecture hall) of Kōfuku-ji as it must have appeared about that time (fig. 7)—the events which are represented, however, occurred two centuries earlier.

The inner sanctuary is enclosed on three sides by altar tables holding bouquets of flowers; at the four corners are the Shi Tennō, the four Deva Kings. At the back is the honzon of the hall, three statues of Amitābha, Mahāsthāmaprāpta, and Avalokiteśvara. In front of these, Vimalakirti and Manjusri are placed facing each other, the former looking to the east, the latter to the west. Parallel with them are two high dais, each holding a seated monk whose precise status is somewhat unclear. The one to the left is probably the Kōshi 講師 (leader of the ceremony); the other is either the Tōshi 讲師 (Reader) or the Monja 閲者 (Inquirer). To the west are four rows of ten seated monks each, the Chōshu 聽衆 (Auditors). An informal array of monks is shown in the foreground, together with the Imperial Messenger, who sits on a special dais on the portico. Laymen, who are possibly patrons, and monks are seated to the northeast of the main altar. Palanquins of the two chief monks and of the messenger are shown in the foreground, together with samurai and other servants.

This ceremony, perhaps on a simpler scale, was held at Hokke-ji for an unspecified number of years between A.D. 757 and 810. The nunnery was closely associated with the Nara court at this time when the support of the Buddhist faith by the Impe-

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17 These possibilities are suggested by Fukuyama (note 16 above) and by the text of the scroll. The figure to the left might also be the Ryūgi 健義 (Expounder, see de Visser, op. cit., p. 601); the one to the right is Egyō Hōin 崇照法音, a celebrated Hossō monk of the late Fujiwara period.
18 This is recorded in the Genkō Shakkusho 元享記事, ch. 13; Dai Nippon Bukkyō Zenshū, vol. 101, Tokyo, 1913, p. 415 entry for the autumn, A.D. 801; also in the Fūsō Ryakki 扶桑略記, Kōgaku Sōsho, Tokyo, 1924, vol. 6, p. 152.
rial family had become so ardent that there was a real possibility Japan would become a theocratic state. 19 Hokke-ji had been founded in a.d. 741 as the chief of the official nunneries of the land (Kokubuniji 国分尼寺) at the same time that Tōdai-ji had been designated the chief of the official monasteries (Kokubun-ji). It was located in a converted villa of Fubito near the Heijō-kyū 平城宮, the Imperial Palace compound; its chief patron was Fubito's daughter, the Empress Kōmyō, whose husband and daughter, the Emperor Shōmu and the Empress Kōken, both gave lavish donations in support of the Yuima-e. During the few decades that the capital still remained in Nara and even after it was moved to Kyoto, this ritual occupied a central position in the official religion of the court. The Hokke-ji statue must have belonged in this context. Exactly where and when is unknown; but because of its current location, its large size, and high level of artistic quality, its origin anywhere else would be difficult to imagine.

THE AESTHETIC PROBLEM

That the Hokke-ji statue stands apart from other early images of Vimalakīrti in its animation and sense of individuality is a matter of degree and not of kind. It was a realization of aesthetic principles latent in the icon-type itself and in the descriptive, semi-naturalistic style widely current in T'ang China and Nara in Japan. This style was used in depicting certain parts of the Buddhist pantheon not subject to the dominant influence of sacred Indian prototypes—guardian figures, arhats, the disciples of the Buddha, celebrated monks, as well as Vimalakīrti himself. 20

To be sure, these image-types were often highly conventionalized, but the conventions were those on which illusionism is based when describing a normal, mortal human being. These include signs of age (wrinkles, emaciation, arthritic distortion of bones), traits of individuality (warts, baldness, distinctive noses or chins, mus-


20 Examples of quasi-realistic images in Chinese sculpture of the Six Dynasties and T'ang periods are too numerous to list. However, an idea of the chronology of this development can be gained by comparing the representations in relief of the Ten Disciples of the Buddha at Yün-kang, Cave XVIII, datable ca. a.d. 460, with those of Ananda and Kāśyapa in the Wan-fou-tung 阇佛洞 at Lung-men (ca. a.d. 680) and the 29 Arhats in the K'an-ching-su 乾經寺 at Lung-men of about the same time. In the earlier cave, the attempt to vary bodily gestures and facial expressions is still rather hesitant and retains many traces of the perfected, idealized forms of Buddhist cult imagery. In the latter, the naturalism has become so assertive and inventive that the images lose their architectonic quality and seem to detach themselves from their stone background. The Lung-men carvers took up many problems of foreshortening and anatomy, but did not solve them all. The treatment of the arhats about a half century later at Sokkuram 石窟庵 in southeastern Korea shows considerably more grace and suavity. See Mizuno Seichi 水野清一 and Nagahiro Toshio 長廣敏雄, Yün-kang, Kyoto, 1954, vol. 12, pp. 100, 102, pls. 116, 124, 127–135; the same authors' Ryūmon Sekkutsu no Kenkyū, Tokyo, 1941, pp. 32–35, 115, pls. 16, 17, 82–96; Evelyn McCune, The arts of Korea, Tokyo, 1962, pls. 88–89; Bukkoku-ji to Sekkutsu-an 佛国寺と石窟庵, Chōzen Hōmotsu Koseki Zuroku 朝鮮寶物古蹟圖錄, no. 1, Kyoto, 1938, pls. 40, 45–52, 55–62.
culature), momentary facial expressions (laughing, speaking, grimacing), momentary body movements (walking, preaching, brandishing weapons), and the like. Great indeed are the differences in aesthetic intent between such naturalized conventions and those of hieratic cult imagery in the classical Indian manner of Sārnath or Nālandā; conversely, the distance between these conventions and those of genuinely descriptive portraiture is quite narrow. In fact, such statues as that of Gien at Okadera or the Hokke-ji Vimalakīrti are close to the dividing line.21

The manner by which naturalism in Sino-Japanese Buddhist art was reconciled with the firmly established values of Indian Buddhist metaphysics demonstrates the great flexibility by which this faith became a truly universal creed. It is true that there are variations in viewpoint and emphasis, but all Buddhist schools—whether Hinayāna or Mahāyāna—agree that the “conditioned world,” the world as known by immediate sense data, is fundamentally undesirable. All conditioned things are marred by having three “marks,” i.e. by being impermanent, “ill,” and alien to our true selves.22 The prime function of the faith is to lead men to escape into the unconditioned, to the state of Nirvāṇa, to release from the bondage of rebirth in saṁsāra. It urges men to give up their awareness of the world of illusion and of the self or ego, and to seek the dissolution of all traits of individuality, all components of personality. “...one teaches Dhamma for the turning away from material shape, from feeling, perception, the impulses, consciousness, for dispassion in regard to them, for their cessation.”23

The Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sūtra is faithful to this principle within the context of Madhyamika thought24; Vimalakīrti is a source of this doctrine, yet in the Hokke-ji statue, he was depicted in terms of appearances in the conditioned world. For Buddhist art this was revolutionary in an aesthetic sense, but it was not so in an ontological one. There was no attempt in this illusionism to discredit or surpass metaphysical values in the same way that illusionism in post-Renaissance European art was bound up with the rise of scientific methodology and ultimately the decline of religious authority.

This degree of illusionism became acceptable in Buddhist icons because of the parallel acceptance of doctrines expressed in the Mahāyāna sūtras, particularly those of the Madhyamika school of which the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa is a part. These ideas are often expressed in terms which are an assault upon conventional standards of thought through the use of paradox, irony, or the “annulation réciproque des contraires.” The Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa proclaims that the Ultimate Reality is inconceivable, unknowable, immeasurable, logically nonexistent, and beyond all comprehension

21 It has been suggested that the Gien portrait was originally a statue of Pindola or Mañjuśrī in the guise of an aged monk and installed in a monastic dining hall. See the author’s Studies in Japanese portraiture: the statue of Gien at Okadera, Ohio University Review, vol. 5, 1963, pp. 34–58.
22 The proposition is explored at length by Edward Conze, Buddhist thought in India, London, 1962, pp. 34–46.
except that of mystical identity—a concept not unlike that of Vedantic one of nirguna Brahma (Brahma without properties).  

This ultimate First Principle is given such epithets as śūnyatā (emptiness or vacuity), tathatā (the manner of being), sama or samatā (equality, equal degree), adhaya (nonduality), parinirvāṇa, apratiṣṭhāna without base). Particularly pertinent to the history of art is sama or samatā, for it leads to the notion of the penetration of the divine into all aspects of creation, the presence of the germ of Buddhahood (tathāgatagarbha) in all things equally. Beneath the appearances of distinctions of form, there exists a profound unity; recognition of this unity is one of the aspects of enlightened vision. By these terms, the illusory surface of the world is no more “real” than before, but it is somewhat less “unreal.” To paraphrase Conze: the foolish common people affirm appearances; the Sthavira tradition negates them; Mahāyāna negates the negation, but this is not to be construed as affirmation. Instead it is a realization that in the state of highest insight, all sense of duality fades—the distinction between the subject and object of thought, between good and evil, conditioned and unconditioned, affirmation and negation, saint and non-saint.

25 One of the most meaningful symbols of the inexpressible, incomprehensible Absolute is the silence maintained by Vimalakīrti when asked by Mañjuśrī to discuss the doctrine of nonduality (VKN VIII. 33, Lamotte translation, pp. 317–318 and note).

26 Lamotte, pp. 50–51.


28 Conze, Buddhist thought in India, p. 230.

29 The entire eighth chapter of the VKN is devoted to this theme.

Thus, even though ultimate reality remains an inexpressible mystery, the Mahāyāna sūtras encourage the notion that it is immanent in all things. This immanence is a concomitant of the Mahāyāna ideal of compassion (karuṇā), since, in simple terms, the ground of salvation lies in many ways close at hand. The pantheon of immensely resourceful Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, moved by compassion to serve the salvation of men, stand ready to respond to those who call for their aid; or the ordinary world, unreal and illusory as it is, nonetheless harbors the principle of enlightenment equally in every particle of its substance.

The term “equality,” or “sameness” (sama), is used at length in a section of the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa in which the sage offers food to Subhūti, a disciple of Śākyamuni. In this text Subhūti is a symbol of the traditional wisdom of the Stāvira-vadins, a monk making his round of householders seeking alms. Vimalakīrti tells him:

Reverend Subhūti, take this nourishment if you can fathom the equality (sameness) of all the dharmas (sarvadharmaśamata) through the equality of all material objects and, by the equality of all dharmas, fathom the equality of all the attributes of the Buddha.

He continues, telling Subhūti to take the food if, without destroying love (rāga), hatred (dveṣa), or error (moha), he can dis-

30 VKN I. 3, Lamotte translation, pp. 98–103.


33 Translation by Izumi of the somewhat less complex version of Kumārajiva: “Well, O Subhūti, if a man is able to see sameness in food he will see sameness in everything too. If a man sees sameness in everything he sees sameness in food.” Eastern Buddhist, vol. 3, 1932, p. 145.
associate himself from them; if, by the equality of the five sins which bring immediate retribution, he can fathom the equality of deliverance (vimuktiṣamātā)—without being either liberated (vimukta) or shackled (buddha); to take the food, if without the fruits of religious life, he is not “one who has not obtained them”; if, without being a common man (prthāgjana), he has not given up the character of common life (prthāgjanadharma); if, without being a saintly man (ārya), he is not an unsaintly one (anārya).

The pattern of life extolled here by Vimalakīrti, that between deliverance and the shackles of falsehood, is the one which he himself follows. Vimalakīrti is described as having a son, a wife, a harem, wearing ornaments, and appearing in brothels and cabarets. In order to conform to the world (lokānvarthanārtham), he is involved with all strata of society and with all kinds of business. He enters freely into any mode of life—banking, warfare, politics—but without attachment or concern for profit or gain, without confusing the surface appearances with the divine substratum.\(^35\)

\(^34\) This is part of the Mahāyāna concept of upāyakausālaya (skill in means) whereby Vimalakīrti, as a Bodhisattva incarnate as the layman of Vaiśālī, enters into everyday life in order to help whose who are chained to its illusions. “If one does not enter the great sea of the passions of samsāra, it is impossible to produce . . . omniscient thought” (VKN VII. 4, Lamotte translation, p. 291). A similar passage appears in the Ratnagotravibhāga of Śārmāti: “It is through his compassionate skill in means for others that he [the Bodhisattva] is tied to the world, and that, though he has attained the state of a saint, he appears to be in the state of an ordinary person” (translated in Conze, Buddhist texts, p. 130).

This concept of the sanctity possible in the life of a layman was in part responsible for the extraordinary influence and popularity of the Vimalakīrti-nīrdeśa in China of the late 3rd and early 4th centuries—far out of proportion to its importance in the land of its origin.\(^36\) The sūtra provided in a concise and dramatic form some of the ideas by which Indian Buddhism could be adapted to Chinese traditions and some of the objectional features of the foreign creed could be softened and changed. For example, the exalted role of the layman in the sūtra met the objections of many Chinese toward Buddhist monasticism, which they

\(^35\) One of the major themes of the VKN is the insubstantiality of the phenomenal world. The various setting of events within the sūtra change miraculously and the identities of persons are altered, the most dramatic being the change of Śāriputra and the Devi into each other (VKN VI. 14). These transfigurations deny the reality of the knowable world and affirm that of the omnipresent but incomprehensible First Principle. Only this is real, and thus the body of a man and that of the Buddha—as bodies—are of the same value ontologically. This is formulated in the Madhyamakakārikā: “Nothing of Saṃsāra is different from Nirvāṇa; nothing of Nirvāṇa is different from Saṃsāra. The limit of Nirvāṇa is the limit of Saṃsāra; there is not even the slightest something separating the two.” (Conze, Buddhist thought in India, p. 228; see also VKN VIII. 29, Lamotte translation, pp. 315–316.)

felt to be hostile to government authority and to an orderly society. The Madhyamika doctrine of śūnyatā was analogous to metaphysical speculations among both Confucian and Taoist intellectuals in south China. In north China, the miraculous and magical aspects of the sūtra were attractive, perhaps at the expense of its philosophical content, in less sophisticated circles.

The transmission of the sūtra and its acceptance in Japan in the 6th and 7th centuries was an appendage to the long development of its traditions in China. Magical overtones played the main role in the legends of the curing of Kamatari, which underlay the sponsorship of the Yuima-e by the Fujiwara family. The character of Shōtoku Taishi was strongly molded by the ideal embodied by Vimalakīrti, either in fact or merely in the legendary biographies which grew up soon after his death. The Prince was considered an embodiment of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (the Guze Kannon 救世観音) with the deepest of religious insight; yet he remained a layman, a government official, and brought his insight to bear on secular matters. An ancient commentary on the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa, one of the oldest works of indigenous Japanese Buddhist literature, is attributed to him.37

This, along with the prominence of the scene of the interview of Vimalakīrti and Mañjuśrī in the Five-Story Pagoda at Hōryū-ji, indicates the degree to which Japanese interest in the sūtra followed Chinese patterns.

The Hokke-ji statue comes closer than any other early image of Vimalakīrti to that direct and immediate depiction of the human form which is the essence of portraiture.38 It demonstrates how far it became possible within Sino-Japanese Buddhist art to respect natural forms and processes and to extol old persons as the embodiments of experience and wisdom. Such naturalism remained a secondary aspect of Buddhist art in the 7th and 8th centuries in both China and Japan, but in the 12th and 13th centuries—largely under the aegis of the Ch’an (Zen) school—positions of ever-increasing importance were given to natural subjects: birds and animals and flowers, landscape painting in ink as well as portraiture. In the aesthetic system of the Japanese Zen sect, which brought all of the visual arts—architecture, painting, ceramics, gardening—into a unified whole, this tendency reached the degree that in some of the sub-temples of Daitoku-ji or Myōshin-ji in Kyoto, not a single conventional, hieratic icon in the Indian tradition can be seen.

Author’s note: This study is part of a research project in the history of Japanese art undertaken in Japan (1962–63) with the assistance of the American Council of Learned Societies. I wish to acknowledge the generous assistance and advice of Mr. Mōri Hisashi of the Kyoto National Museum, Mr. Uehara Shoichī of the Nara National Museum, and Professor Hasumi Shigeyasu of Kyoto University.

37 On the problems of the attribution of this text see Yuimakyo-Gisho Ronsha 鬱摩經義疏論集, Nippon Bukkyō Genryu Kenkyū Kiyō 日本佛教源流研究紀要, no. 1, Kyoto, 1962.

38 A detail from one of the many versions of the interview of Vimalakīrti and Mañjuśrī in the wall paintings of Tun-huang shows the face of the layman with a searching sense of individuality which goes beyond the usual conventional treatment. It is said to date from the Sui period, cave 276 (Tun-huang Wen-wu Yen-chiu-so, ed., Tun-huang pi-hua 敦煌壁畫, Peking, 1960, pl. 106).
CH'EN HSIIEN,
PAINTER OF LOHANS

Two of my learned friends have kindly supplied the information contained in this postscript to Ch'en Hsien, Painter of Lohans.1 Professor Herbert Franke (Munich University) found Mt. Chiu-jih 九日山 listed in the Ts'ui-ch'eng ch'i-ch'eng encyclopedia.2 The mountain is located in the Nan-an district of the Ch'üan-chou prefecture, Fuzhou, in Fukien.

The encyclopedia also mentions the Yen-fu monastery at the foot of this mountain; it contains a Fung-sheng ch'i-ch'ih 放生池 (Pool of Released Life) and a Ts'ui-kuang t'ing 翠光亭 (Pavilion of Kingfisher Radiance).

The monastery was founded, still according to the encyclopedia, in the T'ai-k'ang period (A.D. 280–90) and moved to its present site in the second year of Ta-li (767); it received its name in 851 and, since the late eleventh century, was called Yen-fu Ch'an monastery.3

The gazetteer of Fukien province, Fu-chien t'ung-chih,6 also describes Mr. Chiu-

2 Ibid., p. 255.
3 Ts'ui-ch'eng ch'i-ch'eng encyclopedia (Taiwan edn., vol. 5, p. 4101; cf. Ch‘ing-shih 清史). Other epithets
4 T'ui-shih jih-shih, chia-ch'ing, vol. 6, ch. 1045, p. 20b 1; vol. 7, ch. 185, pp. 12a–13a.
5 T'ui-shih jih-shih, vol. 7, loc. cit., after Min-shu 國書.
6 Fu-chien t'ung-chih, 1871 edn.

jih and mentions a special chronicle of the mountain, Chiu-jih Shan chih 九日山志. According to the gazetteer,7 the Yen-fu monastery was founded in A.D. 288, moved to its present site in the third year of Ta-li (768), rebuilt in 851 when it received its name, renovated in the Ch'ien-te period (963–68), repaired in the Hung-wu (1368–99) and Ch'ung-cheng (1628–44) reigns.

Professor Franke also points out that one of Ch'en Hsien's seals in the album of 16348 reads “Ts'ui-kuang t'ing.” Kuang is here a combination of kuang 光 (“radiance”) and ch'i 奇 (“strange,” “curious”). The Ts'ui-kuang t'ing, mentioned above, is listed in the encyclopedia as well as in the gazetteer as one of the thirty-six curiosities (ch'i 奇) of Mt. Chiu-jih.

Another of Ch'en Hsien's seals reads “T'ai-hsüan” 太玄,9 perhaps his religious name.

Professor Franke found Ch'en Hsien listed in the Chung-kuo li-tai shu-hua shuan-k'o chia tzu-hao so-yin 中國歷代書畫畫刻家字號索引 where his pen names are given as Pan-t'u seng 半道僧,10 Hsi-san 希三,11 and Chan-k'uei 潘幾.12 Other epithets

7 Ibid., ch. 264, pp. 53a–b.
8 Lippe, op. cit., pl. 2.
11 Lippe, op. cit., inscription pl. 3.
12 Ibid., seal pls. 3, 7; MMA album, inscription p. 6.
13 MMA album, inscription p. 1.
used in our album are Yu-sou 遊叟 and Hua-shan tao-jen 華山道人。\

Professor Wen Fong (Princeton University) has some additional information concerning the Eighteen Lohans. According to the *Lin-an chih* 臨安志 (Gazetteer of Hang-chou), the Prince of Wu-yeh had dreamt of a group of eighteen monks in A.D. 944. As a result, he had twelve more images of Lohans added to the six already existing at the Yen-hsia cave by the West Lake.

Among extant monuments, the earliest dedication to the Eighteen Lohans, dated A.D. 1000, is found at the Yu-ju Cave, also in the West Lake region.

Professor Fong adds that the number 18 probably was more appealing to the Chinese than 16 since 18 is a multiple of 3 as well as of 9. He quotes the suggestion of T. Watters: “The Buddhists in this matter imitated a certain Chinese institution.... In the year 621, T'ai-tsung instituted within the palace grounds a very select college composed of eighteen members.... These favoured men were called the Eighteen Ministers, and they were popularly said to have become immortals.”

Aschwin Lippe

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14 Lippe, *op. cit.*, pl. 2.
15 *MMA album*, p. 5.
BOOK REVIEWS


Afghanistan’s historic position as a crossroad of Asian culture and civilization has been ably clarified through the work of the Délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan during the past forty years. Apart from preliminary investigations, notably by M. R. Ghirshman at Nad-i-Ali in 1936,1 the prehistory of Afghanistan has constituted a hiatus of long standing between the more fully explored and documented regions of Iran and West Pakistan. The excavations at the prehistoric site of Mundigak in southern Afghanistan, previously briefly reported by the excavator, M. J.-M. Casal, while the work was in progress, have now been presented in a two-volume exhaustive, analytic report on the site, and the relative position of this prehistoric culture sequence with neighboring contemporaneous cultures of Western and Central Asia provisionally established.

The site of Mundigak, consisting of a principal mound and several related tepes is situated about thirty-five miles northwest of Kandahar in a small valley traversed by a stream now only a seasonal torrent but which must in antiquity have been a more substantial tributary of the Arghandab River to the south. The excavations conducted by Casal through ten seasons between 1951 and 1958 revealed seven principal periods of occupation, the majority of which could be subdivided into successive stages, ranging in date from the end of the fourth millennium B.C. to a final phase in the first half of the first millennium B.C. The value of the site as a key to the chronology of this intermediate zone between Iran and West Pakistan is enhanced by the apparently almost continuous occupation of the locality over so long a span of time, an occupation that continued uninter ruptedly through a long period of decline and gradual abandonment of the site during the entire second millennium. The period of abandonment separates what appears to have been an apogee in the life of the region during the second and third quarters of the third millennium B.C. from a final, briefly rejuvenating, phase.

The report begins with a brief introduction setting forth the significant geographical position of Mundigak, followed by a lucid summary presentation of the stratigraphy of the site. The succeeding chapters are devoted to a more detailed, again clearly outlined, discussion of the successive periods and the finds related to each.

The principal text of the report is concluded with a careful analysis of the Mundigak finds in their relation to synchronous developments in Iran, West Pakistan, and Soviet Central Asia upon which Casal has

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constructed his chronology. Most surprising, and worthy of further study, are the numerous close analogies of the ceramics of some Mundigak periods to those from sites in Soviet Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan (Anau, Namazga-tepe, Kara-tepe), especially those of the potteries of Period V to finds at Bronze Age sites in the Ferghana Valley in the extreme eastern extension of the Uzbek S.S.R. Carbon-14 tests performed on charred wooden remains (vol. 1, p. 258) produced irregular and unreliable results at times inconsistent with the stratigraphy of the site. The author, therefore, rejected them as final determinants in the establishment of a chronology.

Especially valuable are the descriptive catalogues of the finds which constitute over half the text volume. Technical reports on the chemical composition of the potteries, copper and bronze objects are presented and the catalogue of ceramics is prefaced by a detailed study of the evolution of shapes and decoration.

The 140 figures in volume 2 contain well over 1000 excellent black and white plans, elevations, graphs, and drawings of the objects described in the catalogues; the plates, devoted to photographs of the excavations and the more handsome and spectacular finds, are well printed. The volumes continue the smaller, handier format inaugurated with volume 14 of the series.

Mundigak is a complex site and M. Casal is to be praised for his superb organization of the finds, his clear and succinct presentation of the materials, and bold but well considered approach to the problems of chronology. A preliminary survey of southern Afghanistan conducted before the site of Mundigak was chosen for intensive study revealed evidence of widespread habitation of the region in prehistoric times, and it is hoped that the rewarding and brilliantly presented results of the present excavations will stimulate continued work in this aspect of archaeological research in Afghanistan.

William Trousdale


In this short, well illustrated volume the traditional architectural forms of India and China are seen as points of reference for viewing man's conception of himself and his position in his universe, and, conversely, the underlying ideologies of these cultures are seen as explaining and anticipating the forms. The illimitable Indian "Mountain of God" and the measured Chinese "City of Man" are conceptual paradigms or *gestalten* which the author's considerations define and amplify. They represent fundamentally different ways of viewing and, ultimately, of laying out a world in which man can follow his intended paths toward his intended goals. The comparison aids in the definition particularly since each of the two traditions has at its heart a view of the universe as orderly and eternal.

Whether such a study of these two traditions and their architectural expressions really had to be made "before the next turn of events obliterates the message in these ancient architectures" or for some less dire and more academic reason, the book is an excellent one. It serves both to introduce and to clarify the long architec-
tural histories of these two cultures and gets to the very heart of the long—although now eroding—traditions with which it deals.

The author's approach to Chinese architecture is particularly fresh and salutary. He suggests that "the lasting values in the tradition ... perhaps should be sought in the enduring design that has shaped the humble family house as well as the Chinese city of man." He offers this as the key to his study, rather than a review of the history of Buddhist architecture, which "too often ... has been substituted for a history of Chinese architecture." Mixing present day examples with those depicted in painting and sculpture from the past, he discusses the Chinese house (with its open courts and enclosing walls) both as a "home" and as a setting for the necessary ceremonial which has always regulated and reflected the life of the Central Kingdom. Ceremonious quotations from the Han dynasty Book of Rites guide the reader in penetrating with the author into the "graduated privacy" of the Chinese man's world. From home, to tomb, to palace, to temple, to the limits of the land itself, Chinese architectural forms have tended to image man's society, with man placed at the center, his space organized about him.

Sitting in his hall and facing his courtyard to the south, the Chinese sees himself, in an idealized manner of course, not at all fixed in the center of his world, but longingly looking out beyond his walls. In almost every aspect his attitude is different from that of his Indian counterpart. He focuses his eyes on the ground instead of heaven; he is the originator of knowledge and not the seeker of enlightenment who makes the eternal pilgrimage from the periphery toward the center. The Chinese organizes his basic cell in order to organize the world around it. His immediate world, measurable, controllable, is forever encroaching on the Unknown.

But if China provides man with such a "city" and with the image of the square, India provides a different image, that of the "Mountain of God" around which the world of man spreads out and man is gathered in, in continually concentric circles. The author might well be saying, in the words of Eliot, that the Indian temple, sacred spot or sacred symbol, is the "still point of the turning world," the "point of intersection between the timeless and time," between the immediate, tangible, plural world, and the eternal unity which man continually seeks.

In India as in China the author approaches these tangible records of man's attitudes and beliefs with a dramatic sense of immediacy. The experience of personal pilgrimage and gradual revelation is clearly conveyed as we move toward, around, into, or upon such monuments as the early Buddhist chaityas, the stupas at Sanchi or at Borobudur, or the elaborate temples of medieval India and Cambodia. This experience is directly complemented by the sensitively selected photographs which splendidly enhance the text. (The reproduction of the plates is excellent, although a few of the pictures suffer from great reduction in scale.)

Moving from monument to monument, as the author develops his thesis, one duplicates the journey of many a legendary seeker after truth in the Indian tradition who has moved from point to point in a gradual, roundabout, and finally full-circle journey toward illumination. One only wishes that the journey did not need to be so brief at so many important sites,
for in India (as opposed to China) we are subject to an embarrassment rather than a dearth of architectural riches. For instance, in a very few paragraphs the author admirably elucidates the manner in which the dramatic temples of the medieval period found a final form and how streams of Indian symbolism coming down out of a long past contribute to the total meaningful effect and effective meaning of such edifices. Nonetheless, in discussing the Kailasa temple at Ellora as the “Mountain of God,” the author must move on without mentioning the unique way in which flying figures encircle its heights, or the unique way in which the representation of Ravana is placed beneath it, enhancing its meaning. Nor does the compass of the book allow even the briefest mention of those three largest of all earlier Hindu caves, Jogeswari, Elephanta, and the Dhumara Lena, at the main entrances of which the devotee (actually entering the Mountain of God?) also directly confronted the same demon king in his enforced abode. Examples could be multiplied where one wishes more were said, but brevity is after all easy to forgive, particularly when succinctness is combined with so many striking and well stated insights.

The author ends his study “outside the square and inside the circle,” in the Chinese garden where “man’s creative imagination is untrammeled by myopic considerations.” Here, as he drolly puts it (again with a sense of our being there), the “organization man” can unwind as he twists and turns following nature’s way along the garden path.

At first it might seem strange to resolve such a study in this way. But the author is throughout his book looking at values as well as forms, and if the orders examined in both Chinese and Indian tradition now belong to the past ... the need for an architectural reference to man’s position in his universe and to his own independent and creative self is still with us. More than ever we need a symbolic transition to ferry us architecturally away from our world of organized action, yet without leaving it, so that we may cultivate our “eternal” nature. For this one valid aspect the Chinese garden—in contrast to the formal garden—remains an enduring vocabulary from the past.

Also, it brings the author home again to Yenling Yeyuan.

WALTER SPINK


As we look back over the short history of the study of Chinese painting in the West, a small number of landmarks rise above the surrounding countryside. On the horizon stands the modest peak of Paléologue’s L’art chinois (1887), which contained the first account of Chinese painting based on Chinese texts: indeed then, and for a long time after, the material available for study in the West permitted no other approach. Hirth (1905), Petrucci (1912), Giles (1918), and Waley (1923) likewise based their studies very largely upon written sources. During the twenties and thirties, however, as more original paintings reached the Western world, there was a reaction against the Sinological approach. Instead, the techniques of Western Stilkritik were applied, notably by Ludwig Bachhofer and William Cohn, to the
very few early paintings then available for study. Through all these years Osvald Sirén was patiently assembling the great corpus of material which he finally presented, almost without the intrusion of personal opinion or philosophy, in his seven volume Chinese Painting of 1936 and 1938. All these pioneers worked virtually alone. Their versions of texts and their verdicts on paintings stood unchallenged, and each in his own world had—under the circumstances, deservedly—the status of an oracle.

During the last fifteen years, however, a new spirit has been abroad. Several factors have brought this about. Shaken loose by the troubles that beset China, many first-class paintings have found their way into Western collections, while Western scholars are now more rigorously trained in the use of Oriental languages, and thus have access both to standard Chinese and Japanese texts and to the knowledge and opinions of modern Asian experts. As a result they have come to realize that the subject is too vast and complex to be encompassed by any one mind. In the United States particularly, scholars are collaborating and criticising each others' unpublished works with a freedom that would have astonished, and perhaps shocked, the previous generation. Symptomatic of this new and entirely healthy attitude was the two-day conference on the Palace Museum Exhibition which followed the opening of the exhibition of the Crawford Collection in October 1962. At this unprecedented gathering scholars and students expressed the most widely divergent views with a freedom and—in some conspicuous cases—a confidence that must have surprised their more cautious Asian colleagues. This lively meeting revealed: (1) that a very considerable advance has been made in Western knowledge of Chinese paintings and sources in the last decade; (2) that, in spite of this, the gaps in our knowledge are still enormous, and subjective opinions on matters of style still count for a good deal; and (3) that the age of the prima donna is gone for good. No one present at that gathering, no matter how dogmatically he may have expressed himself, could have come away without a deep feeling that he was, like all present, standing on the edge of a vast uncharted territory, and that his own exploration would be more fruitful if he kept in touch with other explorers. If it were nothing else, the Crawford catalogue would be a monument to this new spirit of collaboration among students of Chinese painting.

It is a noteworthy feature of the Crawford catalogue that while it is a work of true expertise, the specialist's responsibility to the layman has not been forgotten. The introductory essays all fulfill their function admirably. Laurence Sickman deals with the forms of Chinese painting, its materials and techniques, sums up the nature of Chinese pictorial perspective in a paragraph, and gives an excellent account of the anatomy of a scroll, the aesthetics of mounting, seals and inscriptions, copies and forgeries. He ends with these words:

Much, if not all, of the above, must seem to the Western reader to be secondary and marginal to the theme of the nature of Chinese painting. To the Chinese connoisseur, on the other hand, all varied elements reinforce one another to create a unity of beauty. For him the aesthetic quality of the painting or writing is enhanced by handsomely designed, well-placed seals, by the allusions of the poetry inscribed by the artist or his friends, by an accomplished calligraphy that may appear among
the colophons; and through the comments of former owners, great critics, or former statesmen, he senses keenly his own continuity with the past.

In this admirable survey I noticed only one omission of any significance. Sickman describes the handscroll and hanging scroll format in some detail and also refers to fans and album leaves. He does not mention the standing screen which until the Sung Dynasty was one of the most important vehicles for large-scale landscape painting. As none of these screens has survived we are apt to forget that they were once the most challenging, and conspicuous, format and would have been familiar to many people who were not privileged to see the handscrolls and hanging scrolls in private collections. Such screens (or undamaged parts of them) and smaller bed panels (such as the one depicted in Mr. Crawford's anonymous 13th-century handscroll, no. 36 in the catalogue) were often subsequently taken down and mounted as hanging scrolls or handscrolls.

Professor Loehr ably performs in eleven pages the difficult feat of summing up the history of Chinese painting, and his essay is both clear and evocative. He concentrates on landscape painting because, as he says, it was "the supreme achievement of China's painters." His opening sentences show how deeply aware of the problems scholars have become: "To speak of Chinese painting is to speak of a concept derived from paintings which have survived and are known to us today. This concept is our key, as it were, to the sum of what Chinese painting was." At once we are plunged into the dilemma of the student of Chinese painting, which is this: when almost no early painting on silk (unless archeologically datable) can be authenticated except, in the final analysis, by style and quality, and while at the same time "period style" can only be determined by a study of such paintings, how will it ever be possible to assemble a body of authentic works? Professor Loehr states: "As our efforts to explore the history of Chinese painting continue, we may expect that the authentic styles will eventually be known." This seems an unduly optimistic assessment, at least so far as pre-1127 painting is concerned (will we ever know, for instance, what Mi Fei's paintings were like?); but it is consistent with the comparatively confident attributions given by Loehr in his catalogue notes on the early paintings in the collection. Moreover, his concern with style perhaps leads him further than a more cautious formulation of the problem would warrant, for after rightly saying that copies can often give valuable clues to lost works, he goes on: "If a collector may wisely prefer to watch for quality alone regardless of names, the historian may well feel tempted to search for specimens of styles regardless of authenticity." If this means merely that a high quality copy of, say, a lost landscape by Hsiao Chao would be of more value to the historian than yet another genuine Ma Yuan, we must surely agree with him; but it could well lead to our accepting, as reliable guides, pastiches of the styles of early Sung masters painted by Wang Hui, who probably knew less about these painters than we do today.

The brief history itself is written with insight and great elegance. Significant changes in the style and content of landscape painting down the centuries are ably characterized, although the author's express intention, "to present not so much an abbreviated history of what happened as
a reconstruction of why it happened" is not fully carried out. These changes are presented as something inevitable within the tradition itself, without any reference to historical or, even more important, sociological factors which played a large part in bringing them about. Professor Loehr does not explain, for example, why landscape became preeminent in the 10th and 11th centuries, nor does he account for the "remarkable changes" (p. 34) that took place around 1100. The poignant atmosphere of 12th-century academy painting is seen merely as due "to the treatment of the atmosphere in such a specific way as to convey the sense of precise moment," but why should painters at that time have been thus preoccupied? The abrupt change of style, mood, and attitude to tradition in the Yüan literati is most ably described, but again no attempt is made to explain it. But some of Professor Loehr's statements stick in the mind. Of Southern Sung he writes, "What to the primitive artist was least real, space, was the last of the phenomena conquered" (p. 36). Even more striking is his description of the attitude of the Yüan literati to tradition:

Not carried by tradition any longer, the Yüan artist was compelled to search for a way out of the darkness in which he found himself, and only from antiquity shone a blessed light that promised life to him. For with tradition dead, the past could no more be improved upon; it was irrevocably final and therefore, suddenly, real. From this exalted past alone would come, to the lonely struggle in the dark, what he needed: precedents of linear structures bearing him out in his fundamental quest for form, standards against which to measure himself, and freedom—the freedom to be himself. The avowed archaisms of the Yüan painter, therefore, did not mean that he was a mere follower of some ancient master or other, but that he found his freedom through the example of the ancients, his freedom that meant life. [p. 37]

Again, the art of the Che School "lacked the intellectual and scholastic foundation that could have assured its success; it skipped the Yüan masters' ordeal and triumphs" (p. 37).

Certain of Professor Loehr's comments will cause surprise, as for example, when he speaks of the "spiritual vigor" of Hui-tsong's art (p. 35), of the great Palace Museum Li T'ang as "a transposition of a Fan K'uan into the gentler feeling [my italics] of the Hui-tsung era"; and of MaYüan and Hisia Kuei as marking "the apogee of Sung art; no other painting style combines, as theirs does, the ultimate of formal elegance with metaphysical depth." Though we may not go all the way with Professor Loehr here, it is a pleasure to see these twin pillars of traditional Chinese romantic landscape painting hauled upright once more. Finally, of the centuries since the Yüan Dynasty he says: "All art of significance, all true art from now on is an intellectual art." One wonders what Shih-t'ao and Pa-ta Shan-jen would have thought of that.

Professor Yang Lien-sheng's essay on calligraphy presents an admirable brief survey of the subject, not forgetting the state of the craft today under the impact of the fountain pen. The role of calligraphy in the scholarly and official world is also touched on, while Professor Yang gives a few valuable pointers on its aesthetics.

One of the first things the reader wants to know about a private collection is what were the motives and predilections of the man who formed it. Why, for example, did Mr. Crawford choose Chinese painting, and what kind of painting appeals to him
most? A long-standing interest in Western calligraphy seems to have inspired him, but he is reticent about his aims and preferences. It seems that he set out to acquire, in a relatively short period of time, the best available examples of all periods, and having achieved this, his collection was complete. There is indeed an air of finality about it. An interesting feature of the selection is that it seems to have been made to some extent in defiance of the current Western trend which strongly favors the literary painting of Ming and Ch'ing. There is no doubt that in this the influence of Mr. Joseph Seo, whose collaboration Mr. Crawford acknowledges in his foreword, has been considerable. It is, in fact, such a collection as might have been formed in Japan.

In all, the catalogue describes 84 works, of which 61 are paintings, the remainder calligraphy. The most notable among the former are works by, or attributed to, Kao K'o-ming, Kuo Hsi, Su Shih, Ch'iao Chung-ch'ang, Hui-tsung, Liang K'ai, Chao Meng-fu, Chao Yung and Chao Lin, Wu Chen, Ch'iu Ying, Wen Po-jen, K'un Ts'an, and Chu Ta. The calligraphy, representing the most successful excursion yet made by a Western collector into this perilous field, includes scrolls by, or attributed to, Mi Fu, Huang T'ing-chien, several Southern Sung empresses, Chao Meng-chien, Hsien-yü Shu, Chao Meng-fu, and a possibly unique example from the hand of the 13th-century statesman Yeh-lü Ch'uts'ai.

The text of the catalogue is an excellent example of the spirit of collaboration mentioned earlier. Individual works were shared by a number of leading authorities in America under the general editorship of Laurence Sickman, who himself described eight paintings. Max Loehr took most of the early paintings (up to Southern Sung), James Cahill the Yüan, Richard Edwards the Ming, and Ashwin Lippe the Ch'ing, while the notes on the calligraphy were written by Achilles Pang and Shujiro Shimada. The entries were compiled with a degree of scrupulous scholarship that is unprecedented in Western studies of Chinese painting. The Crawford catalogue will undoubtedly set a standard for all future works of this kind.

In a collection that aims so high, it is inevitable that among the masterpieces are some whose authenticity is doubted. Not the least fascinating aspect of the catalogue is the manner in which individual authors deal with this situation. Sometimes a negative verdict is implied rather than stated: witness Lippe on the Hung-jen (no. 69) from the Chang Ta-ch'ien collection: “The present scroll does not, perhaps, have all the sensitive and fragile precision which we associate with the artist's most representative works.” The same author's comment on the Wang Hui—“The painting does not have the high technical quality and consistency which we have come to expect from Wang Hui, and so we cannot consider it a major and representative work of the master”—is perhaps more deliberately ambiguous, for it leaves a doubt in the reader's mind as to whether Lippe considers the painting wrong or merely a poor example of Wang Hui's work. In attempting to account for the faults on the drawing of the Tunhuang pastiche (no. 2), Professor Loehr writes, “One explanation of these curious aspects might be that the work is a more than usually elaborate study or exercise done by a student.
or a beginner in the art of painting Buddhist icons.” This implies that Loehr thinks that it could still be an early painting. But does he really think so? It is highly doubtful. There is an element of confusion also in his notes on the important Kao K’o-ming landscape (no. 5). After saying that in style it seems close to Li T’ang, and quoting Cahill to the effect that the style “seems too advanced for its time,” he goes on: “the date of this scroll [1035] is a surprise, sure to influence our concepts of the history of Sung landscape painting.” If Loehr accepts the date, Cahill’s remark is not to the point; if he rejects it, it can have no influence on our ideas of 11th-century painting.

Examples of this sort of perhaps deliberate obscurity are not confined to any one contributor and are readily understandable in discussing paintings in regard to which so many problems arise. They do not detract from the very high scholarly level of the book as a whole. Indeed, in the care and perceptiveness with which the paintings are catalogued and described, this work is an important landmark in the study of Chinese painting in the West.

The book has been produced on a lavish scale, the great attention paid to layout and typography reflecting Mr. Crawford’s own knowledge and impeccable taste in this field. The illustrations, four of which are in color, are too of the highest quality. It is all the more to be regretted, therefore, that a number of pictures described, and an even higher proportion of the scrolls of calligraphy, are not illustrated. Among these are parts of the important scroll of horses by three members of the Chao family (no. 43), and works by Sheng Mou (no. 47), Hsieh Po-ch’eng (no. 50), T’ang Yin (no. 63), and Wang Hui (no. 81).

On the other hand, a hanging scroll by Wang Yüan-ch’i, doubtfully accepted by Dr. Lippe, is reproduced, and the unimportant handscroll (no. 56) gets a double spread. It is difficult to see what principle governed the choice. This, however, is the only serious criticism that can be made of this magnificent book.

Michael Sullivan

Chinese Painting in Hawaii. By Gustav Ecke. Published for the Honolulu Academy of Arts by the University of Hawaii Press, 1964. 1 vol. text, 2 vols. plates; 426 pp. text, 100 full page text figures, 20 text illustrations, 267 panels in colotype (15 in color), illustrating 70 paintings and calligraphies by more than 50 masters.

Mark Tobey, certainly one of the most influential figures in the evolution of modern painting in America, once remarked, “The arts of the Far East are being brought to our shores as perhaps never before. The Pacific hiatus is closing.” The awareness of the ever closer relationship of the art in East and West inspired the closing sentence of Sherman Lee’s recent History of Far Eastern art: “The present and future of Eastern art is inextricably enmeshed with the modern international styles until now originating in Europe and America.” Dr. Gustav Ecke in the present work is also concerned with closing the Pacific hiatus, a marriage he is well qualified to perform as a scholar and, one might add, by his geographical position in the Islands. The title of this sumptuous publication is Chinese painting in Hawaii in the Honolulu Academy of Arts and in private collections.
The subtitle gives the key to Dr. Ecke's analysis of this material: "Attempts to co-ordinate a group of typical Chinese creations with the Western taste of today." The text, which can be described as alternately romantic, didactic, and philosophical, is an attempt to interrelate Eastern and Western ideals in pictorial expression and to explain the fundamentals of Chinese painting in terms of the native aesthetic and in relation to Western psychology and mysticism. The work begins with a chapter of some fifty pages entitled "Imponderabilia," concerned with the relationship between Chinese painting and the West from the 17th century onward and an attempt to explain some of the fundamental canons of Chinese art. Part II, comprising nearly 250 pages of text and illustrations, is entitled "Avenues of Approach." This section is a very personal thumbnail sketch of the development of Chinese painting, based almost entirely on painting, calligraphy, rubbings, and sculpture in the Hawaiian collections which are the subject of the work. Part III, "Painters and Calligraphers," presents a catalogue of the actual works referred to in the preceding chapters.

A consideration of Dr. Ecke's book calls for two separate reviews, one of the text, the other of the plates and the author's commentaries. The comparison of Eastern and Western art as a means of mutually illuminating the salient qualities of both traditions is one that has long been of interest to me, and in fact formed the subject for a detailed study of selected examples of certain themes: Art in East and West (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1954 and 1963).

In the course of his introductory chapter Dr. Ecke notes, with regard to the ephemeral resemblances between masters of brushstrokes in East and West: "Whenever these two modes of brush art seem to meet, it is an encounter, not in consonance, yet, at the same time, in terms of a certain, undeniable kinship." It might be worthwhile in view of Dr. Ecke's concern with this spiritual exchange to examine the so-called calligraphers of modern American art in relation to the Chinese art of writing with the brush. Marin, Tobey, and Morris Graves have often been grouped under the heading of calligraphers, and to this trio may be added the name of Franz Kline.

There are no indications that John Marin was even aware of Oriental art or for that matter of any other artistic predecessors. It will be remembered that he once said of Cézanne, "There's a painter, not much else." To put it as briefly as possible, Marin invented a personal shorthand to symbolize the dynamic flux and change on the face of nature. Marin once observed:

I see great forces at work ... the warring of the great and the small, influences of one mass on another greater or smaller mass. In life all things come under the magnetic influence of other things ... While these powers are at work, pushing, pulling sideways, downward, upward, I can hear the sound of their strife. And there is great music being played. Within the frames there must be a balance, a controlling of these warring, pushing, pulling forces. This is what I am trying to realize.

Marin's paintings might be regarded as animated tonal arrangements, in which the jumbled kaleidoscope of individual forms, set down in emotionally stimulated flashes of line and color, is designed to give the beholder a kind of nervously intensified aes-

thetastication and a sense of the endlessly stirring web of light and movement that hangs before the face of nature. Marin's watercolors are invariably a strange dichotomy of a subdued Whistlerian impressionism, and, superimposed upon this ground, a dazzling and often inconsistent network of vibrant brushstrokes. This mode, repeated in countless papers by Marin, could perhaps be called calligraphic, since, as has been noted, it consists of an array of brushstrokes dancing over an impressionistic wash. In some ways this is a manner more akin to the decorative manipulation of brushstrokes by an artist like Sesshu than the dynamically articulated skeleton of a Chinese painter. This is a performance that completely misses the kind of unity of medium and expression that characterizes some of the great examples of Chinese brush drawing. Marin's so-called calligraphy is at best a decorative device, and useful to this particular artist for expressing the immediacy of his reaction to the visually experienced surface quality of the subject in terms of the change and clash of light and movement in a particular landscape. The wonder of many of the Chinese landscapes reproduced by Gustav Ecke is the evocation of the whole shifting pattern of nature set down in shapes that appear to dissolve in pools of ink or thickets of brushstrokes, and yet at the same time present a clarified or transfigured view of recognizable elements that fit into a perfectly logical pattern in space and texture. This unity in the marvelously succinct suggestion of dynamic movement and growth in Chinese landscapes makes the Marin formula appear thin and ornamental by comparison.

Mark Tobey, who, as Dr. Ecke tells us, found an inspiration in white-on-black rubbings of Chinese stone engravings for his so-called "white writing," developed another kind of personal calligraphy. Tobey's white writing was his device for showing the stir and confusion of the modern world in the evolution and convolutions of his lines. In these little pictures the nebulous webs of lines and ominous symbols were an expression of change and conflict. These white lines, too, were in a way an ideographic network symbolizing light as a unifying, irradiating force. In Tobey's paintings the dissolving of all corporeality into the energy and movement of lines is only a more abstract expression of Marin's method. However, in Tobey's concern with expressing a kind of dynamic rhythm in these abstract shapes there is a legitimate, if remote, reference to the animated qualities of Chinese brushwork. Taken a step further, Tobey's revolution and rhythm becomes that feeling without reference to objective reality, which is abstract-expressionism.

Morris Graves, whose art stems from Tobey's, has a peculiarly intimate connection with Hawaii, since, as one of his biographers states, "The Oriental objects in the Honolulu Academy of Art became the Orient that he was seeking." Indeed, it was under the inspiration of archaic bronzes in this collection that Graves painted his notable series of pictures devoted to the magical transformation and transmutation of archaic vessels. Graves is an artist who has always admired the Orient, an admiration carried to Oriental methods of mounting and the use of Chinese papers

and links. Graves’ art may be described as calligraphic only with respect to his use of these fragile materials and his personal development of Tobey’s white writing. In Graves’ pictures the white lines became disassociated from any symbolizing of flux and change, but are an expression of the ambience of light, in which his symbolical creatures nest. Graves is always expressing an influence of the intuitive quality of Zen as a means for revealing his own ideas of the relation between man and the universe. Perhaps the most Oriental quality in Graves’ art, beyond the superficial imitation of ink texture and spatial voids in his paintings, is his sympathetic or empathetic identification with the creatures of the wild. In a sort of nether world of his own journeying, Graves evokes an almost Franciscan pity for other voyagers in the great darkness. In painting the wounded and the blind in the world of the birds, the wreck of their beautiful, functional structure becomes a poignant, almost cosmic tragedy. These creatures seem to dissolve into the strange matter that surrounds them. It is as though, in painting their ruin and dissolution, the artist was trying to express symbolically the imminent terror of his own soul in the mesh of the machine world. Often the spatial organization and the mood of Graves’ entirely personal bird symbols approximate as a parallel, not an imitation, the immutable and universal qualities of bird paintings by such Chinese Zen masters as Mu Ch’i.

The supposed calligraphic aspects of Franz Kline’s giant black and white structures have been proved to be more or less a myth. Although at Kline’s first major exhibition some critics pointed out that his pictures were only “magnified improvisations of Chinese ideographs used as an abstract expressive idiom,” this resemblance is a purely accidental one. One of the better analyses of this artist’s work states quite rightly that “a painting by Kline is the sum of a series of improvisations that could not have been plotted in advance, whereas in the Orient the brush painting is a poetic metaphor of time and place rendered in accordance with a system of brushstrokes the artist has spontaneously varied.” Although Kline professed to be an admirer of Oriental art, his enormous skeletons of heavy black lines on white have nothing to do with the fluid dynamic quality of Oriental calligraphy. Only superficially do these titanic abstractions embody vague suggestions of the ideograph as an abstract shape. In this connection it is perhaps significant to quote a statement by Mrs. de Kooning: “The black and white image had a wide influence on modern Japanese artists. The Japanese revival of the great tradition of Zen calligraphy was in a way triggered by their special interpretations of Kline’s style.”

This examination of only four artists, often singled out for their adaptation of Oriental techniques and forms, does not leave us repeating the old Kipling cliché of “Never the twain shall meet.” It is not necessary to suppose that any Western artist of today, any more than Castiglione in the 18th century, could, or indeed should, become a Chinese painter. This digression has perhaps served to show that if only in an indefinable spiritual way, a real rapprochement working in both directions

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is underway and that Tobey's Pacific hiatus is indeed being narrowed. My own detailed analysis of these American painters is intended only as a supplement to what Dr. Ecke has to say about the Europeans, Mathieu, Masson, and Soulages, and the gifted Tseng Yu-ho, who "arrives at a true synthesis of Far Eastern and Western painting 'beyond encounter.'"

I do not know how some of my more severely critical colleagues will feel about Dr. Ecke's interpretation of the first canon of Chinese painting: "The canon total may thus be understood to demand evocative vitality in terms of spirit resonance. It visually reveals those cosmic facts of which, as Nietzsche believes, 'music alone can speak directly.'" The translation of these binomes "spirit resonance, evocative vitality" still, I feel, leave the reader with the idea that this principle is something mysterious and altogether inexplicable. I would prefer a translation which somehow avoided the words "spirit resonance," which imply something beyond explanation in normal terminology.

As I see it, the first character ch'i has been defined as the "vivifying principle" or aura of Chinese cosmogony: the indwelling force or vitalizing principle of the universe. Ch'i also means breath, vapor, steam, or vital fluid. The phrase erh ch'i, literally two spirits or forces, means specifically Yin and Yang, the plus and minus of the age-old Chinese concept of polarity that maintained the precarious balance of harmony in the universal machine. Liu ch'i, the six influences of spirits, signified Yin and Yang, wind and rain, light and dark. From this we get the impression that the ch'i is something like the Brahmanic conception of the atman, the divine regulating spirit and principle that infuses and animates all things with breath or prana. Yin means harmony of sound or form, especially in the sense of rhyme, or the rhythmic repetition of a note or gesture in music or the dance. Certain scholars, notably Raphael Petrucci, have taken this phrase to mean the Taoist idea of the artist as a magician who made pictures of magic creations that could by the presence of ch'i be transformed into the things they represented. One is of course reminded of the old legend about Chang Sêng-yu's dragon that left the wall where it was painted when the eyes were inserted. It seems reasonably certain to me, at least, that the Taoist way was not intended, if only because the character for Tao is not used. I am more inclined to agree with the Japanese scholars who maintain that not the Tao but the older and eventually Confucian spirit of heaven and earth which sets in motion the phenomena of the universe is intended. This is the "subtle spirit" of the I Ching, through the operation of which life's movement is produced. It is this spirit which the artist is bound to express. Ch'i yin is sometimes equated with the Indian canon Bhava-yojananam, the representation of moods and emotions through the appropriate pose or action of a figure. In other words the painter is to imbue his figures with the mysterious breath of life, to make them appear as if they were actually moving and breathing through the operation of the spirit that sets in motion the phenomena of the world, as the hand of the harpist sets in motion the strings of his instrument. The artist, in other words, is a kind of transformer through which the electric cosmic force is canalized into the creations of his brush.
This is what Wang Wei meant when he said, “Painting must also correspond with the phenomena of the universe.” The onlookers who watched Wu Tao-tze painting thought that he must be receiving supernatural aid. It is clear that whether we wish to place a Taoist or Confucian interpretation on the meaning of ch'i yün, it implies an outside force working through the artist; in other words, the quality of inspiration. Probably the most satisfactory translation of the First Principle would be “life movement realized through vitalizing spirit.” As Sirén has said, “It refers to something beyond the material form, call it character, soul, or expression. It depends on the operation of the spirit or on the mysterious breath of life by which the figures may become as if they were moving and breathing.” It should perhaps be mentioned that something of the same sort is implied in the Sanskrit term cetana, which in the treatise on painting, the Vishnudharmottaram, means the necessity of giving expression to the movement of life, so that the artist who was properly imbued with cetana can represent the dead without life movement, the sleeping possessed of it.

One is apt to gather the impression from this and other works on Chinese painting that the mysterious qualities inherent in ch'i yün sheng ting are the exclusive property of Chinese artists. Actually the transforming of the object and the intuitive presentation of the essential reality and life are not far removed from the Romantic conception of Imagination and Inspiration, or, without going too deeply into the subject, the Idea or even the Disegno Interno of the 16th-century Italians. The Romantics' conception of Imagination and Inspiration as qualities that enable man, although in a finite world, to discern the infinite and absolute, the creative sensibility or intuition of objects in their essential reality, is not too different from the interpretation of the First Canon as the capacity of the artist to grasp the true nature of reality beyond the image of the visual world.

Although it is one of the shortest in the book, Dr. Ecke's chapter on the art of the Han period, represented largely by rubbings, is one of the most telling. In it the author explains with great clarity the emergence of the peculiarly dynamic character of Chinese line drawing. He also demonstrates in his descriptions of representations of various beast forms how “the abstract has been made subservient to organic vitality.” This is as succinct a definition as one could find for that intensification, rather than distortion, that enables the Oriental artist to imbue his creations with a life of their own. Dr. Ecke is at his best in analyzing the vitalized drawings of the Han bestiary. The words he finds to describe the animation of these creatures would serve admirably to explain the special qualities of the First Canon of Chinese painting that seems to have as one of its primary requirements the suggestion of a creature's way of going and its essential life. On pp. 117–118 Dr. Ecke makes the suggestion that a squeeze of a Han relief with two horsemen is derived from the design on a tetradrachm of Euclates I of Bactria, representing the Dioscuri. I have personally examined a great many coins of this Bactrian prince, including the famous 20 stater piece in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Much as I would like to accept this fascinating conjecture on a possible connection between the Hellenic world and
China, I do not find the comparison very persuasive. I would even go so far as to say that if any Bactrian tetradrachms did find their way to Han, the practical Chinese would more likely have melted them down, rather than have used these barbarian trinkets as a source of inspiration. One ends this chapter with the feeling that Dr. Ecke’s phrases “super-tension” and “velocity more than speed” could hardly be improved upon to describe the true character of Han art. One has the feeling, too, that in a strange way these characteristics appear to belong to Han art alone.

Dr. Ecke’s chapter on Buddhist art is one of the thinnest in the book, partly because this material is relatively sparse in the collection he describes, and partly because the author has no particular interest in a type of art so largely determined by canons and iconographical requirements, rather than creative originality. Of course Dr. Ecke is not writing a history of Buddhist art nor a history of Chinese art in the usual sense of the word, but the treatment is, to say the least, perfunctory. There is no mention of the intrusion of Buddhism in the Han period nor of the foundations at Tun Huang reputed to date from A.D. 366. In this chapter Buddhism and Buddhist art begin with the rock-cut sanctuaries at Yün Kang; but here again, there is no mention of the activities of the priest Tan-yao, who, according to the Wei Shu, inaugurated the dedications as early as 454. We are grateful for the reproduction of a rubbing of a Buddha image from Kalgan dated A.D. 460. One might have expected some slight mention of the Central Asian aspects of this image. In connection with this and the Yün Kang sculptures it is useful to recall the enforced settlement of some 30,000 families from the Tun Huang region at Ta-t’ung in 435. It might be added that the gigantic sculptures at Yün Kang, mentioned on p. 256, are not, as Dr. Ecke states, all representations of Sākyamuni. As Matsumoto and others have pointed out, these colossi are almost certainly portrayals of Vairocana or other manifestations of the mortal Buddha in his transcendent aspect. Dr. Ecke is happier when he turns to the more painterly or draughtsmanship carving of Lung-men that seem like a return to the linear discipline of the Han reliefs. The inclusion of a relief of an arhat from the Eastern Pagoda of Ch’uan-chou appears rather irrelevant and, for the present reviewer, difficult to associate with the nebulus figure of Li Lung-mien. Strangely enough, the author does not dwell on the beautiful flying apsaras from T’ien Lung Shan, except a note under the illustration referring to “a modulated force of monumental brushwork.” As I have had occasion to point out elsewhere, this figure lends itself to an interpretation in plastic form of the dynamic drapery associated with Wu Tao-tze.

“Counterpoint and Transformation” is a stimulating chapter. The most exciting part of this section is the juxtaposition of photographs of real landscapes and painted counterparts chosen by the author. These comparisons are usually selected with such rare insight that they are self-explanatory. Dr. Ecke’s comments on these plates are invariably apt and succinct. The pairings of real nature and paintings bring out with extraordinary force how the very formation of fissures, cleavages, and “dragon

veins” impose themselves on the painter’s imagination. Dr. Ecke sums up the fundamental idea of the Chinese painter’s transformation of nature in art when he writes, “Chinese landscape painting has never had any other aim but to disclose by means of different devices what had ever been there but concealed until revealed by the artist.” Or again: “The painter fuses with the landscape he has before or in him. It has grown to be the landscape of his inner eye. Alone in his trance, he grows to be all-one with this world of forms and cosmic forces. With it he merges while recreating it with his brush.” Perhaps the most effective, compelling section in this entire chapter is Dr. Ecke’s interpretation of Wèn Chêng-ming’s masterpiece of Juniper Trees, together with a photograph of a similar form in nature, and the superbly translated poem accompanying the scroll. This is perhaps the supreme example to illustrate the author’s contention that the Chinese artist at once transfigured and transposed nature. We are grateful for the author’s scholarly interpretation of the famous Ma Fèn scroll of the Hundred Geese. I am only disturbed by his suggestion that the method of relief shading is “supposed to have been imported in the 10th century by way of Central Asia.” Dr. Ecke must know that this foreign method of modeling had, according to literary tradition, found its way to China as early as the Six Dynasties and T’ang periods in the work of Chang Sêng-yu and the Wei-ch’ih clan. The chapter trails off in an account of academic paintings in which the writer has no particular interest. In fact, in his devotion to the more explosive and wildly dynamic type of brushmanship the author does not have much patience with the Ma-Hsia style. Of these pictures, still congenial to old-fashioned critics like Sesshu and the present reviewer, Dr. Ecke says “[they] do have their merits to be sure, their own Chinese appeal, yet of a kind which seems obvious to the more fastidious viewer.”

Probably one of the best chapters in the book is “Modes of Brushwork,” in which Dr. Ecke finds the eloquent words to describe the nuances of interpretation which separate the performance of the virtuoso and the genius. The section is filled with many and usually apt allusions to Western art, including Cézanne’s Mont St. Victoire and Greco’s Toledo. I find myself somewhat less convinced by the paragraphs devoted to Huang Ting’s “automatism,” which Dr. Ecke tells us “causes the hand to impart messages from the unconscious.” Much more impressive, because the writer is on surer ground, is his comparison of Shen Chou’s and Huang Ting’s evocations of the Wang Mêng style.

It is beyond the scope of the present review to undertake an evaluation of the attributions of paintings in the collection, especially since this is a problem that does not concern the writer of the text. It is more important to state emphatically that the reproductions so lavishly provided both in color and black and white are more than admirable. Among these the many details of sections provide both aesthetic delight and superb material for the specialized study of the works reproduced. The plates, many of them, are not only “suitable for framing” but chosen with the scholar’s discerning eye to bring out the essential qualities of styles of brushwork in the most telling details and enlargements of the originals.

Throughout the book, which is, as Dr.
Ecke says, only an outline of a catalogue, the reader encounters the writer's enchantment with the magic of calligraphy. The mysterious dynamic power, the outpourings of inner spiritual force which he reads in calligraphy literally possess him like a daemon, so that the writing itself takes on something of the élan vital and musicality of Chinese brush art. Although some may object to this self-conscious lyric type of writing about Chinese art forms, perhaps only a style that is at once dynamic and elusive (in the sense of the Chinese I-p’in) can communicate appropriately the explosive and mysterious elements of Chinese brushwork.

As Dr. Ecke remarks (p. 44), “There never will be a last word about a great Chinese painting or a great Chinese calligraphy,” but we are grateful to him, not only for presenting a notable collection in such sumptuous form, but also for permitting us to share his lifetime of experience and joy in the realm of the immortal painters.

Benjamin Rowland, Jr.
Robert Treat Paine
IN MEMORIAM

ROBERT TREAT PAINE
(1900–1965)

Robert Paine will live in the minds of colleagues who knew him as one who upheld the finest standards of scholarship and connoisseurship in the field of Asian art. Few can equal the combination of guarded care and really penetrating understanding with which he judged a work of art or sifted out its meaning guided by the clues that other scholars may have given. He was a true professional.

But friends knew, too, that his exacting correctness spoke eloquently of an integrity through which warm friendship might endure. There was quite simply nothing false about him.

He wore the mantle of his proud New England background with genuine certainty. There was no mistaking his heritage. Its orthodoxy was real. In his family lineage he was a direct descendant of a signer of the Declaration of Independence. As Curator of the Asiatic Department of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts he was heir to such famous names as Fenellosa and Okakura. He was the student of another great New England orientalist, Langdon Warner.

Robert Paine was graduated from Harvard in the class of 1922. He then read English at Lincoln College, Oxford, for two and a half years. His studies continued in Kyoto from 1928–1932. It was in 1932 that he joined the Boston Museum as Associate in the Asiatic Department. He returned to the Orient in 1934 and again in 1939. His latest trip to the Far East was for purposes of organizing the important exhibition of Korean art that toured this country in 1957-1958. It was characteristic of his thoroughness as well as inherent respect for others that in preparation for that journey he spent hours in the study of Korean. He was devoted to the Museum of Fine Arts—for 30 years as a quiet scholar, organizer of exhibitions, and donor to its collections. He was appointed Curator in 1963, and in this position he was just beginning to realize the fruits of his efforts over the past two years in the major and long-overdue task of renovating its oriental galleries. To this work, as well as to important additions in the Indian and Islamic collections, a recent number of the Bulletin (1965, no. 333) eloquently attests.

The bibliography appended here speaks clearly of his scholarship. One thinks of Robert Paine chiefly for his contributions in the areas of painting, prints, and ceramics. The clarity and perception with which he might approach an individual work of art is perhaps best seen in such a slim yet vital volume as Ten Japanese Paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (1939); and there is a quality of authoritative finality about a famous book in his article, “The Ten Bamboo Studio; its early editions, pictures and artists” (1951). For comprehensiveness and usefulness in teaching his tightly written and yet penetrating discussion of painting and sculpture in the Art and Architecture of Japan (1955) remains standard in its area. Ars Orientalis was fortunate enough to have been able to print one of his latest studies in the lore of the Japanese print (1963), and Ann Arbor
may also be considered in his debt for his many contributions to the *Far Eastern Ceramic Bulletin* from 1948 to 1959.

To the art and culture of the Far East there are doubtless many roads that may be taken by her Western admirers. For Japan the most elusive, perhaps the most tragic, involves the effort to "go native." This is so for the very simple reason, as one ultimately learns in Japan, that to be Japanese is to be born Japanese. Robert Paine never cultivated this conceit. Rather his life and its serious involvement with the beauty of Asia remained rooted in New England and is tribute to that more enduring bond that links cultures, not through denial, but through the recognition of mutual excellence. It need hardly be emphasized that from the days of the clipper ships, New England has had its own proud relations with the Far East. Her carpenters and silversmiths shared a love of craft comparable to the ancient skills of Japan's bronze-casters and woodworkers. It was completely right that Robert Paine was a serious specialist in the lore of mushrooms, for the Japanese, too, have the extraordinary ability to cultivate the greatness of that which is seemingly small and insignificant. As Japan, so is New England bound by nature's seasons. And the morning mists rise from a New England meadow as they do on the Nara plain and in fact did for Robert Paine in the quiet surroundings of the Massachusetts town of Harvard, where the Paines for many years had a summer home. Here, too, one could listen to the insects of late summer as one might in a Kyoto garden; and he cultivated his own careful arrangement of flower, pine, and pool in back of his Hubbard Park residence. Robert Paine at the close of his section in *The Art and Architecture of Japan* quotes Hiroshige's famous poem composed as he was dying. It is perhaps proper to repeat this here. For Robert Paine was deeply involved with the greatness of Japanese prints, with nature and with Japan. His Japan, however, was also for those outside of Japan. His departure, after suffering, was stoical and without regrets.

*I leave my brush at Azuma,*

*I go to the Land of the West on a journey*  
To view the famous sights there.

**Richard Edwards**

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