STUDY OF LEAVES AND FLORAL ORNAMENTS
PAINTED ON TILE
Plates CXXXIV to CXXXVIII
WOODWORK
Moucharabey and Wooden Grilles

In Egypt, as in most Oriental cities, the hot climate has made the circulation of fresh air within doors a necessity; thus, windows are ordinarily nothing more than openings closed by lattice work, very artistically rendered and allowing fresh air to enter while blocking the interior from the outside view, in such a way that people within the apartment can look outside without being seen. These latticed windows are called chibba; they are charming works and quite varied, as can be seen in the specimens reproduced in our plates; often they are pierced by small openings featuring a movable grille, also in lattice work, which allows a head to pass out to look or call out if need be. There are few simple lattice work frames. These windows are also sometimes replaced by moucharaby of the same sort, but which offer the advantage of seating in order to enjoy the coolness and the view.

Bait al-Amir: Pentagonal Moucharaby (Pl. CXXXIV).—This elegant moucharaby, surrounded by its latticed windows, resembles an aviary hung upon a wall. It is adorned with climbing plants, whose greenery buffers the reverberation of the sun and whose flowers brighten the solitude of the harem. We have changed nothing and added nothing to this charming Arabic motif, contenting ourselves with the faithful reproduction of what we saw in the courtyard of an abandoned house, so decrepit that we dared not enter the pretty garden pavilion glimpsed through the window. It is the handsomest example of this type of woodwork that we have ever encountered – its turned lattice work furnishes every detail of its construction.

For an exact idea of this type of openwork window, a comparison can be made with the moucharaby of the house of Sheikh Sadat.

Grilles in Cut, Turned and Carved Wood, with Kufic Inscriptions (Pl. CXXXV to CXXXVIII).—The two inscriptions in rectangular Kufic characters, frequently used in the ornamentation of panelling and mosaics, read and translate as follows:

The one on top of the large window, No. 1: ʿLillahi-ʾal-amr min gabl ou min badd.—"To God, the empire of the past and future" and that on No. 2, a fragment of a moucharaby: Biʾannalh machaʾla Allah.—"In the name of God, the will of God".

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