for Sultan Melek al-Nacer Muhammad, son of Sultan Melek al-Mansour Qala'un, who reigned from 692 to 708 (1294 to 1309).

Plate CLXVI shows a bronze candlestick holder with ornaments and inscription damascened in silver and in gold, from the furnishings of this sultan. It has three legs, like certain candlesticks from the Middle Ages, and still bears the point destined for the candle. On the medallion all that can be read is "Al-Melek-al-Nacer", a title common to several Muslim sovereigns, but the ducks from the Qala'un coat of arms, which form the border of this medallion, leave no doubt as to the sultan to which it belonged: Melek al-Nacer Muhammad ibn Qala'un.

We give again, in Plate CLXIX, two candlestick holders from the 14th century, most remarkable for the artistic richness of their decoration.

Vases in metal, brass or tin-plated copper, very numerous in the homes of the different Islamic peoples, both in days gone by and the present, take on varied forms which imply diverse uses, and bear diverse names as yet unknown to us. They are generally adorned with inscriptions and arabesques which make veritable works of art of them, carefully crafted or damascened in gold and silver.

Most inscriptions only express a banal wish in favour of the owner, written by the manufacturer for the use of all and sundry: "Blessings, safety, health, affluence and lasting happiness to my owner!" But vases manufactured for sultans and emirs always bear their name and titles, allowing them to be dated precisely. Lastly, these vases are sometimes signed with the name of the manufacturer or damascener.

Several vases, like the mirror-backs, represent hunting scenes, animals fighting one another, musicians and revellers. Sometimes the twelve signs of the Zodiac, decorated with figures, are present.

In Egypt, vases of the rounded form seen in Plate CLXVII are called sedrie. No longer in fashion today in noble dwellings, they are still quite common in the boutiques of Cairo food merchants where European amateurs buy them at all cost.

We know of three vases similar to the splendid sedrie shown in this plate, all three of the same size and craftsmanship, from the palace of Sultan Muhammad ibn Qala'un, two are still in his tomb in Moristan, and the third is in the British Museum.

A long and beautiful legend is inscribed on the belly of this sedrie, in lovely Neskhi characters, damascened in silver and surrounded by arabesques featuring ducks, from the distinctive Qala'un coat of arms; it reads: "Glory and honour to our Master, the victorious king, the wiseman, the just, the warrior, supporter of the world and of religion, Muhammad Ibn Qal'Un".

The three flowered medallions which separate the compartments display a small band damascened in gold in their centres; each repeats the following words: "Glory to our master, the sultan."

The bottom of the vase shows a lovely rosette, formed mainly by a series of fish, a type of ornament frequently encountered on sedrie.

In Plate CLXII, we have reproduced other, less important, sedrie to demonstrate the wide disparity in richness; these were for sherbets and other refreshments. We also provide several drawings of vases and trays in copper (Pl. CLX, CLXII, and CLXV).

Penbox of Sultan Bahrite Beken, Details (Pl. CLXX and CLXXI).—The khatib, or secretary to the sultan, used large and artistically wrought writing cases. When presenting himself to the audience of the prince, his writing case was carried by the amir of the gate or by one of the amirs most in favour with the master.

Nearly all writing cases of the august chancellery and of the secret chancellery were in brass, plated and incrusted with gold and silver. The one we give here is quite curiously its ornamentation formed of arabesques and birds.

Vessel Inlaid with Bronze, Decorated with Martichores (Pl. CLXXXIII).—This small vase is now part of a private collection; it belonged in years gone by to the Chapter of Templars, and was then passed down to its present owner. The monsters known as martichores (which decorate everything) go back to a most distant period, although Herodotus makes no mention of them.
IVORY CASKET DECORATED WITH SILVER
Conserved in the Bayeux Cathedral (12th century)
ORNAMENTAL DETAILS OF A SEDRIEH
(15th century)
SMALL COPPER TRAY
(15th century)
BRASS TRAY
(16th century)