Another art which was indigenous to Syria was that of glass-making. The Syrians seem to have been masters of all the various techniques from early times, for much of the best Roman glass was made in the area, and its early development has often been attributed to the Phoenicians who once inhabited the coastal belt. The mastery of the technique continued into Muslim times, for blown, moulded and cut glass were all made for the Muslim patrons. Most important of all, however, was the enameled glass, a technique which was known in Roman times, but which achieved new glories under the Islamic rulers, more especially for the decoration of a very distinctive form of lamp, with large bulging base and upper section and with a narrow waist in between (Ill. 134, 135). The earlier ones are to be assigned to the thirteenth century, but the majority belong to the fourteenth century or later. Tall, narrow beakers and long-necked bottles were also often decorated with similar enamelling; there is an especially fine one of the Mamluk period in Vienna. Kufic or naksh script made up the most usual decoration; in Egypt motifs with heraldic significance, like the cup or spread eagle, set in medallions, were often included as a part of the decoration.

Exactly when the technique of inlaying bronze with silver or copper was first developed in Syria, or whether or not it was adopted from Mosul, is hard to say, but it is certain that good work of the so-called Mosul type was done there, especially in Aleppo and Damascus, from the early thirteenth century onwards and from Syria the technique probably spread to Egypt. Basins (Ill. 137), ewers and other vessels were usual, but the most common objects to be adorned in this way were the broad-based candlesticks which formed an essential part of the furnishing of the finer mosques. One bearing the date 1317, in the Benaki Museum at Athens, is typical and is probably to be assigned to Syria. But the Egyptian craftsmen were just as proficient, and one of the finest examples of the technique, the so-called Baptistry of St Louis, now in the Louvre (Ill. 138), is to be regarded as Egyptian work. As on many of the secular examples, stylized human figures set in medallions sometimes formed a part of the decoration of the candlesticks, though on those intended for use in the mosques inscriptions or formal scrolls were
The question of whether or not the manufacture of carpets was included in the repertoire of the Egyptian textile weavers at this time is a somewhat debated one. Fragments have been dug up at Fostat, one of which can actually be dated to the year 821, while others can be assigned on stylistic grounds to dates from the tenth century onwards. It has, however, been questioned whether these should be regarded as local work or imports, and in the fourteenth century there was certainly a significant trade in imports from Turkey. By the seventeenth century, however, the word ‘Cairene’ was in common use to describe a special sort of carpet made in Egypt. These carpets were distinguished by very characteristic geometric designs inspired by marble pavements, rather than gardens – like the carpets of Persia, or mosque plans – like those of Turkey. The fact that similar designs inspired the woodwork of the middle period in Egypt, as well as the known competence of Egyptian weavers in other veins in early times, tends to support the existence of a local carpet industry, and that, if it existed at all, it was probably established as early as the eighth or ninth century.

If the glass, the metal and the pottery is all clearly to be classed as art, it may perhaps be questioned whether the textiles and some of the woodwork of this age, especially towards its end, should not rather be designated as craftwork. On the textiles designs on a small scale or inscriptions supplant the large-scale motifs of earlier times and embroideries gradually took the place of the loom-woven stuffs; fine though all these often are, they lack the magnificence of the earlier work, and attract because of the detail of the craftsmanship rather than because of the grandeur of the compositions. The sculptured and inlaid woodwork, with its love of intricate arabesques or small-scale geometric patterns, though amazing proficiencies, again is hardly great art – often indeed it seems somewhat tedious. It is adequate for what it was intended, doors, mihrabs and so forth, but can hardly be regarded in the same light as the glasswork or the pottery.

Copper basin with inlaid decoration and bearing the name of Sultan Malik Nair Muhammad (1294-1341). It is an example of the technique once associated with Mosul, but must have been made in Egypt.

Copper basin with inlaid decoration. This is the largest and most important example of inlaid metalwork from Egypt, is usually known as the Baptistry of St Louis, c. 1290-1310.
It is perhaps to some extent true to say that the miniature painting of the Mamluk school had a certain dry, wooden character which distinguished it from the earlier work done in Mesopotamia. The figures are somehow like dolls or puppets instead of living individuals, and the renderings are decorative rather than interpretational. But deficiencies in this direction are compensated for by the gay, delightful colouring and the almost Matisse-like conception of some of the designs.

Most important of the earlier Mamluk books are copies done in Egypt and Syria of the famous treatise of al-Jaziri on *Automata*, first written at Diyarbakir between 1181 and 1206 (Ill. 130). The original no longer survives; the copies probably follow it very closely, for one in the Saray at Istanbul, done in 1254 (No. 3472) is close to others of a century later, except for the addition of certain motifs which are part of the repertory of Mamluk heraldry. A cup

on one of the leaves of a Mamluk volume may be cited, and may be compared with the same heraldic motif on pottery from Fostat or on metalwork. Other volumes that were illustrated belong to the old repertory so popular in Mesopotamia—the ‘Fables’ of Bidpai, the ‘Assemblies’ of Hariri and so on. In addition a few other books were illustrated, such as one now in the Ambrosian Library at Milan, entitled ‘The Banquet of the Physicians’ (*Du‘wat al-Athba*); it is dated to 1273 and was probably done in Syria (Ill. 140). The schematic frame, the symmetrical balance, the rippling, wrinkled folds of the costumes and the way that the dishes of fruit or wine vessels have been reduced to a symbolism akin to that of the art of the twentieth century are all characteristic.

The beginnings of the Mamluk school are represented by two copies of the ‘Assemblies’ of Hariri in the British Museum. One (Addl. ms. 22,114) is dated to 1237, and the scene of two figures conversing in a room with looped curtains (Ill. 141) is typical. The colours are bright and contrasting, but the faces are much less expressive than those which characterized the Mesopotamian work. The same colouring is to be seen in the scenes with three figures in a tent. The arrangement of the curtains follows a convention which had been current in the Byzantine world since early Christian times. The other (Or. ms. 978), dated to 1271, is akin, but is rather more stylized and this is carried further in a manuscript in the Bodleian (ms. Marsh 458), which is dated to 1337; some of the pictures seem to have been conceived almost as pieces of pattern. The work is nevertheless of high quality and it is to be counted as one of the finest Mamluk books we know, though it is perhaps surpassed by one at Vienna, dated to 1334, for it has a magnificent frontispiece which as a piece of pure decoration is wholly successful (Ill. 142).

Though in the main a work of Arab art, Eastern influence has penetrated, for the plumed hats worn by the two musicians are wholly Mongol; the turban of the central figure on the other hand is of a type that was reserved for the Mamluk princes.

A similar change affected the animal picture-books, although owing to the advanced degree of stylization that had been reached in the Mesopotamian models, it is perhaps less striking at a first
glance. Indeed, although a copy of the Fables of Bidpai in the Bodleian (Ms. Pococke 400), dated to 1334, has sometimes been assigned to Iraq, it is, in fact, probably to be regarded as a close Egyptian copy of an earlier Mesopotamian work. The trees of the Syriac manuscript of the gospels in the British Museum (Syr. Ms. 7170) may be compared, and the colouring is less brilliant than in typical Mamluk work. Another copy of the Fables in the Bibliothèque Nationale (Ms. arabe 3467), on the other hand, contains miniatures which are more essentially decorative, and fall obviously into the Mamluk group. The ultimate and most extreme development of the style is, however, represented by a copy of an animal picture-book, the Kitab Manaf al-Hayawan, in the Ambrosian Library at Milan (A.R. A.F.D. 140). Here the plants, birds and animals are wholly stylized and the greatest quality of the pictures lie in their delightful, brilliant, but wholly unnaturalistic colouring. The book contains thirty-two miniatures and they bring to a logical but delightful conclusion the work of the Arab school of secular book illustration.

Perhaps the most remarkable of all the work done under the patronage of the Mamluk sultans, however, were the buildings for which they were responsible in Cairo. Some of the sultans built a very great deal, nearly everyone built something, for it had become the custom for a fine mausoleum to be erected for burial purposes, and the tombs of the caliphs are one of the glories of Cairo. In addition to a mausoleum nearly every one of them built a mosque – not a great congregational mosque as in early times, but a smaller, more compact structure where there was opportunity for the carver and the craftsman to show their skill.
143 The north-west entrance to the mosque of Beybars (1260–77), Cairo. All the sultans of the Mamluk dynasty were great patrons of art and architecture and each of them was responsible for a fine mosque in Cairo. Photo by courtesy of Professor Creswell.

The first of the series was the mosque set up by Beybars (1260–77) (III. 144), outside the city, on the road to Heliopolis. It is the exception that proves the rule, for it is the only congregational mosque of the age. It consists of a great rectangular court with a six-aisled sanctuary and three aisles at the other end and at the sides. Its north-west entrance is particularly impressive and shows the work of the sculptor to good advantage. Qala-un (1279–90) was responsible for a madrasa and a mosque in Cairo itself (III. 144), the two forming a complete entity, with a fine minaret in three stages. Sultan an-Nasir (1292–1340) built several mosques and palaces including the Nasiiryeh College. The twin minarets of one of his mosques, on the citadel, are rather Persian in style, while on the other there is sculpture of very outstanding quality (III. 146). Finally Sultan Hassan (1347–61), though he was himself a despicable character, was responsible for one of the finest of the mosques which, with its madrasa, was built about 1362; it is very tall, almost like a fortress, and has one of the highest minarets in Cairo and perhaps the finest mihrab and minbar of the period.

144 Interior of the tomb chamber, Mosque of Qala-un (1279–90), Cairo. All these Mamluk mosques were primarily intended as burial places. 145 Detail of the sculptured decoration on the minaret of the madrasa of Sultan an-Nasir Muhammad (1292–1304), Cairo.

The fine building tradition established by the Mamluks was followed by their successors of the Circassian Mamluk dynasty, which was established in 1382 and lasted until the conquest of Egypt by the Ottoman Turks in 1517. Stylistically there is no sharp division between the work of the two periods, and the mosque and madrasa that bear the name of the first Circassian Mamluk sultan, Barquq (1382–97), are close in style to pure Mamluk work, while the stages of the minaret of a mosque built for his son Farag outside the walls recall those of earlier buildings, notably that of the mosque of Ibn Tulun.

In 1400 history was to repeat itself, for Farag once more halted the Mongol progress, this time by defeating Timur (Tamerlane). His victory resulted not only in the continuance of a period of
said to mark the end of the story of Egyptian art, for in 1517 the
country was conquered by the Ottoman sultan, Selim I, and the last
building of consequence to be erected, Süleyman’s mosque on the
citadel (1550-6), was in a completely new style, based on a Constan-
tinopolitan model which had itself been derived to no small degree
from a Byzantine prototype.

Though few other buildings in Egypt or Syria were as completely
Ottoman in style as Süleyman’s mosque, the last phase of Islamic art
there was nevertheless much affected by Ottoman influences, espe-
cially in the spheres of architecture and ceramics, and most of the
buildings set up were thus very like those of Constantinople. At the
same time a new type of pottery was made at Damascus which it is
sometimes hard to tell from that of Iznik, in Turkey, though in
general the designs tend to be less precise and hard and more

wealth and prosperity, but also in the development of a somewhat
precious style in art, which lacked the vigour which seems to have
resulted from the Mongol invasions in Persia, despite the havoc that
was wrought. The Egyptian buildings were all exquisite, notably
the famous madrasa and mausoleum of Qaitbay (1463-96) in the
eastern cemetery, but they seem almost too perfect and their decora-
tion is so delicate that it somehow appears to be overdone; this is
true, for example, of the geometric reliefs which adorn the outside
of the dome of Qaitbay’s mosque (III. 146). In fact, these works,
exquisite though they are, represent the limit of a style which could
go no further without revolution or violent change. They may be
148 Cushion cover embroidered on linen. In later Mamluk times embroidery to a great extent superseded the fine woven stuffs of earlier date. Probably Egyptian, seventh to eleventh century.

spontaneous, and manganese purple was a favourite colour. It is distinguished by a very fine white body with a painted decoration of flowers and leaves in apple-green, blue and pale purple, outlined in black against a clear white ground. Lamps, bowls and other large vessels were usual (Ill. 147). The best work was produced in the later sixteenth century and much of it is to be classed amongst the finest products of Islamic art. Of the other arts the embroideries were perhaps the most outstanding and they seem to have replaced woven stuffs to a considerable extent (Ill. 148).

Later Islamic Art in North Africa, Spain and Sicily

Though there was no very clear division between the earlier and later phases of Islamic art in Spain, the style nevertheless changed very considerably as time went on, and in the later work a wholly distinctive manner was developed which was more decorative and less monumental than the earlier, reflecting very clearly the character of the society which produced it, for the centralized government of Cordova ended about 1090 and the country fell under the control of a number of local rulers. The same was equally true of North Africa. In both areas the buildings became smaller and less monumental, and their decorations more ornate and more superficial, depending for their appeal on elegance rather than grandeur. The Great Mosque at Tlemcen (1082–restored 1136) (Ill. 149) is typical of this phase. It is comparatively small yet the ornament is lavish. The horseshoe arch has been evolved to an exaggerated degree and the multi-lobed arches and the pierced stonework of the dome are amazingly intricate; the effect is picturesque and delightful, but it can hardly compare as a piece of creative architecture with such buildings as the mosque at Cordova or the Masjid-i-Jami at Isfahan. The same is true of the pottery and the other arts, however graceful they may be; only the textiles stand out because of the great majesty of their designs.

The first phase of this new age, both in Africa and Spain, is known as the Almoravid dynasty, which was centred at Marrakesh from 1056 until 1148, but also controlled southern Spain. It was succeeded by the more coherent Almohad, lasting until about 1250, when Spain fell under the control of a line of rulers from North Africa who were inspired by profound religious ideals of a basically iconoclast character. Their capital was at Marrakesh, and the Quasi-biya mosque there (second half of the twelfth century), in its plainness and restraint, illustrates the character of the religious art of the
age as a whole (Ill. 151). Anything in the way of greater ornamentation was reserved for work in the secular sphere, and here some very outstanding buildings were produced during the later twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. The great city gates of Marrakesh (Ill. 152), Rabat and elsewhere show the decorative style of this secular art at its best. They were important, for they served not only to protect the entrance to the cities but also acted as the places from which justice was dispensed and where meetings of importance took place. At a later date the gates even became symbols of the centre of government and sometimes even served to designate a régime – in the Ottoman world the idea survived in the term ‘Sublime Porte’ which was actually the gateway to the central block of government offices at Constantinople, but the name was applied to the whole governmental machine.

A number of North African cities rose to importance at this time in addition to Marrakesh – the most outstanding of them was Rabat. Pottery was made in many of these cities and there was a certain amount of weaving; taken as a whole, however, no very important products in the minor arts are to be associated with North Africa, and what was done belongs more to the range of folk art rather than fine art (Ill. 153).
In Spain exactly the opposite situation prevailed, for there the minor arts were more interesting than the architecture. This was, however, to some extent due to the fact that few of the Islamic buildings there survived the Christian conquest, and it is really only in the Alhambra at Granada that anything of architectural consequence is to be seen. Granada served as the capital of a small independent dynasty from 1237 until 1492 when the Muslims were driven out of Spain. The Alhambra was the palace of the rulers and it underwent a number of repairs and enlargements during the whole of this period. The famous 'Court of the Lions', with its lion fountain in the centre, was added in 1354 (III. 150).

Though there are but few monuments of Muslim architecture in Spain, the ivory carvings, textiles and, at a later date, the pottery were all of high quality. As regards the former, the rather full, ornate style which had characterized the work of the tenth and eleventh centuries continued; the textiles became more elaborate and in the pottery a number of techniques new to Spain were developed. The best work dates from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and is represented by the famous Hispano-Moresque lustre wares (III. 154). The technique was first developed in Murcia and Almeria in the thirteenth century, but it was monochrome; polychrome lustre only appeared almost two centuries later, by which time the motifs of decoration were mostly of a definitely Western character and as often as not included Western heraldic emblems. It was a luxury art produced to suit wealthy patrons, and many of the vessels like the great storage jars in the Alhambra were of great size and of not much practical use. The large dishes for fruit which are represented in numerous collections are in closer accord with present-day tastes. More practical were the coarser wares decorated in a bold, simple style, in green (III. 153). Paterna in Valencia and Teteul in Aragon were two of the main centres of production. The work is closer in style to that of such Italian centres as Urbino than it is to anything produced in the rest of the Islamic world, and it thus stands rather apart. Tiles with a decoration both in relief and in coloured glazes were also made, especially in Andalusia, but they too were more Italian than Islamic in character.
Except perhaps for the Hispano-Moresque lustre, the quality of Spanish pottery was rather poor in contrast to that of Egypt and Persia, and the varieties were limited. But the textiles were on the other hand outstanding, and some of the most beautiful products of these later years must be assigned to Spanish looms, or to those of Sicily, where work which was very similar was done. Indeed, it is not always easy to tell the Spanish products from the Sicilian, though the two are distinct from those of the rest of the Islamic world, both in respect of their designs and also with regard to the colouring, which was unusual and distinctive. The grounds were often rather dark, green, brown or black being the favourite colours, and the designs were in cream, red, blue or white. The patterns were again characteristic, being somewhat rigid and severe. An outstanding textile of the twelfth century in the Musée de Cluny (III. 157), for example, bears confronted peacocks, one row in red and gold, the next in yellow, against a brown ground. A somewhat similar colouring characterizes a textile with a highly stylized bird design in the Museum at Vich (III. 155); it has sometimes been assigned to Spain and sometimes to Sicily, but it is hard to be sure of its provenance.
Though Sicily was an important centre of manufacture of purely Islamic textiles - they had no doubt been made there during the period of Egyptian overlordship - others which were more definitely Byzantine in style were also produced in the island. We know that Roger II introduced craftsmen from Greece who presumably worked in a Byzantine manner, and textiles like the Shroud of St Potentien at Sens are probably to be regarded as their work. It is finely woven and carries a design of confronted birds and addorsed griffons in medallions bordered by kufic inscriptions. The presence of Greek craftsmen did not mean the death of Islamic motifs, and the great Coronation Mantle of the Sicilian kings, now at Vienna, which dates from 1134, is more Islamic than Byzantine (Ill. 156). The camels and lions which form the nucleus of the design are thus entirely Eastern, and it also has a border of kufic script. It is actually an embroidery, although the disposition of the design is close to that of the woven silks and the absolutely balanced, confronted beasts would be well suited to weaving on a loom.

Another group of textiles which is undoubtedly to be assigned to Spain contrasts markedly so far as the designs are concerned with these figured stuffs, and the patterns are basically geometric, even if stylized animals or birds are sometimes included. Textiles of this type first appeared in the thirteenth century. The same rather unusual colour contrasts distinguish them. Gold threads were often used in their production, and as time went on delicate brocades replaced the rather coarser, heavier textiles of earlier days. But, as with the lustre ware, European motifs, often of an heraldic character, were then quite often included, and work of this type usually goes under the name of the Mudéjar style.

We know practically nothing of Sicilian pottery and nothing was produced that can compare with what was made elsewhere in the Islamic world. But Sicily was an important centre of ivory carving, and there are quite a number of caskets, which are to be regarded as Sicilian rather than Spanish (Ills. 158, 159, 160). Most of them bear

135 Woven silk textile known as the Tapestry of the Witches. It has sometimes been assigned to Spain, sometimes to Sicily, but the former is more likely. Twelfth or early thirteenth century