Not very many works on a really small scale have come down to us from Seljuk times, but the few that have serve to indicate the proficiency of technique and the high quality of the arts that were practised. In contrast to the blue and black tile mosaics used for the decoration of mosques, secular pottery, so far as we know, consisted of three main types: sgraffito wares, not unlike those of Persia, but related at the same time to Byzantine products; vessels of red body with rather intricate designs in blue above a white slip—the type is usually known as ‘Miletus ware’—and painted tiles of octagonal or star shape with a figural decoration in red, gold, black and white, usually on a blue ground, not unlike the Minai style of Persia (see p. 68) (Ill. 186). In one type there was also a secondary decoration in lustre, which was achieved by firing for a second time at a lower temperature. Examples have come from Konya and a summer residence of the sultans at Kabadabad near Beyşehir, and were used, so far as we know, only in the palaces. A few vessels seem to have been made in the same technique in addition to the tiles (Ill. 188).

They represent the only type of luxury pottery, for the two other groups we have noted were strictly utilitarian, and the Miletus ware bowls hardly came into use before the thirteenth century. Their decoration was, however, by no means crude, even if their red bodies are hardly to be compared with high-class wares of Persia of the same period.

If we know little of Seljuk pottery, we know even less about their textiles, for there are very few woven stuffs that can be definitely assigned to this age; a silk at Lyons in the name of Keykubad I, dated to 1218–19, is the most important of them. But one thing that is certain is that the Seljuk craftsmen produced carpets, and so far as is known at present, it is to them that must be assigned the institution of carpet manufacturing in Asia Minor which was to become of such immense importance in Ottoman times. A number of carpets which are with little doubt to be regarded as Seljuk were discovered still in use in the Ala’ed din Mosque at Konya (Ill. 182) early in this century. Others have been found at Beyşehir, which are now preserved either in the Mevlana Museum at Konya or the Türk ve İslam Müzesi at Istanbul (Ill. 178-81).

177 Carved minbar in the Kelic Çami, Aksaray, Thirteenth century. The Seljuk mosques of Turkey are especially rich in carved woodwork. Good timber was available over most of Turkey and its availability must have stimulated the craft of wood carving.
178-179. Woollen carpets of the Seljuk period. These are some of the earliest carpets known from Turkey and come from the Ala'ed din Mosque at Konya. Their decorations, essentially Seljuk in character, are associated with different regions. The prevailing colours are brown, ochre, red, blue, purple and green. (Ill. 179) is one of the most complete carpets and has a kufic inscription on the border. (Ill. 180) is based on stylized animals.

182. (opposite) Interior of the Ala'ed din Mosque at Konya showing how the carpets were spread on the floor.
183 Gold buckles of the Seljuk period. The open-work decoration takes the form of a griffon and a winged monster. c. 1215-46. Small-scale work of this type in this period is not very common.

Some fragments found at Fostat in 1935 are also probably Turkish. All bear basically geometric decorations similar to those on the stonework and wood, but contrived perhaps with rather greater balance. The backgrounds are dark blue or red, the designs usually in yellow or light green and the geometric patterns, made up of lozenges, stars and similar motifs, or of kufic script, are particularly effective. Once more the designs attest the Asiatic origins of the Seljuks, while the fact that carpets seem to have constituted the most important branch of their textile industry, bears witness to the nomadic basis of their culture, for it was undoubtedly in nomadic society more than anywhere else that the carpet had a truly significant role to play.

The metalwork of the western Seljuks was perhaps rather less distinctive than the carpets, for such examples of the favourite Muslim types of spouted vessel, mortar or candlestick that we know are closely similar to those from Persia. They seem also to have liked ornaments and pieces of jewellery moulded or carved with small-scale patterns. But here the geometric forms which were so prominent in the other arts have given place to naturalistic ones, such as scrolls,

184 Bronze weight of the Ortokid period. Weights of this type, with relief ornament on the top, were common in Persia and Asia Minor alike. In most cases it is hardly possible to distinguish the products of the different areas.
The Ottoman Turks

It has sometimes been assumed that the Turks as a race have made but little contribution to art, and that the quality of the works produced under their patronage is to be attributed to the fact that they employed Persian, Armenian or Greek craftsmen. But the very distinctive character of Seljuk work, especially in architecture and sculpture, serves to disprove this. The deception becomes even more apparent when Ottoman art is examined, for it again is wholly original and distinct, owing in general but little to Persia, and even if the ideas that were to form the basis of Ottoman architecture were adopted from Byzantium, the basic theme was so developed that almost at once it became a distinctive style. Like Brahms’ Variations on a Theme of Handel, the variations constituted the work of art rather than the basic theme.

The Ottomans first appeared in Anatolia during the days of Seljuk rule, but with the decline in the power of the latter towards the end of the thirteenth century they gradually asserted their position under the leadership of Osman, and it was from his name that that of the group was derived. For this reason they were first known as the Osmanlis. In 1338 Osman’s successor as leader, Orkhan, captured Bursa from the Byzantines, and soon after the middle of the century the Osmanli Turks were already established in Europe; in 1369 they defeated the Serbs at Kosovo. It was towards the West that their eyes were first directed, rather than towards the subordination of the other Muslim group in Asia Minor, but by 1400 they had secured the country behind them and were firmly enough entrenched in western Asia Minor and even in eastern Europe to be but little affected by the defeat of their armies at the hand of Tamerlane. Though their Sultan, Beyazid, was captured and taken off to Asia, his successor Muhammad had reunited Anatolia by 1405 and in 1423 Sultan Murad was at the walls of Constantinople, though it was not
until 1453 that the Byzantine capital fell before the attack of Sultan Fatih, or Muhammad the Conqueror, as he is better known in the West. From then onwards the old Byzantium, the city which had defied all attacks since it was founded by Constantine I in 330, became their capital. It was to be embellished by many fine buildings, while the court was to prove a centre of patronage hardly surpassed even by its Christian predecessor. But the city was, in the long run, also to prove the undoing of the régime, for once the hard life of the military conqueror, once the rigours of the uplands, had been finally left behind, the old virility and energy that had inspired leaders and stimulated the activities of so many Turkish groups in their long pilgrimage across Asia declined, and, from the time of Süleyman I onwards (1520-66), it was no longer the drive of the rulers that kept the state in being but rather the fact that there were no more energetic rivals on the scene to supplant them. But even if the later Ottoman sultans showed little of the enterprise of the early conquerors, they were mostly great patrons of the arts, and much work of very fine quality was executed under their aegis.

The architecture - and for that matter, the pottery also - that they sponsored falls into two very distinct groups: that done prior to, or very soon after, the conquest of Constantinople, when Seljuk elements were to the fore, and that done after about 1500, when a wholly new style was developed in a way which would have been virtually impossible had the great Byzantine cathedral of Hagia Sophia not been there as a model. The main centre of development of the former style was Bursa, that of the second Constantinople, though there are fine examples of mosques in the second style elsewhere, including perhaps the finest of all the mosques that the Ottomans ever set up, that at Edirne, built for Sultan Selim II by the architect Sinan between 1570 and 1574 (Ill. 187). Here, as in all Sinan’s mosques, the central dome was the essential point around which the structure was developed; in most of the works of his predecessors, though domes played a part, they were on a smaller scale and did not dominate the structure in quite the same way. The earlier style is typified by the Ulu Cami at Bursa, begun for Murad I (1359-89), but only finished about 1430 (Ill. 188). Though tile-work
plays a part here and in other early Ottoman structures such as the Yeşil Cami at Bursa (1419–24) (Ill. 189) or the Çini Kiosk (1472) at Constantinople (Ill. 190), or Istanbul as the Turks called it, the Ottoman approach to architecture was much more sober and restrained than the Seljuk, and the rich, lavish sculptures which were so loved in the earlier phase were in general avoided in the later; at best they took the form of very sober, restrained decorations in low-relief.

It has sometimes been held that the new style was essentially the invention of the architect Sinan, whom the Turks laud as their greatest genius and whom the Greeks claim as a compatriot. But though he was to bring the new style to fruition, the earliest of the mosques in which the central dome constituted the dominant feature was that of Sultan Beyazid II, built between 1500 and 1505 to the design of the architect Hayriddin. It consists of a principal sanctuary with central dome on four piers, a mihrab at the centre of one wall, with the entrance opposite it; beyond the entrance is a great columned court, like an atrium, very similar to that which existed originally in front of Hagia Sophia. The mosque of Beyazid is unusual, however, in the great width of its entrance façade and in the length of the space which separates the twin minarets that delimit it on either side.

189 Tile decoration in the Yeşil Cami, Bursa, 1419–24. The decoration of the tiles still shows limits of the earlier Seljuk style. The painted square tiles developed by the Ottomans came later.

190 The Çini Kiosk is the earliest example of Ottoman building still extant in Istanbul and its tile decoration, and to some extent its architecture, are closer to work at Bursa, than later monuments in Istanbul.

Even if the glory of the first variation on the theme of Hagia Sophia must go to Hayriddin, it was Sinan who was to carry the idea forward. He completed the Selzade Mosque, which he liked to call a work of his years of apprenticeship, in 1548, as a fairly simple variant of the plan of Hagia Sophia. It was followed by a long series of other works – as many as eighty-one mosques are recorded, apart from madrasas, libraries and other buildings. The earlier ones were
built under the patronage of the great Sultan Süleyman – ‘Süleyman the Magnificent’, as he was usually called – the later ones for Sultan Selim.

The most famous and probably the most beautiful is the mosque of Sultan Süleyman in Istanbul (1550–7), which stands in a superb position dominating the Golden Horn (Ill. 191, 192). Its great dome is supported on four square piers, and it has four minarets, two flanking the entrance and two at the extremity of the atrium-like forecourt. The architect himself, however, is said to have regarded the mosque of Sultan Selim at Edirne as his most perfect and mature work.

In the mosque of Sultan Süleyman, as indeed was the case with all the larger mosques, there were numerous subsidiary buildings, for in most cases a school or college was associated with the main foundation, living quarters were provided for the students and for those who served in the mosques; often too there were rooms in which the sultan could rest or hold court, and sometimes there was even a bazaar quarter associated with the larger mosques. Close by, the mosques, türbes or mausolea were built – there are a whole series of imperial ones close to Hagia Sophia, but those of Sultan Süleyman and his consort Roxelana stand to the south-east of the Süleymaniye Mosque are among the most beautiful (Ill. 194, 195).

The ideas that Sinan perfected served as the theme for nearly all the mosques built thereafter, but in many of the later buildings the proportions were often rather less perfect than in the work of the master. Thus in the mosque of Sultan Ahmed (1609) (Ill. 193, 196) the piers that hold up the dome are somewhat clumsy and heavy, though outside its six tall minarets give it a lightness and delicacy which is truly outstanding, and the lovely tiles adorning its interior have
given to it the name by which it is most usually known today, 'The Blue Mosque'. But the purist would regard them as decadent, and attractive though the over-all effect is, the details of the tile-work perhaps lack something of the quality of the earlier work, as we see it in Suleyman's türbe (III. 194) or in certain smaller mosques like Sinan's Sokollu Mehmet Pasha (1571) or Rüstem Pasha (c. 1550), both of which are veritable tile museums (III. 197-200).

The nature of these tiles is quite distinct. First the old idea of mosaic work, where tiles of two colours were cut out and set together to form a pattern, so popular with the Seljuks, had disappeared, as had that of the alternating star-shaped and octagonal tiles decorated in lustre which the Seljuks brought from Persia.
marked differences, and the suggestion of a Persian origin is not wholly convincing, for the technique, the nature of the decoration, and the style of its rendering developed very rapidly along quite distinctive lines under the patronage of the Ottomans, and the pottery soon became one of the most individual and outstanding of the arts of the Islamic world.

The most important centre of production was the town of Iṣnik, the Byzantine Nicaea, and the factories there seem to have been equally concerned with the manufacture of both vessels and tiles, for the techniques of the two are identical. Wares of both types were widely exported, but the finest tiles were mostly made for Istanbul, and it is in the mosques and the royal palace there that the best examples are preserved. But from the point of view of pottery, the products must be studied as a whole, for the same workmen and designers were responsible for tiles and vessels alike.

The products of Iṣnik have been divided into three primary groups: an earlier, dating from about 1490 to 1525, an intermediate, most important from 1525 to 1535, and a late, from 1550 or thereabouts until the beginning of the eighteenth century. Thereafter the main centre of activity moved to Kütahya, where a new and distinct style was developed.

During the first of these periods the decorations were restricted to blue and white (III. 201); the glazes were thin and fine, the shapes of the vessels followed metal prototypes, and the tiles were comparatively restricted in scope; there are some examples in the mosque of Murad II at Bursa. The second phase, sometimes described as the 'Damascus style' (III. 203), which was characterized by a more varied palette, several shades of blue and a lovely sage green predominating, while from about 1540 manganese brown was also often added. Flowers like bluebells or carnations formed the main motifs of decoration; sometimes the effect was rather Chinese, at others it was more original, as for instance in a very distinctive group where a mass of thin scrolls in blue cover the surface. This group is usually known as 'Golden Horn ware' (III. 202). It was at one time associated with Istanbul, but it now seems likely that all the examples were made at Iṣnik.