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Saracenic Art

BY

STANLEY LANE-POOLE

Saracenic Art



P.C. Museo de la
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ART HANDBOOK.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

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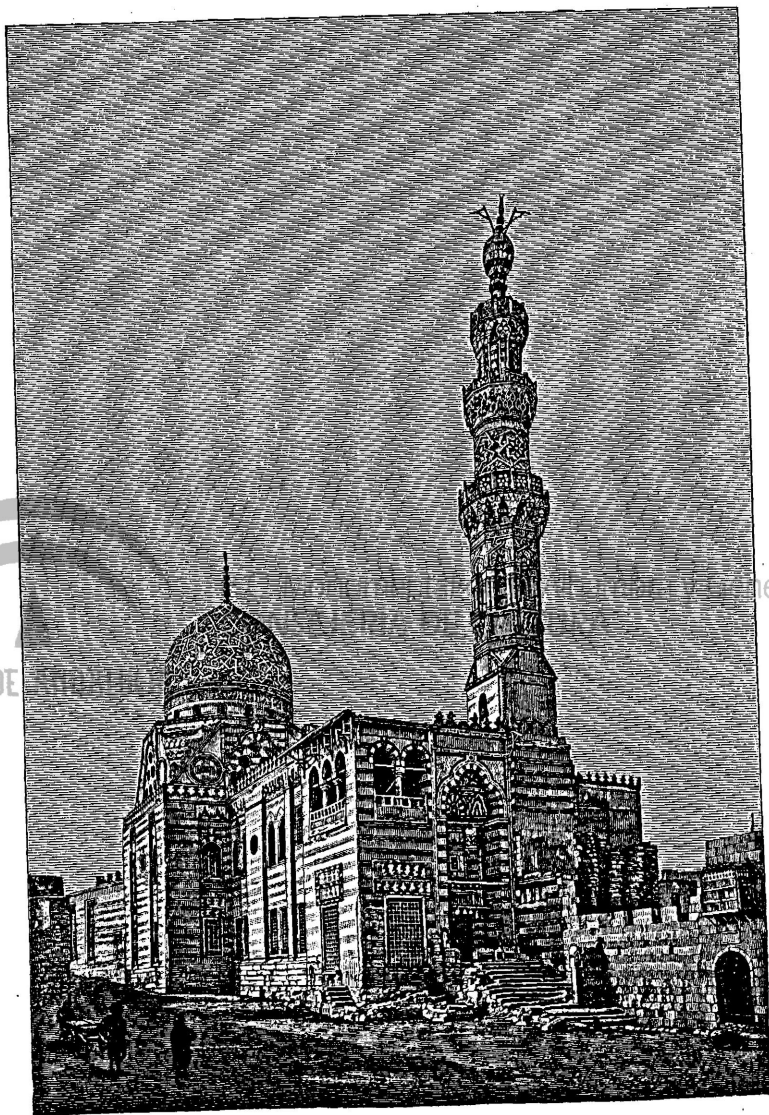
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MOSQUE OF KAIT BEY.

Frontispiece.

THE

ART OF THE SARACENS IN EGYPT

BY

STANLEY LANE-POOLE, B.A., M.R.A.S.

*Hon. Member of the Egyptian Commission for the Preservation of the
Monuments of Arab Art*

With 108 Woodcuts

CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

Donativo del Sr. Conde de Romanones á la Biblioteca de la Alhambra 1909



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PREFACE.

THE subject of the following chapters is what has been commonly known as 'Arab' or 'Mohammadan' Art. Both these terms are misleading—for the artists in this style were seldom Arabs, and many of them were Christians—and the general term 'Saracenic' has therefore been substituted. 'Saracen,' which means simply Eastern, was the universal designation of Muslims in the Middle Ages, whether the paynims referred to were Syrian or Egyptian princes, like Saladin, or Barbary chiefs, or Moorish Alcaydes in Spain; and the mediaeval ring of the term Saracenic—which recalls the "proud Sarrasin" of the ballads, the *Sarrasina* artist of Italy, the Bysant *Saracenus* of the Crusaders, and the stuff *Saracenum*, or, as we spell it, "saracenet"—is specially appropriate to the art about to be described. Saracenic art possesses an unmistakable style, which is instantly recognised wherever it occurs, from the pillars of Hercules and the Alcazar of Seville to the mosques of Samarkand and the ruins of Gaur in Bengal; and this style was developed and brought to perfection in the Middle Ages. The word Saracenic, implying the two ideas of Oriental and mediaeval, exactly fulfils the conditions of a general term for the art with which we are concerned.

There is a Saracenic art of Syria, with Damascus for its centre; there is a Saracenic art of Egypt; another variety is seen in the buildings of the Barbary States and Morocco; Andalusia, in the extreme west of the Mohammadan dominions; Persia, India, and Central Asia in the east; and Anatolia, Armenia, and even Turkey in Europe, between, have each their special development of the Saracenic style. Some of these varieties are perhaps better designated by their geographical positions; we speak of Persian art, Indian art; or again, the Moresque decoration, and so forth; but we must not forget that all these are but modifications of the Saracenic style, produced by the differentiating elements which were found in each country conquered by the Arabs, or introduced by the genius of some special school of artists. The mere classification of the various branches of Saracenic art, with a list of the monuments and objects illustrating each branch, would occupy a volume: so large a subject requires subdivision, and the present work therefore treats of the Egyptian branch alone, with but occasional passing glances at contemporary or derived developments. In some respects the Egyptian is the most important example of the style; for the mosques of Cairo furnish a fuller, longer, and more continuous record of the arts employed in their construction and decoration than any other series of monuments in a single Mohammadan city, and the simple lines and restrained decoration of the Egyptian artists exhibit to perfection the essential character of the Saracenic style. The mosques of Cairo give us the normal character of the art; we may go eastwards to Delhi, or west to the Alhambra, to see what a fanciful taste could add to the

normal elements; but we shall come back with the conviction that the purest form of Saracenic art, and that which most rests and satisfies the eye, is to be seen in Egypt.

In this account of the Egyptian development of Saracenic art, I have worked an almost unexplored vein. The only previous attempt to describe the art of Cairo, as a whole, is M. Prisse d'Avennes' *L'Art Arabe*, a magnificent work, unapproached in its coloured illustrations; but its volume of text is of slight value. M. Prisse, who was not in a position to consult the Arabic historians, or to decipher the inscriptions which so often determine the date of an object of Saracenic art, is naturally an uncertain guide when it is a question of anything beyond draughtsmanship. We must not trust his facts; but for his plates we cannot be too grateful. Coste's work, the *Monuments du Caire*, deserves all credit as the first of its kind, but here again the letter-press is of no scientific value, and even the drawings exhibit an imaginative power, which, however admirable it may be in the creation of works of art, is not desirable in their reproduction. M. Bourgoïn's *Les Arts Arabes*, and the smaller *Éléments*, are finely illustrated, but their text is occupied almost entirely with a minute examination of the principle of geometrical ornament in Saracenic decoration, for which there is no better authority.

The first attempt at a scientific examination of the origin and development of Saracenic art was made by my father, the late Edward Stanley Poole, of the Science and Art Department, in an Appendix to the fifth edition of Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, 1860, and very little of importance has been added to the results set forth in that essay

twenty-six years ago. It is still the best authority on the subject of the sources of Arabian architecture, and the relation of the earliest buildings of the Arabs to Byzantine and Sassanian models; but of other arts, besides architecture, this essay does not treat. My own work, while it necessarily includes an outline of the principal forms and characteristics of Cairo buildings, does not presume to offer a history of Cairene architecture, for which both space and materials are at present wanting. The decorative arts, which were employed to embellish the mosques and palaces of mediaeval Egypt, form the subject of the following chapters; the history of mural sculpture, of mosaic work, wood and ivory carving, glass, pottery, and the like, is traced by means of dated examples down to the decadence which followed the Turkish conquest of Egypt; and the general characteristics of each period having thus been established at fixed points by dated specimens, the classification of undated examples becomes comparatively easy. I may perhaps be thought to have wasted time over the exact determination of the chronological sequence in each separate art, but there is so much vague generalisation abroad, and such extremely hazardous opinions are constantly ventilated, on the subject of Oriental art, that I have considered it a matter of the first consequence to cast aside all merely aesthetic canons and prejudices, and base the history of the arts I describe strictly upon sound historical evidence. An art critic is none the worse off when the date of an object is fixed by historical proofs; and those who are not versed in the principles of art criticism will be glad to have definite facts to go upon.

The authorities of which I have made use will be found referred to in the footnotes. Beyond the materials supplied by accurate drawings, like those of Prisse and Girault de Prangey, European books on this subject are few, and consist chiefly in short papers in periodical publications, such as M. Adrien de Longpérier's in the *Revue Archéologique*, or M. Lavoix' in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*; or else notes, scattered through the pages of books like Colonel Yule's invaluable *Marco Polo*, or M. Schefer's *Nāsir-i-Khusrau*. Reinaud's description of the Duke de Blacas' collection (*Monuments Musulmans*) deserves special notice, as the first scientific account of any large series of Saracenic works of art, and also because it abounds in valuable information, especially in reference to metal-work. In my great-uncle's *Modern Egyptians* the buildings and furniture of Cairo are carefully and clearly described, but the subject of Mr. Lane's book was the manners and customs of the modern people, and not the art of their forefathers. In special departments, Mr. Nesbitt's *Catalogue of the Glass Vessels in the South Kensington Museum*, Mr. Fortnum's corresponding *Catalogue of the Maiolica, &c.*, and Fischbach's *Geschichte der Textil-Kunst* have been consulted. Eastern historians are as a rule singularly destitute of the sort of information we require about the art of the various dynasties and capitals: they tell us how many pieces of gold a certain mosque or pulpit cost, but they seldom record where or how it was made, or who were its designers. Nevertheless there are a certain number of valuable indications scattered among the Arabic writers, and these have been collected, from the works of such historians and travellers as El-Mes'ūdy,

Es-Suyūṭy, Ibn-Khaldūn, El-Makkary, Ibn-Batūta, Nāsiri-Khusrau, 'Abd-el-Latif, &c., &c., and, above all, from the treasure-house of the mediaeval topography and history of Egypt, El-Makrizy's *Khitat* and *History of the Mamlūks*.

I have to acknowledge much private assistance from friends who have made Saracenic art their study. Mr. J. W. Wild, the curator of Sir John Soane's Museum, than whom there lives no better authority on the architecture of Cairo, has kindly read and approved the second, third, and fourth chapters, on architecture, stone and plaster, and mosaic, and generously placed his interesting Egyptian notes and sketch-books at my disposal. Mr. H. C. Kay, whose long residence in Egypt and special study of Arabic mural inscriptions give his criticisms a high value, has read the proof sheets of most of the work, and some important additions have been made at his suggestion. Mr. A. W. Franks, the keeper of mediaeval antiquities in the British Museum, and his assistant, Mr. C. H. Read, have given me every aid in studying the fine collection of Saracenic metal-work under their care, and have also seen the chapters on metal-work, glass, and pottery in the proofs. M. Charles Schefer has sent me some useful references from his valuable notes and materials. To Franz Pasha, the architect to the Ministry of Wakfs in Cairo, I am indebted, not only for giving me every facility when in Cairo in 1883 for studying, photographing, and taking casts from, the monuments, but also for having ever since kept me supplied with photographs and reports of great value for the present work.

With regard to the orthography of Eastern names, I

have tried to be accurate without pedantry. I have neglected diacritical points, which were not required in a book destined for the general student, and I have not spelt Koran with a Q. The vowels *a*, *e*, *i*, *u*, with the prolonged sounds *ā*, *ī*, *ū*, are to be sounded as in Italian; *ey* is to be sounded as in they; *aw* as "ow" in now; (') represents the guttural 'eyn, and *g* (or more strictly *ǧ*), may be pronounced either as English *j* or hard *g*. The latter is the usual Cairo pronunciation.

I must not conclude without expressing my obligations to Mr. J. D. Cooper, who has expended even more than his usual care and skill upon the execution of the woodcuts illustrating this work.

S. L.-P.



RICHMOND,

February, 1886.

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JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
THE SARACENS OF EGYPT	I
CHAPTER II.	
ARCHITECTURE	47
CHAPTER III.	
STONE AND PLASTER	95
CHAPTER IV.	
MOSAIC	115
CHAPTER V.	
WOOD-WORK	124
CHAPTER VI.	
IVORY	171
CHAPTER VII.	
METAL-WORK	180
CHAPTER VIII.	
GLASS	247



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CHAPTER IX.

	PAGE
HERALDRY ON GLASS AND METAL	268

CHAPTER X.

POTTERY	274
-------------------	-----

CHAPTER XI.

TEXTILE FABRICS	281
---------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XII.

ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS	298
-----------------------------------	-----

INDEX OF NAMES, &c.	309
-----------------------------	-----



P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife
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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

FIG.	PAGE
1. MOSQUE OF KAIT BEY	<i>Frontispiece</i>
2. EAST COLONNADE OF THE MOSQUE OF 'AMR	50
3. PLAN OF THE MOSQUE OF 'AMR	51
4. MOSQUE OF IBN-TULUN	55
5. ARCADES IN MOSQUE OF IBN-TULUN (Ninth Century)	59
6. DIAGRAM SHOWING PROPORTIONS OF A DOME	62
7. PLAN OF THE MOSQUE OF SULTAN HASAN	63
8. ORNAMENT FROM THE PORTAL OF SULTAN HASAN	69
9. KUFIC FRIEZE IN MOSQUE OF SULTAN HASAN (Fourteenth Century)	71
10. DOORWAY OF SMALLER MOSQUE OF KAIT BEY (Fifteenth Century)	75
11. DOORWAY OF A PRIVATE HOUSE	79
12. A STREET IN CAIRO	81
13. PLAN OF A CAIRO HOUSE.—GROUND FLOOR	83
13A. " " FIRST FLOOR	84
13B. " " SECOND FLOOR	85
14. ROSETTE IN MOSQUE OF SUYURGHATMISH (Fourteenth Century)	93
15. ROSETTE IN MOSQUE OF SULTAN HASAN (Fourteenth Century)	97
16. STONE PULPIT IN MOSQUE OF BARKUK (Early Fifteenth Century)	99
17, 18. GEOMETRICAL ORNAMENTS FROM THE WERALA OF KAIT BEY	101

FIG.	PAGE
19. ARCHED ORNAMENT OF THE WEKALA OF KAIT BEY (Fifteenth Century)	103
20. GEOMETRICAL ORNAMENT OF THE WEKALA OF KAIT BEY. (Fifteenth Century)	107
21. ELEVATION OF PART OF THE SHOP-FRONTS OF THE WEKALA OF KAIT BEY.	108
22. ARABESQUE ORNAMENT OF WEKALA OF KAIT BEY (Fifteenth Century)	109
23, 24. GEOMETRICAL ORNAMENTS OF THE WEKALA OF KAIT BEY	110
25. ROSETTE OF THE WEKALA OF KAIT BEY (Fifteenth Century)	111
26. ARABESQUE OF THE WEKALA OF KAIT BEY	113
27. GEOMETRICAL ORNAMENT OF THE WEKALA OF KAIT BEY	114
28. MOSAIC DADO	117
29. MOSAIC PAVEMENT	118
30. MODE OF BEVELLING MOSAICS	119
31. MOSAIC PAVEMENT	122
32. CARVED PANEL OF PULPIT	125
33. CARVED PANEL OF PULPIT	126
34. PULPIT OF SULTAN KAIT BEY (Fifteenth Century)	127
35, 36, 37, 38. CARVED PANELS OF LAGIN'S PULPIT, ONCE IN THE MOSQUE OF IBN-TULUN. A.D. 1296	130
39. ARABESQUE PANEL OF LAGIN'S PULPIT, ONCE IN THE MOSQUE OF IBN-TULUN	131
40. PANEL OF LAGIN'S PULPIT, BEARING HIS NAME AND TITLES	131
41. CARVED PANELS FROM PULPIT (OF KUSUN?) (Fourteenth Century)	133
42. CARVED PANELS FROM PULPIT (OF KUSUN?) (Fourteenth Century)	135
43. CARVED PANELS OF THE TOMB OF ES-SALIH AYYUB (Thirteenth Century)	137
44. CARVED PANEL OF A SHEYKH'S TOMB. A.D. 1216	141
45. PANEL OF A DOOR FROM DAMIETTA	142
46, 47. CARVED PANELS FROM THE MARISTAN OF KALAUN (Thirteenth Century)	143
48. CARVED PANEL FROM THE MARISTAN OF KALAUN	145

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

xvii

FIG.	PAGE
49. LATTICE-WORK	146
50. LATTICE-WORK	148
51. LATTICE-WORK	150
52. LATTICE-WORK	151
53. LATTICE-WORK	152
54. LATTICE-WORK	153
55. LATTICE-WORK	154
56. LATTICE-WORK	155
56A. LATTICE-WORK	157
57. LATTICE-WORK	159
58. LATTICE-WORK	160
59, 60. CARVED AND INLAID LATTICE-WORK	161
61. PANELLED DOOR FROM A COPT'S HOUSE	163
62, 63, 64. PANELLED DOORS	165
65. CEILING OF APPLIQUÉ WORK	166
66. TABLE (KURSY)	167
67. CEILING OF A MESHREBIYA	169
68. CARVED IVORY PANEL	172
69. CARVED IVORY PANELS OF A PULPIT DOOR	173
70. INLAID IVORY AND EBONY DOOR	175
71. INLAID IVORY AND EBONY PANEL FROM A TABLE	177
72. IVORY INK HORN	179
73. INSCRIPTION INTERWOVEN WITH FIGURES ON THE "BAPTISTERY OF ST. LOUIS"	183
74. TABLE FROM MARISTAN OF KALAUN (Thirteenth Century)	187
75. PANEL OF TABLE OF EN-NASIR, SON OF KALAUN	190
76. LAMP OF SULTAN BEYBARS II. (A.D. 1309-10)	191
77. BASE OF CHANDELIER OF SULTAN EL-GHORY (Sixteenth Century)	195
78. LANTERN OF SHEYKH 'ABD-EL-BASIT	197
79. COVER OF SHERBET BOWL (Sixteenth Century)	201
80. CASKET OF EL-'ADIL, GRAND NEPHEW OF SALADIN (Thir- teenth Century)	205
81. PERFUME-BURNER OF BEYSARY (Thirteenth Century)	211

FIG.	PAGE
82. INLAID SILVER PANELS OF THE "BAPTISTERY OF ST. LOUIS"	219
83, 84, 85, 86. BRONZE PLAQUES FROM DOOR OF BEYBARS I.	224
87. BRASS BOWL INLAID WITH SILVER (Fourteenth Century).	231
88. BRASS CANDLESTICK INLAID WITH SILVER (Fourteenth Century)	235
89. BRASS BOWL OF KAIT BEY (Fifteenth Century)	237
90. LAMP FROM JERUSALEM	241
91. ARMS FOR LION-HUNTING	245
92. DIAGRAM OF GLASS LAMP	252
93. GLASS LAMP OF ARBUGHA (Fourteenth Century)	257
94. VASE OF SULTAN BEYBARS II.	262
95, 96. STAINED GLASS WINDOWS	264
97, 98. STAINED GLASS WINDOWS	265
99. ASYUT COFFEE-POT	275
100. SILK FABRIC OF ICONIUM (Thirteenth Century)	283
101. DAMASK, WORN BY HENRY THE SAINT (Eleventh Century)	291
102. SILK FABRIC OF EGYPT OR SICILY	295
103. ILLUMINATED KORAN OF SULTAN SHA'BAN (Fourteenth Century)	299
104. ILLUMINATED KORAN OF SULTAN SHA'BAN (Fourteenth Century)	303
105. ILLUMINATED KORAN OF SULTAN EL-MUAYYAD (Fifteenth Century)	305

* * The Department is indebted to Mr. John Murray for the use of Figs. 3 and 7; to Messrs. Virtue & Co. for Figs. 2, 4, 25, 66, 71, 74-8, 99; to Messrs. Cassell for Figs. 8, 9, 13, 91, 94, 101-5; to M. Leroux for Figs. 73, 82, 90; and to M. Giraud for Fig. 100.

THE ART OF THE SARACENS IN EGYPT.

CHAPTER I.

THE SARACENS OF EGYPT.

THE study of any branch of art supposes some acquaintance with the history of the people among whom the art was practised. Without such knowledge not only is much of the interest lost by the inability to enjoy the associations which the imagination winds about the possessions and works of historical personages, —always a strong attraction in antiquarian studies,—but we even lack the data upon which to construct a true and natural sequence of the art itself. Especially important is the aid lent by history to Mohammadan art. It frequently happens that the analogies that go to make up the style of a given period are obscure and difficult to seize in the scattered relics of Saracenic handiwork, and our only safe guides are the names of princes and nobles which the artist, allured by the fluent grace of the Arabic writing as much as by the desire to record the name of the nobleman who expended his treasure upon skilful work, was accustomed to engrave upon most of his productions. These inscriptions, which seldom record the name of the artist himself, but frequently that of the great man for whom the work was executed, are a prominent feature in Saracenic art, and form an invaluable aid to the student in establishing a definite and indisputable sequence of styles. The mosques were naturally inscribed with the name of the pious

founder; and when a later grandee devoted his wealth to restoring the sacred building, he too would place his deed on record, over the entrance, or above the niche, and his new pulpit or carved door would be duly inscribed with his name: thus we are furnished with the dates both of foundation and restoration, — a circumstance of the utmost value in Egyptian architecture. Most of the smaller objects of art, such as metal bowls, glass lamps, and trays, have inscriptions, and a large proportion of these contain the name of some Sultan or noble who is well known to history. From such information we are able in most branches of Saracenic art to weld a chain of artistic development which enables us with little difficulty to class most of the undated specimens.

In the following pages such a chain of examples of known date will be found illustrated and described; but it is not the less necessary to provide the reader with the means of ascertaining for himself the date of an example which he may possess, and which may not be susceptible of positive identification by the help of the engravings in this work. For this purpose a slight knowledge, at least, of the history of Egypt under the Saracens is necessary, and the details, which cannot be given in so brief an outline as is possible in the present limits of space, may be to some extent supplied by the chronological tables which are appended to this chapter.

The writer on the art and history of the Mohammadan East labours under the disadvantage of being obliged to begin at the very beginning; to assume in his reader an ignorance not merely of the chief names of Saracenic history, but even of whole dynasties, and their places in general history. A person of ordinary education may possess some acquaintance with the early events of the Muslim empire, the life of the Prophet Mohammad, the first sweep of conquest, and perhaps even the Khalifates of Damascus, Baghdad, and Cordova. In the later history of the Arab empire, a name here and there, a Saladin or Nüreddin, a Hâkim or a Boabdil, may be known; but the rest is naturally a

blank. People have enough to learn in the present day without attempting Oriental history. In describing the art of Greece or of Italy we are generally on familiar ground; the names of Pericles and Hiero, of the Medici and the Sforze, ought to be as well known as that of Wolsey or William of Wykeham. In Eastern history we must perforce take nothing as known until it has been explained; and in doing so now, no discourtesy is designed towards those few who are acquainted with the history, and who will, I am sure, forgive repetition for the sake of the larger number whose studies have not been directed to Oriental subjects.

The history of Egypt under Mohammadan rulers extends from the middle of the seventh century to the present day; but we are only concerned with that portion of those twelve centuries which bears an intimate relation to the development of Saracenic art. The earliest monument which undoubtedly preserves its original design and ornament is the Mosque of Ibn-Tūlūn, built in the latter part of the ninth century (878); after this we have but five or six monuments of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, and then the most brilliant period of mediaeval Egyptian art opens with the accession of the Mamlūks. Again, after the destruction of the Mamlūk power by the Ottoman conqueror Şelim in the beginning of the sixteenth century, though a few rare survivals of the ancient artistic genius of the Saracens are found, and in the smaller branches of skilled industry, in wood-work, glass, and mosaic, the workmen of Egypt continued to produce some excellent results, the energy and enthusiasm of the artists languished for lack of encouragement, and as a rule the period of Turkish domination furnishes but the record of a long and dreary process of degradation in every branch of art, until the nadir of Eastern art was reached in the palaces of the Khedives. The period of the finest and most abundant works of art is that of the Mamlūks, from the thirteenth to the beginning of the sixteenth century, and to these three centuries we must devote our chief attention. Of the earlier periods a very slight outline is

all that can be attempted. The rule of the Fātimy Khalifs indeed is recorded to have been signalized by extraordinary artistic productiveness: but too few examples of this period have come down to us to justify us in giving it a rank equal to that of the Mamlūks.

The history of Mohammadan Egypt falls into eight divisions: (1) the period of governors appointed by the Khalifs of Damascus and of Baghdād ($\frac{\text{A.H. } 21-254}{\text{A.D. } 641-868}$); (2) the dynasty of Tūlūn ($\frac{254-292}{868-904}$); (3) an interval of governors appointed by the Khalifs of Baghdād ($\frac{292-323}{904-935}$); (4) the dynasty of Ikhshid ($\frac{323-358}{935-969}$); (5) the Fātimy Khalifs ($\frac{358-567}{969-1171}$); (6) the Ayyūby house of Saladin ($\frac{567-648}{1171-1250}$); (7) the Mamlūks, Turkish (Bahry) and Circassian (Burgy), ($\frac{648-922}{1250-1516}$); and (8) the period of Turkish Pashas, ending in the dynasty of Mohammad 'Aly (Mehemet Ali).

I. In A.D. 639, the eighteenth year after the Hīgra or Flight of Mohammad from Mekka to Medina, 'Amr, the general of the Khalif 'Omar, invaded the Egyptian province of the Byzantine empire. Aided by the factious divisions which sundered the Greek and Coptic Christians, and made the latter eager to welcome any invader who would bring down the arrogance of the Melekites, 'Amr was soon able to march on Alexandria, the first city of the East, and after a siege of fourteen months, on the first day of the Mohammadan year 21 (10th December 641), captured it. The victorious general was named the first Muslim governor of Egypt, and the spot where he pitched his tent (in Arabic, Fustāt) became the site of the new capital of Egypt, EL-Fustāt, which speedily grew to handsome proportions. From the time of 'Amr, A.H. 21, to the appointment of Ibn-Tūlūn in A.H. 254, a period of 233 years, 98 governors, nominated by the Khalifs of Damascus and Baghdād, ruled the province of Misr or Egypt (the name Misr is given both to the country and to its capital); and as some of these enjoyed more than one term of office, there were 105 changes of

government in 233 years, giving an average of about two years and a quarter for each governor. A ruler liable to be removed at any moment, and enjoying so brief a term of office, was not likely to occupy himself with the embellishment of a capital which after a few months' or years' reign he might never see again, and he probably directed his energies, like a Turkish Pasha, to accumulating all the wealth he could with his brief opportunities. We have no monuments of the period of the governors, with the exception of the mosque of 'Amr, at Fustât, which has been too often restored to furnish trustworthy evidence as to the style of architecture or decoration. The governors indeed built other edifices; the representatives of the 'Abbāsy Khalifs founded in 133 a new quarter of the capital, adjoining Fustât, which was called El-'Askar, or "the Camp," because the soldiers first had their quarters there; and here they erected a government house and a mosque, of which, however, no trace now remains. El-'Askar was never more than an official quarter: the capital was still Fustât.

2. *Ahmad Ibn-Tūlūn* was a Turkish governor appointed by the 'Abbāsy Khalif, in 868, but after a year he asserted his independence, while still rendering homage to the Khalif as his spiritual lord by retaining his name on the coinage and in the public prayers. Ibn-Tūlūn was the first Mohammadan ruler who founded a dynasty in Egypt; he was also the first to unite Syria with Egypt, as did all independent sovereigns of Egypt afterwards; and he was the first great encourager of Saracenic Art; for he abandoned the old government house at El-'Askar, and built a new suburb, connecting that quarter with the citadel hill, which he called El-Katāi', or "the Wards," either because a large part of it was given in feof to the numerous colonels of his 30,000 troops, or because the new suburb was partitioned into various quarters allotted to different nations and separate trades. Both El-'Askar and El-Katāi' were fashionable suburbs, where the nobility and men of position resided; and the streets were full of splendid

houses. But the glory of the latest suburb was the mosque of Ibn-Tūlūn, of which we shall have more to say hereafter. It is the first undoubted example of true Saracenic art in Egypt, and one of the noblest monuments in the East. Ibn-Tūlūn also built himself a stately palace, with a *meydān* or race-course attached, where the Sultan and his courtiers played at polo. One of the many splendid gates of this meydān was called the "Gate of Lions," because it was surmounted by two lions in plaster; another was called the Sāg gate, since it was made of that wood. Around rose the handsome palaces of the generals; the mosques and the baths; the windmills and brick-kilns; the great hospital; the markets for the assayers, perfumers, cloth merchants, fruiterers, cooks, and other trades, all well built and densely populated. The palace, mosque, race-course, and hospital, together cost a sum of nearly 300,000 dinārs of gold; and the annual revenue from taxes, to meet this vast outlay, and the expenses of government, was placed at 4,300,000 dinārs. To which fact may be added the instructive comment that at the time of Ahmad's death no less than 18,000 persons were found in the prisons. His son Khumāraweyh, who succeeded in 883, carried this passion of splendid luxury to its height. He turned the meydān into a garden, filled with lilies, gilliflowers, saffron, and palms and trees of all sorts, the trunks of which he coated with copper gilt, behind which leaden pipes supplied fountains which gushed forth to water the garden. In the midst rose an aviary tower of sāg wood; the walls were carved with figures and painted with various colours. Peacocks, guinea-fowls, doves and pigeons, with rare birds from Nubia, had their home in the garden and aviary. There was also a menagerie, and especially a blue-eyed lion who crouched beside his master when he sat at table, and guarded him when he slept. In the palace, Khumāraweyh built the "Golden Hall," the walls whereof were covered with gold and azure, in admirable designs, and varied by bas-reliefs of himself and his wives (if we are to credit the historians), and even of the *prime*

donne of the court. They were carved in wood, life-size, and painted with exquisite art, so that the folds of the drapery seemed natural; they wore crowns of pure gold and turbans set with precious stones, and jewelled earrings. Such figures are unparalleled in Saracenic art; yet the account is too detailed to be altogether a fiction. But the chief wonder of Khumāraweyh's palace remains to be described: it was a lake of quicksilver. On the surface of the lake, lay a leather bed inflated with air, fastened by silk bands to four silver supports at the corners; here alone the insomnolent sovereign could take his rest. Of all these marvels, and the splendid harim rooms, the spacious stables, the furniture, wine-cups, rich silk robes, inlaid swords, and shields of steel, nothing has come down to us. We are obliged to take the mosque of Ibn-Tūlūn as witness to the consummate luxury and artistic eminence of the period.

3. After the fall of the dynasty of Tūlūn, owing to the weakness of the later members of the family, who paid the common penalty of their Capua, *governors* appointed by the Khalifs once more exercised their monotonous sway over Egypt, and again there is nothing to record in works of art.

4. Nor did the accession of Mohammad *El-Ikhshid*, in 935, bring any change for the better in this respect. El-Ikhshid followed the example of Ibn-Tūlūn, and made himself independent ruler of both Egypt and Syria, but he left no great works behind him, nor did his dynasty contribute to the monuments of the Saracens. His two sons were under the tutorship of the eunuch Abu-l-Misk Kāfūr, "Father of Musk, Camphor," who ruled the kingdom well, kept a generous open table, where 1700 pounds of meat were consumed daily, but was unable to resist the invasion of the Fātimy Khalif, El-Mu'izz, who conquered Egypt in 969, and Syria in the following year, and also annexed the Arabian provinces of the Higāz and the Yemen.

5. Hitherto the rulers of Egypt had been at least appointed by the lawful heads of the Mohammadan Empire, the Khalifs, first of

Damascus, and then of Baghdād ; many of them were Turks or Tartars, notably Ibn Tūlūn and El-Ikshīd, who both came from beyond the Oxus ; but they were not the less the servants of the Khalifs. In the Fātimy Khalifs we see for the first time an heretical line of rulers invading the empire of the Khalifs, and owning no sort of allegiance to them. The Fātimy Khalifs had created a kingdom in Tunis upon the ruins of the Aghlaby power, and now they proceeded to add the dominions of the Ikshīdis to their realm. They transferred their seat of government from Tunis to Egypt (and thereby soon lost their western provinces), and founded a new suburb, or rather a vast palace, which was called *El-Kāhira*, or Cairo. The design of the Fātimy general Gauhar was simply to build a palace for his master, the Khalif, where that sacred personage might be able to enjoy perfect seclusion ; and it was only in much later times, after the burning of Fustāt, that El-Kāhira became really a city. El-Kāhira was, in fact, originally but a walled enclosure with double earthworks, about three quarters of a mile long and half a mile broad, containing the two royal palaces, one called the Great Palace (which was so extensive that on the fall of the Fātimy dynasty, in 1171, it was found to contain 12,000 women and eunuchs), the other, the Small Palace, overlooking the pleasure-grounds ; and the two were connected under the open space which divided them (and which is still known as the street *Beyn-el-Kasreyn*, "Betwixt the Palaces"), by a subterranean passage. Close to the Eastern or Great Palace was the Imperial Mausoleum, in which El-Mu'izz deposited the bones of his ancestors, which he brought with him from their places of sepulture in the west. Further south was the mosque, also built by Gauhar, in which the Khalif, as Imām of his subjects, conducted the Friday prayers. The palaces received the name of *El-Kusūr ez-Zāhira*, "the Splendid Palaces," and the mosque that of El-Azhar, "the Most Splendid," which it still retains, and under which it has long been widely known as the great seat of Mohammadan learning, frequented by students from the most

distant countries of Islam. In addition to the garrison's quarters, many other buildings are enumerated, sufficient to account for the remaining space ; such were the treasury, mint, library, audience-halls, arsenals, provision-stores, and imperial stables. No person was allowed to enter within the walls of El-Kāhira but the soldiers of the garrison and the highest officials of the state, whose greatest privilege was that of approaching the sacred person of the Khalif. Ambassadors from foreign lands were obliged to dismount at the gates of the fortress, and were conducted thence to the audience-hall on foot, an official on either side grasping their hands.* The old gates of Cairo are the gates of this palace or fort, built by order of Bedr el-Gemāly, in 1087, by three Greeks.

Thus the capital of Egypt underwent a third move to the north-east : first was El-Fustāt, founded by 'Amr, close to the Roman fortress of Babylon ; then El-'Askar, a move north-east, built by the 'Abbāsy governors ; thirdly, El-Katāi', the creation of Ibn-Tūlūn (which remained an important suburb until desolated by the great famine of El-Mustansir's reign) ; and now, fourthly, Cairo, the site of the Fātimy palace. Of these, the scanty remains of El-Fustāt are seen in what is called Masr-el-Atika, or "Old Cairo ;" El-'Askar and El-Katāi' have disappeared, save the mosque of Ibn-Tūlūn, and part of their site has been covered by later houses ; El-Kāhira is Cairo, but has greatly expanded since the time when it comprised little more than the huge palace of the Fātimy Khalifs : new suburbs have joined it to the Citadel on one side, and prolonged it beyond the northern gates on the other. Yet Cairo is practically the Fātimy capital, though, unfortunately, beyond the mosques of the Azhar and El-Hākim, built in 971 and 990, and a fragment here and there, nothing remains of all the splendour which the historians attribute to these celebrated Khalifs.† Refer-

* H. C. Kay, *Al-Kahirah and its Gates*. *Journ. R. Asiatic Society*, 1882.

† *E.g.*, in A.H. 442 died Rashidah, daughter of the Khalif El-Mu'izz, leaving an inheritance valued at 2,700,000 dīnars ; in her house were 12,000 robes of different colours. All the Khalifs since El-Mu'izz had impatiently expected her

ence will frequently be found in the following pages to the costly possessions of these rulers, especially those included in the well-known Inventory of El-Mustansir, and it will suffice here to remark that the Fātimis even surpassed Ibn-Tūlūn in magnificence and the encouragement of every branch of art, and that to them, more perhaps than to any other Eastern dynasty, we owe the introduction of Saracenic design into southern Europe. The Mohammadan Amīrs of Sicily, who left so rich a legacy of art to the Norman kings, were vassals of the Fātimy Khalifs.

6. How Saladin—or, to be accurate, Salāh-ed-din Yūsuf, son of Ayyūb—was despatched to Egypt with the troops of Nūr-ed-dīn, Sultan of Damascus, to support the cause of one of those powerful vizirs who by their arrogance and rivalry had prepared the downfall of the Egyptian Government, and how the brilliant young soldier and statesman soon found his way to depose the last of the Fātimy Khalifs and assume the supreme authority himself, are almost matters of European history. The period of Ayyūby rule from 1171, when the prayers were ordered to be said no longer in the name of the heretical Khalif, but in that of the Khalif of Baghdād, the orthodox head of Islām, to the year 1250, when the sovereignty descended to the Mamlūks, falls within a century, but it was filled with wars and deeds that have made this period known even to European readers. El-Mu'izz the Fātimy had changed Egypt from a province into a kingdom with a definite political significance; Saladin transformed the kingdom into a powerful empire. The long struggle with the Crusaders, the victory of Tiberias, the conquest of Jerusalem, the well-known treaty with Richard Cœur de Lion, though most familiar to us,

death. In the same year her sister 'Abda also died and left an immense fortune. Forty pounds of wax were needed to put seals on her rooms and coffer. Among her treasures were 3000 vases of silver, enamelled and chased; 400 swords, damascened in gold; 30,000 pieces of Sicilian stuff; quantities of emeralds, rubies, and other precious stones; 90 basins and 90 ewers of purest crystal, &c. (El-Makrizy.)

form but a part of Saladin's exploits. He made his power felt far beyond the borders of Palestine; his arms triumphed over hosts of valiant princes to the banks of the Tigris, and when he died, in 1193, at the early age of 57, he left to his sons and kinsmen, not only the example of the most chivalrous, honourable, and magnanimous of kings, but substantial legacies of rich provinces, extending from Aleppo and Mesopotamia to Arabia and the Country of the Blacks.

And, like so many of his successors the Mamlūks, Saladin combined in a marked degree the passion for war with the love of the beautiful. The third wall, and the Citadel of Cairo, with its magnificent buildings, now alas destroyed, bore witness to his encouragement of architecture. The citadel was begun in 1176, with materials obtained from some of the smaller pyramids of Giza, and so strongly and carefully was it constructed that when Saladin died the fortress was not yet completed, but remained unfinished until the year 604=1207. The eunuch Karākūsh, "Black Eagle," was entrusted with the superintendence of the work, and this may account for the sculpture of an eagle on the Citadel wall. The present massive gate, within which is the passage where the massacre of the last descendants of the Mamlūks by Mohammad 'Aly took place in 1811, is an eighteenth century work, but the walls and part of the internal masonry belong to Saladin's fortress. Of the mosque and palace, however, no trace remains. The so-called "Hall of Joseph," or *Kasr Yūsuf* (which was Saladin's name as well as the patriarch's), pulled down about 1830, was really the *Dār-el-'Adl*, or "Hall of Justice," of the Mamlūk Sultan En-Nāsir, more than a century later. The deep well with its massive masonry is, however, attributed to Saladin, and there used to be ruins of a solid and beautifully decorated mansion which was known, rightly or not, as the "House of Salāh-ed-dīn Yūsuf."

Saladin's empire needed a strong hand to keep it united, and the number of relations, sons and nephews, who demanded their