

FIG. 100.—SILK FABRIC OF ICON:UM.
Thirteenth Century. (*Lions Museum.*)

cost 500 gold pieces." At Tinnis also was made the wonderful iridescent fabric called *Būkalamūn*,—probably from Abū-Kalamūn, the chameleon, as Col. Yule suggests,—which was said to change colour at different hours of the day, and was used for saddle-cloths and for covering the royal litters. At Beny Suweyf was manufactured an excellent sort of linen, called Alexandrian, which was exported to Europe.

All these manufactures were in great demand during the centuries of luxurious splendour which the independent rulers of Egypt enjoyed. The Fātimy Khalifs were fond of display beyond the dreams of even Oriental potentates, and many records of their sumptuous attire, their "gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls," have come down to us. There is a piece bearing the name of the Fātimy El-Hākim preserved at Nôtre-Dame at Paris, which shows the richness of the materials and the splendour of the colours; and El-Makrīzy and other historians are full of the wonderful fabrics in which "the soul of my lord delighted." Some of these, like the countless dresses of 'Abda, daughter of the Khalif El-Mu'izz, were of Sicilian manufacture; but others were Persian, Anatolian, and native. We read of quantities of silk, shot with gold, and embroidered with the portraits of kings, and the tale of their deeds; of a piece of silk made at Tustar, in Persia, by order of the Khalif El-Mu'izz, in 964, which represented in gold and colours, on a blue ground, a sort of map of the various countries in the world, with cities, rivers, roads, and mountains, and their names embroidered in gold, and it is not surprising that this work cost 22,000 gold dinārs. Among the objects described in the celebrated inventory of the possessions of the Fātimy Khalif El-Mustansir (to which the preceding example belonged) were several magnificent tents made of cloth of gold, velvet, satin, damask and silk; some plain, some covered with representations of men, elephants, lions, peacocks and horses, and lined within with velvet or satin, silk from China, Tustar or Rūm, shot with fine gold. One huge pavilion of this kind was made for the Vizir

Yāzūry; the pole, which was sixty-five cubits high and six and two-thirds thick, was a gift from the Greek Emperor; the stuff was embroidered with figures of animals and the like, and the making of it is said to have occupied 150 men for nine years, at a cost of 30,000 dinārs. Another tent of this description, made at Aleppo, was supported by the mainmast of a Venetian galley, and it required seventy camels to transport it to the place where it was set up. A third was named *El-Katūl*, "the killer," because a man was sure to be crushed in pitching it. Behnesa was the place where such tents were often made, as well as many kinds of royal stuffs, embroideries and needlework, and large carpets, thirty cubits long, which were worth 10,000 grains of gold. The chief weavers and embroiderers of these magnificent fabrics were Copts, and to their influence may be ascribed the introduction of figures of animals and portraits of heroes and princes, a practice against the spirit of Mohammadan art, but quite in accordance with the traditions of the decorative work of the Lower Empire. Some concession was, however, made to Muslim prejudice by the skilful workmen of the Fātimis. If they would at times introduce the forbidden portrait of an animate being—under pain of being ordered on the Day of Judgment to find a soul for their portrait, or else to be dragged on their faces to hell—they would oftener depict such fabulous creatures as the griffin and the winged lion of Assyria, which fitly portrayed, to the Muslim mind, the fabulous beast Borāk on which the blessed Prophet made his miraculous dream-journey; or they would represent the harmless form of the *hom*, or tree of life. The employment of Christians to weave such unorthodox designs as beasts and even human beings, however, was in itself a salve to the Muslim conscience; for the Christian weaver and not the Mohammadan wearer might be expected to receive the punishment. And the same consolation soothed the religious mind when it contemplated the rich silk tissues which the same impious infidel, unmindful of the Prophet's command that

silk was not permissible to his followers, had wrought for the believer's attire. A frequent characteristic of Saracen (and modern Eastern) weaving is the mixture of cotton or linen thread with the silk; and this was only another mode of evading the disagreeable ordinance of the tasteless Prophet of Islam.

Nāsir-i-Khusrau, who travelled in Egypt during the reign of El-Mustansir, gives us a glimpse of the magnificence of the Fātimy Court, in the eleventh century, which, coming from an eye-witness, is even more valuable than the traditions reported by El-Makrizy. He describes the Khalif's tent as made of satin of Rūm, covered with gold embroidery, and sown with precious stones. The furniture inside was of the same material, and so large was the pavilion that a hundred horsemen could stand in it. The entrance passage was lined with the "chameleon" fabric of Tinnis. The Khalif's state escort of 10,000 horsemen had all saddle-cloths of satin and "chameleon," and even the trappings of the camels and asses were covered with gold plates and precious stones. At the cutting of the Canal, always an imposing ceremony at Cairo, the Khalif appeared clad in a white robe with a large tunic, costing 10,000 dinārs, a turban of white stuff, and a valuable whip in his hand. Three hundred attendants preceded him, attired in Rūm brocade, and bearing pikes and axes, with bandelets on their legs; and the dress of the bearer of the jewelled parasol over the Khalif cost 10,000 dinārs. These values are doubtless exaggerated, and the figures run suspiciously often to ten thousand; but the main fact is that Nāsir-i-Khusrau, a competent and travelled witness, was dazzled with the splendour of the fabrics which he saw at the Fātimy Court.

Although it belongs to a later period, the engraving, fig. 100, may serve to give some idea of the silk fabric of Rūm. It is reproduced from an engraving which has been kindly lent me by M. Giraud, the keeper of the Archaeological Museum at Lyons, and it has been made the subject of a special essay by M. Pariset. Like the cope of St. Mexme, preserved in the

church of St. Etienne, at Chinon, this silk garment of Lyons had been converted into a church vestment—a chasuble. The following is an abridgment of M. Pariset's description of this remarkable specimen, which, though not itself of Egyptian manufacture, may nevertheless be held an example of the kind of silk weaving done by Saracen looms in the first half of the thirteenth century.*

The warp is of crimson silk, in two parts; one laid on ribands forms the plain ground, the other makes the pattern. The woof is also of red silk, of a delicate shade, but fast, and perfectly preserved, produced with cochineal (or perhaps kermis). The fabric thus belongs to the class called *holosericum*, because entirely made of silk, with no mixture of cotton. The present specimen, however, is enriched by a second woof, of gold, which alternates with the silk woof, and, traversing the whole breadth of the material, helps to form the design, while the silk woof makes the red ground. Such stuff was highly prized in the middle ages under the name of *chrysolavum fundatum*. The gold thread consists of a silk core covered with gilt paper. Drawn gold thread was not used in ancient times, and leaf gold was the ordinary form of the precious metal employed for embroidery. The Chinese invented the process of laying thin gold leaf upon paper and rolling it round silk thread, and the Arabs, always in intimate trade relations with China, learned the process from the Celestials, and regularly employed it from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries. Great strength was attained when thin cows' hide or other skin was used instead of paper.† Though the object of the gold paper is of course to economise the

* *Note sur un drap d'or arabe que possède le Musée Industriel de Lyon : lue à l'Académie de Lyon, 30 Mai, 1882, par M. Pariset.*

† The gold leaf was attached to the paper or skin by gelatine, and then cut and rolled round the thread. The early Italian weavers imported this peculiar Saracenic gold thread: hence the *mysterium auri filati* of the chroniclers. See the interesting account of gold tissue in Fischbach, *Geschichte der Textil-Kunst*, 76, ff.

precious metal, the gold used for this example is very pure and rich. The arrangement of the woof is a proof of Oriental origin, and the design confirms this conclusion. Simple as it is—a pair of lions or griffins back to back, in a circular medallion bordered with flowers—it is characteristically Eastern. We have seen many instances of such opposed animals and birds on the metal-work and carving of the thirteenth century, and there is no doubt that the design is much older than Mohammadan times, and goes back to the productions of the old artists of Mesopotamia and Persia. We read in Quintus Curtius of robes worn by Persian satraps, adorned with birds beak to beak—*aurei accipitres veluti rostri in se irruerent pallam adornabant*. Plautus mentions Alexandrian carpets ornamented with beasts: *Alexandrina belluata conchyliaata tapetia*.* There is indeed reason to believe that the notion of such pairs of birds or beasts may have originated with the weavers of ancient Persia, and have been borrowed from them by the engravers of metal-work; for the advantage of such double figures would be specially obvious to a weaver. The symmetrical repetition of the figure of the bird or animal, reversed, saved both labour and elaboration of the loom. The old weavers, not yet masters of mechanical improvements, were obliged to work their warp up and down by means of strings, and the larger the design the more numerous became these strings and the more complicated the loom. Hence, to be able to repeat the pattern in reverse was a considerable economy of labour, and could be effected very simply on a loom constructed to work *à pointe et à reverse*. Examples of such repetitions of patterns, especially of symmetrical pairs of animals within circles, are common in Byzantine and Sassanian woven work, and the Saracens followed these models. Finally our piece of silk bears part of an Arabic inscription, which runs *'Ala-ed-din Abu-l-Feth Kay-*

* For other notices, see Col. Yule's notes in his translation of Marco Polo, i. 67, 68, &c.

Kubād, son of Kay Khusrau, witness to the Prince of the Faithful. This Kay-Kubād was a Seljūk Sultan of Rūm, and reigned at Iconium, &c., from 1214 to 1239 A.D., and the occurrence of his name on the garment shows that it was a *tirāz* made at a special royal factory, reserved, like that at Tinnīs, for the exclusive use of the particular sovereign. This factory was no doubt in Rūm, and probably at the capital, Kōniya (Iconium), or perhaps one of the other large cities. "In Turcomania," says Marco Polo, "they weave the finest and handsomest carpets in the world, and also a great quantity of fine and rich silks of cramoisy and other colours, and plenty of other stuffs. Their chief cities are Conia, Savast [Sivās], and Casaria [Kaysariya]."* At all events there can be no doubt that this is the silk of Rūm of which we read so often in the records of state ceremonies and robes of honour in the Arabic histories.

An interesting parallel to the royal silk factory, or *Dār-et-tirāz*, of Kay-Kubād, and to that of the Fātimy Khalif at Tinnīs, is found in the similar institution at Palermo, which owed its foundation to the Kelby Amirs who ruled Sicily as vassals of the Fātimis in the ninth and tenth centuries, though it maintained its special character and excellence of work under the Norman kings. The factory was in the palace, and the weavers were Mohammadans, as indeed is obvious from a glance at the famous silk cloth preserved at Vienna, and called the "Mantle of Nürnberg," where a long Arabic inscription testifies to the hands that made it, by order of King Roger, in the year of the Hijra 528, or A.D. 1133.† Just as our piece of silk from Rūm is the *locus classicus*, so to say, for Anatolian weaving in the thirteenth century, and the Nôtre Dame silk for the Fātimy work of the beginning of the eleventh century, so this Nürnberg mantle gives us the type of Siculo-Arab work in the twelfth century, and enables us to form

* Col: Yule, i. 45-6.

† J. B. Giraud, *Les Origines de la Soie, son Histoire chez des Peuples de l'Orient*, p. 60.

some conception of what manner of hangings William of Palermo intended when he described the palace of Roger of Sicily :—

To enter fu encertines
 De dras de soie à or ouvres
 À œuvres d'or et à peintures,
 À maintes diverses figures
 D'oisiax, de bestes, et de gens.
 Les chambres furent par dedans.
 Paintes et bien enluminées.*

Of the thirty examples of "Saracenic" fabrics illustrated in Fischbach's beautiful work, "The Ornament of Textile Fabrics," the great majority are Sicilian, and although they are chiefly of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and most of them evidently woven by artists who were ignorant of Arabic, the designs are unmistakably Saracenic. The medallion arrangement of earlier times gives place on these Palermo fabrics to bands or rows of fabulous beasts, birds, and fish, generally in blue and green, on a deep-red ground, divided by bands of mutilated Arabic inscriptions or arabesque and geometrical panels.

This description of the silk chasuble of Rūm has brought us nearly to the time of the Mamlūks, and we shall find that these sumptuous sovereigns were as ardent patrons of the textile art as the Fātimis. Some of the Mamlūk Sultans indeed prided themselves on a distinguished simplicity of attire, but the same cannot be said of their followers. The Amir Salār, in the time of En-Nāsir, made himself famous by (among other services to the State) introducing a novel style of vest of white Ba'lbekk linen, sometimes strewn with precious stones. Another Mamlūk lord, of the court of Beybars, was allowed two gold brocade caps a month, each worth fifty dinārs, and a turban at forty; and Beybars himself, though he preferred to dress simply in black silk with no gold or jewels, made amends for his austerity by the rich apparel of his suite, and by the portable mosque, entirely

* F. Michel, *Recherches sur le Commerce et la Fabrication des Etoffes de soie, d'or et d'argent*, ii. 133.



FIG. 101.—DAMASK, WORN BY HENRY THE SAINT.
Eleventh Century. (*Bamberg Museum.*)

constructed of woven stuffs, attached to his tent. A pavilion of red satin, with silken cords and pegs of sandalwood, strengthened with bands of silver gilt, was the Mamlūk idea of elegance. The description in Chapter I. of a state pageant under Beybars shows what display the Mamlūks thought suitable to their dignity; and the golden silk standards, the dresses of the pages, and rich housings of the horses, must have made the silk weavers a very flourishing community at that time. Silk was a passion with the Mamlūks; they lined their cuirasses with silk, housed their chargers in silk, wrapped their letters in silken covers, waved it in the air as flags, trod it under foot as druggot, hung it along the streets and over the shops on gala days; they wore it on their heads, and on their bodies; everything must be of silk brocade; their fairest slaves were exposed for sale in silken veils shot with gold thread; and though the Sultan Lāgin tried to put a stop to this bravery of attire, and issued sumptuary laws against gold embroidery in the caps and turbans of his Mamlūks, the reform was but temporary. The inventor of the new waistcoat flourished after Lāgin's reforms had been forgotten, and Barkūk soon introduced the Cherkis caps, with their spiral ornament and capacious dimensions.

Apart from royal robes, the most handsome stuffs were devoted to the manufacture of the dresses of honour (*Khil'as*) which Mohammadan princes were pleased to bestow on those who had succeeded in winning their royal approbation. A welcome ambassador, the bringer of good news, a Court favourite, a newly appointed official, or a servant who had done something (or nothing) that pleased his master, would be forthwith presented with a robe of honour perfumed with amber and musk. There was a precise etiquette about these dresses, and it was a matter of deep moment that the robe should be appropriate to the rank of the person to be thus distinguished. To give the wrong dress would be like giving the Michael and George to an Indian officer, or the C.I.E. to an Australian. El-Makrizy carefully

distinguishes between the *Khil'as* bestowed on men of the sword and those given to men of the pen. Of the former, the Centurions, or captains over 100, who were mighty lords, enjoyed the finest kind of robes. Red satin of Rūm, lined with yellow satin from the same country, formed the chief material, but the outer garment was embroidered with gold, and trimmed with miniver and beaver. A little cap of gold brocade was worn under the turban, the fine muslin of which was adorned with silk embroidery, while the extremities were formed by bands of white silk, bearing the titles of the Sultan. A girdle, enriched with rubies, emeralds, and pearls; a sword, inlaid with gold; a horse and gold housings from the royal stable, completed the equipment of a person distinguished by a dress of honour of the first rank. The prince of Hamāh, says El-Makrīzy, received such a dress as this, only instead of muslin, the *shāsh* or turban was made of silk, shot with gold, manufactured at Alexandria. Less noble personages received a *Khil'a* of the silk fabric called, from its designs, *tardwahsh*, "beast-hunts," which was also manufactured at Alexandria, as well as at Misr [Cairo] and Damascus. The dress was made of several bands of different colours, intermingled with gold-shot cambric, with embroidery between, and a border of cambric. The gold cap, girdle, and turban, as before, completed the dress of honour for a petty lord. The lower the rank the plainer and simpler became the robe of honour, and the degrees of difference were finely graduated. Vizirs, and men of the pen, were arrayed in robes of white *kangy*, or stuff of Kanga, trimmed with beaver, and lined with miniver. The under garment was of green *kangy*, and the turban of *dimity*, or linen of Damietta, embroidered. Lower ranks were deprived of the miniver lining, and had no fur on their sleeves. Judges and learned men had their robes of honour made of wool, without borders, white outside, and green underneath.

The number of specimens of mediaeval textiles made by the Saracens that have been preserved to this day is unhappily

very small. Naturally silk is more perishable than stone or metal, and it was not to be expected that dresses should have outlived the vicissitudes of wear and fire to which such materials are exposed. The fine series of "Saracenic" stuffs lithographed by Fischbach in his "Ornament of Textile Fabrics" are, in my judgment, very rarely the work of Saracens. Most of them were probably made by Sarrasinas, or imitators of Saracenic style, at Palermo, Lucca, and other towns, where enterprising rulers imported Byzantine, Greek, and Oriental weavers to teach their own subjects. The mutilation of the Arabic inscriptions and the European development of the Saracenic ornament are signs of copyists, who were doubtless the successors of true Saracen artists, or at least were originally in communication with the chief centres of loom-industry in the East.* Nos. 144 and 145 of that work are, however, exceptions to the generally European character of the "Saracenic" illustrations. They belong to a cloak at Regensburg (Ratisbon), said to have been worn by the Emperor Henry VI., who died at Messina, and who may have had it as a present from the Norman King of Sicily. An Arabic inscription worked in the fabric states that it was made by Ustād (foreman) 'Abd-el-'Aziz for King William II., who reigned in Sicily from 1169 to 1189. Another Arabic inscription contains a benedictory formula. This example is characteristically Saracenic: beasts of the chase, whorls, rosettes, and medallions, filled with geometrical ornament,

* Mr. Fischbach almost admits as much himself, when he occasionally notes his hesitation in ascribing a Saracenic stuff to an Eastern loom or to Sarrasinas at Lucca; and some of his "Saracenic" examples are even vaguely attributed to "Asia Minor or Greece." He has enjoyed the scholarly assistance of Prof. Karabacek, who has made considerable use of Col. Yule's and Sir George Birdwood's discoveries, and added the results of his own researches. The attribution of no. 13 to Ibrāhīm of Dehli, however, is not warranted by the Arabic inscription in the lithograph, which does not show the name of that Sultan. 88a, again, which "cannot be read," shows the name 'Abd-Allah clearly. Fischbach's *Geschichte der Textil-Kunst* contains Prof. Karabacek's information, but the Saracenic divisions are unhappily full of misprints, which detract from the scholarly aspect.



FIG. 102.—SILK FABRIC OF EGYPT OR SICILY.
(Nurnberg Museum.)

and a large gold band of benedictory inscription, recall Mamlūk decoration.

The illustration fig. 101 represents a damask garment, worn by Henry the Saint, 1002—1024, now in the Bamberg Museum. Here we see the system of ornament in medallions which the Saracens adopted from the Sassanian weavers of Persia. The pairs of lions (or chitahs), winged griffins, and parrots, closely resemble the style of Mōsil metal-work, and the geometrical borders are no less characteristic. Wherever the stuff was made (a point on which information is wanting), there can be no doubt that it is a typical example of early Saracenic weaving, which was founded upon and closely resembled the textile fabrics of the Sassanians and Byzantines. Fig. 100, the Seljūk silk, already described, preserves the main design of pairs of animals in medallions, but the surrounding ornament betrays the influence of the arabesque style. Fig. 102 represents a silk fabric at Nürnberg, which Fischbach describes as Siculo-Saracenic, and on which the human-headed sphinxes suggest an Egyptian influence, such as was exerted by the Fātimy Khalifs upon their Sicilian vassals. The ground is dark-red, the sphinxes are woven in gold thread, and the foliage is green. Prisse d'Avennes has also some excellent illustrations of Saracenic textiles: one from the Utrecht Museum, with stiff-looking green and read peacocks, beak to beak like the *aurei accipitres* of Q. Curtius, may be of the twelfth or thirteenth century, and an even earlier date may be claimed for the silk preserved at Toulouse, with its bird decoration, and benedictory Kufic inscriptions.

The history of textile ornament is strikingly illustrated by such mediaeval fabrics as have been preserved in royal and ecclesiastical vestments, formed out of the spoils which the Crusading collector or the ambassador to Eastern Courts brought home. An attentive study of the admirable series of 160 plates published by Fischbach leaves no doubt either of the Sassano-Byzantine origin of Saracenic weaving, or of the penetrating influence of Saracenic design over the

early loom-workers of Italy and Sicily. How much Europe owes to Eastern design in textile fabrics may be judged from the prevailing Saracenic character of all the Italian work of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries; whence all Europe derived the artistic impulse.

The art of weaving, if it has languished in some centres where once it flourished, has not altogether died out in Egypt and Syria. A large proportion of the beautiful mixed silk and cotton stuffs that are offered for sale in the bazaars of Cairo are of native manufacture, though European dyes have not improved the colours. Kufiyas of yellow, red, and blue striped silk, shot with gold, familiar to all travellers in the East, are still made of exquisite beauty and delicacy, and the striped *gubbas* still worn by tradespeople, and, till the frock-coat invaded the East, by gentlemen, in Egypt, are generally made by Oriental weavers. Damietta indeed no longer manufactures its famous dimity, but there are plenty of cotton factories in Egypt, at Demenhur, Ikhmim and Cairo, and silk is still woven at the capital. Beny Suweyf, once famous for its linen, now makes only a coarse kind for the common people, besides woollen carpets; and linen and cotton factories are still seen at Mansūra.

CHAPTER XII.

ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS.

AMONG the minor arts of the Mohammadans, none is more individual and characteristic than that of illuminating manuscripts. Possessing in the Naskhy or cursive hand a script unrivalled in flexuous elegance, the art of calligraphy may be said to have been forced upon the Saracens. Penmanship soon took its place next to scholarship in the estimation of the wise, and the names of great calligraphists, like Ibn-Mukla and Yākūt Er-Rūmy, became almost as famous as those of the poets and historians who provided them with the materials upon which to exercise their art. Many of the ordinary books of reference, such as dictionaries and annals, were transcribed with fastidious care in the fine bold Naskhy character, and a further step was taken when illumination was added to the beauty of penmanship. This embellishment was, however, reserved for the book of books, the "noble Korān," alone.* Ordinary manuscripts might be beautifully written, but the Korān only was ornamented with the rich illuminated title-pages and marginal medallions which form the chief points of decoration in Arabic manuscripts. It is only necessary to turn over the leaves of the thirteenth century Korān, preserved in the British Museum (Orient. 1009), to realise what

* The curious figures in certain MSS. of El-Hariry's Makamāt are quite exceptional, and probably the work of Christians.

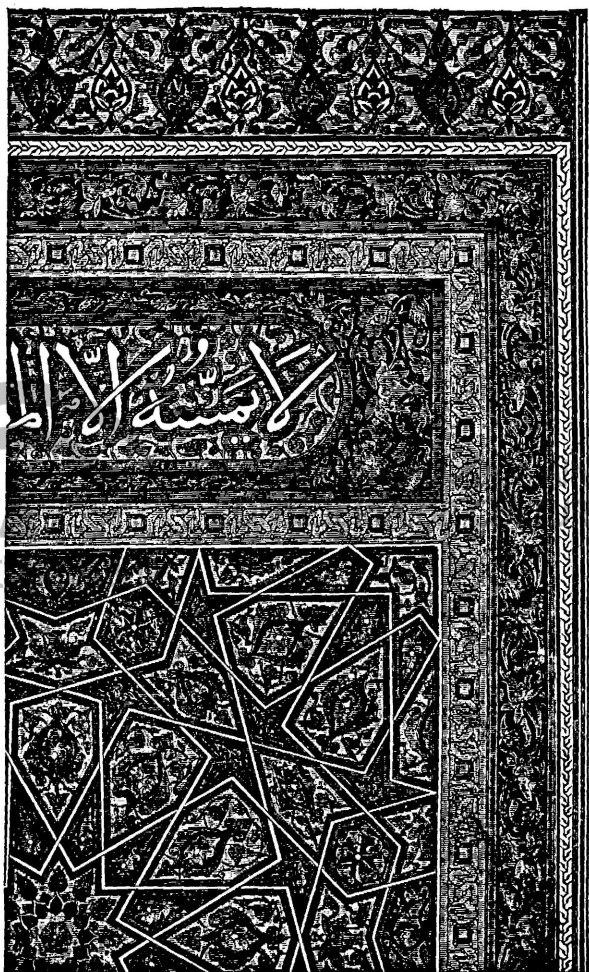


FIG. 103.—ILLUMINATED KORAN OF SULTAN SHA'BAN.
Fourteenth Century, (*Viceregal Library, Cairo.*)

infinite pains, what elaboration of the few decorative elements at their disposal, what skill in the arrangement and application of gold and colours, the Mohammadan illuminators expended upon their sacred book. The first two and last two pages are the subjects of specially rich decoration. They form each a rich panel, resembling a magnificent carpet. A central ornament of intricate geometrical or arabesque design, with the usual inscription, "Let none touch it save the purified," (by which the Muslim warns those who would handle the sacred volume to first perform the prescribed religious ablutions,) is surrounded by three borders, composed (1) of a sort of key-pattern, like what we have seen on Mōsil metal-work, on a gold ground, (2) of flowers in various colours on a prevailing blue ground, and (3) of free scroll-work, showing the simple elements of the arabesque, which afterwards received such manifold elaboration. There are generally four or five such full-page illuminations in the best Korāns, two or three at each end of the volume. The remaining pages are less richly ornamented: the headings of chapters alone are framed in gold and colours, with arabesque and geometrical borders, and the outer margins of the leaves are enriched with numerous medallions, filled with arabesques and other designs. In the example referred to, these medallions are exceptionally numerous and varied. There are about three to each page, and their designs, notwithstanding their small compass—for a floral border enclosing a gold rosette is the prevailing type—present every change and contrast that the illuminator's ingenuity could suggest. The colours are chiefly carmine, deep blue, black and gold, but green and yellow sometimes appear. The bold writing—called *Thuluth*, or "Thrice-Naskhy"—of the text is lightened by gold rosettes and other ornaments, to indicate the punctuation and other directions to the person who chanted the Korān. The character of the flowers and arabesques, and the scarceness of pure geometrical ornament, lead to the impression that this beautiful manuscript was illuminated at Damascus; but it may

have been the work of Cairo artists, trained in the Syrian school. Its date can hardly be later than the thirteenth century.

Another very splendid copy of the Korān in the British Museum (Add. 22,406) bears inscriptions which prove that it was written for Beybars Gāshenkir in the years 704-5, or A.D. 1304-5, while he was still *Ustāddār*, or major-domo, to the Sultan En-Nāsir ibn Kalāūn, and had not yet ascended the throne himself. It was no doubt prepared for his Khāngāh, or conventual mosque, which was completed in 706, and is still standing. This magnificent manuscript is in seven volumes, and is written from beginning to end in gold letters (within a delicate ink outline) on a ground resembling the key-pattern of the early metal-work. The first two pages are, as usual, fully illuminated, and covered with splendid arabesques in gold, on blue and red ground, with the inscription "Let none touch it save the purified" in white. The next two pages are framed with interlaced borders; but the rest of the volume, except the last page, has only the customary medallions, to mark the divisions of the text, and the rosettes and whorls, of red, blue, and gold, which are inserted in the writing for purposes of punctuation and accent. The marginal medallions are much less frequent than in the previously described Korān, and the designs are more monotonous. On the last page, within a gold frame with interlaced border, is the inscription

امر بكتابة هذا السبع الشريف واحواته المقر الكريم العالى المولوى
الاميرى الكبيرى الركنى استاد الدار العالیه اعز الله نصره وكتب
محمد بن الوحيد

"The writing of this noble Seventh and its sisters was ordered by his excellency, the generous, the exalted, the lord, the great Amir, Rukn-ed-din, major domo altissimo, God magnify his triumphs; and Mohammad ibn El-Wahid wrote it." In the marginal medallions of the same page are the words ذهبه محمد عنه بن مبادر عفا الله عنه, "Mohammad ibn Mubādir gilded it, God assoil him!" Another of the seven volumes, or "sisters," opens

with magnificent geometrical panels filled with arabesques within a free scroll border; the pages are literally stiff with gold. At the end is an inscription similar to that already translated, but with the addition "and he finished the whole of it in the year 705." A portion of the margin of another volume gives the name of Sandal as the gilder, *تذهيب صندل*; and the seventh part has the further information that this volume "was incrustated (*زمك*) by Aydaghdy ibn 'Abd-Allah el-Bedry," which raises a difficulty as to what this "incrustation" was. The word is frequently employed to designate the laying on both of ink and of gold on a manuscript; but the previous use of the words *كتب* and *ذهب* for these two processes seems to suggest some different operation in the case of Aydaghdy. Dr. Rieu thinks it may refer to the delicate outlining of the characters, but this would more probably be termed *كتابة*. Perhaps the *زمك* was the laying on of the colours, as distinguished from the *تذهيب*, or gilding. It should be noticed that in this example the colours of the medallions, &c., are *peintee over the gold*, which gives them a peculiar brilliancy.

A third Korān in the British Museum (Orient. 1401) is later—probably of the end of the fifteenth or beginning of the sixteenth century—and the decoration is very inferior to that of the two preceding examples. The rosettes and medallions are comparatively few, and the ornament is over-intricate, with something of the Alhambra effect. The headings of chapters are good, but the execution is coarse; the full pages at the beginning and end present some fine arabesques, but none of the designs approach in delicacy those of the first Korān described above. The colours are again laid over gold.

In the South Kensington Museum are the first two pages of a magnificent Korān, belonging to the fourteenth century. They contain the first chapter and the beginning of the second chapter of the Korān, in gold letters on a ground shaded with red lines, and covered with beautiful scrolls in two shades of blue; the

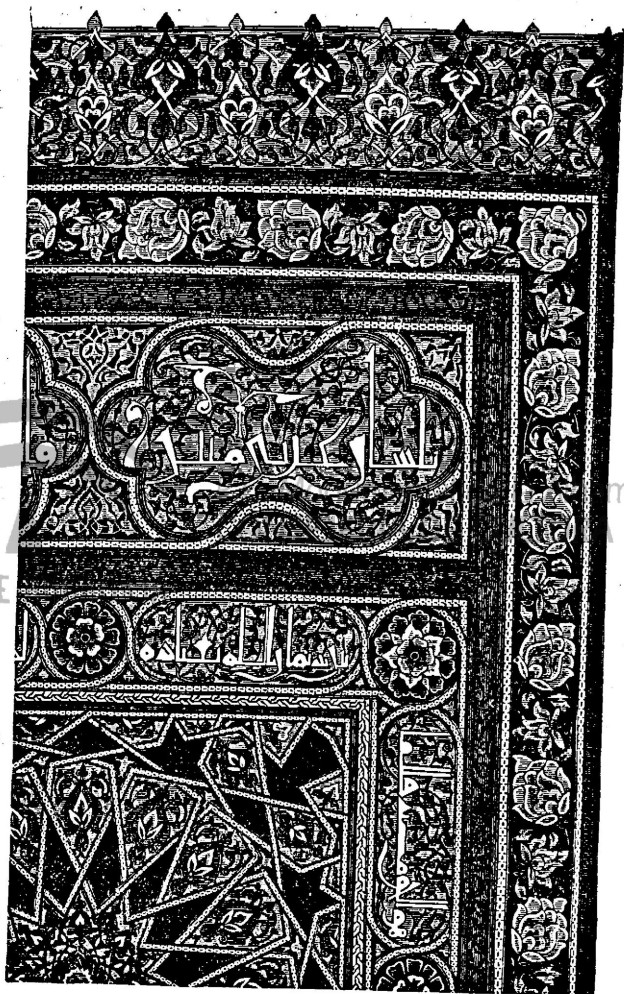


FIG. 104.—ILLUMINATED KORAN OF SULTAN SHA'BAN.
Fourteenth Century. (*Viceregal Library, Cairo.*)

border is of gold arabesque scroll-work on a blue ground, with here and there a red flower-like ornament. In the same Museum are a pair of fine leather boards, forming the binding of a Korān, upon which little less skill has been expended than upon the illumination of the manuscript itself. One of these is covered with gold tooling, and has a border containing "the Beautiful Names" of God; the other is tooled with a floral design with an oval centre. These are fine specimens of Saracenic book-binding, and probably date from the fourteenth or fifteenth century.

The finest illuminated Korāns in the world, however, are still preserved in Cairo, where the Khedive's library contains the volumes which have been rescued from the chief mosques of the city. Like the glass lamps, these precious manuscripts were no longer safe in the custody of the mosque guardians; enterprising collectors proved dangerous to mosque treasures; and the score of splendid *mushafs*, or copies of the Korān, now stored in the Darb-el-Gemāniz, were prudently saved in time. The earliest of these is said to date from the second century of the flight, and thus to be nearly twelve hundred years old; but the tradition is somewhat apocryphal. The best examples, from the point of view of illumination, belong to the period of the Mamlūk Sultans, like most other works of art in Egypt. Three specimens of these Mamlūk manuscripts are given in figs. 103-5, after Professor Ebers' "Egypt," but the size of the present volume unfortunately precludes the possibility of representing more than a quarter of each page. The designs are, however, sufficiently shown even in this mutilated form, and perfect justice could not be done to them without reproduction in the true colours and gilt. The following is the description of the chief Korāns in the Khedive's library, as described by Spitta Bey, the late librarian: *— The first is a Korān of Sultan Mohammad En-Nāsir ibn Kalaūn (1293—1341), 21 by 14 inches, written by Ahmad Yūsuf, a Turk,

* Baedeker's *Lower Egypt*, 268.

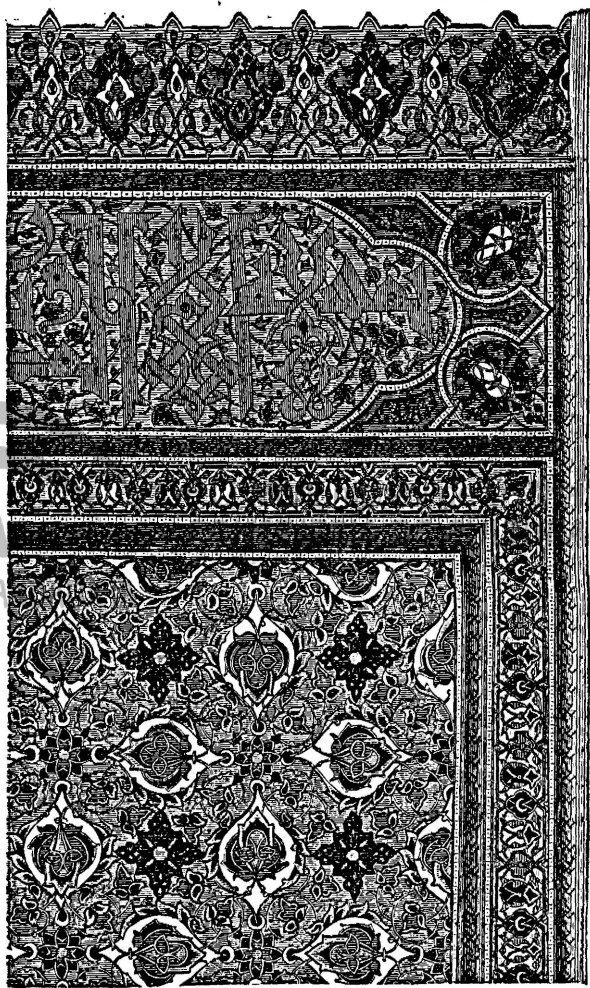


FIG. 105.—ILLUMINATED KORAN OF SULTAN EL-MUAYYAD.
Early Fifteenth Century. (*Viceregal Library, Cairo.*)

in 730 of the Higra. It is written entirely in gilded characters, and there is also a second copy of a similar description. Several other Korāns date from the reign of Sultan Sha'bān (A.D. 1363-77), grandson of the last named, to whose mosque they were dedicated. The first of these, dating from 769, $27\frac{1}{2}$ by $19\frac{1}{2}$ inches, has not its titles written in the usual Cufic character, and the headings "in the name of God the all-merciful" are in gold. Of the same date and similar size is the Koran of Khawend Baraka, mother of Sha'bān. The first two pages are written in gilded and coloured characters, blue being the prevailing colour, and are illuminated with stars and arabesques; the next two are in gold, embellished with faint arabesques; and the whole work is written in a bold and excellent style. Another copy of Sultan Sha'bān, dating from 770, of the same width, but a little longer, contains some beautiful workmanship on the early pages. The text is wider than that of the last, and the book is bound in two volumes. Another and still larger copy, dating from the same year, measures $32\frac{3}{4}$ by $21\frac{1}{2}$ inches. All these last were destined for the school in the Khutt et-Tabbāneh (street of the straw-sellers), founded by Baraka, the Sultan's mother. Lastly we may mention another copy written in 778 (1377), by order of the same prince, by 'Aly ibn Mohammad El-Mukettib, and gilded by Ibrāhīm El-Amidy. This copy measures 28 by $20\frac{1}{4}$ inches, and above each sūra is recorded the number of words and letters it contains. All these masāhif are written on thick and strong paper, and vie with each other in magnificence. The designs exhibit no great variety, but they are executed with the most elaborate care and neatness. The text of these Korāns is provided with red letters written above certain passages to indicate where the tone of the reader's voice is to be raised, lowered, or prolonged.

The collection contains three Korāns of the reign of Sultan Barkūk (1382-99), the oldest of which measures 41 by 32 inches. It was written by order of Mohammad ibn Mohammad, sur-

named Ibn-el-Butût, by 'Abderrahmân Es-Sâigh, with one pen, in sixty days, and revised by Mohammad ibn Ahmad ibn 'Aly, surnamed El-Kufty. A second copy, of the same Sultan's reign, and of similar size, has its first and last pages restored in the same style as those of other copies, but the modern workmanship is inferior to the ancient. A smaller Korân, of the year 801, measuring 23 by $19\frac{1}{2}$ inches, is written entirely in gilded characters.

To Sultan Farag (1399 — 1412), the son of Barkûk, once belonged a copy of the Korân dating from 814, and brought to the library from the mosque of El-Muayyad. It measures 37 by $29\frac{1}{4}$ inches, and was also written by 'Abderrahmân Es-Sâigh, the same skilful penman who had been previously employed by Barkûk, and the author of a pamphlet, entitled "Sanâ-at el-Kitâba" ('the art of writing'), and now preserved in this library. From the year 810 dates a fine copy, $38\frac{1}{2}$ by 27 inches, written by Mûsa ibn Isma'îl el-Kinâny, surnamed Gagîny, for Sultan El-Muayyad (1412-21).

A copy which once belonged to the mosque of Kâit-Bey, dating from the year 909, or a century later than the last, and unfortunately in a very injured condition, is the largest Korân in the collection, measuring $44\frac{3}{4}$ by 35 inches. To the period of the Ottoman Sultans belongs the small mushaf of Safiya, mother of Sultan Mohammad Khân, who caused fifty-two copies to be written by Mohammad ibn Ahmad El-Khalil Et-Tebrîzy. It dates from 988, and measures 14 by $9\frac{1}{3}$ inches. In it, as in one of the other copies, a black line alternates with a gilded one, and the first few pages are very beautifully executed. A copy of Huseyn-Bey Khemashûrgy, $21\frac{1}{2}$ by $16\frac{3}{4}$ inches, is written in a smaller character.

The description of such manuscripts fitly concludes a book on Saracenic art. In illumination, as in other branches of decoration, the peculiar character of Saracen ornament is clearly expressed. The effect is that of rich embroidery, or gold brocade; in other words, illumination, like mosaic, plaster, wood, and ivory, shows

the tapestry motives of Saracenic art. In the sanctuary of a mosque, or the *kā'a* of a house, in the complicated panelling of pulpit or ceiling, and in the chasing of vessels of silver,—everywhere the same carpet-like effect strikes one. Another salient feature of Saracenic work is exhibited in these manuscripts: rich as they are,—as rich even as the exquisite Book of Kells,—they suffer from the inevitable restrictions of religion. Mohammad forbade portraits of animate things; and though we have sometimes seen the prohibition evaded or defied, as a rule Mohamadan art is figureless, and the illuminated Korāns exhibit this peculiarity. Yet, without this same arid creed, the special features of Saracenic decoration would never have been developed for the benefit and example of Europe.



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