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The influence of Islamic art in Italy *

[...]

Let us establish, to begin with, two fundamental concepts. Firstly, we must distinguish at least three different phases, both chronological and geographical, of the influence of Islamic art on the arts of the Italian peninsula: (i) during the medieval period, from at least the 11th century onward, Italian art was “influenced” by the Muslim arts practiced in Sicily and Southern Italy; (ii) between the 15th and 17th centuries, when – conscious of having Islamic prototypes as models – Italian art turns to Islam for inspiration, in an area that moves progressively towards Central and Northern Italy; (iii) from the 18th century onwards, when Italian art truly “imitates”, or makes “annotated copies”, of Muslim originals, all over Italy, in the wake of a vogue from Transalpine Europe (Fontana 1992, pp. 288–90). The second concept regards the transposition of media. Let us take a piece of fabric as an example: it is possible that a Muslim textile, having arrived in Italy, influenced or inspired the Italian production of an Italian textile – retaining its identity of media –, or that it was reproduced – as clothing, a mantle, a curtain, or the covering for a throne – in a painting or sculpture – a functional transposition of media; or, finally, that its ornamental motifs – above all, the epigraphic motifs – inspired the decoration of a manuscript, a ceramic object, or an architectural decoration: the total transposition of media.

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* This is the English translation of a part of my article “L’influsso dell’arte islamica in Italia” (that regarding the period from the 12th to the 17th centuries), which was published in the Catalogue of the Exhibition *Eredità dell’Islam. Arte islamica in Italia* (Venezia, Palazzo Ducale 30 ottobre 1993–30 aprile 1994), edited by Giovanni Curatola, Venice 1993 (pp. 456–93, 496–8, 514–17). Its publication in English is meant as a contribution to the discussion on the influence of Islam in late medieval and Renaissance Italy to which I took part on the occasion of the Conference *Islam and the Italian Renaissance* organized by the Warburg Institute and the Victoria and Albert Museum from the 15th to the 16th of March 1996 in London. The Proceedings of the Conference will be published by the Warburg Institute.

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12th–14th Centuries

Architecture, and the sculptural, pictorial, and mosaic elements of architectural decoration

Regarding the possible Islamic influences on medieval European architecture, a Ernst J. Grube's study of 1966 is still valid today. It establishes three fundamental points: (i) the necessity of distinguishing between an influence that is only vaguely "Oriental" and an influence that is properly Islamic (and the related problems connected with probable intermediaries); (ii) the identification of architectural elements, and architectural decoration, which are more or less strictly due to Islamic influences; (iii) a comprehensive "history of studies" on the problem (we also may recall later works, such as a study by Oleg Grabar published in 1975).

As for medieval architecture, and architectural decoration, with Islamic influences in Southern peninsular and insular Italy, we may refer to the study by Giovanna Ventrone Vassallo (chap. VII). Wall-paintings and floor-mosaics call for particular treatment: indeed, while they are "elements" of architectural decoration, they constitute a chapter of Southern pictorial art.

In Southern Italy, and particularly Basilicata–Apulia and Calabria, Byzantium is very important in accounting for the numerous Islamic decorative elements that appear in wall-painting and architectural decoration. Of great interest are some of the decorative patterns in which, as in churches in Greece (Orlandos 1962; Miles 1964, 1 and 1964, 2; A. Grabar 1971; Ettinghausen 1976; Bartels 1990), we find Islamic-inspired decoration in the form of bands of pseudo-epigraphic motifs composed of letters from the Arabic alphabet, more or less complex, used as framing elements. This occurs in wall-paintings – those from the late 12th century and early 13th century, in the Churches of S. Maria le Cerrate (Lecce) and S. Maria d'Anglona (Matera), which can easily be compared to the paintings in the Church of the Episkopoi in Manea (Greece); and those from the 13th century in the crypts of S. Marco in Massafra (Taranto), S. Vito Vecchio in Gravina di Puglia (now in the local Pomarici Museum), S. Giovanni in Monterrone in Matera (the work of Maestro della Bruna); and also in an example in Campania from the 14th century, in the Church of S. Restituta, under the Cathedral of Naples¹. It also occurs in stucco, or terracotta tiles with relief ornamentation – we may recall the stucco panels from the 12th century in S. Maria in Terreti (cat. no. 85, a very precise comparison can be made with the Church of the Episkopoi at Volo, in Greece), and the terracotta tiles in S. Maria

¹ A similar example (late 13th–early 14th century) is also in Northern Italy, in the Visconti's Fortress in Angera (Varese), in the border of a wall-painting in the large hall adjoining the castellan tower; a more precise comparison can be made with St. Nicholas in Kastoria (Greece) and, especially, with the refectory of the abbey church in Lavandieu, Upper Loire (it is well known that decorations using pseudo-Kufic are the patrimony of all Europe – the example of Puy [Fikri 1934] is famous; a good repertory is in Erdmann 1953).

d'Anglona (Whitehouse 1969, pls VI–VII). It is interesting to note that, always parallel to Byzantine prototypes, these pseudo-Kufic characters are used in some paintings from the same churches in a narrative fashion as well, in the representation of the borders of textiles – for clothing or scarves – and of leather shields; this narrative function can also be verified from the end of the 13th century onwards, in the large pictorial cycle of frescoes by Deodato Orlandi in the Church of S. Piero a Grado, near Pisa; or by Giotto, for example, in the upper basilica of S. Francesco in Assisi, but also in Padua² and Florence; by Francesco Traini or, more probably, by Buonamico Buffalmacco, in the Camposanto in Pisa – where Muḥammad and the antipope Nicholas V are, however, depicted together among the souls sent to Hell –; or yet again by Alessio di Andrea in the Cathedral of Pistoia. The inscriptions in Arabic characters on the glass windows of the basilica of Assisi, attributed to German workmanship of the mid-13th century, are once again used on frames – and therefore have an exclusively decorative function; window-frames, as we have already seen in the case of wall-paintings, also display the narrative use of pseudo-Kufic characters, as in the Cathedral of Siena, in the *Coronation of Mary* (early 14th century)³.

Floor-mosaics are an integral part of buildings. In some churches, the Byzantine mediation is again evident; yet it is not by chance that this particular circumstance is confirmed in Apulia and, with less frequency, in Calabria. Here, in the Church of S. Maria del Pàtire, in Rossano Calabro (1101–5), and in Apulia in the cathedrals of Taranto (1160), Otranto (1165) and Brindisi (mid 12th century), we may find horizontal or circular bands with pseudo-Kufic (the foliated type in Rossano and Taranto, much more “cursive” in Otranto), flanked by medallions with real or fantastic animals or, in Apulia, narrative scenes. The mosaics framing the floor of the apse in the basilica of S. Nicola in Bari (1105–23) and that in Brindisi are different, having a double motif of interlaced *lam-alif* that is repeated endlessly and in mirror-image.

Other pseudo-Kufic ornamentation can be seen on the architectural decoration of the exteriors of monuments. The perforated stone portal of the Cathedral of Trani (c. 1175) has a appearance of chiaroscuro, while “applied” decoration can be seen in the bronze medallions on one panel of the door to the

² A splendid exception is in the Cappella degli Scrovegni, where bands of pseudo-inscriptions frame the circular medallions of the minor *tondi* of the vault depicting Malachi, Isaiah, Daniel, and Baruch, according to a format common to many Muslim artistic products. In architectural decoration they reach a very high level in *mudejar* Spain, of which we may recall the example of a ceiling from the 13th century in the monastery of Las Huelgas in Burgos.

³ In this case, as in many other paintings on wood from the period (see *Painting*), the bands with pseudo-Kufic inscriptions are on the coverings for thrones, as in many Persian miniatures, especially from the 14th and 15th centuries.

Pseudo-Kufic motifs are depicted in the glass windows of many European cathedrals, from England to Germany to France: a comprehensive list is supplied by Erdmann (1953); the pseudo-inscriptions of the glass windows of Canterbury Cathedral are presently being studied by Morgana Barbero.

mausoleum of Bohemund, Prince of Antioch, at Canosa (1111). The doors of S. Maria in Cellis at Carsoli (1132) and S. Pietro in Alba Fucense (12th century) in Abruzzo, both preserved in the Museo Nazionale degli Abruzzi in Aquila, are wooden with pseudo-epigraphic motifs of Islamic derivation that assume vegetal forms, as do a certain number of ambos from the same region.

As for Central and Northern Italian architecture, we may recall the exceptional example of the domes with intersecting arches, in the Piedmontese Church of S. Evasio in Casale Monferrato (first half of the 12th century), the grandeur of which recalls Armenian architecture rather than that of Andalusia and North Africa⁴. The decorative motif of intersecting arches, originating from Spain and North Africa, became widespread, even if in different ways, in Sicily as in Southern Italy; it can be found, for example, in 12th century-Tuscany, in the apse of the small Church of Lano, as well in the Pieve of Sillano and the Abbey of S. Rabano (Salviati 1991, pls I–III); and further North, for example, in the Church of SS. Nazario and Celso in Montechiaro d'Asti (12th century, probably of Lombard tradition; see Scerrato 1979, caption figs 649–50 on p. 556).

Some decorative elements of the churches of Sardinia are worth noting, such as S. Pietro of Sorres (1170–1230), distinguished by double lancet windows with horseshoe arches, and S. Maria of Boncardo, S. Pantaleo of Dolianova and others, enriched by hanging polylobed arches which are smooth or engraved (see Cagliari 1993, p. 43 and ill.).

Parts of the façades of the palaces from the 12th century reflected in the Canal Grande in Venice display a particular eclecticism, in which Byzantium and Islam inspired the creativity of the Venetian masters. Marble decoration and inlay, of Fatimid Egyptian influence, enhance the façade of S. Michele in Foro (first half of the 13th century) in Lucca⁵. In Feltre (Belluno), the stone capitals of the small apsidal loggia in the Church of SS. Vittore and Corona are “nielloed” with two types of foliated pseudo-Kufic script, dating from early in the 13th century; a good comparison can be made with a corbel from the Khatolikon of Hosios Loukas, Greece. One example, almost unique in Italy, are the floors inlaid with zoomorphic motifs within circular medallions, in the Baptistery of Florence, and in S. Miniato al Monte, of the first decade of the 13th century; the pattern and ornamentation are typical of Islamic textiles, of Byzantine–Iranian origins, decorated with roundels (see *Painting and Textiles*).

⁴ As already suggested by Toesca (1927, p. 484), and Scerrato (1979, caption of fig. 643 on p. 555); while Porter (1917, p. 250) and Beckwith (1976, p. 274) compare the Piedmontese vault with that of the *mihrab* in the Great Mosque of Cordoba. Discussion of the influence of Armenian intersecting arches on European architecture is in Strzygowski (1918); regarding the relations between S. Evasio and Armenian monuments in recent literature, see De Bernardi Ferrero (1978), Rocchi (1978), and Goss (1984).

⁵ Similar figurative subjects are in the façade of the Cathedral from the same period (Scerrato 1979, caption of fig. 527 on p. 490). Dalu Jones (1976, caption of fig. 4 on p. 282, and fig. 5) suggests an excellent comparison with the inlaid ivory on a Spanish wooden casket, early 13th century, preserved in the Museo Diocesano, in the Cathedral of Tortosa.

Miniatures in Illuminated Manuscripts

André Grabar published *Les manuscrits grecs enluminés de provenance italienne* in 1972. In many of these manuscripts, dated between the 10th and 11th centuries, a number of motifs of Islamic origin can be observed⁶. Among them is a Greek manuscript in the Patmos Library (Ms Grec. 33; see A. Grabar 1972, no. 11, pp. 31–5, particularly figs 70, 79–82), the *colophon* of which informs us that it was written in 941 in a Greek convent in Reggio Calabria, with headings decorated with peacocks and quadrupeds in a style similar to that used in Persian works at about the same time; the Greek manuscript in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York (Ms 397; see A. Grabar 1972, no. 8, pp. 27–9, mainly figs 56, 58–60) which constitutes the Greek version of the fables of Bidpay, dated to the early 11th century⁷; the Chisien Vatican manuscript (Ms Grec. R. IV. 18; see A. Grabar 1972, no. 48, p. 75, figs 328–30) with a text by John of Damascus, dated to the early 11th century.

Other manuscripts clearly displaying Islamic influences date to the 13th century: the Greek manuscript with the *Chronika* of John Skylitzes in the Biblioteca Nacional of Madrid (Cod. Vitr. 26, 2; see Estopañan 1965), dates to no earlier than the end of the 13th century and is attributed to the royal school of Naples or Sicily (A. Grabar 1977, p. 163); the Islamic influence cannot be denied, both in the architectural representations and in the posture and costumes of the Muslims there represented⁸. Certain Latin manuscripts were probably written under the direction of the Norman kings of Palermo, from William (1120–66) to Manfred (1232–66): the manuscript of Pietro da Eboli of 1195–6 in the Municipale Library of Bern (Cod. Bern 120; see Siragusa 1905; Crombie 1989, figs 119–20 [in colour]), a eulogy to those kings; a manuscript of *De arte venandi cum avibus*, by Frederick II (1194–1250), in the Vatican Library (Ms Pal. Lat. 1071; see Volbach 1939; Scerrato 1979, figs 202–3, 209–10 [in colour]), written for King Manfred. Another manuscript from Southern Italy, but dated to the end of the 14th century, is the Latin version, by Gerardo da Cremona, of the surgical treaty of Abu'l-Qasim Khalaf ibn 'Abbas al-Zahrawi in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna (Crombie 1989, fig. 139 [in colour] on p. 122), the miniatures in which look almost like Islamic originals, above all in the textiles and fashions of the personages' clothing⁹.

⁶ As already noted by Kurt Weitzman, *Die byzantinische Buchmalerei des IX. und X. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1935, p. 76, figs 516–17.

⁷ A. Grabar (1977), pp. 167–8: "Il pourrait s'agir, dans la série de Bidbao, d'images inspirées par des illustrations arabes des récits de Kalila et Dimna, et certaines de ces miniatures, qui montrent des lions et des chacals, ou des oiseaux alignés, le font en silhouette plate (et quelques fois cernés d'un contour double, détail qu'on retrouve sur des images d'animaux qui décorent des broderies islamiques), font penser à des versions archaïques des miniatures arabes dites de l'école de Baghdad (XIII^{ème} siècle)" (regarding *Kalila wa Dimna* now see Grube 1991).

⁸ A circumstance already well documented by André Grabar (1977, p. 164) and particularly recognizable in the miniature on fol. 97 where the siege of Benevento is depicted.

⁹ European personages who deal with Islamic culture are sometimes dressed in the Muslim

A true attempt at copying a Timurid miniature is fol. 13 of the *Tractatus de septem vitiis*, representing "Intemperance"; the manuscript was written in Genoa in the late 14th century and is preserved in the British Library in London (Ms Add. 27695; see Sievernich & Budde 1989, fig. 722 [in colour] on p. 627).

Before concluding our rapid *excursus* on the illustration of manuscripts, we may recall that Italian scribes, as elsewhere in Europe (Erdmann 1953, *passim*), made ample use of ornamentations made up of graphemes, single or repeated, of pseudo-Kufic. We note only two examples from two great miniature traditions from the 11th–13th centuries: the school of Bari, for Southern Italy, and the school of Bologna, for Central and Northern Italy. A manuscript of the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid is preserved in the Biblioteca Nazionale of Naples (Ms IV F 3), which can be attributed to the late 11th–early 12th century, almost certainly written in Bari, many pages of which display true "repertories" of foliated pseudo-Kufic, also with elaborate apices, along the margins¹⁰. From the school of Bologna, we may mention a *Psalter* from the end of the 13th century in the Biblioteca Universitaria of Bologna (Ms 346; see Flores D'Arcais 1989, p. 335). As for ornamentation in pseudo-Kufic from the 14th century, we recall the following three manuscripts, attributed to the schools of Padua and Bologna at the beginning of the century: a *Lectionary* in the Biblioteca Capitolare of Padua (Ms A19; see Flores D'Arcais 1989, p. 336 and fig. 1); a manuscript of the *Decretals* in the Biblioteca Capitulare of Toledo (Ms 1818; see Flores D'Arcais 1989, p. 336); and an *Antiphonary* in the Museo Civico Medievale in Bologna (Ms 522; see Flores D'Arcais 1989, fig. 3).

Painting

In painting on wood, such as in sculpture and – as we have already seen – for many wall-paintings and glass windows, it is more appropriate to speak of the influence of Islam than of a direct influence of Islamic art; or, better still, of the influence of the taste in Western society, which determined the importation, and therefore the use, of handmade articles of Islamic art which were simply reproduced by painters and sculptors. In these centuries, there was a notable demand for textiles on the European markets: they were precious and therefore lent themselves to use as the backdrops to scenes, as the coverings for thrones and cushions, as draped tunics, mantles, and other kinds of clothing for painted or sculpted personages.

In painting, it is Muslim textiles, above all from Egypt and Spain, that were

fashion – above all noticeable by the presence of a turban – as happens, for example, to Henry of Germany in an illustration of his *Liber ethicorum* by Lorenzo da Voltolina from the school of Bologna dating from the second half of the 14th century, preserved in the Kupferstichkabinett of the Staatliche Museen, in Berlin (Ms KdZ 1233; see Sievernich & Budde 1989, fig. 150); the clothing is strictly connected to the circumstance of him being depicted in the act of teaching philosophy to his students.

¹⁰ Unfortunately, in the article by Orofino (1993) only one page is illustrated (fol. 46', fig. 26) enriched by this decoration, but many others feature a certain Islamic influence, for example in some representations of fauna (see fig. 13 in Orofino's article).

primarily represented (Errera 1921; Klesse 1967; Bagnera 1988). We can distinguish four substantial types that were most frequently depicted in paintings from the 13th and 14th centuries. The first is a fabric with roundels enclosing, for the most part, zoomorphic motifs (an ornamentation of pre-Islamic Iranian origin largely used by Islamic and Byzantine craftsmen); the second is a fabric with geometric ornamentation based on the composition of polygons, crosses, and stars, especially produced by Muslim Spain; the third is a variation of the preceeding type, enriched along the borders with bands of epigraphic ornamentations; and the fourth type is those textiles in a solid colour with borders of various widths decorated with epigraphic motifs or, more simply, ornamented borders which could be applied to any fabric, even of local production. We find the first type on the throne of the *Madonna dei Servi* by Cimabue (c. 1280; already mentioned in Bagnera 1988, p. 254); an example of the second type is found in the *Crucifix* attributed to Giotto (late 13th century) in S. Maria Novella in Florence; again it is Giotto who provides us with more than one example of the third type, for instance in the drapery on the throne in the *Madonna with Child* (late 13th–early 14th century) in S. Giorgio alla Costa in Florence¹¹. Alessandra Bagnera (1988, p. 256) provides us with precious information regarding the earliest representation of textiles that we have defined as the fourth type in Tuscan painting, in the *Crucifix* by Cimabue in S. Domenico (1256–8) in Arezzo: this is the type most frequently represented in the whole of the 14th century (the *Maestà* by Duccio di Boninsegna, for example) and, as we shall see, the 15th as well.

Another article of Islamic art that was often reproduced in Italian painting is the carpet¹². It seems a risky to claim that certain articles depicted in such paintings are actually carpets – always Anatolian or Caucasian – which could in fact be textiles (see Curatola 1990, p. 235). Nonetheless, we must indicate the presence of “carpets” in works by Giotto and his school: an Anatolian carpet decorated with geometric patterns filled with equally geometric figures – fragments of this type of carpet have been found in Fustat – in a painting in Assisi and, as well, in a panel depicting the apparition to Gregorius IX; or another type of Anatolian carpet, also having geometric patterns but with a filler-pattern of two-headed eagles¹³, in the central panel of the *Polyptich Stefaneschi* (c. 1320) in the Vatican Gallery¹⁴. In the small Swedish town of Marby (Lamm 1937; and

¹¹ A “repertory” is in the upper basilica of Assisi (13th century); we have already mentioned this in connection with wall-paintings.

¹² There is a vast literature in this regard, but one scholar who recently devoted himself to this problem is John F. Mills: apart from *Carpets in Pictures* (London 1975), see also his numerous articles in the magazine *Hali*, starting from 1978.

¹³ The two-headed eagles are rather frequent in Muslim textiles; we may remember, for example, the Mesopotamian textile from the early 13th century kept in the Siegburg Museum.

¹⁴ Up until now, no carpets have been found having this type of animal. The example that von Bode found in a church in Central Italy presents stylized dragons and phoenixes, similar to those reproduced in a fresco from the 15th century in Siena (see *Painting*).

today in the Statens Historiska Museum of Stockholm) an Eastern Anatolian carpet, dating from the first half of the 15th century, was discovered; it has octagonal panels containing two pairs of birds facing each other with a tree in the centre. We recall two paintings from the 14th century that reproduce this type of carpet, and we shall also find them in paintings from the following century: the first is *St. Louis Enthroned* by Simone Martini (1317) in S. Lorenzo Maggiore, in Naples; the second is also attributed to Simone Martini, or his follower Lippo Memmi, and is a *Madonna*, dating from the first half of the century, in the Berlin Gemäldegalerie. The animals set into octagons in the carpet depicted in the *Marriage of the Virgin* by Niccolò di Buonaccorso (c. 1372–80) in the National Gallery in London are probably birds¹⁵.

Lastly, we may mention a carpet, with geometric designs filled with single quadrupeds, in the *Virgin Enthroned with Saints* (1319–47) by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in the Abegg Foundation in Bern.

The depiction of figures wearing clothing of “oriental” style is well known in Italian painting, sometimes with physical characteristics of Asian or African types, particularly from late 13th–early 14th centuries.

As for the painters of such pictures, Hermann Goetz (1938, p. 55) supplies us with a list of painters of the 14th century and he pauses at two paintings: *St. Francis before the Sultan* (first quarter of the 14th century) by Giotto, in the Bardi Chapel in Santa Croce, in Florence; and the *Martyrdom of the Franciscans in Ceuta* (1331) by Ambrogio Lorenzetti, in the Church of S. Francesco in Siena. These two frescoes, however, strike us above all for the way the scenes are composed, with the sovereign enthroned in the centre and the other figures higher; such a scheme without doubt was influenced by the pre-Islamic models frequently encountered in Islamic miniatures (see Grabar & Blair 1980, p. 195, n. 2, with bibliography).

Sculpture

A masterpiece in low-relief is the ivory polyptich depicting stories from the Old and New Testaments, from Amalfi or the Salerno school (11th–12th centuries) in the Museo Diocesano in Salerno; it illustrates architecture of a clearly Islamic taste (Scerrato 1979, fig. 405).

In later sculpture, from the 13th and 14th centuries, we can recognize the reproduction of objects and textiles of Islamic craftsmanship.

The exceptional repertory of Tuscan sculpture provides the best examples of the reproduction of objects of Muslim origin, in the works of Nicola Pisano and his school, second half of the 13th century¹⁶. In the Bargello Museum in

¹⁵ A fragment of a carpet with a single bird, dating from the 14th century, was found in Fustat and it is preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

¹⁶ But we should not forget Nicola's Apulian origins, today almost universally accepted, and deducible, apart from the connections between the Southern pulpits in Salerno, Moscufo, or Sessa Aurunca, from the inheritance of Islamic influences recognizable in his work.

Florence, and in the Museum of Fine Arts of Boston, are two marble bases with sculptures, in the round, of three addorsed acolytes: one of the three figures on both bases holds a bottle, almost certainly a reproduction of two contemporary Syrian glass bottles; the bottle in the base at the Bargello, in particular, shows two epigraphic bands in Arabic characters. The two groups probably constitute two of the supports for a single monument; a third base of which could be identified in the marble statue of St. Gabriel, preserved together with a St. Michael in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. St. Gabriel holds an object (a "bomb", an "eolipile", or a perfume-burner), whatever the case, of Islamic production and probably adopted in liturgical functions as an *aspergillum* (Fontana 1991). As regards the reproduction of textiles with borders in pseudo-Kufic, we refer to the clothing of the *Madonna with Child* carved practically in full relief in the centre of the front side of St. Dominic's tomb in the Church of S. Domenico in Bologna. It is attributed, in particular, to Lapo and, in any case, to the school of Nicola Pisano, second half of the 13th century. A hypothesis proposed by two authoritative scholars, Gnudi and Pope-Hennessy, would group the statues of the Bargello, Boston and the Victoria and Albert Museum as four of the six supports of the same tomb of St. Dominic: a confirmation of this hypothesis could be supplied by the subtle thread of Islamic "influence" that connects the marbles.

Later examples, dating to the middle of the 14th century, feature sculpted bands of pseudo-Kufic characters in the clothing in two other marble sculptures depicting the *Madonna with Child*: one is attributed to Nino Pisano, in S. Maria della Spina, in Pisa; the other, by Alberto Arnaldi, is in the lunette of the Bigallo door in Florence¹⁷.

Ceramics

As early as the 11th century, lead-glaze was introduced into Italy from the Islamic world, probably through Byzantium and the South of the peninsula, almost certainly through Sicily. The so-called tin-glaze, invented by Muslim ceramists, was used in Italy from the 12th century. This influence from the Near East was not only expressed in the manufacture – and sometimes in the shapes – but also in techniques and in decoration, whether painted, engraved, or *champlevé*. Without doubt, it was in Southern Italy that ceramics were produced under Islamic influences, especially from the Maghrib and Spain: this can be seen not only in the use of pseudo-Kufic decoration – widespread in Apulia, Campania and Latium – but also in some decorative motifs like spirals, geometrical ornament, and the triangular breaking up of spaces (Fontana & Ventrone Vassallo 1984).

Muslim ceramics were imported into Italy in large quantities (Sarre 1933). A particular example of their use in architectural decoration in the South is on the

¹⁷ Elsewhere in Europe, especially in France, the borders with pseudo-Kufic inscriptions on the mantles of the ivory Madonnas, for example, are painted and not sculpted.

pulpit of S. Giovanni in Toro in Ravello, decorated on the sides by twenty-one pieces of ceramic; what is perhaps more interesting to note is that the ambo (13th century) was covered with a mosaic composed, for the most part, of ceramic tesserae obtained from the smashing of Muslim dishes and bowls that were monochrome, polychrome, and lustre-painted¹⁸. The same technique was used for the ambo of the Ravello Cathedral and another two ambos in the same area, in Amalfi and Scala – there are also examples, even if less striking, in Northern Italy, like the mosaic of the portal lunette of the Church of S. Lorenzo in Genoa (Farris 1988, fig. on p. 45).

Starting from the 11th century, the custom of decorating façades and sides of churches, campaniles and towers with ceramics, the so-called *bacini* embedded in the walls during construction, was equally widespread in Central and Northern Italy: many of these *bacini* are Muslim – especially North African and Fatimid¹⁹ (cat. nos 33–6; 47–8; 69–78, 83).

Glass

A group of goblets in glass that Lamm (1934, pp. 278–86, figs 99–103) defined as “Franco-Syrian”, and that he claimed were manufactured in Syrian workshops commissioned by Franks during the Crusades before 1291, could be of Venetian production from the Island of Murano. This reference is made in particular to a glass beaker in the British Museum bearing the name of “*Magister Aldrevandin*” (13th century), in which we can find a total absence of gilding, that is typical of Syrian production at the time (Tait 1979, pp. 11–12, 16–17, pl. I [in colour]; Carboni 1989, pp. 153–4, fig. 15)²⁰.

Textiles

After the death of Manfred of Swabia in 1266, the subsequent crisis in Sicily led a number of weavers from the laboratories of Palermo²¹ to emigrate to

¹⁸ Peduto (1991, p. 103) claims that it is possible to hypothesize, by a calculation by defect, on using about sixty entire pieces to make that mosaic.

¹⁹ In most cases – the example of the hundred in Pisa alone (Berti & Tongiorgi 1981) gives us an idea – we are not dealing with recovered ceramics, but with commissioned pieces. The last word on the study of the *bacini* comes from the communications from the XXVI *Convegno Internazionale del Centro Ligure per la Storia della Ceramica* held in Albisola which, this year (1993), had the same *bacini* as its theme.

²⁰ Apart from technical arguments, one fact in favour of this attribution to Murano production is supplied by the lack of these objects in Syrian territory; a good fragmentary example comes from the excavations at Steri Palace in Palermo (Venice 1982, fig. 46 on p. 67), preserved in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Palermo.

²¹ It is known that the first textile production centre in Italy was in Muslim Palermo, the *tiraz* of which had reached exceptional levels of manufacture and decoration; after the conquest of Sicily, Roger brought Byzantine weavers to Palermo as prisoners. From that moment, they began to work beside Muslim craftsmen, and the famous mantle of the sovereign preserved in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (cat. no. 95) is probably the most famous product of those workshops.

other centres of production in Central Italy, Lucca in particular. From that moment, the factories in Lucca expanded their decorative techniques and repertoires which were greatly affected by Muslim influence, even if it had already filtered through a period of about two centuries: animals, in free patterns or inserted into roundels, were without doubt the favorite ornamental theme (see Santangelo 1959, pp. 13–15). A fragment of shuttle-woven damask from the Franchetti Collection in the Bargello (inv. no. 604; a similar fragment is in the Cleveland Museum, see Shepherd 1966, fig. 160) having stylized palms alternating with pairs of gazelles and parrots²², is attributed to Lucca during the second half of the 13th century.

At the beginning of the 14th century, when Lucca fell under the influence of Henry VII (c. 1270/80–1313), the Guelph masters of Lucca moved to Florence, Genoa, and Venice: about 300 craftsmen arrived at the latter city where, for the whole of the 14th century, they made a considerable contribution to the refinement of silk manufacturing which was still influenced by the Near and Middle East. Some textiles from the second half of the 14th century, of clear Islamic influence deriving from the Sicilian–Lucca workshops, can be considered as Italian production, probably Florentine or Venetian, including a fragment of silk with stylized palmette and bird motifs; it is preserved in the Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst in Vienna (Klesse 1967, fig. 104).

15th–17th Centuries

Architecture

15th-century architecture in Italy does not seem to have been influenced by Islam²³. In his careful study on the relationships between *The structure of the Muslim Hospital and the Italian Renaissance*, Ralph Quadflieg (1981, and 1985) gives particular emphasis to the figure of Filarete (as noted, an architect and sculptor; see *Sculpture*). The architectural solution of the vault with intersecting arches that are not decorative but structural precedes the Baroque: the dome of the Church of S. Barbara in Mantua dates to 1563, the work of Giovanni Battista

²² Pairs of gazelles very similar to these are on a Spanish fragment of silk from the 13th century preserved in the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Berlin (Klesse 1967, fig. 90). In some cases the scholars are uncertain whether to attribute the textiles to Lucca or Sicily, but it would seem more probable that a fragment of brocatel in the Franchetti Collection in the Bargello Museum (inv. no. 630), having stylized floral and animal motifs and scrolls with pseudo-Kufic characters, was produced on the Island in the 14th century.

²³ The inspiration, or reproduction even, of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem – which, in turn, was the inspiration for the Dome of the Rock – is easily recognizable in the Florentine edicules of the Old Sacresty of S. Lorenzo, by Filippo Brunelleschi (1428), and of the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre in S. Pancrazio, by Leon Battista Alberti (1467), which is inspired by the Brunelleschi's one.

Bertani, and its intersecting arches follow the format of one of the simpler domes of the mosque of Bib Mardum in Toledo, forming a square in the centre²⁴.

The architect who created one of the most complex rib-systems supporting domes was one of the major representatives of the Piedmontese Baroque, Guarino Guarini who, after testing his ability with intersecting arches in the Church of Sainte Anne (1662) in Paris, lost to us today, built the splendid dome of S. Lorenzo (1670) in Turin with a central octagon, again using the identical format of one of the domes of the mosque of Bib Mardum in Toledo (or, in turn, of the *maqsura* of the Great Mosque of Cordoba)²⁵. Our last example of intersecting arches is from the first half of the 18th century, in the Santuario del Vallinotto near Carignano (1738), the work of Bernardo Vittone, a representative of the Piedmontese Rococo. Some literature suggests that there is an influence of Borromini in the S. Lorenzo by Guarini, who is supposed to have turned to the vault of the Collegio di Propaganda Fide (1647) in Rome for inspiration. But there the intersecting arches have a principally decorative function, as happens in the case of a certain number of Maghrib domes, the most famous example of which is the one at Tlemcen.

As for the work of Francesco Borromini, we may suggest that he was inspired by the helicoidal minarets of Samarra and Ibn Tulun, in Cairo, for the dome of S. Ivo alla Sapienza in Rome (the 60s of the 17th century)²⁶.

Painting

Both textiles and carpets from the Islamic world continued to be imported to the West, and surely into Italy, during these centuries, but there is an indication of a slow-down in the importation of textiles provided in painting of this period, as Italian production became increasingly competitive.

In painting, therefore, we find Islamic fabrics depicted in great abundance during the 15th century, particularly in the bands of characters taken from the

²⁴ In the sketches of the small domes by Eugenio Galdieri (1985, pl. I, fig. 2) we can recognize vault no. 8. The 16th-century dome is very different from the weightiness of the arches of S. Evasio in Casale Monferrato (see 12th–14th Centuries, *Architecture*) that, as we have hinted, must find prototypes in Armenian architecture, rather than in Islamic.

²⁵ Only to cite the early Spanish examples, but these are clearly not philological comparisons. The question of a journey by Guarini to Spain is highly debated; see, however, the articles by Terzaghi (1959), and Florenza (1970).

²⁶ "The stepped roof of S. Ivo is patterned after that of the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus; the lantern follows the Round Temple of Baalbek; the helical spire recalls the traditional concept of the Tower of Babel, and the bulbous crown is derived from Dutch models which themselves originate from finials of minarets" (Born 1943, p. 234). From the sketch of the lantern by Borromini preserved in the Albertina in Vienna, the comparison with the minaret of the Great Mosque of Samarra is particularly evident.

The Church of S. Gregorio in Messina has been erroneously attributed to Guarini, once again in the 60s of the 17th century, a few years after Borromini's S. Ivo. The architect of the Sicilian building – with all probability built at least two centuries later – used S. Ivo as inspiration for the spiral roof of the campanile (see the image, attributed to Guarini, in Born 1943, fig. 8).

Arabic alphabet, that are used as borders or in parallel strips, in paintings by painters like the Beato Angelico, Mantegna, Paolo Uccello, Gentile da Fabriano, Perugino, and Pinturicchio, to name but a few. Sylvia Auld (1986) has written an interesting article on the pseudo-Kufic inscriptions in the work of Gentile da Fabriano, calling attention not only to those in textiles, but also to those in the haloes surrounding the heads of Madonnas and Saints²⁷. Among the examples of textiles that, apart from cartouches with pseudo-inscriptions, feature splendid stylized floral ornamentations and medallions, we may cite the mantle of the *Madonna with Saints* by the “Maestro del Bambino Vispo” (third decade of the 15th century), in the Martin von Wagner Museum in Würzburg²⁸. The reproduction of 15th and 16th-century textiles with the pomegranate pattern (see *Textiles*) is particular, and it is not always easy to identify whether it is Italian or Ottoman: there are splendid examples in paintings by Piero della Francesca.

As far as the representation of carpets goes, we find some types of Anatolian carpets already discussed for the preceding century: confronted birds with a tree in their midst, in Sano di Pietro in the Vatican Gallery or in a work by Beato Angelico, in the convent of S. Marco in Florence; stylized dragons and phoenixes in Domenico di Bartolo, in the hospital of S. Maria della Scala in Siena. Anatolian carpets with geometric designs²⁹ (cat. nos 244–5) can be seen in the paintings by Domenico Ghirlandaio, Raffaellino del Garbo, Piero della Francesca, Benozzo Gozzoli, and numerous others, including Pinturicchio, Carpaccio, and Mantegna. In the altar-piece of SS. Giovanni and Paolo (1542) in Venice, Lorenzo Lotto depicted a carpet with arabesques – floral motifs stylized into a cross alternating with octagonal motifs – yellow against a red background³⁰ and thereby gave his name to the conventional term for this typology (Mills 1980), as has already happened to Carlo Crivelli for the 15th-century Anatolian carpets, with large geometric designs of stylized stars and animals – a fragment is in the Museum Iparművészeti in Budapest; while a carpet with a niche on one end, reproduced also by Lotto and Cima da Conegliano, is called “Bellini”. A “Ushak–star type” (a typology from the 16th century, see cat. no. 246) is depicted in the *Consignment of the Ring to the Doge* (1533) by Paris Bordone in the Academy of Venice; a “bird-and-flower” carpet (of the Ushak group with a white background) is depicted in a painting by Alessandro Varotari, called the

²⁷ This circumstance, which does not seem to have affirmed itself before the 15th century – see the articles by Sellheim (1968), and Forstner (1972) – is an example of the passage of a decorative motif – the pseudo-Kufic – from one medium, the textile, to another, the halo, both in painting and in sculpture.

²⁸ Klesse (1967, figs 87–8) proposes a comparison with a brocade in silk from the same period of Egyptian manufacture, today in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

²⁹ Known as “Holbein” carpets, particularly because of their reproduction in the *Ambassadors* (1533) by Hans Holbein the Younger in the National Gallery in London.

³⁰ Carpets produced from the 16th to the 17th centuries; an example made for the Doria–Centurione wedding is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Padovanino (1588–1648), *Eumenius and Roxanne*, in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg³¹.

Some especially widespread decorative motifs in Muslim art merit particular attention: patterns of “knots”, and the “crosses and eight-pointed stars”. They were used in more than one wall-painting resembling wall-hangings; the knots by Leonardo on the vault of the Sala delle Asse in the Castello Sforzesco in Milan, from the last years of the 15th century, are famous, as are those by Mantegna in the Palazzo Gonzaga in Mantua (1474) where also occur the motifs of crosses and eight-pointed stars.

In Italian painting, as in the rest of Europe, and much more so than in preceding centuries, figures from the Near East and Africa frequently appear³²; Pisanello probably paid the most attention to their presence, and analysed the details: his studies bear witness to this. We may mention those for the fresco of *St. George and the Princess* (1433–8) and the *Arrival of John VIII the Paleologos* (1438–9), both in the Louvre. As for the representation of architecture, Julian Raby (1982, p. 55) rightly maintains that the architectural verisimilitude of Mansueti, Bellini and even Carpaccio is far exceeded by the Mamluk buildings that an anonymous (Italian) reproduced in the *Reception of the Ambassadors*³³.

Painting was also inspired by the great historical episodes that brought the West into contact with the Muslim East: we recall the *Taking of Constantinople* (a famous version by Tintoretto [1581–4] in the Doges’ Palace in Venice), and the *Battle of Lepanto* (contemporary versions by Paolo Veronese [at the Venice Academy], Andrea Vicentino [in the Doges’ Palace in Venice], an anonymous painting in the Cathedral of Montagnana; and, in the 17th century, Giovanni Coli and Filippo Gherardi, who frescoed an allegory in Palazzo Colonna in Rome).

Before concluding we must remember the figure of Gentile Bellini – a painter of many paintings having Turkish subject-matter – who, because of his diplomatic role, was afforded the privilege of painting the sultan Mehmet II (1480; National Gallery in London)³⁴; he summarizes the close relationship between 15th-century Venice and the Ottoman Empire.

³¹ Soulier (1924, pp. 208–9) already gives us information regarding carpets represented in the painting of *cassoni* and of illustrated manuscripts.

³² Refer to the studies by Soulier (1922), Arnold (1931), Goetz (1938), Olschki (1944), and Benesch (1959). They also appear in illuminated manuscripts like, for example, in a miniature from the *Decretum Gratiani* (1474) from the Ferrara school (Sevilla 1992, p. 158, ill. 72).

³³ We possess three versions, all preserved in Paris, one in the Louvre and the other two in the Stern and Langlade Collections, respectively. None of them are dated, but another reproduction, on tapestry, is from 1545. Raby dates the work between 1488 – year of the construction, on commission of Qayt Bay, of the Western minaret of the Great Mosque in Damascus, recognizable in the extreme left of the painting – and 1495–9.

³⁴ In August of 1479 a special envoy from the sultan arrived in Venice having the request for an artist able to cast and work bronze; the choice fell on Gentile Bellini (Raby 1987, p. 180). Of Bellini, as for Costanzo da Ferrara, we must remember his work as a sculptor of medals of the same

Stained glass windows

Of the stained glass windows from the 15th century, let us mention only two examples which, while both influenced by the use of inscriptions of Arabic epigraphic characters, are very different one from the other.

The first is in the Cathedral of Milan: in the panel depicting *The Funeral of Drusiana* motifs in pseudo-Kufic are painted on the lower band (the work of Cristoforo de Mottis, 1461–82); in the panels, very similar one to other, depicting *The Prayer of St. Eligius* and *Jesus appearing to St. John* (respectively the work of Niccolò da Varallo and of the school of C. de Mottis, second half of the 15th century) we find a pseudo-cursive text – Arabic/Hebrew – on the borders of the fabrics on the altars.

The second example is as particular: a tondo (attributed to Alessio Baldovinetti, c. 1464) in the Chapel of the Madonna in the Santissima Annunziata, Florence. In the centre is the Medici coat-of-arms; the band surrounding it is broken up into six cartouches decorated with splendid characters in Mamluk pseudo-Naskhi³⁵.

Sculpture

In 15th century-sculpture, the Muslim “influence” is much more amply documented, by the pseudo-inscriptions in Arabic characters³⁶. They can have both a narrative character – yet again, as borders or on the fields of textiles – and a decorative one – although this is rarer – which sometimes co-exist in a single work³⁷. Moreover, the pseudo-Kufic is sometimes replaced by an Arabic/Hebrew

subject matter (see cat. no. 309); what is more, Costanzo da Ferrara is attributed with a miniature reproducing the portrait of the same sultan, preserved in the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul. There are many other painters, especially from Venice, who illustrated figures from the Ottoman world during the 16th and 17th centuries, among others we may recall Jacopo Ligozzi (1547–1625). The illustrative drawings for Venetian publications are also important: the “*Habiti de Turchi*” from *Habiti antichi et moderni di tutto il mondo*, book VII (Venice 1589) by Cesare Vecellio is an excellent sample; from the many examples we cite the portraits of Ottoman sultans and illustrious personages by Giacomo Franco (*Effigie naturali dei maggiori principi et più valorosi capitani di questa età con l’armi loro*, Venice 1596), and L. Grasso (*Elogi di capitani illustri* [...], Venice 1683); the scenes by Jacopo Piccini (*Istoria dello stato presente dell’impero ottomano* [...], Venice 1672). A Congress in Venice (6th–7th October 1993, organized by the German Centre of Venetian Studies) is dedicated to the image of Ottoman sultans in Italian art.

³⁵ Father Eugenio Casalini was the first to note the presence of these inscriptions which are presently being studied by Michele Bernardini.

³⁶ If depictions of carpets seem to be lacking in sculpture in the real sense, we must remember that they can be found in the engravings in wood for illustrations, especially in the late 15th century: a beautiful example is in the Bible of Malermi (Soulie 1922, p. 209, fig. 90). Identifying the origin of some textiles reproduced as clothing, or mantles of sculpted figures is a more complex problem. Are the fabrics – of Ottoman inspiration (see *Textiles*) – depicted, for example, in the monuments for Baldassarre Cossa by Donatello and Michelozzo, in the Baptistery in Florence (see below), and for the Cardinal of Portugal, by Antonio Rossellino in San Miniato al Monte, Ottoman or Italian?

³⁷ As had already happened since wall-paintings, both of the churches of Basilicata and Apulia, and of Giotto’s Cappella degli Scrovegni in Padua.

pseudo-cursive inscription (Aanavi 1968), as we have already seen in some of the painted glass windows in Milan.

We find these pseudo-inscriptions in the works of the greatest artists of the 15th century, in works in marble as in bronze, from sculptures in the round to those in low-relief: by Donatello (*the Prophet Joshua, St. John the Evangelist, St. George, Madonna Goretti Miniati, Madonna Chellini, Judith, St. Rossore*), Michelozzo (the Aragazzi monument in Montepulciano, the Baldassarre Cossa monument in the Baptistry of Florence, the work of both Donatello and Michelozzo), Simone Ghini (the monument for Pope Martin V in S. Giovanni in Laterano), Andrea del Verrocchio (the monument to Giovanni Chellini in S. Domenico in San Miniato, *David* [Piemontese 1982, pp. 29–30, 41; 1989, pp. 1037, 1041–7]), Agostino di Duccio (some reliefs in the Chapel of the Arti Liberali in the Church of S. Francesco, Rimini), and Lorenzo Ghiberti (*St. John the Baptist, St. Mathew*). This last sculptor introduces us to the bronze doors where we can find pseudo-epigraphic motifs; from those of the Baptistry in Florence (above all the oldest, the Northern doors, but also the eastern ones) by Ghiberti himself, to those of the Vatican Basilica by Antonio Averulino, Filarete³⁸. The Vatican doors are of particular interest for our discussion: an Arabic pseudo-cursive fills the haloes of Christ and Saints Peter and Paul, and the borders of the tunics of the latter. What is more – an unusual circumstance – a cursive inscription runs along the innermost frames (textiles or carpets?) of the panels depicting the two saints³⁹. In a panel on the bronze doors to the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino (1474–80, today in the Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, work of Ambrogio Barocci after designs by Francesco di Giorgio Martini) a Muslim “war machine” is sculpted.

In the same way as did painting, sculpture too, illustrates historical episodes in the contact between the Muslim East and the West, usually in panels of low-relief. The battle of Lepanto was a popular theme, as we can see in the Church of S. Giuseppe di Castello in Venice, in the marble altar-piece by Domenico da Salò (1571). The celebratory spirit in which the Barbaro family rebuilt the Church of S. Maria del Giglio, also in Venice, is very different: they had marble reliefs sculpted depicting the places visited by Antonio (d. 1679) during his political journeys to the East.

³⁸ Perhaps on the basis of some Arabic pseudo-cursive inscriptions, but much more crude and careless than those in the Vatican, Filarete is attributed with other works such as a tabernacle showing Christ carrying the cross, in bronze with enamel and gilding, in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

³⁹ Lanci (1845–6, II, p. 211; III, pl. LX), publishing a sketch of Christ's halo, writes: “Abbatevi in prima cosa l'augusta porta di bronzo del vaticano tempio del Filatele [sic] operata, il quale, seguitando l'antico uso orientale di fare acconci di lettere a' lembi delle vestimenta e sì ad ogni generazione di utensili, si piacque di rinfarciare le immagini, i ripianetti e vanelli della fregiatissima porta con arabiche note, anco per far mostra di caratteri alle varie nazioni che, per latini carmi suvvi scolpiti, a visitare il gran tempio chiamate sono”.

Textiles

The major weaving centres during the 15th and 16th centuries can be found in Tuscany – in Lucca and Florence – and in Venice. The Islamic models that were imitated the most were the Ottoman (see cat. nos 236 and *ff.*) because of the commercial ties that were established, above all from the 15th century onwards, between Venice and the Ottoman Empire (Curatola 1985). In the 15th century the “pomegranate pattern” was introduced into the Italian laboratories, which copied or were inspired by the same motif used by the Ottoman weavers⁴⁰. Some examples of Muslim prototypes and Italian imitations, above all from the 16th century, are illustrated in an article by Schmidt (1933; see also *Painting*); two splendid Italian silks (Florentine [?]) similar in their decoration – for structure and ornamental elements – of close Ottoman derivation, are from the middle of the 15th century. One is in the Abegg-Stiftung Bern in Riggisberg (Klesse 1967, pl. XI), and the other is in the Franchetti Collection in the Bargello Museum, in Florence (inv. no. 116). We find a similar motif in the *Madonna with Child, St. John, St. Jerome and Two Youths*, 1445–50, by Andrea del Castagno (Contini Bonaccorsi Collection in Florence).

Ceramics

In the 15th century the Ligurian factories of Genoa, Savona, and Albisola produced the so-called *laggioni* – glazed tiles, often with relief decorations of a vegetal or geometric type. The custom of decorating walls and floors with these tiles comes from nearby Spain, whence *azulejos* had been imported since the middle of the 13th century. Starting from the 15th century and for the next two centuries, the local production of *laggioni* caused a decrease in importation – from Valencia and from Manises and Talavera; Ligurian factories adopted a decorative repertory that drew for a large part on Iberia. The large vase with a lid, in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge (Rackham 1952, pl. 84), was produced in Savona during the first half of the 17th century; painted in blue on white with zoomorphic and floral decorations in horizontal registers, it is still inspired by the Talavera factories from the end of the 16th century and into the 17th century.

The majolica wares painted in blue on white, and decorated in the “volute calligraphic” style (cat. no. 299) which imitate the Ottoman ceramics known as the “Golden horn” (or *tughra*, Atasoy & Raby 1989, chap. XIV [see, *here*, chap.

⁴⁰ Between 1420 and 1450 the motif of the pomegranate is especially widespread. The Italian factories adopted particularly refined systems, weaving velvets in two or three heights of pile, and including metallic curls to give more brightness to textiles (see Di Sorio et alii 1986). These precious textiles were only used for ceremonial dress and religious functions, and most of the survived examples are actually of the ecclesiastical type; many of them are depicted in painting (Klesse 1967). Even the Ottomans bought these velvets from the Italian factories; in some cases, especially for certain textiles reproduced in painting, it is difficult to establish whether they are of Italian or Islamic origin.

XIII]), are generally attributed to Genoa, starting from the second half of the 16th century; recent excavations would have production start earlier, during the first half of the century. In the first half of the 17th century, Savona produced majolica bottles with a square base, decorated in blue on white in the "naturalistic calligraphic" style; there are inspired by a well-known Safavid type (see Düsseldorf 1973, fig. 390).

In the 15th and 16th centuries, cylindrical, zoomorphic containers with small feet were produced in Padua – for oil and vinegar – that are without doubt inspired by the *refredadores* from Manises (Fontana 1989, figs 13–14). The so-called *candiane* which imitate the famous ceramics of Iznik (Sarre 1939; see also cat. no. 301 and nos 231–2, 234), were certainly produced in Padua or the surrounding area from the end of the 16th to the beginning of the 18th centuries.

The ceramic called *a rabesche*, in contrast to that called *alla porcellana* – of more Chinese origin – certainly had prototypes in the ceramics of Iznik⁴¹. Majolica ware *a rabesche* was produced in the 16th century all over Central and Northern Italy, from Venice (from where we recall two particular beautiful dishes, respectively the work of Giacomo da Pesaro and Maestro Lodovico, today in the Victoria and Albert Museum; see Fontana 1989, figs 10–11) to Siena, for example (a splendid dish is in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam; see Sievernich & Budde 1989, fig. 703 on p. 612).

Even Florentine majolica was partly influenced by some types of Anatolian ceramics (Sarre 1931–2).

Glass

The Italian workshops that, starting from the 15th century, produced glass inspired by Muslim prototypes, from Syria in particular, were those of Murano. A mosque lamp in painted glass with the name of Qayt Bay, preserved in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, is attributed to Murano or Barcelona, and from no later than the end of the 15th century (Carboni 1989, fig. 6). Six lamps that are almost certainly Venetian, and from the 16th century, today in the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul, have only a vague memory, in shape and decoration, of Muslim prototypes: but they are part of the large Ottoman commission which lasted for the whole of the 16th century (Carboni 1989, figs 8–9).

At the end of the 15th and for the whole of the 16th centuries, Murano produced a type of *guastade*, squashed bottles with a high neck, made of "crystal" glass decorated with glazing only on the body: the shape derives from the so-called "pilgrim-flasks" and the decoration may be figural (Ferber 1975, fig. G23; Venice 1982, fig. 78) or coats-of-arms (Venice 1982, fig. 81; Carboni 1989, fig. 16).

⁴¹ As well as in the Ottoman textiles and bindings, which also influenced Italian and European bindings, inlaid woodwork, drawings on paper, and some types of the so-called "Veneto-Saracenic" metalwork (see *Metals*).

As regards the relations between Venice and the Ottomans for the manufacture of glass for windows, see the comprehensive article by Ömür Bakirer (1985).

Metal

A category of metal objects exists, generally in brass and characterized by damascened decorations of *rabesche* in silver, datable to the end of the 15th and the 16th centuries; until the middle of the last century these were classified as “Veneto–Saracenic” (a history of the literature can be found in Allan 1989, pp. 167–8). Many of these objects are now in European collections and some are in historical Italian collections, like that of the Medici of Ferdinand I (1549–1606) and that in the Cathedral of Cividale, which can be reconstructed on the basis of an inventory from 1546. Muslim shapes and decorations on objects which feature the coats-of-arms of important Italian families – especially Venetian – gave birth to the idea that there was a colony of Muslim craftsmen in Venice producing these objects⁴². Already in 1972, Hans Huth provided proof of the implausibility of this assertion. Despite the doubts of scholars, such as Melikian-Chirvani (1975), in 1986 James W. Allan dedicated chapter V of his essays on the Aron Collection to this argument, and the thesis that he maintains is the following: within the “Veneto–Saracenic” class of metal-wares, we must distinguish two fundamental groups, both of Muslim manufacture. The first, to which the works of Maḥmud al-Kurdi belong (Auld 1989), as well as that of Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Husayn, Muḥammad Badr and Zain al-Dīn (cat. no. 303), should be attributed to Cairo between the last years of the 14th century and the first two decades of the following century; Rachel Ward (1993, pp. 102–3) assigns the whole group to Western Iran on the basis of the name of one of its representatives, Maḥmud al-Kurdi, the Kurd (see also Scerrato 1968, p. 26, and 1979, p. 559; and Ettinghausen 1974, p. 305, and 1975, p. 17). The second group, which a number of examples form part of the Aron Collection (Allan 1986, nos 14–19), should be attributed to Syria during the second half of the 15th century. To these two principal groups Allan adds two minor ones, which we can define more properly as “Veneto–Saracenic”: they are metal objects with forms that could be manufactured in Venetian factories, at some time during the second half of the 15th century, with surfaces left smooth, that could later be sent to Muslim workshops to be decorated, in Syria and especially in Egypt, but also in Persia (cat. no. 307). A third group, rather small, would be the only one entirely produced in Venice in the 16th century, the arabesque decorations of which were inspired by Muslim prototypes. Allan (1986, p. 60) finds very few – two candlesticks in the Aron Collection, and a dish in the Victoria and Albert

⁴² Sylvia Auld (1989, p. 186) claims: “Indeed, it seems indubitable that a group of objects, loosely labelled ‘Veneto–Islamic’ because of the presence on them of Venetian arms, was made in Syria and perhaps imported into Venice to be finished”.

Museum – to which we can add two lamps in the Museo Correr in Venice (cat. no. 308), and a large “pilgrim-flask” with the coat-of-arms of the Mocenigo family, in a private Roman collection, for which a good comparison can be made with a 16th-century example sketched by W. Jamnitzer in the same period (Ward-Jackson 1967, fig. 8) – but see also the famous miniature from c. 1618 with Jahangir and Shah ‘Abbas, in the Freer Gallery in Washington, inv. no. 4216 (Atil, Chase & Jett 1985, fig. 69), and see *Glass*; and two chalices in the Galleria Nazionale of Cagliari (Cagliari 1993, figs 53–4 on p. 46) from late 16th–early 17th century.

Apart from this category of “Veneto–Saracenic” metalwork, other metal objects in the 16th and 17th centuries were inspired by Islamic models and often display decoration in the *a rabesche* manner. In particular, we may cite an iron shield with burnished and gilded relief decorations, having in the middle a Medusa’s head, manufactured in Milan in 1541 by Filippo Negroli (1503–65), given as a gift to Charles V by his brother Ferdinand on his return from the Algerian campaign, today in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

[...]

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