



The Taming of the Horror Vacui in Islamic Art

Author(s): Richard Ettinghausen

Source: *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 123, No. 1 (Feb. 20, 1979), pp. 15-28

Published by: American Philosophical Society

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/986468>

Accessed: 19-02-2019 14:31 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



American Philosophical Society is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*

THE TAMING OF THE HORROR VACUI IN ISLAMIC ART*

RICHARD ETTINGHAUSEN

Consultative Chairman, Islamic Department, Metropolitan Museum of Art,
Hagop Kevorkian Professor of Islamic Art, New York University

(Read November 11, 1977)

Much of art historical research deals with individual works of art, particular monuments, paintings, sculptures or objects and thus treats the *vocabulary* of the language of art.

This applies also to the art of the Islamic world and its designs. In addition to many stylistic investigations, a number of figural motifs have been examined and in consequence it has been possible to reconstruct their most likely original meaning, which had become lost in the course of time.¹ But a good deal of this ornamentation remains ambiguous, if not obscure. This is true, for instance, of one of the most decorative features of Islamic art, Arabic inscriptions. Their direct primary message could not have been understood by most of the public when they were written because the script was usually without the diacritical marks distinguishing the individual letters and the signs designating the short vowels and, of course, later on was nearly always deliberately composed in a much too involved and artful manner. They were also rendered in Arabic and not in any of the vernacular languages of the many non-Arabic countries and finally most of the people were, until recently, illiterate. The difficulty of finding a proper explanation for a decoration is even more obvious when we consider that most of the employed designs are non-figural, that is to say purely ornamental so that an intellectual interpretation is scarcely possible with a credible amount of assurance. There is yet another vital point to consider when we look at a decorated object (as the ones which illustrate this paper or any of the many decorated buildings demonstrate). It is not so much

the individual motif such as a flower, arabesque, a geometrical design or hunting scene which asks for our attention and possible interpretation, but rather the whole ensemble, the *Gestalt*, which impresses itself on our sensibilities and represents our aesthetic experience. The immediate and perhaps exclusive appeal is made by the decorative structure of the integrated totality, irrespective of whether we understand the meaning of certain designs or not. It is only by a secondary act, a close viewing of the object and its decoration that we are led to examine the separate details and are then confronted with the question of their possible significance.²

This paper will therefore not be concerned with individual motifs, but with what one might call a *syntactic* problem, namely, the manner of the arrangement of the various units in a larger setting. Our task will be to trace the principal methods by which the artisans handled the extensive combinations of patterns so as to avoid bare areas which, it seems, were aesthetically unsatisfactory. In this manner they managed to overcome in a pleasant fashion the horror vacui and yet did not create the impression of being overcrowded when many designs were used. The various organizing schemes used by artists in the Islamic world are, of course, individually known but their overall intention has so far not been considered.³

To apprehend the nature of the problem, it seems appropriate to look first at decorations which differ from the typical Islamic ones. There is no dearth of such material because it is represented by almost all of the various designs used from ancient Egyptian times through all the different historical periods. Wherever we look and whatever the patterns may be,

* All illustrations, if not otherwise noted, are from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

¹ Some of the more important investigations are: Willy Hartner, "The Pseudo-planetary Nodes of the Moon's Orbit in Hindu and Islamic Iconographies," *Ars Islamica* 5 (1938): pp. 113-154; *idem*, "The Vaso Vescovoli in the British Museum. A Study of an Islamic Astrological Iconography," *Kunst des Orients* 9 (1973/74): pp. 99-130; R. Ettinghausen, *Studies in Muslim Iconography I; The Unicorn*. Washington, 1950 (Freer Gallery of Art, *Occasional Papers* I, 3); Eva Baer, *Sphinxes and Harpies in Medieval Islamic Art. An Iconographic Study*. Jerusalem, 1965; *idem*, "The Nisan Tasi. A Study in Persian-Mongol Metal Ware," *Kunst des Orients* 9 (1973/74): pp. 1-46; *idem*, "A Brass Vessel from the Tomb of Sayyid Battāl Ghāzi," *Artibus Asiae* 39 (1977): pp. 299-335.

² Oleg Grabar, "Das Ornament in der Islamischen Kunst," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Supplement III, 1: XIX Deutscher Orientalistentag von 28. September bis 4. Oktober, 1975 in Freiburg im Breisgau. Wiesbaden, 1977, pp. XLI-LIV.

³ For the geometrical designs see J. Bourgoïn, (*Les*) *Éléments de l'art arabe; le trait des entrelacs*. Paris, 1879; F. Sarre-E. Herzfeld, *Archäologische Reise im Euphrat- und Tigris-Gebiet*. Berlin, 1911-1920, 2: pp. 255-258, figs. 252-255; E. Kühnel, "Der mamlukische Kassettenstil," *Kunst des Orients* 1, (1950): pp. 58-68. For arabesque designs see E. Kühnel, *The Arabesque. Meaning and Transformation of an Ornament*. Trans. from the German by R. Ettinghausen. Graz, 1977.

there will be a major motif or a group of them which stand out clearly from the background; the latter appears like an empty or near-empty space encompassing the main themes without presenting a shape or a life of its own (fig. 1). A scientist might say that we are faced with positive and negative particles in the unit.

At this point it has to be stated that in view of an age-old tradition a good deal of Islamic art follows the universal principle of placing a prominent pattern against an empty background. Many examples, especially of the early periods, come readily to mind (fig. 2). There are even rare instances in some periods when the decoration is very sparsely applied. We could, for instance, quote the cases of East Persian pottery from Nishapur in which calligraphically rendered black inscriptions are placed on an extensive white, undecorated background (fig. 3); but even here forces were soon at work to fill that empty space as slightly later vessels demonstrate (fig. 4). This fact and many other examples imply that there was a strong and in certain periods an overriding tendency as early as the ninth century to fill the whole available space as much as it was feasible. In yielding to this horror vacui, the artist would either try to eliminate the empty background to the highest possible degree or even better, let it play a decorative role of its own and by doing so accord it a positive character. To investigate at least some of the methods used to achieve this aim helps not only to grasp a specific quality of Islamic art but possibly provides an opportunity for a better understanding of the reason or reasons for the use of so much ornament.

In the first system to create a dense composition—which we might call the “structural” or “skeletal scheme”—a prominent configuration was placed in the field and both its internal and external areas were then filled with another type of pattern. The latter is always executed on a smaller scale which adds to the feeling of compactness. This compositional type could be accomplished in two ways. In the first sub-group the main organizing structural figure would be of a geometric nature and would have straight linear outlines. For instance in an Iraqi wood carving of the early ninth century, all the space in and around a six-pointed star composed of two triangles was occupied by floral or abstract patterns (fig. 5). In the course of time the skeletal composition becomes more complex as is readily demonstrated by an Egyptian door panel of the early fourteenth century where an elaborate star design served as an organizing element for the manifold ivory inlays in its interstices (fig. 6). The various Muslim countries between Spain and Central Asia could easily provide many additional specimens which follow the same principle. What is clear even from these initial examples is that one is,

first, left with the feeling that there is almost no background left and second, the bare areas of the traditional ornament which represented the shapeless background and played only a secondary, unobtrusive role, have now taken on a specific definable form which dominates the overall composition. To express it differently, the negative element has become positive.

In the second sub-group the structural configuration has curvilinear outlines but the system of filling the surface is the same. Here an early example with a cruciform arrangement of overlapping bands is provided by a ninth century painted dado decoration excavated in Nishapur (fig. 7), while a thirteenth century inlaid brass cup from Iran presents the structural element by means of a series of bands and medallion-like units (fig. 8). In all these examples the whole surface is all but filled although there remains a minimum of background space around the patterns of which one is, however, barely aware as the whole surface seems surfeited with designs. The prototype for this general principle is to be found in Roman art, particularly in floor mosaics and ceiling decoration (fig. 9). While they provide the general principle, the areas within the geometrical layout are usually not as compactly filled as in Islamic art, nor do they contain inserts of such small scale.

The approach in a second major group was to use sinuous lines (often of an S shape) or a combination of straight and curving lines and to bevel the surface toward these constituent contours—hence its designation as the “beveled style” (fig. 10). This technique created a complete surface covering of an abstract nature in which there was no longer any difference between design and background. It is even difficult to state which should be regarded as the main motif as the complementary or filling design has now taken the place of the traditional background.⁴ In the Islamic world this decorative style was first extensively used in the ninth century in the temporary Abbasid capital of Samarra in Iraq, where it was commonly applied to dadoes, but it appears also on painted panels and in the decorative arts. It was employed up to the early fourteenth century, but probably because of its abstract character, its influence outside Samarra was limited in use and geographical distribution. The origin of this curious style which

⁴ The original patterns, though now highly stylized, can still be recognized by the expert, but hardly by the untrained layman. See E. Herzfeld, *Der Wandschmuck der Bauten von Samarra und seine Ornamentik*. Berlin, 1923; Rudolf Schnyder, “Zur Frage der Stile von Samarra,” (supplementary volume of) *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*, in press. (VIIth International Congress of Islamic Art and Archaeology, Munich, 1976). For the distribution of the “beveled style” in time and space, see “The ‘Beveled Style’ in the Post-Samarra Period,” *Archaeologica Orientalia in Memoriam Ernst Herzfeld*, ed. George C. Miles. (Locust Valley, N. Y. 1952), pp. 72–83.

is the only one to eliminate completely the empty background has been much debated. As a possible source for its dissemination, the Turkish regions of Central Asia⁵ as well as the western world (the late classical arts of Egypt and Syria, or the arts of the late Roman and Migration periods) have been considered.⁶ However, the beveled technique was also used in the Sasanian period of Iran and Mesopotamia, particularly for the edges of seal rings which present the same complete coverage of abstract designs (fig. 11).⁷ These two countries being close in time and area to the Abbasid capital, where this style was first extensively used in the Islamic world, would thus appear the most likely source of inspiration. Certain silver vessels (fig. 12) and stone capitals (fig. 13) would fill the time interval between the Sasanian period and ninth-century Samarra.

Still another method for the total organization of the surface ("the tile method") is introduced by developing a repeat pattern usually consisting of two or more different dovetailing units to cover the field in tile-like fashion (figs. 14 and 15). Each unit is then completely filled with a design, or at least as closely as possible. Although the motifs are now repetitive, the horror vacui is again managed in an esthetically satisfactory manner. When the different units are in different colors, the patterns can be easily distinguished (fig. 14), but this becomes more difficult if both units are coloristically identical. In that case a separating frame has to be introduced which in turn can carry a minor decoration, for instance an inscription. Should the separating lines be, however, rather narrow and therefore without decoration, this form of composition will then resemble the structural or skeletal scheme described earlier (fig. 15).

In still another method to reduce the negative quality of the background (which also seems to have first appeared in ninth-century Samarra), the latter is filled with a design, but to differentiate pattern and foil, a plain white area of a non-structural character

surrounds the main design as a kind of protective border (fig. 4). This style was widely used for manuscript illuminations, especially for Korans where the separation of the stark, calligraphic renditions of the divine word from the more playful ornamentation by human hand was eminently appropriate. As this white *cordon sanitaire* follows gracefully the uneven and curvaceous flow of the unequal heights of Arabic letters, it usually has a cloudlike appearance which adds another decorative quality (fig. 16). This led Iranian historians of the art of calligraphy to call this decorative method "abri," after the Persian word *abr*—meaning cloud. The method was, however, also used for the central designs of quadrupeds or birds on pottery.⁸ The origin of this decorative principle has not been established, but an early use may have been on prehistoric pottery.

While in the examples so far given the main and filling patterns were on the same level, that is to say they were two-dimensional, it was also possible to have the formative configuration in relief and the complementary motifs sunken, which meant a three-dimensional solution of the problem. This was, for instance, done in the case of inscribed tiles where the calligraphic writing of Koranic texts was regarded as the major pattern and therefore appeared in relief and in a dark color (usually cobalt blue), while the surrounding filling background design was on a lower level and in a softer color, particularly in evanescent gold luster (fig. 17). Iranian craftsmen often produced this combination of a major motif on a raised level and of a secondary filling pattern below it, when they decorated pottery vessels, both glazed and unglazed.⁹

Another more limited form of three-dimensional space-filling was provided by the superimposition of one motif on top of another. For instance, large arabesques on thirteenth century Persian tiles and sixteenth century carpets were overlaid by dotted circles or small arabesques. Sixteenth-century carpets show leaves with lion masks or smaller flowers on them.¹⁰ There are many similar instances where such

⁵ The latest comments on a Turkish derivation are to be found in E. Kühnel, "Türkische und islamische Kunst," *Halil Edhem Hâtıra Kitabı*. (Ankara, 1947), pp. 201–209; R. Ettinghausen, "Turkish Elements on Silver Objects of the Seljuk Period of Iran," *Communications Presented to the Congress, International Congress of Turkish Arts, Ankara, 1959*. (Ankara, 1961), pp. 128–133.

⁶ For Egyptian and Syrian models see Herzfeld, *Der Wand-schmuck der Bauten von Samarra und seine Ornamentik*. (Berlin, 1923), pp. 10–12; for derivation from the arts of the late Roman and Migration periods see (*Katalog*) *Sammlung E. and M. Kofler-Trüniger*. (Luzern, Kunsthau Zürich, 1964), No. 600, pl. 45; Katherine Brown, "A new Dimension to the Problem of the Origin of the First Style of Samarra" (unpublished).

⁷ A. D. B. Bivar, *Catalogue of the Western Asiatic Seals in the British Museum. Stamp Seals II: The Sassanian Dynasty*. (London, 1969), "Shapes," pl. II, after which our figure 11 has been reproduced.

⁸ "Abri Painting," in *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet*, ed. Myriam Rosen-Ayalon, (Jerusalem, 1977), pp. 345–356.

⁹ Arthur Lane, *Early Islamic Pottery*. (London, 1947), pls. 42–44; Charles K. Wilkinson, *Iranian Ceramics*. (Asia House). (New York, 1963), pls. 43 and 44.

¹⁰ For tiles see M. S. Dimand, "A Gift of Islamic Pottery," *Bulletin Metropolitan Museum of Art* 36 (1941) p. 72, fig. 2; for carpets see Kurt Erdmann, *Der orientalische Knüpfteppich*. (Tübingen, 1960), pls. 50, 51, 63, 68, 79, 80, 83, 88, 89. In the so-called "Portuguese Carpets" there are six irregular medallions one on top of the other, see Charles Grant Ellis, "The Portuguese Carpets of Gujarat," *Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, ed. R. Ettinghausen. (New York, 1972), pp. 267–289 with references to earlier publications.

double layers are created to make the available space richly and compactly decorated.

So far we had only the interplay of two complementary systems, the major constituent configuration and the filling patterns. There are still other possibilities, as evident from the so-called "vase carpets" which were organized by a staggered system of three different but equally important floral scrolls forming a lattice pattern composed of overlapping ogives. What remains of empty spaces between the large flowers is filled with smaller floral designs (fig. 18). Once again another method has been evolved to gracefully fill a given space.

The maximum achievement in the taming of the horror vacui in a three-dimensional manner was reached in certain sixteenth-century Persian carpets, for instance in one in the Musée des Gobelins in Paris. The decorative areas around a constituent configuration, in this case a large medallion with appended cartouches and escutcheons, was placed over successive layers of no less than four highly varied scroll systems (fig. 19). Each of these four levels has been isolated so that we can now grasp the bewildering interplay of the different ornamental schemes (figs. 20–23).¹¹ It is striking to see in a reconstruction on the drafting board how two of these systems interlock with each other to fill the space more densely; it becomes astonishing to see three of them overlap each other. It is truly remarkable when we see four forming the ground pattern on which the large medallion is placed (fig. 24). However, the design is now so intricate that the eye can no longer follow the patterns, but perceives the whole as a lacy ground cover, like the combination of many plants and vines, forming a highly varied herbaceous border in a garden. This lush interaction of four levels with a fifth—the superimposed medallion with its appendices—represents, however, the end of the line and nothing was developed to exceed this. Indeed, soon after this achievement, the artistic decline in the arts of Iran and the whole Near East began.

If we look for parallels for this *tour-de-force* of superimposed themes, only polyphonic music can match it if such a comparison may be mentioned by a non-musicologist. There were commonly four to five voices, but the number could be increased to twelve and in rare cases even to forty or more. This complex interplay occurred at just about the same time the carpet from the Musée des Gobelins was created (figs. 19–24). But here, too, the ear could no longer take in the wealth of sound and the opera with the dominant single voice or duet took over.

There remains one final question to be asked: Why were Islamic artists obsessed by the horror vacui? Historical or literary sources from the Muslim world can hardly be expected to give an answer, as this civilization never developed a critical system of artistic evaluation and there are only occasional references to or descriptions of buildings and objects. It is true in more recent years Near Eastern scholars have become interested in questions of Muslim aesthetics, especially the religious implications, and they have lectured and written about it.¹² Their suggested explanations of the phenomena have, however, not yet been too convincing, especially to the non-Muslim Western mind, but it should be admitted there exists the possibility of religious connotations, although they still appear to be rather vague.

In trying to find a solution to this issue, it is important to realize that although the density of Islamic design is an aesthetic quality, it is of such an excessive and universal nature that it presupposes a special state of mind or reflects social conditions which insisted on this quality throughout the Muslim world. A possible clue to this problem might therefore be found in other fields which show the same unusual attitude, but where an explanation would be more readily available.

Taking this approach the answer seems to lie primarily in the field of psychology and social behavior as demonstrated by three specific situations. First, it should be pointed out that the artistic objects here presented were all products of urban workshops. It has always been a feature of Near Eastern cities up to the modern times, that they were densely populated with tightly packed residential units, just as were the shops in the bazaars. It can therefore be assumed that people accepted this crowded condition and were in any case accustomed to live in close quarters. The compactness of living and working quarters was apparently not regarded as a deficiency to be deleted but rather as a way of life, probably increasing the sense of community and security, and creating the precondition for fulfilling the basic requirements of religious, educational, and social experiences. What was desirable only was that in this close existence the individual had to be in a personally harmonious and well-organized setting, a fact which is apparent in the well-planned and functionally arranged houses. On the other hand the world outside the protective city walls was empty, consisting of deserts, sparse plains or treeless mountains, where one encountered only dust, robbers, wild animals and jinns and was further-

¹¹ For this admirable analysis, see Charles Grant Ellis, "The System of Multiple Levels," *A Survey of Persian Art*, vol. XIV: *New Studies 1938–1960. Proceedings of the IVth International Congress of Iranian Art and Archaeology*. Part A. April 24–May 3, 1960. (Tehran, London, New York and Tokyo), p. 3172, figs. 1173–1199, pl. 1115.

¹² Especially Seyyed Hossein Nasr and N. Ardalan and Laleh Bakhtiar, *The Sense of Unity: The Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture*. Foreword by Seyyed Hossein Nasr. [Chicago, 1973]. The series of lectures on "Islam and the Arts" given by Professor Nasr at New York University has not yet been published.

more plagued by thirst and the fatigue of long-range caravan travel. Whatever these empty areas were, they were mostly arid, fearful, and hostile to man and even the simple villages of uneducated peasants gave no relief from this aspect. So these useless, unattractive regions between the urban areas were entered only by sheer necessity and otherwise avoided. Closeness reflected therefore the pleasantness of a rewarding existence while emptiness was associated with conditions antagonistic to civilization and the good life.

Empty spaces between towns and cities formed also a strong contrast to other areas: the lush oases as well as the richly planted gardens, usually placed outside the urban walls; these had copious water resources available and therefore were filled with vegetation; they stood for enjoyable, refreshing and life-supporting elements. The luxurious growth of ornaments in art, often themselves based on vegetal models, had therefore yet another specific and very positive association. As gardens were also regarded as reflections of paradise on earth, the mental connection was still more suggestive.

Our third hypothetical explanation is based on the tendency in the Islamic world toward exaggeration and lavishness, not outwardly in the streets, but in personal relations. One is extremely subservient toward one's superior, one offers overwhelming hospitality to one's guests, one uses exaggerated metaphors and hyperboles and does so copiously, not only in poetry but also in official documents. Polite exaggeration reigns even in everyday conversations. This

condition is so universal that anyone familiar with Muslim life and literature would be able to give abundant instances. Here one specific example is offered from daily life. When friends are entertained, and I am not speaking here of the court or high officials but of members of the upper-middle class, the vast number of offered dishes will completely cover a large table so that one is barely aware of the tablecloth. The delicious repast is presented in such profusion that at the end of the meal, one hardly notices that something has been eaten. Only in this fashion, is it thought, are friends properly honored. Prosaic as this example might seem, it is, however, not too different from the way an object is to be "honored" by its decoration.

To sum up: It is probably no exaggeration to say that the three above mentioned social and mental reactions are in their basic character paralleled by the lavish ornamental production with its horror vacui. One may therefore very well ask whether there is not an underlying connection which made such abundance of decoration in art possible and even desirable. On the other hand the innate artistic sense of the artisans used all their ingenuity in skillfully organizing the material. They did so in an orderly rational way, in the same manner which led to the profusely planted but very formal Near Eastern garden (especially the Iranian one) which spurned any irregularity or whimsy. It is just this presentation of precise, dense but spirited regularity which gives Islamic art its unique character.



FIG. 1. Roman marble pilaster. Rogers Fund, 10.210.28.



FIG. 2. Wooden panel, probably Egypt, seventh-eighth century. Gift of V. Everit Macy, 30.112.5.



FIG. 4. Ceramic bowl, greater Iran, probably Samarkand, late tenth-early eleventh century, excavated in Nishapur. Rogers Fund, 40.170.15.



FIG. 3. Ceramic plate, Iran, probably Nishapur, tenth century. Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 67.178.2.

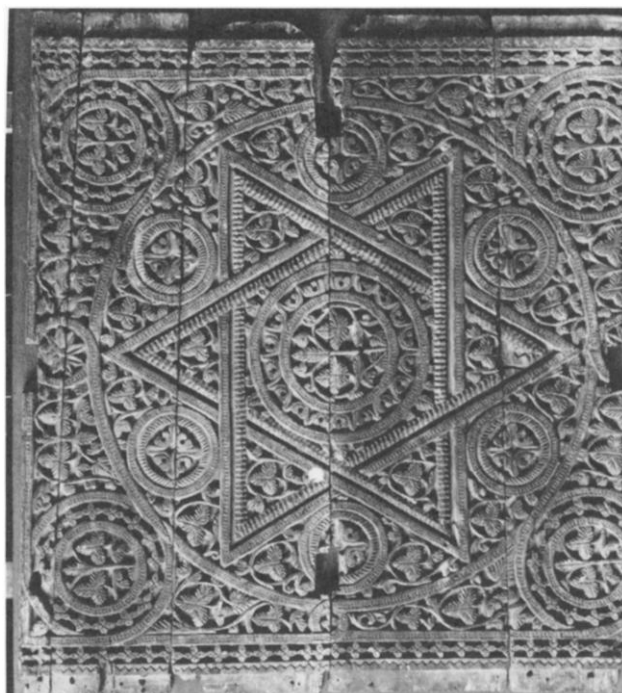


FIG. 5. Wooden panel, Iraq, ninth century. Rogers Fund, 33.41.1 a-e

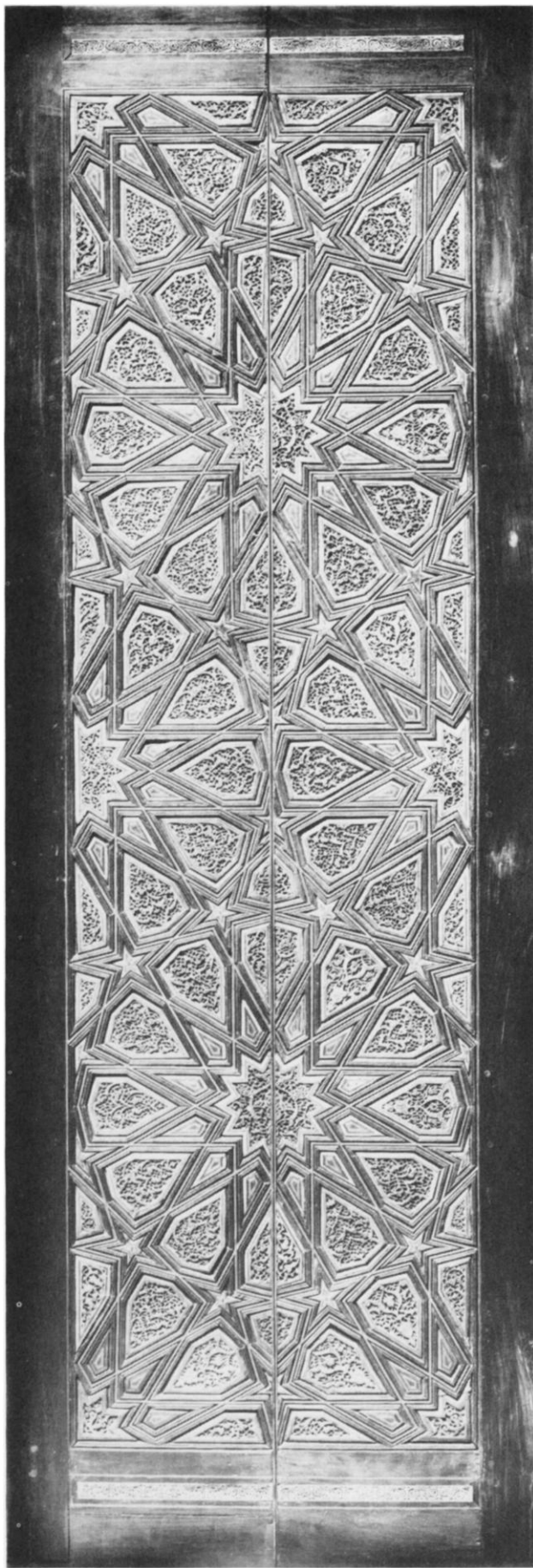


FIG. 6. Wooden doors, inlaid with ivory, Egypt, probably first half of the fourteenth century. Bequest of Edward C. Moore, 91.1.2064

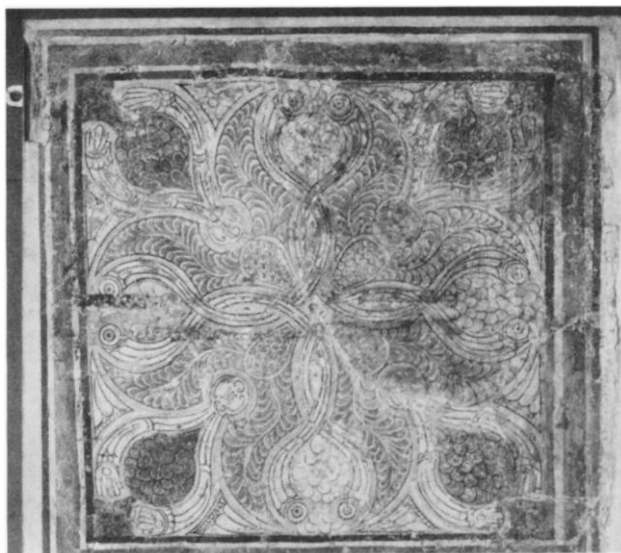


FIG. 7. Painted stucco panel, Iran, ninth century, excavated in Nishapur. Rogers Fund, 40.170.176



FIG. 8. Brass cup, inlaid with silver, Iran, second half of the fourteenth century. Bequest of Edward C. Moore, 91.1.559



FIG. 9. Mosaic from Djebel Oust after *La Mosaïque Greco-Romaine*, Paris, 1963, fig. 5

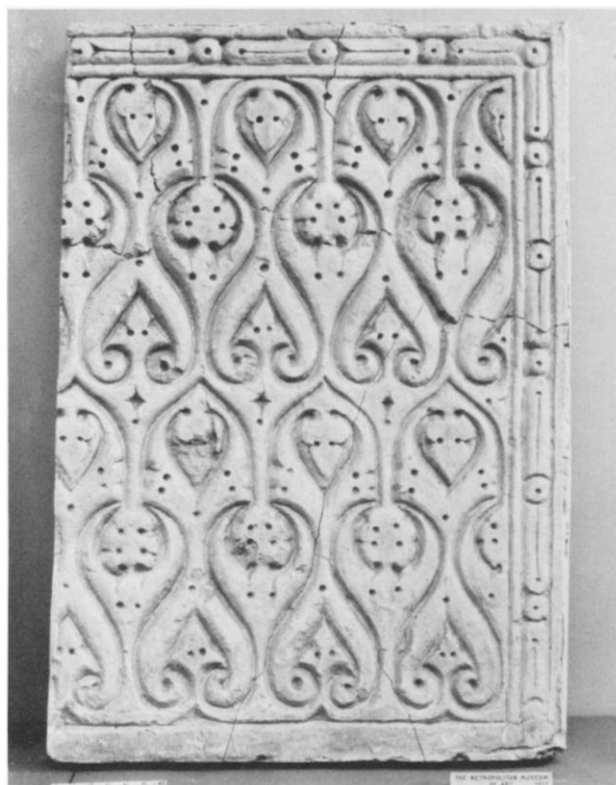


FIG. 10. Stucco cast, Samarra, Iraq, ninth century. Gift of Edward C. Moore, Jr., 27.229.3

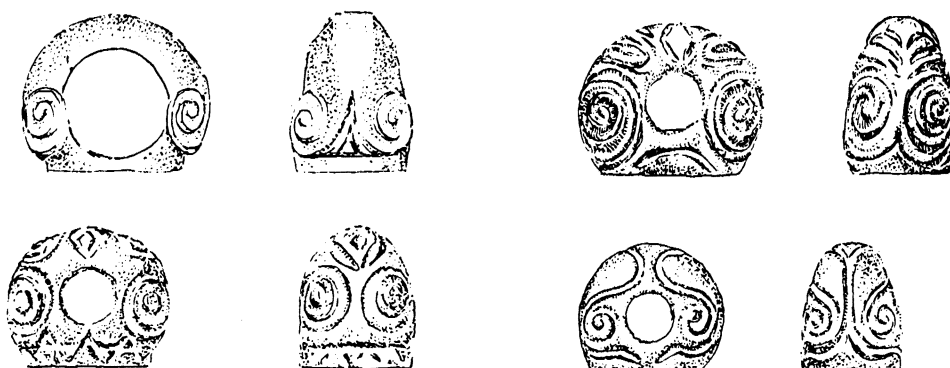


FIG. 11. Typical decorations on Sasanian seal rings in the British Museum. After A. D. H. Bivar, *Catalogue of Stamp Seals. The Sassanian Dynasty*, pl. Shapes II.



FIG. 12. Silver vessel, Iran, eighth century. Gustavus A. Pfeiffer Fund, 69.224



FIG. 13. Alabaster capital, Iraq, first half of the ninth century. Samuel D. Lee Fund, 36.68.1



FIG. 14. Tile panel, Iran, probably Nishapur, late thirteenth-fourteenth century. Rogers Fund, 37.04.26,27

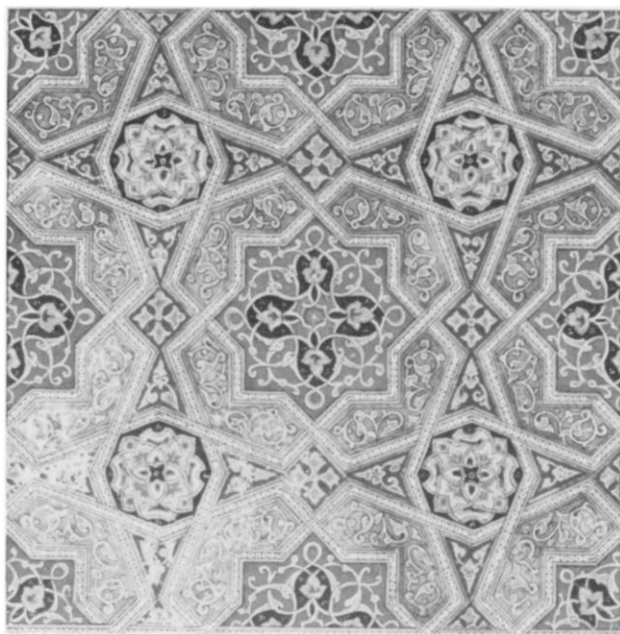


FIG. 15. Detail, Koran leaf, Iran, early fourteenth century. Rogers Fund, 50.12

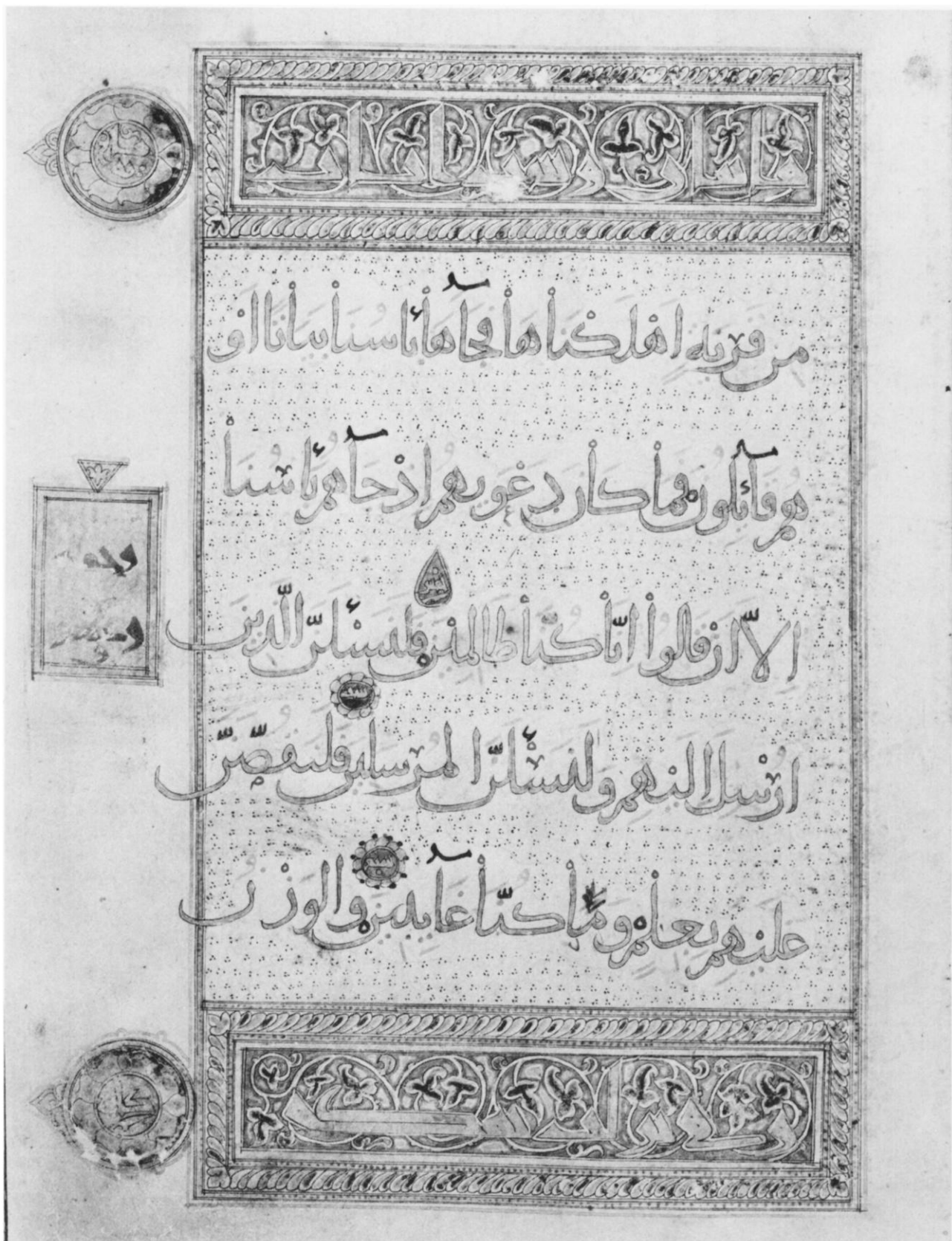


FIG. 16. Koran leaf, Iran, late twelfth-early thirteenth century.
Rogers Fund, 40.164.4b



FIG. 17. Tile, Iran, Kashan, first half of the thirteenth century. Rogers Fund, 12.34.3



FIG. 18. "Vase carpet," Iran, first half of the seventeenth century. Rogers Fund, 43.121.3

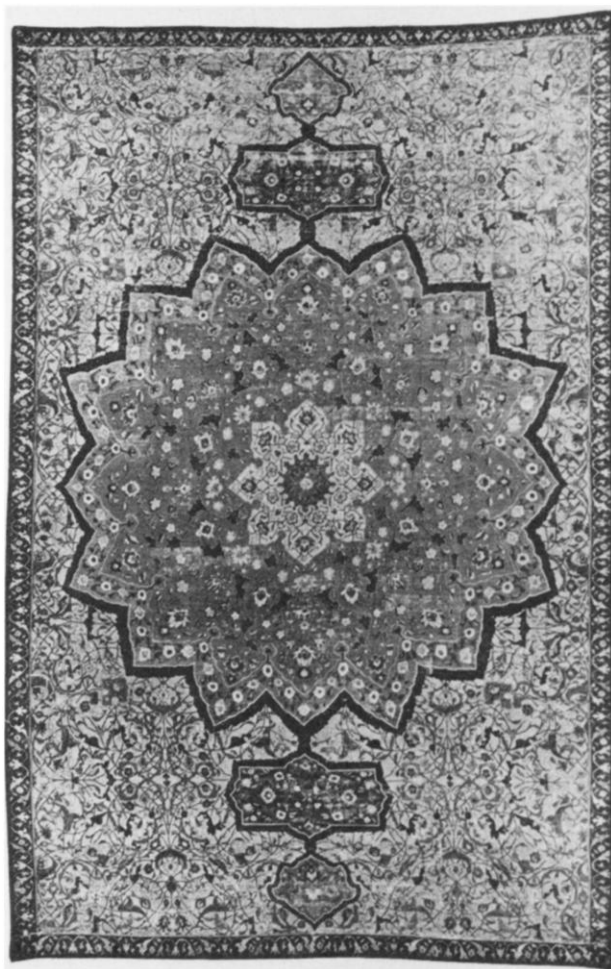


FIG. 19. Medallion Carpet, Iran, late sixteenth century, Musée des Gobelins, Paris.

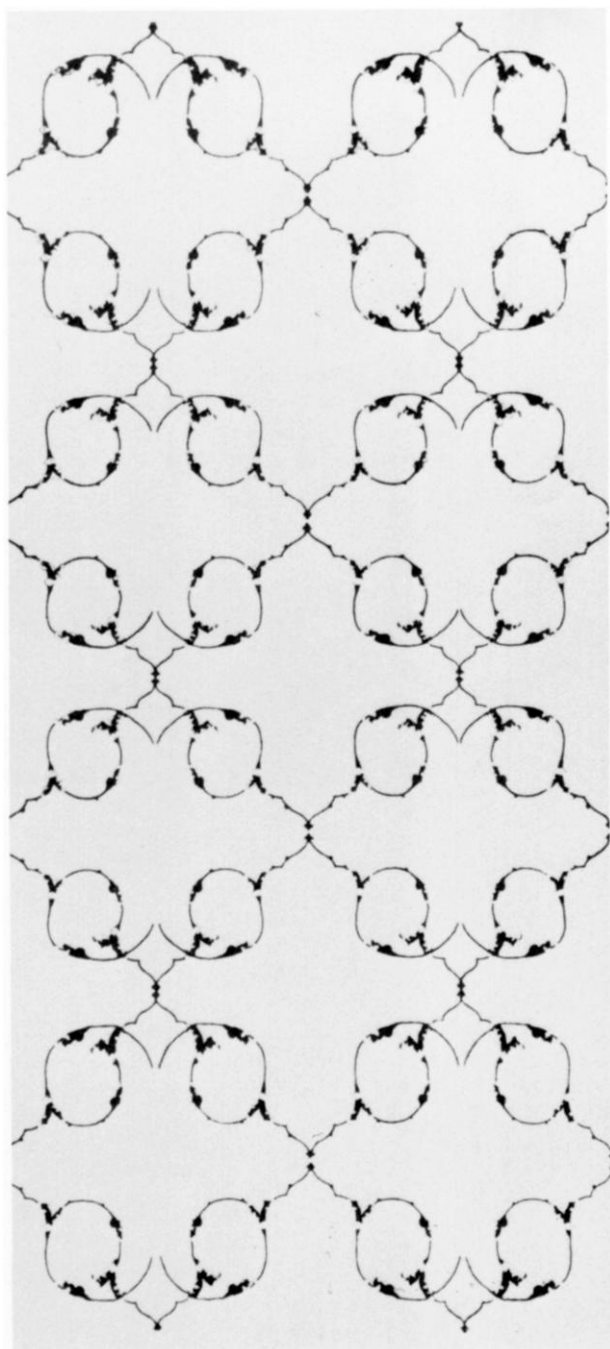


FIG. 20. Design Element, Medallion Carpet, Iran, late sixteenth century, Musée des Gobelins, Paris (Drawn by C. G. Ellis).

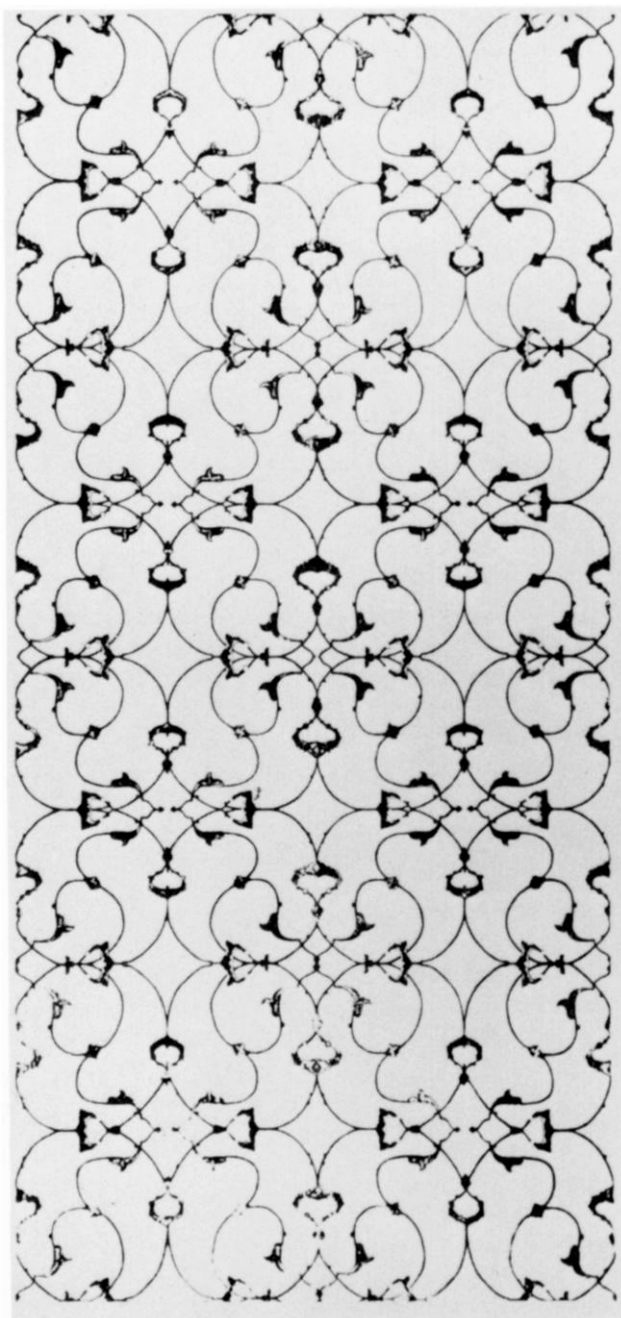


FIG. 21. Design Element, Medallion Carpet, Iran, late sixteenth century, Musée des Gobelins, Paris (Drawn by C. G. Ellis).

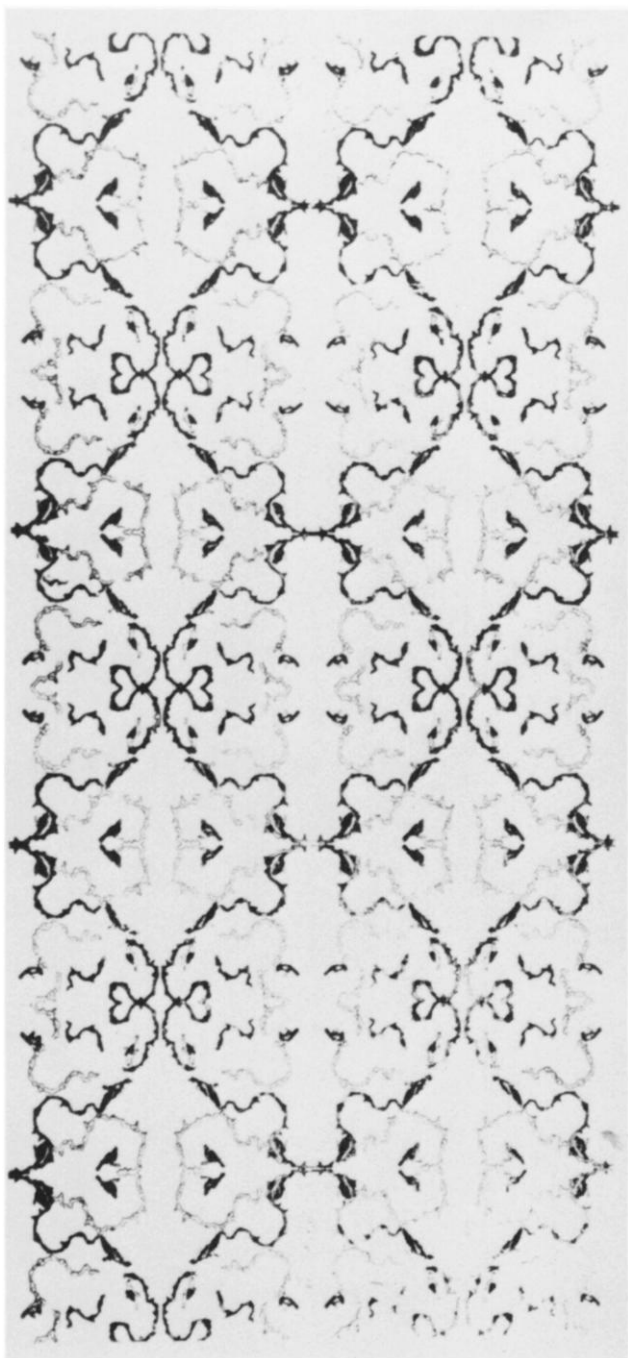


FIG. 22. Design Element, Medallion Carpet, Iran, late sixteenth century, Musée des Gobelins, Paris (Drawn by C. G. Ellis).

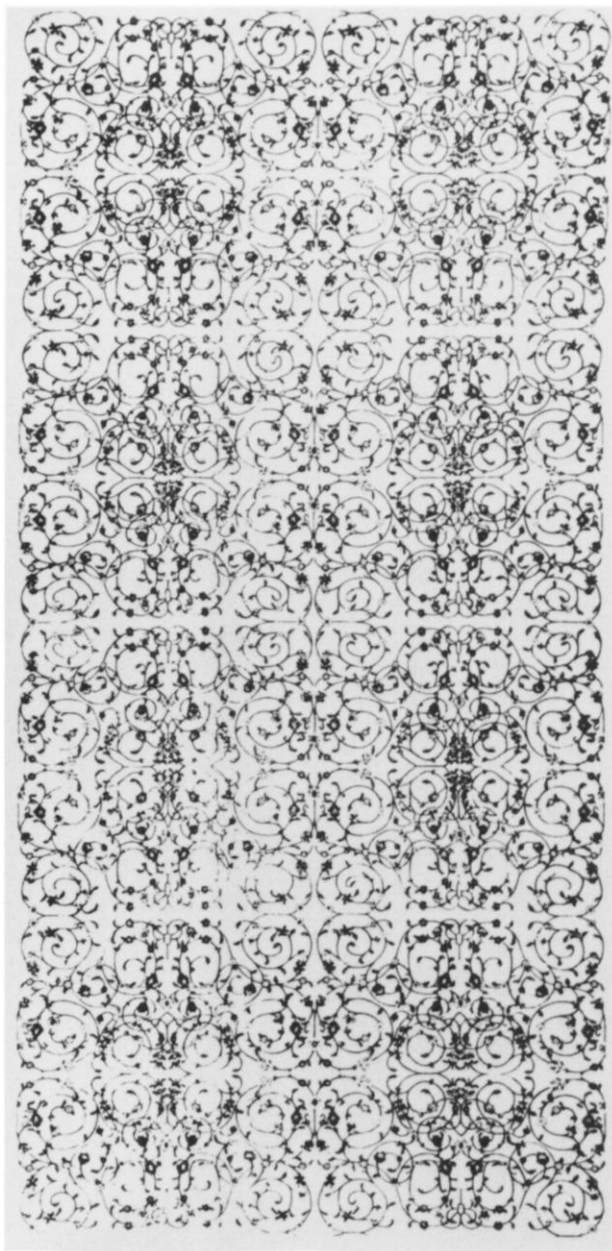


FIG. 23. Design Element, Medallion Carpet, Iran, late sixteenth century, Musée des Gobelins, Paris (Drawn by C. G. Ellis).

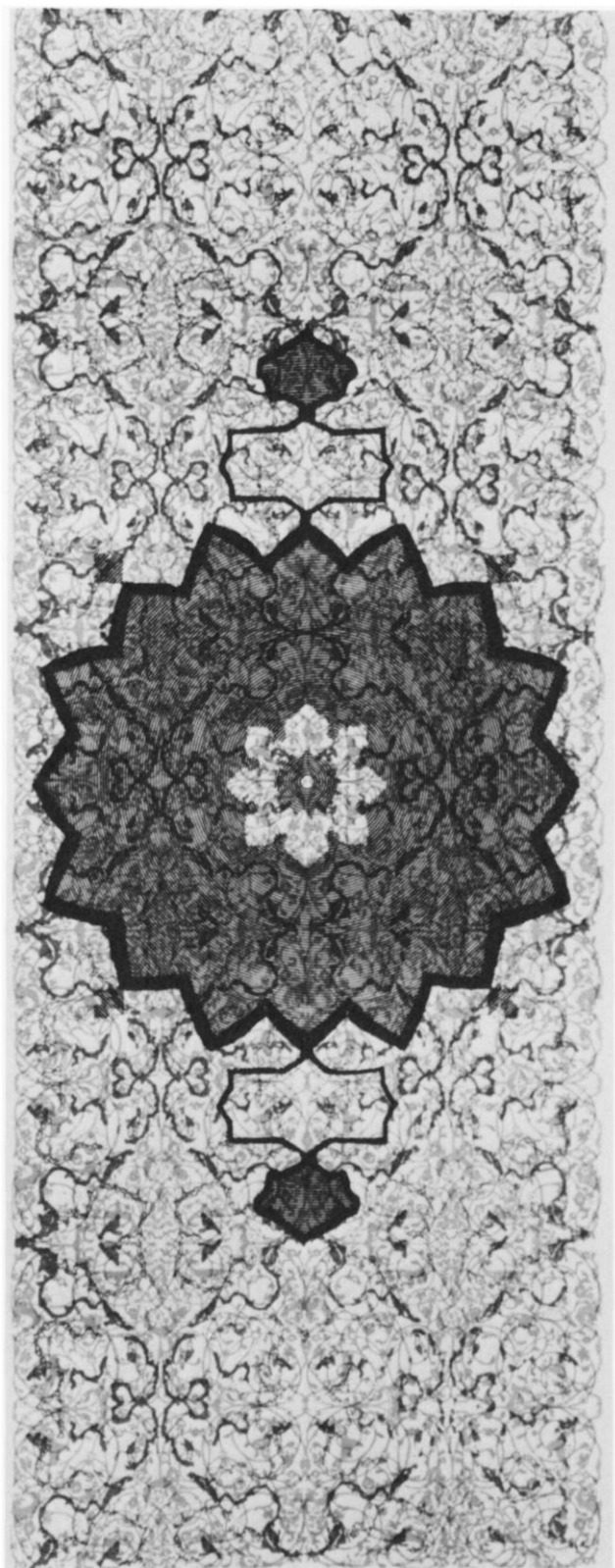


FIG. 24. Design Element, Medallion Carpet, Iran, late sixteenth century, Musée des Gobelins, Paris (Drawn by C. G. Ellis).