Mehmed A. AKŠAMIJA

**ANALIZA KORIŠTENJA TERMINOLOŠKIH ODREDNICA
„UMJETNOST ISLAMA“ I „ISLAMSKA UMJETNOST“**

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF TERMINOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS
„ART OF ISLAM“ AND „ISLAMIC ART“**

ILUSTRACIJA ~ Detalj „Natjecanja grčkih i kineskih slikara“; dupla stranica iz rukopisa *Masnavi-i Ma'navi* („Duhovni parovi“) Džalāl al-Dīn Rūmija (Mevlana) (um. 1273.); Tabriz (Perzija) 1530. Rekonstrukcija urađena 2020. godine prema originalu iz Zbirke Bruschettni, Muzej *Aga Khan*.

ILLUSTRATION ~ Detail of „Greek and Chinese Painter Competition“; double page from a manuscript of the *Masnavi-i Ma'navi* („The Spiritual Couplets“) by Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (Maulana) (d. 1273); Tabriz (Persia) 1530. Reconstruction done in 2020 according to the original from the *Bruschettni Collection* at the *Aga Khan Museum*.

Prof. Dr. Mehmed A. Akšamija je teoretičar i kreativac. Redovni je profesor na Akademiji likovnih umjetnosti Univerziteta u Sarajevu. Suraduje sa Univerzitetima u Pragu, Bazelu i Gracu. Redovni je član BANU – *Bošnjačke akademije nauka i umjetnosti* (Sarajevo, Bosna) i EASA / ASAE – *Academia Scientiarum et Artium Europaea* (Salzburg, Austrija). Bio je dekan Akademije likovnih umjetnosti Univerziteta u Sarajevu. Kao teoretičar iz oblasti teorije i historije umjetnosti iskazao se zapaženim objavljivanjem naučnih i stručnih članaka, enciklopedijskih unosa, izvještaja i analiza, te više bilingvalnih monografija na bosanskom i engleskom jeziku (*Monografija arhivografije*, *LETTER • PISMO • BRIEF • LIST • RISĀLAH*, *Prozori*, *Stop negaciji genocida i holokausta* (ur.), *Život i djelo akademika Muhameda Filipovića*, *Historiografija arhitektonskog kompleksa gradačake utvrde* [koautor sa Lemjom Chabbouh Akšamija] ...). Dizajnirao je reprezentativno bibliofilsko izdanje *Prijeвода Kur'ana na bosanski jezik*, uredio veći obim publikacija iz oblasti teorije i historije umjetnosti (fotografije, arhitekture...), a jedan je od urednika časopisa *Glasnik* Bošnjačke akademije nauka i umjetnosti.

Prof. Dr. Mehmed A. Akšamija is a theoretician and artist. He is a full professor at the Academy of Fine Arts, University of Sarajevo. Collaborates with the Universities of Prague, Basel and Graz. He is a Regular member of BANU – *Bosniak Academy of Sciences and Arts* (Sarajevo, Bosnia) and EASA/ASAE – *Academia Scientiarum et Artium Europaea* (Salzburg, Austria). He was the dean of the Academy of Fine Arts at the University of Sarajevo. As a theorist in the field of theory and history of art, he proved himself by notable publication of scientific and experts articles, encyclopedia entries, reports, and analysis, and several bilingual monographs in Bosnian and English (*Monograph of Archivography*, *LETTER • PISMO • BRIEF • LIST • RISĀLAH*, *Windows*, *Stop Genocide and Holocaust Denial* (ed.), *The Life and Work of Academician Muhamed Filipović*, *Historiography of the architectural complex of the Gradačac fortress* [co-author with Lemja Chabbouh Akšamija], and so forth). He designed representatively a bibliophilic edition of the *Translation of the Qur'an into the Bosnian language*, edited a larger volume of publications in the field of art theory and history (photography and architecture), and is one of the editors of the journal *Glasnik* of the Bosnian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

Abstract

This paper is a distinctive analysis of the phenomenological value of terms „Islamic art“ or „art of Islam“, which attempts to clarify the common treatment of such terms found in both Western and Muslim sources and which are inappropriate and ungrounded formulations from the viewpoint of traditional Islamic civilizational principles. By focusing on the cognitive and precognitive approach to the productive-reflective representation of elements of visual art within this topic (i.e. by offering a possible solution) this study „comes into conflict“ with stereotypes that contemporary theories and history of art in the spirit of Western understanding of civilization, which can apply the aspect of globalization to anything it considers within the scope of its scientific area and approaches any civilizational achievement in the same way, reducing it to classic Western postulates.

In the explanation of this phenomenon (i.e. a prominent rather than appropriate need to reduce all forms of creative activity to common denominators whereby some lose and others win) the study introduces corresponding Latin and Arabic terms in parallel, and their possible lexical connections through theoretical tenets of Western civilizational circle to come closer to distinctive characteristics of Eastern/Islamic civilizational circle (*homo faber*, *homo islamicus*, *homo fannān*, and so forth). It is interesting and totally distinctive that it is by approaching this terminology both from the Eastern and from the opposite, Western side through a methodological process one comes to the conclusion that these are diametrically opposite phenomena, which the ultimate Western definition names „art“, while Islamic denotation is explained and defined by means of terms grounded in the sacral and profane productive-reflective discourse of *homo islamicus's* action-design/*qadar*, respectively *qadar/ṣināʿat*. Thus, we will conclude that understanding and the essential meaning of the concept of „art“ in Islamic civilization from the one hand and in other civilizations on the other are not and cannot be the same. Also, many of the issues and dogmas raised earlier are mentioned and some are addressed in this paper.

Key words: *Islamic art, art of Islam, homo islamicus, homo fannān, skill of action/arranging/designing, design, qadar/ṣināʿat, cognitive and precognitive productive-reflective representation, cognitive assimilation, precognitive assimilation.*

Foreword and acknowledgments

The writing of this text was driven by several stimuli, and since they determined its content and form, it seems useful to briefly explain them. The first stimulus resulted from the observation of the use of current terms, i.e. the lexical units in the terms „Islamic art“ and „art of Islam“ in widely available literature by authors of both Western and Eastern provenance. Unfortunately, there are almost no publicized or specialized scientific studies on the meaning, rationale and implementation of such terms, and the same is true of general reviews in book form where this issue could be discussed as related to its traditional meaning pursuant to Islamic teaching, without reducing it to global postulates conditioned by persistent centuries-long captivity.¹ So there is a real need for an accurate theoretical framework with more precise terminology. The second stimulus was determined by the treatment of the huge span of time and space of the presence of „Islamic art“ or „art of Islam“, the duration of which permanently tends to be presented as non-unified. I believe that from the experimental, phenomenological and theoretical standpoints there are completely valid reasons to consider this huge area as a single entity in the analysis of its establishment, growth and spread, although there have been significant regional or temporal changes, as well as gradual alterations related to the orientation of content within visual art. Without taking into account the views of some theoreticians that one should at any price „employ tools that by no means belong to the *a fortiori* cultural region under observation“², the observation of the part of phenomenology related to the ornamental (abstract) and the profane (illustrated manuscript forms) within a historical framework that is also aesthetic and political led to the conclusion that this form of human creative activity is materially and creatively defined by distinctive *design/action*, which are decidedly Islamic.

¹ It seemed that the appearance of the collection of essays by Oleg Grabar entitled *The Practice of Islamic Art History* in the late 1970s finally attempted to provide an answer to the given issue of used lexical units, and particularly to the possible explanation of the individual meanings of the words „Islam“ as a noun and „Islamic“ as an adjective. Unfortunately, it failed to provide a possible interpretation of the word „art“ in the context of the conservative or traditional understanding of „Islam“. Thus, the lexical unit „Islamic art“ was preserved in this unique theoretical-historical review as well, as an analytical product which ultimately has the defined mission not to pertain to the „art of any particular religion“. Indirect interpretation of such a view leads to the possible conclusion that it refers to a „simple cultural covering that affects countries which became Muslim through religion or civilization“, i.e. to a „culture or civilization where most citizens, or at least the governing element, profess the faith of Islam“. However, he also notes that even „Islamic“ used in this way becomes meaningless as an adjective „which identifies a cultural and artistic moment or has to be modified by a series of additional adjectives such as ‘early’, ‘late’, ‘classical’, ‘Iranian’, ‘Arabic’, ‘Turkish’ or anything else that scientific wit can think of“. Still, we were not provided with an accurate interpretation or definition of the lexical unit „art of Islam“ and the already noted meaning of the word „art“ in the context of apprehending „Islam“.

Oleg Grabar: *The Practice of Islamic Art History*; Yale University Press, New Haven and London 1978, pp. 1-4.

² Valerie Gonzalez: *Beauty and Islam – Aesthetics in Islamic Art and Architecture*; Institute of Ismaili Studies, I.B.Tauris Publishers, London and New York 2001, p. 2.

The third stimulus was caused by years-long studies and my personal practice within what has been described as „Islamic art“ or „art of Islam“. Continuous work helped devise „a new path“ of defining a series of ideas, hypotheses and interpretations which are both a conservative and traditional *reflection* of the conditions for the constitution of distinctive forms of the **productive-reflective discourse** of the Islamic concept of civilization. Elaboration proceeded within a unique and higher stratified theoretical framework and the rationale for defining a possible routing of the appropriate terms, context and audiences. It also respected the freedom and human dignity of persons who were, by their own choice, *guided* to the characteristic paths of both sacral and profane productive-reflected disposition (in the above described context). Naturally, the process of consideration of the entire issue stemmed from multiple different, from multiple and diverse perspectives of pluralistic and polyvalent practice of visual art. Many of the ideas and offered solutions that follow are possibly initial and insufficiently stable values. Still, *their fragility* and incompleteness can make them more useful than „ready-made studies and solved problems“ in the historical world which, within global viewing, defined a given (not any) theory of the „world of art“ and a „work of art“ created within such a mission. Such an explicitly narcissist attitude inevitably led to the view that one must necessarily adopt the idea that there is a single, sole and definite way of identifying context and terms, supposedly due to reasonable justification, where a „work of art“ should be positioned in comparison to a theoretical construction modelled by the adherents of modern enlightenment. Besides, it seems important to note that the *fragility* and incompleteness present in this study can still point far more accurately to the blurry limits of contemporary knowledge, draw attention to personalities whose spirituality and practical design/actions positioned them in the foundations of productive-reflective discourse as an integral part of Islamic civilizational heritage, explain the form of **cognitive and precognitive productive-reflective representation** of evidently complex elements of visual art, and offer the possibility for others to criticize, to challenge or to improve their implications.

The described stimuli truly shaped the character of this study. It is not a manual of „Islamic art“ or the „art of Islam“ and does not strive to deal with material about all available artefacts and all issues. It consists of eleven essays mutually connected by a question articulated in the introductory essay: **why is the use of the terminological determinants „Islamic art“ and „art of Islam“ unfounded and contrary to a conservative and traditional understanding of Islam?** Somewhat extensive notes provide necessary elucidations and explanations, while in the list of cited literature one can find references that seem necessary for the critical presentation of facts. I have attempted to discuss and propose various intellectual, functional, aesthetic, theoretical and formal interests which seemed undoubtedly to serve to define the form of cognitive and precognitive productive-reflective representation of complex elements of visual art under the auspices of the civilizational achievements of Islam. In some instances I simply introduced additional ideas and observations of both conservative and profane discourse, which were sometimes unprovable – perhaps even irrefutable – claims. Moreover, it seemed to me that an issue such as analyzing and possibly defining the sacral and profane climate for creative design/actions over almost fifteen centuries cannot be solved

simply by continuous, monographic research into individual sources and corresponding artefacts. I am convinced that, among other things, it is necessary to place them in the general cultural context, as well as in the context of **their own complex, spiritual emergence, development and duration**, together with the role of characteristic initiation in the formation of productive-reflective representation of elements of visual art of both **cognitive** (profane) and **precognitive** (sacral) **assimilation**. To better understand this conception as a whole I included the issue within the existing terminological context of the general theory of art that effectively challenges these terms, which have *fossilized as scientific orthodoxy* among many historians and theoreticians of art, and thus attempted to indicate whether the specific views of conservative and traditional orientation may be considered reasonable or unreasonable (or, perhaps paradoxically, both simultaneously). I also analytically observed individual views/postulates originally founded in the general theory of art and contrary to the general area of the foundations of Islamic history of creative design/action. In the attempt to still introduce a *breath of fresh air* and a certain *light* into a higher-quality understanding of aesthetic analysis and the Islamic distinctiveness of design/action. I also used some Western tools for this area, accompanied with the explanation of meanings that are founded on traditional Islamic bases. One of the most significant results of assembling the character of Islamic creative actions and echoes of Western methodology and terminology is that „Islamic art“ is studied within the main body of contemporary intellectual and cultural discourse, respecting the present structure of the corresponding traditional Islamic terminology and methodological indications of its use. I am convinced that it is a potential process which is nothing else but the rehabilitation of Islamic principles of creative actions in the scientific approach to current issues. I hope that Islamic theologians, historians and theoreticians of other creative traditions will find interest in what follows and, most of all, I assume that the offered hypotheses and conclusions will be considered and challenged.

It would certainly be immodest and unwise to claim that this study reveals a singular profound theory or truth. My desire is to be provocative so that others can find more substantial and justified solutions. This work presents a textual structure of ideas which could answer, at least in my opinion, some fundamental questions within the understanding of the described topic. It is also an attempt to present the spiritual, active, sometimes even aesthetic, fascination in the biological and psychological disposition of man, which I define as ***homo fannān*** or, for the sake of a more popular (broader) understanding, ***homo islamicus***.

If, at times, one gets the impression that I did not sufficiently explain or argue some postulates, the reason may be, on the one hand, that too little (or, more aptly), no attention is paid in general to the theoretical principles of this area, which I used to explicate the situation (the impossibility of a critical review) and, on the other hand, the idea that any form of *the design/actions of homo islamicus* within the productive-reflective representation of elements of visual art of any assimilation should be grounded within properly defined epistemological boundaries of the conservative and traditional understanding of Islam. Only when these conditions have been fulfilled will it be possible to more accurately and thoroughly suggest forms of *new theoretical insights*.

The pages that follow also present a number of very thorough discussions of individual issues, as well as fairly specific considerations of the general issue of the technique illustrating the design/actions of our *homo islamicus*. The symbiosis of intellectual genres is dictated considerably by various dilemmas that are activated and significant deviations in our habitual understanding and information on the character, conditions and circumstances of the effectuation of creative activity. To avoid overloading the content with unnecessary geographic, historical or technical-technological details within the presented material, I assumed that readers have an approximate idea of the main cultural and political history of the civilisation of Islam, i.e. that these basic facts are available in a great number of other book editions.

Similarly to any essay dealing with interpretation which implies that histories of art are typically aspects of a broader history of ideas, this study also risks not satisfying those who read it with the aim of finding accurate explanations of otherwise well-known issues, or those who might expect a coherent theoretical system. This and other such material certainly cannot and should not replace the indispensable monographs in this area, since I would not wish to deny others' intellectual affinities, although I still feel that it is not yet possible to fully theoretically define all conceptual, constructive and aesthetic issues stemming from the **spiritual basis** for design/actions. Perhaps it is as it should be. Still, these eleven essays are based on the conviction that most insights and explanations provided in this study are only a working hypothesis, the constant subtlety of which is simply intellectual endeavor, and whose key criterion of value is not their possible *truth* but rather the degree to which they can help and perhaps direct work on further studies, even if the presented material ultimately perishes through rejection.

I owe gratitude for the genesis of these essays to many people, since hundreds of studies enriched my knowledge and supplemented the content of my library (some are provided in references), and allowed the emergence and evolutionary shaping of the presented theoretical elaboration. Friends and acquaintances have read this paper, and their sincere critique contributed much to its improvement in the last stage: Prof. Emeritus Ibrahim Krzović, Dr. Ugo Vlasisavljević, Dr. Ekrem Tucaković, Dr. Ahmet Alibašić and Mr. Abdullah Martin Drury. Naturally, none of them bears any responsibility for the pages that follow, although I must point out that their comments contributed more than I dare admit.

It is well known that all writings that use original Arabic terms face a serious problem of transliteration. To avoid possible confusion resulting from the provision of special markings attached to particular letters to letters and words (i.e. from introducing a system of diacritical marks for Arabic, Persian and Ottoman-Turkish words and names) I decided to simplify the distinctive phonetic value attached to an individual phoneme (speech sound) in the original language, so I used transliteration according to the methodology of the IJMES, transliteration system for Arabic, Persian and Ottoman-Turkish (*Ottoman Yazisi*). Indeed, I am convinced that such an approach will eliminate confusion of the unfamiliar, and lead to recognition by experts.

Finally, it is my special pleasure to express my gratitude, on behalf of the publisher, to those who helped in the publication of the essay. I am extremely grateful to all the institutions and individuals whose reproductions

of original artefacts became a constituent part of this non-profit bilingual edition. The list of institutions and individuals will be found in the captions below the illustrations. In addition, I would like to express my feeling of sincere debt to my wife Lemja and son Ammar, for their years-long understanding for my research in this area, which diminished my daily attention and fulfillment of my obligations to them. Finally, I also owe particular gratitude to Dr. Ibrahim Chabbouh, who, in the early 1990s, provided me with the primordial, traditional interpretation of the formation and maturation of those who have been concerned with ornamental creative design/actions i.e., *qadar/şinā'at**, as well as to academicians Mustafa Cerić and Asim Kurjak, for suggesting that I assemble the written essays and publish them in a single study.

ILLUSTRATION ~ Unknown author, *Homo islamicus Bosniacus* (Matrakçi/Matrakchī Naşūh bin Karagöz bin Abdullah al-Visokāwī al-Bosnāwī); 16th century. Reconstruction in 2020.

ILUSTRACIJA ~ Nepoznati autor, *Homo islamicus Bosniacus* (Matrakčija/Naşūh bin Karagöz bin Abdullah al-Visokāwī al-Bosnāwī); 16. stoljeće. Rekonstrukcija urađena 2020.

* See footnote 4.

في ارضهم و اخر فوجد دمه لما عهد
 حوته اكله غنود فسكن مرا و سلكه
 هليكم و احسنو لهم اوله و د فيه و
 اياه اياه ذلك كفو ايامهم اياه
 ارضهم كذا لك سر الله اياه الله
 في الدن امنوا انما الحمد و الميسر
 في دله ديس من عمل الشكر و جنة
 انهم فوجد الشكر ارا لو في بيده
 في الحمد و الميسر و تصد ك
 و الصلوة و هو الله مسنون و
 الرسل و اجد و افا ر تولكم
 سوا ليل الله الميسر ليل
 عدا الصلوة كذا
 في دله اياه او عدا الصلوة كذا

لدن امنوا
 اهدت به الى
 ناهي الدن
 الموف ج
 من عده ان
 هو د لفسو له
 لستوي له نصا
 انا اذ الم
 فهو من غممة
 اهدت بها احو

Die Stadt Meding. Fig. LXXXIII

Die San Meda Fig. LXXXIV

همتا و لستوي و جنة عدا

Introduction

When analyzing what is termed „Islamic art“ or „art of Islam“ Western sources mostly imply the *artistry of human doing*³ which was initiated in the 7th century between two mountain ranges in the region of Hejaz (ar. *Al-Ḥijāz*), in a sand valley around 277 meters above the sea level, in the western part of the Arabic Peninsula. Followers of this disposition further expanded and cultivated themselves in the area of the Middle East, North Africa, Anatolia, the Iberian Peninsula, Central and South Asia, and the Far East. Somewhat later, between the 13th and 14th centuries, under Ottoman influence, the form of **cognitive and precognitive productive-reflective representation of elements of visual art** also found its home and fructified in the area of the historical and geographic region of Southeast Europe. It seems essential to point out, at the very beginning of this study, that within Islamic civilization, the productive-reflective **arranging/designing/action**, or **qadar/actions**, respectively **qadar/ṣināʿat**⁴ refers to the productive, creative activity focused on optimizing the development of reflective abilities in a person who, in line with his/her own disposition, performs certain creative actions and discovers the inner structure and distinctiveness of the Islamic spiritual world. In doing so, they trigger developmental patterns and characteristics of the evolution of reflection both while providing a positive emotional attitude and after having finished such activities.

³ The term *doing*, i.e. do, refers to what is being done in reality; to the achieved particular character and effect of an anticipated kind of work.

⁴ When it comes to a specific and concrete usage of the term **qadar** and **action creativity** (ar. **ṣināʿat**), from which was forged the Bosnian word "zanat" (eng. **craft**), the situation is atypical but it, nevertheless, comes from what the traditional Islamic theology and philosophy offer us. Namely, in the Islamic theology and philosophy the term **qadā** (**decree** or **determination** or **judgment** which alludes to the idea of **qāḍī**, i.e., **judge**) and the term **qadar** (**a precise order of things** or **harmony**, **that is, design**) represent one of six fundamental tenants of Islamic faith. The **qadā** signifies **God's Decree** as an absolute **Will of God**, while the term **qadar** signifies **God's omnipotent** power by the way of which God Almighty creates everything in the nature according to a precise measure so that in it (in the nature) everything is in **a proper order** (ar. **qadar**) or **harmony**, the harmony which in a philosopher (gr. *φιλοσοφία*, *philosophía*) provokes a curiosity for knowledge, while in an **homo fannān/islamicus** (ar. **fannān**) produces the sense of will and desire to order and arrangement/design, as a form of creative action on the principle of **qadar**, a precise measure. "Everything what God has created, He has created by [design, aut. n.] a precise measure [ar. **bi-qadar**]" (*Qur'an*, 54:49). We are not talking here about the man's imitation of God's omnipotence, but we are alluding to the man's will and desire to carve (**ṣināʿat**) creatively defining harmony in a peculiar way a precise measure as he observes that phenomenon of harmony **qadar** in the very nature of all things of which he is just a piece of this universal God's harmonious creativity (**ṣināʿat**) as well.

As opposed to *doing*, "action" refers to man's spontaneous conscious activity that has become fully self-aware. There is no action without awareness both of action and of **qadar**, which **homo fannān/islamicus** also considers realistic in line with the breadth and depth of his insight into the Sovereignty of the Almighty.

ILLUSTRATION ON THE PREVIOUS DOUBLE PAGE ~ The territorial beginnings of „Islamic art“: in the central part: *The Cosmography of Claudius Ptolemy of Alexandria* (*Cosmographia Claudii Ptolomaei Alexandrini*), 1467 – *Arabian peninsula*; top left: *Mecca-Mecque* [Bernard Picart, Publ. by Fouquet, c. 1720]; bottom left: *Arabia* (detail), London 1825; lining right: *Pages from a Qur'an in Hijazi*, Arabia, late 7th Century; bottom right: *A map of Arabia and city views of Mecca & Medina* by Allain Manesson, 1719. Composition solution made by reconstruction of said sources in 2020.

Although Western sources, where the authors are typically not Muslims, tend to treat the lexical units in both terms almost uniformly⁵, from the standpoint of the civilizational principle of Islam, they are inappropriate and unfounded forms that cannot have the same meaning. Indeed, the use of the very concepts *Islam* and *Islamic* leads to the dichotomy of art from both a conservative and traditionalist Islamic standpoint. If *Islam* is understood in a broader sense, as the interpretation and application of faith (religion) by its follower („artist“/*homo islamicus*), the dichotomy lies roughly between the interpretation of Islam by means of traditional figures and its interpretation by means of individual Western figures, which are supposed to provide a full interpretation of the present cognitive and precognitive productive-reflective representation of works of visual art. However, if one speaks of *Islam* as faith (religion) and of the „artist“/*homo islamicus* whose creative activity is prescribed by Islam (religion), there is no dichotomy between Islam and other monotheistic religions; the „artist’s“/*homo islamicus*’s acceptance of messengership (ar. *nubuwwah*) or prophethood (ar. *risālah*) in the narrow sense, and his effectiveness in the broad sense is completely ignored. Consequently, it is necessary to carefully analyze the relationship between art and prophethood before detecting any element associated with *Islam*, i.e. with *what is Islamic*. It can be claimed that the categorical defense of a given interpretation of „universal artistic thought“ tends to repress diversity. Sources speak of authentic „Islamic art“, and „art of Islam“ as if there were no previously standardized foundation based upon which one can discern whether someone’s creative activity is authentically Islamic or not. They attempt to view „Islamic art“ or „art of Islam“ from different standpoints, and both write about well-known produced artefacts and – which can be considered positive – provide useful information on less known creations. Unfortunately, such approaches do not provide proper solutions for the distinctive issue of atypical creative *qadar/ṣinā’at*. As opposed to the conservative⁶ and traditional⁷ comprehension of Islam, they strive to present and explain different structures or „art trends or styles“ in Islamic societies that exist in different geographic and national areas, taking into account creative activities believed to be related in some way or even

⁵ See: Blair, Sheila S. and Bloom, Jonathan M.: *Islamic Arts (Art & Ideas)*; Phaidon Press, London, 1997; Bloom, Jonathan M. and Blair, Sheila S. (ed.): *Islamic Art: Past, Present, Future (The Biennial Hamad bin Khalifa Symposium on Islamic Art)*; Yale University Press, 2019; Blair, Sheila S. and Bloom, Jonathan M. (ed.): *Rivers of Paradise: Water in Islamic Art and Culture*; Yale University Press, 2009; Broug, Eric: *Islamic Geometric Design*; Thames & Hudson, London, 2013; Critchlow, Keith: *Islamic Patterns: An Analytical and Cosmological Approach*; Inner Traditions International, Rochester, 1999; Dodds, J. D.: *Al-Andalus: the Art of Islamic Spain*; New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992; Hillenbrand, Robert: *Islamic Art and Architecture (The World of Art)*; Thames & Hudson, The World of Art edition, 1998; King, Donald and Sylvester, David, eds.: *The Eastern Carpet in the Western World, From the 15th to the 17th Century*; Arts Council of Great Britain, London, 1983; Leone, Nicola Giuliano and Mauro, Eliana et al.: *Siculo-Norman Art. Islamic Culture in Medieval Sicily (Islamic Art in the Mediterranean)*; Museum With No Frontiers, MWNF (Museum Ohne Grenzen), 2003; Madden, Edward H.: *Some Characteristics of Islamic Art*; Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 1975, 33 (4), pp. 423–430; Mozzati, Luca: *Islamic Art: Architecture, Painting, Calligraphy, Ceramics, Glass, Carpets*; Prestel, Munich in London and New York, 2019; Ruggles, D. Fairchild (ed.): *Islamic Art and Visual Culture: An Anthology of Sources*; Wiley-Blackwell, Main St. Malden, United States, 2011; Shaw, Wendy M. K.: *What is ‘Islamic’ Art?: Between Religion and Perception*; Cambridge University Press, 2019, and so forth.

⁶ The notion *conservative* is expressed in Arabic by the term *al-muḥāfiẓ*, the participle active of which means *one who is conserving*, i.e. *a conservative*.

Conservatism is a state of mind, i.e. ways of thinking which are focused on the preservation of an acquired/inherited (cultural) order; the individual’s and the group’s view that opposes changes in the existing conditions and advocates its stability, supported by tradition and traditional values as the collected wisdom of the past.

predicated on creative activity viewed in this manner. None of this is surprising. Everything that is in line with the modalities of this way of approaching and analyzing „Islamic art“, as well as their theses on the metaphysical dimension of „Islamic creative thought“, seem fairly open to discussion, i.e. to a detailed explanation of facts in comprehending conservative and traditional civilizational principles of Islam.

ILLUSTRATION ~ Ibn al-Muqaffa', 'Abd Allāh (translator), *Folio from a manuscript of the Kalila wa-Dimna (Kalīla and Dimna)*; Egypt or Syria 1401-1500. Fables. Reconstruction done on the basis of source from BnF Galica.

ILUSTRACIJA ~ Ibn al-Muqaffa', 'Abd Allāh (prevoditelj), *Ilustracija iz rukopisa Kalila wa-Dimna (Kalila i Dimna)*; Egipat ili Sirija 1401-1500. Basne. Rekonstrukcija izvedena na temelju izvora iz BnF Galica.

⁷ In Islamic literature, the notion of **traditional** is expressed with the term **al-athar** which, in the form of a noun, means **tradition** or the **traditional**. In general, **tradition** pertains to the experiences and conditions of heritage (customs, beliefs, norms, values, and so forth) of a given community based on the transfer of knowledge from one generation to another, endeavoring not to deviate from established rules, though it can be supplemented/changed over time and adjusted to up-to-date cultural patterns within a given civilizational structure.

ILLUSTRATION ~ Unknown author: *A Copy of Firdawsī's Shāhnāma*. This miniature represents „Shah Tahmasp's Ascension to the Throne“ Iran, Shiraz; 1565-1566, The David Collection, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Use and meaning of the word **art**

From the traditional Islamic standpoint, the use and meaning of the word „art“ with respect to its key meaning („essential, basic, fundamental“) and sense („creation of nature in every corner of the human mind“) should imply *qadar/ṣinā'at*, rather than the power to „create“ an already achieved result by consciously controlled and focused doing. If we respect the use and meaning of the word „art“ related to its key meaning in the sense of *qadar/ṣinā'at*, we should necessarily note that in this case, the term „Islamic art“ could primarily imply the **profane productive-reflective discourse of *homo islamicus*⁸ *qadar/ṣinā'at*** which emerged within the Islamic civilizational circle. In this case, the coinage „art of Islam“ might signify **sacral *qadar/ṣinā'at* of *homo islamicus*'s precognitive inner assimilation** within the essence of Islam (ar. *al-islām* – peaceful or voluntary devotion to the Most High God as opposed to a violent or hateful allegiance to the faith *Revelation*/Qur'an (Qur'an, 2:256), *Sunnah*/Prophet's norm, and *Ḥadīth*/Prophet's oral tradition), while **precognitive assimilation**, i.e. the unit of these two terms, should imply the process of cognition whereby a *homo islamicus* voluntarily develops his own cultural practice of *qadar/ṣinā'at*⁹ which in turn includes imitation/interpretation of all positive attributes of God as one's own.

We believe that it is also important to point out that the term **cognitive** implies all psychic processes that are found in the basis of *homo islamicus*'s behavior and that are related to the **productive-reflective representation of collaborative disposition** (a form of informative initiation [collaboration] aimed at achieving a given content-related goal of the *qadar/ṣinā'at*). It should be noted that the character of cognitive assumes the existence of an inner mental state (faith) which was originally transferred to *homo islamicus*'s mind and intelligence, aimed at gaining cognizance of „fundamental“ or „essential“ information. In this way, based on „independent“ deduction and making one's own judgment on collaboration, and deciding to use the given constructive elements of visual art that follow, he would establish an appropriate balance between textual initiation and the applied constructive visual art. To achieve the desired results, *homo islamicus* must have **cognitive intelligence**, for that is to say the mental ability and function to perceive/observe, study, analyze, conclude and solve problems and tasks within the character of *qadar/ṣinā'at*, which is ultimately related to the mind, reasoning, memorizing, acting, and so forth based on his knowledge and spiritual vision (ar. *ḥikmah*); in brief, **conscious knowledge/skill of *qadar/ṣinā'at***.

⁸ We use the term *homo islamicus* („Islamic man“) for persons involved in creative *qadar/ṣinā'at* and who are at the same time sincere followers of the Islamic path, and who, though few of them became famous under their own name, gathered around individuals, mostly influential ones, who were their spiritual and professional teachers. These individuals endeavored to be persons of productive-reflective action with a significant role in the intellectual, spiritual, precognitive-assimilative and collaborative-cognitive life of the Islamic civilizational circle.

⁹ It is possible to distinguish between **transitive *qadar/ṣinā'at***, which begin in *homo islamicus* and end in the outer object that he changes; and **inner *qadar/ṣinā'at***, which remain in *homo islamicus* himself. Transitive actions are manifestations of *homo islamicus*'s inner perfection, and frequently of his inner actions as well. As an actor, *homo islamicus* communicates his own reality, since each *homo islamicus* acts as if he is in reality. In this sense, it can be claimed that *qadar/ṣinā'at* follows being (*agere sequitur esse*), while nature (substantive form) is a distinctive principle of *qadar/ṣinā'at* out of which the powers to act, as immediate design principles, draw their acting energy. However, although being and nature are principles of activity, what actually makes *qadar/ṣinā'at* possible is *homo islamicus*, within his conscious productive-reflective disposition.

The term *precognitive* refers to mental processes aimed at recognizing phenomena and forms which are, in terms of experience and reproduction, related to *homo islamicus*'s productive-reflective disposition of an assimilative nature. They can be simple and complex, and include illustration, argumentation, research and explanation. In the interpretation of productive-reflective representation of elements of visual art (sacral *qadar/şinā'at*), precognitive assimilation refers to the perception of the compositional structure of the piece and its characteristics, and to defining compositional principles, contrast, harmony, rhythm, balance, proportions, domination and unity of all elements of visual art in an authentic whole. The precognitive character necessarily assumes the existence of *homo islamicus*'s inner state of mind (faith), which he adopts from previously acquired knowledge, *a priori* interprets it in the form of assimilation and synthesis and transfers it to his own mind and intelligence, aimed at additional-repeated recognition-confirmation of the insight into „fundamental“ or „essential information“.

Productivity signifies the general perception of the level of engagement and use of resources compared to the (output) results of *homo islamicus*'s precognitive-assimilating and collaborative-cognitive activity. *Reflective* implies the thinking, mental process of reflection (reflexion) as self-reference, self-referral, i.e. referring to His absoluteness and sublimity by means of self-fulfillment, self-support, self-restriction, self-modification, and so forth. The prefix *self* indicates that these are actions that *homo islamicus* performs to acknowledge God's attributes, based on the mental, reasoned review of experiencing them by active contemplation, thinking, reasoning, all aimed at the specific definition characterized as conscious, reflective „knowledge of knowledge“.

It can be deduced that it is about perception at the level of engagement and using resources related to the mental observation of conscious activity and its results when spirit, mind or cognition does not recognize external material characterizations but rather turns to its own inside and shifts the focus of attention from original objects, material values or models to *homo islamicus* himself and either his mental (spiritual) or operating (practical) relationship toward the world or corresponding inputs on the world and events in it.

Thus, we speak about the human activity whereby *homo islamicus*, through his own contemplation based on the knowledge of God's attributes, imprints the beautiful in the attempt to reflect universal beauty. This characterizes such self-referential existence as a mental process based on a metaphysical understanding of **truth** which draws its origin from spiritual tradition.

In both the above-cited terms used by Western sources (in the first case, as an adjective and in the second as a noun) *Islam* refers to the **religion of Islam**, regardless of its evidently different meaning within these lexical units, and of the understanding of the meaning and sense of the word „art“. Unfortunately, the term „art“ encompasses the sense of numerous theoretical discourses dealing with challenging, anatomizing and transforming the coordinate system of the epoch of Islam, which maintained the power of the great meta-story about universality as the beacon. *This story was able to encompass and prescribe an external pons asinorum of theoretical knowledge and the practical orientation of the entire epoch, though copied from the foundation of Western heritage and its conceptual and interpretative*

strategy. There are also views that incessantly attempt to seek the source of „Islamic art“ or „art of Islam“ in sociopolitical conditions also marked by Islam. Such a view certainly did not surface at the origin of the existence of Islam, even though it is still supported by many Muslims, since the source of the internal can be seen in the external and reduces the conscious sacral productive-reflective definition of precognitive assimilation with its **interiorizing power**¹⁰ literally to external, social and economic conditions. In layman's terms, *interiorizing power* implies the inclusion of external values (effects) and social relations into the interiority of „Islamic art“ or „art of Islam“. Still, it seems reasonable to seek the answer in **Islamic teaching about inner nature**¹¹ (*intrinsic possibile naturalis*) itself, which is founded not on external manifestations of things (experiential externa) but rather on their **internalized reality**¹² as a categorical imperative.

Since this is a very broad sphere of human conscious productive-reflective *qadar/şinā'at*, we will here focus on possible forms closely connected to the area which within Western civilizational identity is named „painting“. More accurately, we will focus on calligraphic illumination and Ebru productive-reflective *qadar/şinā'at* of precognitive assimilation (a traditional marbled paper art of Ottoman), as well as on illustrations created within unique hand-written forms of literary works or historical narrations on the life of the time within **collaborative-cognitive discourse**. Such a choice implies collaboration, i.e. *homo islamicus*'s experiential cooperation based on the additional motivation of a given textual content aimed at achieving the goal of *qadar/şinā'at* within the profane productive-reflective interdisciplinary representation of elements of visual art.

The initial emphasis on *qadar* based on the (Western) cognitive space and its structure of signifying (external) relations aimed at elucidating controversies related to the meaning of a lexical unit between the two concepts, **art** and **Islam** is essential for the perspective of conservative, traditional and contemporary reconsideration. When beginning to discuss the „art of Islam“ or „Islamic art“, many people believe that these concepts, as well as their lexical unit, are both understandable *per se*, and that they are unitary and monosemic, relying on definitions in general encyclopedia or professional lexicons¹³ of both Western and Islamic origin.

¹⁰ By definition, **interiorization** is a term that refers to the mechanism of adopting the individual's cultural-historical experience, which explains the genesis of his/her higher mental functions.

¹¹ In Arabic, the term for what cannot be apprehended by the senses (what is thought) is *bāṭin*, and in Greek it is *noumenon*. According to Plato, noumenon is what is recognizably related to spirit, as opposed to what is observed with the eye, and this is the essence which is, according to him, the source of all visible and tangible manifestations on the physical world. According to Kant, as opposed to the Greek *phenomenon* – ar. *zāhir*, which means „manifestation“, the concept *noumenon* signifies the thing that can be thought but which is, as the „thing in itself“ (*das Ding an sich*), ultimately inapprehensible. In this sense, it cannot be the object of theoretical cognition, but can be confirmed only by the practical mind, i.e. as a corrective for actions in ethics. Still, the practical mind must postulate the world of noumenon to be able to interpret freedom.

¹² **Internalized reality**, in this actual case, refers to the moral category of conscious adoption of religion and faith within *homo islamicus*'s conscious *qadar/şinā'at*; the „establishment of mediation“ between religion and active life.

¹³ See: Bosworth, C. E., Donzel, E. van et al.: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam (New Edition)*; Leiden – E. J. Brill, 1997; Campo, Juan Eduardo: *Encyclopedia of Islam (Encyclopedia of World Religions)*; Better World Books, Mishawaka, IN, U.S.A., 2009; Gibb, Sir Hamilton Alexander Rosskeen: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*; Brill Archive, 1980; Glasse, Cyril: *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*; Hippo Books, Toledo, OH, U.S.A., 2005; Houtsma, Martijn Theodoor, Arnold, Sir Thomas Walker et al.: *The Encyclopaedia of Islām: A Dictionary of the Geography, Ethnography and Biography of the Muhammadan Peoples*; E.J. Brill Limited, 1913; Kalin, Ibrahim, Ayduz, Salim et al.: *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Science, and Technology in Islam*; V Books, DH, SE, Spain, 2009; Lane W. E.: *Arabic-English Lexicon*; Islamic Texts Society, Revised Format, Cambridge, 1984; Morrow, John A. (ed.): *Arabic, Islām, and the Allāh*

We are warned that this is not the case by one of the Arabic terms, *fannu taḥsīn*,¹⁴ the meaning of which focuses on the technique and, generally, on the formal *definition* of the constructive side of ornamental, productive-reflective discourse. Originally, the word *fann* does not mean „art“¹⁵ in the sense in which it is defined in the Western civilizational circle: *fann* is „artistry“, „techné“¹⁶ focused on skill and generally on the formal-methodological side of *the field of qadar/ṣināʿat* of Islamic *homo faber*, i.e. of *homo fannān* – a person who is able to control his own fate and living environment as a result of using certain tools based on his own knowledge and convictions in the reality of coherent faith (*cohaerentia religare*), incorporating them in the institution of unique history (*historiae autonoma*),¹⁷ i.e. of *homo islamiensis* („Islamist“) or, more accurately,

Lexicon: How Language Shapes Our Conception of God; Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, 2006; Netton, Ian Richard: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*; Routledge, 2013; Smailagić, Nerkez: *Leksikon islama*; Svjetlost, Sarajevo, 1990.

See also: Bloom, Jonathan M. and Blair, Sheila S. (eds): *The Grove Encyclopedia of Islamic Art and Architecture – Oxford Reference*; Available at: <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195309911.001.0001/acref-9780195309911>. Accessed on 8.8.2019; *Islamic Art – New Catholic Encyclopedia*; The Gale Group Inc. Available at: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/islamic-art>. Accessed on 8.8.2019; *Islamic Art And Architecture – The Columbia Encyclopedia*; 6th ed. Available at: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/literature-and-arts/art-and-architecture/asian-and-middle-eastern-art/islamic-art-and-architecture>. Accessed on 8.8.2019; *Islamic arts – Encyclopædia Britannica*; Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Islamic-arts>. Accessed on 8.8.2019; Brozović, Dalibor (gl. ur.): *Hrvatska enciklopedija*; Leksikografski zavod „Miroslav Krleža“, Zagreb, 1999. Available at: <http://www.enciklopedija.hr/Natuknica.aspx?ID=70076>. Accessed on 8.8.2019;

Art Glossary of Terms – The Art History Archive; Available at: <http://www.arthistoryarchive.com/arthistory/glossary/Art-Glossary-Terms-AA-AZ.html>. Accessed on 8.8.2019; Donzel, E. Van, J. Schacht, B. Lewis et al.: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*; Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1960–2004; *Encyclopaedia of Islam (Second Edition)*; Online sets out the present state of our knowledge of the Islamic World. Brill. Available at: <https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2>. Accessed on 2.12.2019.

¹⁴ Since we did not manage to find appropriate terms in Arabic, which in no case means that there are not any, we resorted to the formulation of an appropriate conceptual definition by analogy with the known terminological entry from the history of Arabic corpus for poetry technique (not poetics in the meaning of Aristotelian tradition), which is, in the Arabic lexical unit, identified with the expression /term *fannu al-ṣiʿr*.

¹⁵ To more accurately understand the primordial and contemporary meaning of the word „art“, it is necessary to distinguish between its contemporary use and meaning and its key meaning and sense, which was traditionally called *craft*. It is evident that Arabic vocabulary retained this traditional meaning in the term *fann*, with the meaning of *skill of qadar/ṣināʿat*, while contemporary Western vocabulary transformed it into the meaning of *ars* in Latin, or τέχνη (*technē*); „ability, craft“ in Greek, i.e.: *the power to ‘create’ a previously achieved result by consciously controlled and directed doing*.

¹⁶ It seems essential to note that in ancient times there was no concept that could appropriately express what is presently understood under the concept „art“.

Aristotle divided the science into: theoretical (observing), practical (focused on doing), and technical. The last, technical science, included the skill of productive-reflective doing, which was a notion equivalent to that of *production*, namely *handicraft production*. *Technē* was related to the manner of production, and did not enjoy the status of „free public activity“, as was, to a degree, the case with philosophy. It was only with the emergence of *ars* (Lat. *Ars, artis* – „skill“) that the notion of „art“ began to include the moment of creativity, though it was a strictly controlled and prescribed, almost ordered activity.

¹⁷ The term *homo faber* (Lat. *Homo* „man“, *faber* „blacksmith“) was adopted by H. Bergson in 1907 to refer to human distinctive qualities.

See: Bergson, Henri: *Stvaralačka evolucija* (*L'Évolution créatrice*), [transl. Tomislav Medak]; HAUZ, Igitur, Zabok – Zaprešić, 1999.

In conservative Islamic thought one can find views that generally deprive *homo fannān* of the power of causal actions, claiming that only God is active and that any kind of causal actions should be attributed to God; in the created reality, the relationship between cause and effect depends on God's will. It is such views that led to the establishment of *occasionalism*, as a specific form of interpreting causation, rooted in the interpretations of Islamic conservative theology. In the sources of traditional Islamic thought one can encounter the view that causation can be interpreted rationally. Abū Ḥāmid Al-Ghazālī believes that if there were any *creator's causality*, God's agency would be subordinate to the necessity imposed by nature, and he therefore claims that *there is no other causation than that by God*.

Sharif, M. M.: *Historija islamske filozofije* [prev. Dr. Hasan Sušić]; II volume, August Cesarec, Zagreb 1990, p.9; Zakzouk, Mahmoud: *Ghazalijeva filozofija u usporedbi s Descartesom*; El-Kalem, Sarajevo 2000, pp 148–149; See also: Bohm, David: *Uzročnost i slučajnost u savremenoj fizici*; Nolit, Belgrade 1972, p.70.

homo islamicus („Islamic man“),¹⁸ who is positioned in the basis of productive-reflective discourse as an integral part of the Islamic civilizational circle. Ornamentality (*taḥsīn*), as the fundamental feature of *homo islamicus*'s conscious free *qadar/ṣināʿat* within *fann ṣināʿat* (skill of action), is not a mere „artificial“ (opp. of *natural*) procedure of pictorial *ornamenting, decorating, imaging, adorning, arranging* which depends on his occasional ability. For instance, if, during the completion of *actus humanus* („human act“) of *homo islamicus*'s actions of such a nature, one can determine the artistic quality of presenting an ornamental composition in a sequence of different stages of conceiving the linear and tonal, the building of constructive footholds that make up the compositional value is an *inventive-conceptual act*.

¹⁸ In the late 1980s, while working on a study on the ornamental nature of the Islamic civilizational circle, I used both terms for a person consciously involved in productive-reflective discourse in this area: *homo islamiensis* and *homo islamicus*, depending on the character and practical function of the attribute. Unfortunately, the study has never been published in the form of a book, and its manuscript was completely destroyed during the shelling of my studio in Sarajevo on 28 May 1992.

In this study we chose to primarily use the term *homo islamicus*, since its meaning is pregnant with content that, over centuries, endeavored to permeate the sacral productive-reflective discourse with the reflection of God's perfect attributes pertaining to inner purity, adherence to Sunnah, the moral advancement of the human soul, the elevation of a human being through honesty, sincerity and humbleness, as well as through attempts to understand the inner meaning of religion and the teaching of Islam, and the conception of *Tawḥīd* (Islamic term for monotheism, which means the oneness of God) in its meaning (i.e. testimony that there is no other god except Allah).

These were the *homines islamici* who, over centuries, created constructs of a productive-reflective nature. They did it either because they had the ability to have a vision (ar. *dhawq, kashf or shuhūd*) of that archetypal world, due to resources made available by the Revelation and specifically Mohammedan *Baraka* (ar. *barakah* „blessing, progress, happiness“), or by having been taught by teachers who had such a vision.

By virtue of circumstances, when I was submitting this study to be printed in the journal „Illuminatio/Svjetionik/Almanar“, the editor, Dr. Ekrem Tucaković, drew my attention to the use of the same term by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, who says: The *homo islamicus* is at once the servant of God (*al-ʿabd*) and His vicegerent on earth (*khalīfatū Allāhi fi-l-arḍ*), not an animal that happens to speak and think but a being who possesses a soul and spirit/intellect created by God. The *homo islamicus* contains within himself or herself the plant and animal natures as he or she is the crown of creation (*ashraf al-makhlūqāt*) but has not evolved from the lower forms of life. Man has always been man. The Islamic conception of human beings envisages that they are beings who live on earth and have earthly needs but are not only earthly, and their needs are not limited to the terrestrial. They rule over the earth, not in their own right, but rather as God's vicegerents before all creatures. They therefore also bear responsibility for the created order before God and are the channels of grace for God's creatures. *Homo islamicus* possesses the power of reason, of ratio that divides and analyzes, but his or her mental faculties are not limited to reason. He or she possesses the possibility of knowing intuitively through the use of the intellect as well as analytically through the employment of reason and also has the capability to gain inward knowledge, the knowledge of his or her own inner being, which is in fact the key to the knowledge of God.

The *homo islamicus* thus remains aware of the eschatological realities, of the fact that although he or she lives on this earth, he or she is here as a traveler far away from his or her original abode. He or she is aware that his or her guide for this journey is the message that issues from his or her home of origin, from the Origin, and this message is none other than revelation to which such as person remains bound not only in its aspect of law as embodied in the *Shariʿah* but also in its inner aspect as truth and knowledge (*Ḥaqīqah*). Such a being is also aware that human faculties are not bound and limited to the senses and reason but that to the extent that human beings are able to regain the fullness of their being and bring to actualize all the possibilities that God has placed within them, through faith and spiritual practice, their minds and reason can become illuminated by the light of the spiritual world, and they are able to gain direct knowledge of the spiritual and intelligible world to which the Noble Quran refers as the invisible or absent world (*ʿālam al-ghayb*).

See: Nasr, Seyyed Hossein: *Islamic Philosophy from Its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy*; Albany, State University of New York Press, 2006, pp. 265-266 and footnote 13.

In the course of further research into recent literature, I found this term used in Islamic economy and finance, where it is claimed that economically extraordinary Islamic finance has been built based on *homo islamicus* who is, as claimed, different from *homo economicus*. Islamic financial institutions are part of Islamic banking, where interest is prohibited and the basic behavior of constituent members of *homo islamicus* is assumed to be part of the idealized society, permeated with Islamic values and commitment. However, the experience of international investments reveals a reality where Muslims still do not behave in the way prescribed by such a model.

See: Farooq, Mohammad: *Self-Interest, Homo Islamicus and Some Behavioral Assumptions in Islamic Economics and Finance*; PDF Available, January 2011. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228204390_Self-Interest_Homo_Islamicus_and_Some_Behavioral_Assumptions_in_Islamic_Economics_and_Finance. Accessed on 25.1.2020.

In this process, *homo islamicus*'s freedom implies making a choice within the entirety of constructive reflections in the form of planar pictorial constructs/messages (e.g. girih tiles¹⁹), while he transforms the used linear character into a supra-individual structure by means of affinity for the ornamental (*tahsīn*); the negation of objectivity beyond the human mind. It is for this reason that one and the same flatly structured representation, with an identical compositional solution, may have both a different characterization and the same projected reflection. Ornamental expression is the heritage and legacy of Islamic understanding of a given field of human disposition, within which *homo islamicus*'s actions can never have the character of the basic production of the same substance aimed at its recycling (repeated production) with the new existence (*novum esse entitativum et substantiale*); rather, it is always the consciously active life marked by new free ornamental constructiveness²⁰ that expresses His uniqueness.²¹

To reach the conclusion that He is impossible to represent by anything that is „created“ – for *homo islamicus* it means being completely serious towards His absoluteness and sublimity.²² When *homo islamicus*'s imaginal world grasps that nothing „created“ resembles Him, it means grasping Him as *Beauty*²³ – *that nothing else that is beautiful resembles*. The inexpressibility of the Almighty is an attribute of God,²⁴ the meaning of which is *eternity, absoluteness, originality or unconditionality*. Eternity is inexpressible in any sense.

¹⁹ It is typically believed that individual geometric patterns are designed using certain aids (tools) in the form of compasses and rulers on rectangular or symmetrical hexagonal units, which can then be regularly periodically tiled. However, this procedure is not feasible with some compositions of patterns arising from the pentagon, and therefore the manner of their constructive production could not be explained until the re-discovered *girih tiles* (pers. *gereh-sāzi*). Girih tiles are composed of five equilateral polygons with a characteristic pattern and allow periodical and un-periodical tiling; a constructive-compositional form. It seems important to point out that within this kind of tiling, i.e. within the developed form of planar concept, *homo islamicus* did not only adopt the known (inherited) constructive values of forms; on the contrary, he strove to new motivating values of praising Islamic truths, and it took a few centuries to decode their constructiveness beyond the Islamic civilizational circle.

Millwright, Marcus: Architecture – *Gereh-sāzi*; *Encyclopædia Iranica*, Vol. X, Fasc. 5, Associated Press and University of Columbia 1982, pp. 500-504. See footnote 38 for an explanation of the *planar concept*.

²⁰ *Free constructiveness* refers to *homo islamicus*'s *qadar*/*ṣināʿat* arising from freedom; in Arabic it is described by the word *akhlāq* (ar. pl. *akhlāqun*), which is the plural of the Arabic word *khuluqun* and signifies innate affinity, disposition, the mode of human communication with the world, mental and moral features that determine and form the manner of human behavior (Greek *ethos*, Lat. *mores*). Although „doing“ is central to the meaning of the notion of *morality*, while „mental and moral features“ are central to the meaning of *akhlāq*, it can be claimed that the meaning of the concept *akhlāq* corresponds to the concept of *morality*.

The etymology of the word *recycle* points to the possible simple production of the same substance with a new existence – its root is found in the Latin word *cyclus*, i.e. the Greek word *kyklos*, both of which mean „circle“ (in English, the prefix 're' is added to the Latin-Greek word, and it is the meaning of the term used in this study).

²¹ *Fann* is the human skill of expressing the most beautiful (*ḥasan* – „a beauty“) the person has within his spirit/soul, as an exceptional productive-reflective value in the sense that this expression is „unrepeatable“. This is the essence and mystery of the concepts *fann*, *ḥasan* and *tahsīn* („beautifying“), i.e. His metaphysical essence (*actus purus*) – pure actuality, actuality itself. He is unrepeatable in His being, and it is for this reason that He is One and the Only.

²² By Islamic definition, *He, God, is the Creator of good* ... He does not create evil, but rather allows evil to „sneak into“ the earthly world, which is imperfect because only God is perfect. If the world were perfect, it would resemble God, and since nothing can resemble God, the world is necessarily imperfect and, consequently, evil is allowed in it.

²³ Certainly, it is also true of earthly beauty: nothing can be as perfectly beautiful as God is, but it does not mean that a person has no right to endeavor not to *create*, but rather to imitate beauty (ar. *taqlīd* – „mimicking, imitating“), which God creates in nature and in man himself. For this reason it is not proper to say that those who act within this productive-reflective *qadar* are „creators“ (ar. *Khāliq* active part. of verb *khalaqa* – „create“); rather, they are only *imitators* (ar. *muqallid* derived from the Arabic verb *qallada* – „to follow someone's words and moves without

ILLUSTRATION ~ Unknown author, *Portrait of Homo islamicus – Painter*; Illustration from an album, India 17th century. Source-based reconstruction from the *Al-Ṣabāḥ*, Collection The Kuwait National Museum and the Dar al-Āthār al-Islāmiyyah („House of Islamic Antiquities“) in 2019.

ILUSTRACIJA ~ Nepoznati autor, *Portret homo islamicusa – slikar*; Ilustracija iz albuma, Indija 17. stoljeće. Rekonstrukcija urađena na osnovu izvora iz zbirke *Al-Ṣabāḥ*, Kuvajtski nacionalni muzej i Dar al-Āthār al-Islāmiyyah („Kuća islamskih starina“) 2019. godine.

thinking“) of what has already been created in nature and in themselves. He wants His beings to be the mediators (*wāsiṭah*), reason or cause (*sabab*) and means (*wasilah*). [He also creates *sabab, wasilah, wāsiṭah* (i.e. reasons, mediators, ways, means) and their effects.

The concept *mimesis* had a particular significance in Ancient aesthetics. Originally, it was understood as *imitation*. Democritus conceived *mimesis* as the imitation of the mode of acting in nature. The concept gained a particular importance in Plato's and Aristotle's philosophy. According to Plato, *mimesis* has three meanings: ontological – pertaining to the relationship between ideas and the sensory objects that are copies thereof; ethical – in the sense of similarity to God; and aesthetic – as the essence of creativity. For Aristotle, *mimesis* means imitation or representation with a particular importance in people's creative activity. It should be noted that the idea of *imitation* as „art“ survived in the Western civilizational circle for a very long time, all the way until the opposite Romanticist understanding of „art as creation“.

²⁴ One of God's attributes is that God is „Jamil“ – *Beautiful* (ar. *jamil* – „beautiful“). Islamic understanding allows man to recognize *His beauty* and adopt it as his own. It is also allowed for man to recognize *God's grace* and adopt it as his own. It is also allowed for man to imitate all the positive *attributes of God* as his own – beauty, goodness, compassion, righteousness, and so forth.

ILLUSTRATION ~ *Homo islamicus*. Composition solution done by reconstructing the following sources: *Laila and Majnūn at School*, Folio from a Khamsa (Quintet) of Nizām 1431-32; *Qawwal*, a sub-caste of the large Muslim caste of 'Mīrasīs' or singer from the *Kitāb-i tashrīḥ al-aqvām* (History of the origin and distinguishing marks of the different Castes of India), Mughal Delhi 1825; Al-Harīrī, *Maqāmāt*, 13th century; Kamāl ud-Dīn Behzād, *Portrait of The Poet Hātifi*, Timurid Period 1511; Reza Abbasi, *Portrait of Ḥakim Šifāeh*, Persia, Tabriz 1628-1629.

Concept of **skill** (*qadar/şināʿat*) in the context of traditional Islamic reflection

The next step toward updating traditional issues in discussing the meaning of *homo islamicus's* *qadar/şināʿat* requires separate consideration of the possible meaning of the notion of skill (of *qadar/şināʿat*), i.e. of **productive-reflective representation of elements of visual art** in the context of the conservative and traditional Islamic civilizational echo.

- One of the primary characteristics of what is designated as *skill* (of *qadar/şināʿat*) in the form of productive-reflective discourse is contained in the implied difference between the *means* and the act itself in the ultimate *qadar*. Each of them is clearly conceived as something different from the other; still, they are mutually connected. The employed term „means“ does not refer to the final actualization of *qadar/şināʿat*, but rather to activities related to it (handling tools): the hand's mastery over pencil, brush and pen (ar. *qalam*, from classical Greek *kamalos*), leaving the trace of blacklead, color or a kind of Arabic/Chinese ink (ar. *murakkab*) to achieve the necessary unity of *qadar/şināʿat* is left aside when it has been achieved;
- The geometric two-dimensional form of *qadar/şināʿat* is conceived in advance or is implied before it has been completed. *Homo islamicus* knows what he wants to do before he has created the final compositional form, which always requires accurately defined previous knowledge (the spiritual upgrade of human soul and training);
- It is as *homo islamicus* that he acquires the skill of *qadar/şināʿat*, partly from his own experience and partly by concentrating on the experience of others, who thus become his spiritual and vocational teachers (religious and practical operability);
- The means and purpose of *qadar/şināʿat* are related in the opposite way in the process of the act of implementation. He first conceives the final value of the compositional form, and only then does he conceive the means. However, while executing *qadar/şināʿat*, means come first, and the end is achieved through their mediation;
- The difference between the employed materials (the direct effect on the formal and substantial characteristics of a piece) and the artefact (the piece as the final visualized form) is evident. The material is what the *qadar/şināʿat* are performed and completed on; i.e. it is intended

to be transformed into something different, though it is taken in a given form before the action begins. Thus, there is a difference between the produced form of the artefact and the employed material and implements. The employed material is identical before and after its use, i.e. its transformation into a shape, while the produced shape is in line with the faith and *qadar/ṣinā'at*, and is aimed at achieving the reflection of the Almighty; depending on the size of the text and the volume of ornamental/profane composition, and the inscription or background panel and the employed material of a certain origin, implements of different characteristics are used.

- It is not necessary to understand, nor is it less important, that the final form of productive-reflective representation of elements of visual art, which allows the momentary and unambiguous understanding of the skill of the *qadar/ṣinā'at* of our *homo islamicus's*, is not *per se* sufficient to cause understanding, unless *truth* is the permanent caveat for each of his thoughts.
- The effect of *homo islamicus's* skill is to trigger, in the recipients of the final forms of productive-reflective representation, certain states of mind that he conceived in advance, and that are characterized as desirable in conservative and traditional views. A competent *homo islamicus* fulfills at least one condition: a piece affects the recipient in the way he intended under the condition that the two of them are on the *same spiritual path* (ar. *tarīqah*). It is also possible to fulfill another condition: the state of mind thus aroused in the recipient can be a valuable state of mind in one way or another; he is the one who enriches their life and therefore induces both their admiration and their gratitude.
- He has the knowledge of the effect he aims at and makes it a possible experience and notion; for the others, it is unattained knowledge and experience, although their souls are also *flooded with light*.
- As much as it is possible for the *homo islamicus* to gain a desirable level of technical-technological skill, he is a *homo islamicus* only if this skill is not identified with „art“ or „craft“ but rather with the **skill of *qadar/ṣinā'at***, which is in line with both the conservative and traditional understanding. Having the technical-technological skill in no case means that it is the value possessed by any other craftsman; his skill is of productive-reflective character and is founded on faith, rather than a craftsman's skill for completing accurately agreed production, or production for the market of things/objects and models with a practical purpose.
- It is not possible or justified to put an equation sign between actions by *homo islamicus* and a craftsman. The technique of *homo islamicus's qadar/ṣinā'at* implies that he, as we have already mentioned, possesses certain experiences which require expression; the well-conceived and spiritually grounded possibility of action in the productive-reflective *qadar* to be able to express himself; his work, as an unattained end, requires the actualization of the compositional values of given powers or forms of skills, and this then is the technique illustrating the *qadar/ṣinā'at* of our *homo islamicus's*.

This contains an element of truth. The truth is that the very definition of a given compositional solution begins with the experience of initiation, which in turn requires expression in the form of productive-reflective discourse. When compared to the craftsman's way of working, it would mean that the latter's productive-reflective *qadar* is false; he does not have a specific solution in terms of its purpose for further mass production and sales, or specs for the material he needs to determine the financial equivalent for the activity and employed material, which any craftsman has before beginning the actual activity. This always pertains to the craftsman; thus, it does not pertain to the *homo islamicus* – although some authors describe the product of his *qadar/ṣinā'at* within productive-reflective representation as *a work of craft*.²⁵

- It can be claimed that the terms *art* and *productive-reflective representation of elements of visual art* are species of the same genus; both are basically activities of producing innovative artefacts. However, they differ in the activation of spiritual initiations and in the ultimate quality or character of meaning. It is necessary to exclude from one's thinking the idea that the *qadar/ṣinā'at* of our *homo islamicus*'s consist of the production of special kinds of artefacts, designated as *works of art* or *objets d'art*. Primarily, it is an inner or mental activity, existing but founded on the sincere faith and the confirmed practice of actions, i.e. the knowledge of *qadar/ṣinā'at*. Secondly, it is a perceptual object of reflective character and pertains to the attributes of the Almighty. It is easy to conclude that *homo islamicus* exact relationship toward this mental structure requires a very careful and well-founded definition.

- Since *homo islamicus* does not appear either as an „artist“ or as a „craftsman“, as such, he does not create „works of art“ or „products of a craftsman character which are created by production, traffic or the provision of services on the market“. As opposed to works by artists and the products of craftsmen's handiwork, *homo islamicus*'s works have, among other things, the defined „socially prescribed purpose based on the experience of devoted faith“. It is possible to claim that the final form of his *qadar/ṣinā'at* cannot be called a „work of art“ or „product of craft“, regardless of certain views that impose equality between all the possible characteristics of „craft“ and „art“. ²⁶

By analyzing the line of Islamic proclamations through the available sources that provide indisputable evidence of the relationship between Islamic spirituality (which, naturally, derives directly from the Quran, plus the Sunnah and Hadith of the Prophet) and forms of hand-making activity, as well as treatises in the

²⁵ Within a *Technical theory of arts*, some authors, led by the thinking of Greek philosophers, designated „works of art“ as those of *craft*. Indeed, Greek philosophers elaborated the idea of *craft*, which was actually one of the greatest and strongest achievements of the Greek mind, from Socrates to Aristotle. When they began to deal with aesthetic issues, both Plato and Aristotle established the existence of the so-called „poetic crafts“, as well as of „analogous crafts“, which included any form of activity in the area of painting.

Ingram, Peter G.: *Art, Language and Community in Collingwood's Principles of Art*; in: *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 37, No. 1, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 1978, pp. 53-64.

²⁶ Collingwood, Robin George: *The Principles Of Art* (reprint of 1938); Oxford University Press, Amen House, London 1960, pp. 42-56.

sphere of the critique and theory of *homo islamicus*'s active life,²⁷ it can be concluded that, throughout time, it proceeded in isolation within the „closed“ civilization of Islam;²⁸ certain views on its **ornamental** (sacral) as well as **profane** fields of representation were not intended for those who „were not initiated“, or rather *who were not on the same path*.²⁹ It refers to the *path of Islam* as a **culturological determinant**,³⁰ as well as *Islam* as a **civilizational determinant**. In productive-reflective discourse both of them are manifested in the use of the concept of *Islam*³¹ in one of two different, though mutually related ways of *qadar/šīnā'at*, depending on

²⁷ Besides direct sources, there is an entire library of writings in almost all the languages of the world dealing with the history, descriptions and material characteristics of productive-reflective discourse of the Islamic civilizational circle. However, the fundamental question of the foundation of such supra-individual free *qadar/šīnā'at* by *homo islamicus* has rarely or never been asked. Unfortunately, the solution of the problem of connections over centuries and cultural borders, despite its curiosity from the viewpoint of the history of productive-reflective discourse, does not reveal the starting point, since it is simply not an artefact that was used, but what the Islamic community (*ummah al-mu'minin*) did with these artefacts.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr believes that: [...] „The question of the source of Islamic art, and the nature of the powers and principles that led to its becoming a reality, must therefore be directed to the worldview of Islam itself, to the Islamic Revelation which directly emanated the **sacred** (emphasis by the author) art of Islam, and indirectly the entirety of Islamic art“ [...]

Nasr, Hossein Seyyed: *Odnos između islamske umjetnosti i islamske duhovnosti*; „Znakovi vremena“, časopis za filozofiju, religiju, znanost i društvenu praksu, vol. 7, double issue 22/33, Naučno istraživački institut „Ibn Sina“, Sarajevo, Winter-Spring 2004, pp. 117–129.

²⁸ With respect to the transfer of knowledge and interpretation of productive-reflective discourse of precognitive assimilation in line with the views of the Islamic civilizational circle, it was believed that such information can be useful only to those who understand them without diminishing their value. The understanding of such a view is wisdom that is not granted to every man, and it can therefore be practiced only by those who, by their sincere work, in line with the knowledge of religious truth, have gained such ability through a great scientist (*‘allamah* or *‘ālim* – one who possesses *‘ilm* „a high level of knowledge, learnedness“) of the same spiritual tradition. Such a view testifies to a certain gradation in the Islamic concept of knowledge by emphasizing the religious (cosmic) aspect of knowledge, which is entitled to judge secular (earthly) knowledge in all its variants. It should be noted that in Islam knowledge (*al-‘ilm*) has a deeper inner dimension which is often called *ma‘rifah* (gnosis), and is primarily related to the intuitive side of the human mind. It is for this reason that due to the lack of understanding of the role (mission) of sacral and profane productive-reflective *qadar* at a specific „moment“ of the development of Islamic culture and civilization, the entire theoretical discussion with the „outer world“ is isolated for the purpose of reinforcing Islamic knowledge, i.e. the „root“ of devoted faith.

²⁹ While working on the graphic design of the *Quran with a translation into Bosnian* for the publisher „Bosanska knjiga“ (1993-1995), I previously analyzed about fifty different versions and forms of printed editions of *mushaf* (the Quran is assembled into mushaf; thus, mushaf is a product of human action, while the Quran is Allah's Recitation) in terms of illumination approaches. In contacts with conservative and traditional Islamic thinkers due to my interest in their attitude toward different illumination approaches, I encountered a „wall of silence“ or, in simple terms, „they were all shy“. During my short stay in Istanbul in 1994 (IRSICA – *Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture*) I discussed the issue of the approach to illumination of the text of the Revelation with the IRSICA director at the time, academician Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu. He told me that there was only one person who could help me, Dr. Ibrahim Chabbuoh from Tunisia.

By virtue of circumstance, Dr. Chabbuoh, whom I had not met before, was already my father-in-law, and it turned out that he was staying in Istanbul at the time. In this way, I met my father-in-law and received a succinct answer to my inquiry about the issue: „One cannot discuss the *qadar/šīnā'at* that remind people of God, unless everything except the Sublime has been removed from the person's heart and the bad nature of his soul (ar. *nafs*) has changed. The person you do it with must be a complete man, who is already following the path (ar./perz. *ma'nawi sayr*) of attaining perfection (ar. *al-insān al-kāmil* – „a perfect man“) and the Merciful's inspiration (ar. *jadhbi*).“ I understood the message but did not hear what I wanted. However, regardless of the warning that it is *wisdom that is not given to any man*, I eventually achieved the prominent illumination of *mushaf* (in the form of a translation into Bosnian), which my father-in-law proudly gave his most respected friends as a present.

³⁰ As opposed to some other explanations and differently understood determinants and methodological frameworks of the concept of **culturology** (e.g. Edward Taylor, Wilhelm Ostwald, Alfred Kroeber, Leslie White, E.V. Sokolov and so forth), in this study culturological determinants refer to the comprehensive consideration of the genesis of the phenomenon of culture, as well as to the fundamental importance of the position, competence and integral interpretation of culture within social development under the influence of Islam. In such a framework, culture gains a significant place in the formation of crucial determinants of social reality, in creating and articulating basic values and development choices. The necessity of such a distinctive consideration stems from the view that the cultural phenomena in question are distinctive and particular; that cultural elements affect and relate to other elements in line with their own Islamic principles; that culture as such can be explained only „by itself“, and so forth. In this way, the analysis of the relationship man-society-culture may have a one-sided, or even simplified basis, since these relations are explained only within the linear, determining effect of Islam-based culture on man and society.

the interests and goals of the productive-reflective representation of elements of visual art, and conservative and/or traditional thought. It seems that on this occasion it is not possible to avoid either.

ILLUSTRATION ~ Gentile Bellini, *Homo islamicus – A Seated Scribe*; 1479-1481, reconstruction done on the basis of source from Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, USA. Reconstruction done on the basis of the said source in 2019.

ILUSTRACIJA ~ Gentile Bellini, *Homo islamicus – Sjedeći pisar*; 1479-1481., rekonstrukcija urađena na osnovu izvora iz Muzeja Isabella Stewart Gardner, Boston, SAD. Rekonstrukcija urađena na osnovu navedenog izvora 2019. godine.

³¹ Islam consists of the Divine law *Šarī'ah*, the spiritual path *Tarīqah* and Truth *Haqīqah*, which is the source of both Law and Path. It also includes many forms of science of the theological, philosophic, esoteric and legal nature that correspond to these basic dimensions, although not all of them can be treated as cognitive-theoretical footholds in the origin of the source for instructions for the effectuation of productive-reflective *qadar*.

ILUSTRACIJA – PRIZORI IZ SVAKODNEVNOG ŽIVOTA. Rekonstrukcija urađena na osnovu izvora: Qāsim al-Ḥusaynī al-'Arīdī iz Qazwīna, *Povijest sultana Sulejmana* od Sayyida Luqmana – Selim se susreće s osmanskim vojskom, donoseći tijelo svog oca Sulejmana u Beograd; Istanbul 1579.

ILLUSTRATION ~ SCENES FROM EVERYDAY LIFE. Reconstruction done on the basis of the source: Qāsim al-Ḥusaynī al-'Arīdī of Qazwīna, *History of Sultan Süleyman* by Sayyid Luqman – Selim meets the Ottoman army, bringing the body of his father Süleyman, at Belgrade; Istanbul 1579.

ILLUSTRATION ~ SCENES FROM EVERYDAY LIFE. Unknown author, *Miniature painting – illustrated manuscript*. Dār al Āthār al Islamiyyah (DAI) – The Al-Şabāḥ Collection, Kuwait. Reconstruction done on the basis of the said source in 2020.

ILUSTRACIJA ~ PRIZORI IZ SVAKODNEVNOG ŽIVOTA. Nepoznati autor, *Minijaturna slika – ilustrirani rukopis*. Dār al Āthār al Islamiyyah (DAI) – Kolekcija Al-Şabāḥ, Kuvajt. Rekonstrukcija urađena na osnovu navedenog izvora 2020. godine.

On the concept of the Islamic characterization of *productive-reflective discourse*

The first and widest-spread way of applying this concept is that for designating conditions of culture (*thaqāfa*), which stems from a broader religious code of learning, the ideas and views accompanying it (an affinity for and experience of *devoted believing*; the sensory component of a cognitive act), which is primarily recognized in the thematic and pictorial preoccupation with the topics and scenes of the „message of Islam.“³² This conception defined the position of the productive autonomy of the sacral/ornamental definition of precognitive assimilation, which defines it as a preoccupation with the „area of competence“, or aesthetic experience, and with standards regarding the requirements of „purity“ and the uniqueness of the medium as a means of the universal truths of Islam,³³ in the same ways as the inexpressible Divine Oneness encompasses the eternal diversity of His Creation.

It should be noted that compositionality, with certain present axioms that serve as a basis for establishing meaning by the fully expressed semantically aestheticized structure of the language used in *homo islamicus's*

³² By the „message (or presentation) of Islam“ Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradawi refers to everything that is said in the name of Islam aimed at inviting to Islam or teaching on Islam, regardless of the means and manner of expressing it. The Islamic message implies a great number of orientations that require enormous effort and a strong organizational system to *communicate the truth about Islam* in an original way.

Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradawi in a program of the Qatar TV channel Al Jazeera Balkans. Available at: <http://www.iltizam.org/tekstovi/read/2327>. Accessed on 23.9.2019.

³³ *Al-tawhīd* is the most significant fundamental concept in Islam, which refers to the ontological sublimity or transcendence of God, for God is present in the whole realm of the appearing world. Everything that is not Him – is created, non-transcendental, subject to laws of space and time. Nothing in the manifest world can be God or Divine in any sense, particularly in the ontological sense; *al-tawhīd*, as the essence of monotheism, denies it (anything and anyone cannot bear any resemblance to God the Supreme Unmatched).

It can be claimed that such a fundamental concept is not contrary to Muslim productive-reflective discourse nor to its enjoyment in beauty. Quite the opposite, *al-tawhīd* blesses beauty and promotes it, although absolute beauty is visible only in God and His revealed words. Thus, it can be deduced that *al-tawhīd* favors the creation of the form of productive-reflective *qadar* appropriate to its worldview.

Starting from the premise that there is no other God except Allah, *homo islamicus* adopted the belief that nothing in the manifest world can represent or express Him. It is for this reason that he *stylized/reduced* everything there is in the manifest world that he represents. In other words, he moved away from the manifest world as much as he could through linear and tonal stylization. In *homo islamicus's* hand, the procedure of stylization became the means of negation with which he says „No!“ to each detail in the manifest world – to make the means create itself. By simultaneously denying the naturalness of this stylization, he uses the visible planar form to express the negative aspect of *Shahada* (ar. *Shahādah* – „prerequisite for access into the religion that one is born, lives and dies with“), indeed, that nothing else is God but Allah. It can be claimed that *homo islamicus's Shahada* is the true equivalent of the denial of transcendence in nature.

Besides its purely religious significance, the *lā ilāha illā Allah* creed is significant in the area of productive-reflective *qadar*. In the Arabic alphabet, its alternating letters *alif* and *lā* form the basic pattern for any kind of ornamental of the formula which is, naturally, found in any place that Muslims reached. Both in ornamental planar forms and in architectural engravings, these important words are adorned with amazing interwoven filigree decorations, so that an uninformed person could hardly imagine that the essence of Islam is hiding behind them.

It should also be borne in mind that essential beauty in Islam is not relative, since it does not depend on the beholder. It is essential ontological beauty, rather than the emotions that it can possibly evoke. Such ontological beauty is difficult to grasp; however, for the sake of easier understanding it can be classified into three categories: genuine, initiating and false. Genuine beauty belongs to God and His existence, while initiating beauty implies the beauty of beings rather than Creator, though it also introduces one to the feeling of admiration for Divine existence. On the other hand, according to conservative-traditional thinkers, false beauty is manifested by enjoying the „beauty of creations“ as a creature, without bearing in mind that everything is God's Creation.

qadar/ṣinā'at, is based on the metaphysical understanding of truth.³⁴ When analyzing traditional Islamic thinking it is possible to understand that such a sensibility of truth³⁵ originates from a **spiritual tradition with traits of the beautiful** *akhlāq* (ar. pl *akhlāq*, sing. *khuluq*, *khulq* – „disposition, nature, character, good deed“) and that it reflects the universal beauty, *Inna Allaha jamilun wa yuḥibbu-l-jamāl* („Allah is beautiful, and thus He loves beauty“), **of abstract expression** (the surreal world of conditioned [created] reflection separated from actual facts; the negation of objectivity beyond human mind/belief), **of intellectual nature** (the way of contemplating the Creator, the world and human being based on the Revelation and the Prophet's tradition as passed-on [*naql*] heritage), **of mathematical interior** (reflection of spiritual creation in terms of concepts, understanding, ways of methodologies of utilization, even achievement of some goals), **of incomprehensible geometric methods** (e.g. the constructive value of *giriḥ* tiles³⁶), **and of the rhythm of symmetric shapes** (classified into three larger groups by rotational symmetry). By means of employed characteristic transformative procedures and their symbolic significance, pictorial forms *yield to* the planarity of the base by virtue of dominant lines that outline shapes, while color (or ink) is directly and evenly applied on the two-dimensional base so that the legibility of the strokes of the brush (or calligraphic pen) is almost absent. Such an area of human (*homo islamicus*) *qadar/ṣinā'at* can be described both as *ornamental*³⁷ and as *planar*³⁸ since it does not create any illusion of the depth of space by dividing the plane into zones or by a possible play of light and shade; rather, it only highlights the two-dimensionality of representation in the convergence toward causality. Even if glimpses of light and shade should appear in such solutions, their

³⁴ According to interpretation by all traditional monotheistic approaches to faith/religion, *faith is truth, while religion is essentially the search for God*. An analysis of the view of Ibn Rushd (Abū Walīd Muḥammad, latinized as: Averroes) views leads to the conclusion that one must distinguish between the literal sense and the explanation of a religious teaching since, as he explains, „[...] to adhere to the literal sense is the duty of the crowd; to search for the true interpretation, on the other hand, is the scholar's task, ... still, the philosopher has the right to derive from them, by interpretation, the hidden, deeper and more frequent meaning [...]“

Traditionalists advocate the view that truth is what it is, in the first and highest sense, being itself and, by analogy to being, any creature and judgment on that creature. In the highest sense, truth is everything that is, and as such it is the most universal category. Being is essentially one, true and good – the same was claimed by medieval philosophers, citing transcendentalism as the most general determinants of being. In this way, truth, transcendental truth, appears as the subject, as the indisputable foundation (*fundamentum inconcussum*) of all being and thinking. They believed that *being, one, true and good* are mutually interchangeable concepts and that it can be said that any being as a being is one, good, true and existing: *ens, unum, verum, bonum*, and some even added *pulchrum*, beautiful. In this sense, every creature is true, one and good if it corresponds to its concept, regardless of how insignificant it may otherwise be. Naturally, to be is not used here in a way analogous to the analogy of being (*analogia entis*), which also applies to *homo islamicus*, since it stems from the one, and the first and the highest creature, God himself.

Certainly, any derived or created creature is in a way, by its determination, also the negation of any other creature, since the initiating determination is, in a sense, negation as well (*omnis determinatio negatio est*) and therefore no creature is as perfect as being itself. The entire manifest world has this diminished being. Everything that is created is smaller than its Creator and this is the origin of non-truth, non-one and non-being.

For Ibn Rushd's views, see: Smilagić, Nerkez: *Europska godina Ibn Ruṣḍa – Ibn Rusd znameniti Averroes*; „Behar“ (internet journal), issue 38, IX-X 1998. Available at: <http://www.oocities.org/paris/bistro/1347/behar38f.html>. Accessed on 28.9.2019.

³⁵ In the empirical research conducted by recent science, *truth* has become both relative and completely inaccessible, while philosophical truth is always *a priori*, which is the background for all research, though it itself is not the object of empirical cognition. This *a priori* is the essence of philosophy as metaphysics. By his essence, *homo islamicus* is a seeker of truth – that is his definition, and according to traditionalists it is greater and more comprehensive than Aristotle's definition, which claims that he is a „rational living being“. It is also greater and more comprehensive than all the other, multifaceted definitions of man, since there is no *homo islamicus* without metaphysical, religious or scientific philosophical truth. Everything else in him is secondary and belongs to historical change and changes in worldview.

³⁶ See footnote 19. [*Giriḥ* (pers. *knot*) is a decorative Islamic geometric form used in architecture and handicraft.]

presence is limited to the contour-like repetition of the outlines of given shapes; it is a figural effect rather than a result of the surface „where not a single ray of Sun falls“. Compositions of geometric patterns that mark the character of such human actions are reflections of His attributes, while their intertwined and connected lines are the most direct expression of Unity, which consists of the inexhaustible diversity of the world.

The nature of medium in the productive-reflective representation of elements of visual art by precognitive assimilation determined in this way and oriented toward „loyalty to the Almighty“ becomes a paradigm of the reduction of symbolic aspects of the form, which consistently connects the exterior of its shapes (*ṣūrah*) with their inner meaning (*m'anā*)³⁹, and allows understanding of the spiritual definition of the character of this activity, thus confirming once again that Unity permeates the world of forms (geometricized, floral, zoomorphous, and so forth) which are seen not as mental abstractions but rather as reflections of certain archetypes within the universe, human mind and soul, i.e. the imaginal world (*mundus imaginalis*).⁴⁰

³⁷ We use the term *ornamental qadar/ṣinā'at* to designate a compositional set of ornamental character defined by forms/constructs of planar nature, characteristic for *homo islamicus*'s original visual expression. *Ornament* as a construct can be painted, plastically shaped, embroidered, engraved in metal or achieved in any other technique of handiwork. Its visual quality is seen in the rhythmical sequences of geometric, floral, zoomorphous and so forth motifs with pronounced and clearly emphasized dominants.

Ornamental expressions of *homo islamicus* can be described as the first alphabet of human thought in conflict with space, aimed at praising the Almighty. Due to all the rhythms of combinations it offers, even the simplest theme of ornament, the bending of a linear form (association with a leafy twig) configures a geometricized shape of whirling and ripples of a simple construct; negating objectivity beyond the human mind aimed at presenting a completely new, stylized visual dimension.

³⁸ *Planarity* refers to the compositional set dominated by the linear character of outlining shapes, where colors are applied evenly (without coloristic modulation; achieving the illusion of volume using complementary hues) on the base (surface) without the possibility to read brush strokes. With respect to space and mass, the applied ink (Chinese ink) or color has the character of masses thinned into a plane, and they are therefore planar rather than planes. Planarity is a characteristic of the pure language of visual arts based on *homo islamicus*'s sense of height and width without any need to add a sense of depth, i.e. to move from the two-dimensional (planar) to three-dimensional (plastic). The planar way of expressing constructs/shapes and compositional values establishes a planar visual order – a sequence or field that yields to the planarity of the base.

A line is created by the movement of a dot and as such it marks the path of its movement on the plane, and we can therefore speak of a planar drawing. Linear drawing is one where the line as a basic element of visual art prevails. Due to its character (thin, thick, long, short, sharp, not sharp, continuous, dashed, broken, transparent, dense, unvarying, varying) and meaning (contour), line is the most direct of all visual art elements that express the character of *homo islamicus*'s *qadar* and his spiritual state.

³⁹ In Arabic, the term typically used for spirituality is *rūḥāniyyat*, while in Persian it is *mā'nawīyyat*. Jalāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad Balkhī always discusses the exterior aspect of an object as its form (*ṣūrah*), and its inner reality as its meaning (*m'anā*).

⁴⁰ According to Islamic theologians, the imaginal world springs from the driver of soul, i.e. activities of the soul which produce or create images of objects (*ālam al-mithāl*). Existences of the imaginal world have cognitive being or, in other words, they are form without matter, which are in their essence separated from the Earthly and Sensory world, though at the same time connected with it.

From the standpoint of perceptibility and having a form and quantity, the imaginal world is associated with the material world but has no other features of matter, such as variability, temporality and spatiality. From this viewpoint, it is thus more similar to the World of Mind (*ālam al-aql*). Since this world has many resemblances with the power of human imagination, it is named *separated imagination* (*al-khayāl al-munfaṣil*), while the human power of imagination is named *joined imagination* (*al-khayāl al-munfaṣil*). Joined imagination implies human sensitivity which stores sensory forms due to which *homo islamicus*, under certain circumstances of productive-reflective *qadar*, conceives and composes new constructs, storing them in the planar form. (The term *imagination* instead of *imagination* implies a meaning that differs from *fantasy*.)

Still, when we discuss *homo islamicus*'s *qadar/ṣinā'at* within his productive-reflective *qadar* we cannot ignore the state of *contemplation*, where his mind focuses on spiritual reality, sinking into it until he forgets any other reality (such as *sufi* or *dervish* – Islamic believers involved in the nurture of soul [*nafs*] aimed at the worship of Allah and abandoning decoration and the delights of this world).

For Plato and Aristotle, this meaning of the ripening of truth and observation of an object meant intellectual cognition as opposed to activity, while Plotinus and the Neo-platonists understood contemplation as an integral part of the emanation process whereby One emanates other hypostases (mind and soul).

Such a world is *homo islamicus*'s real world, more real than the world of witnessing and sensory experiences;⁴¹ it rises above the world of witnessing and is below the world of pure reason. Thus, the imaginal world is the mediating world where *homo islamicus*, through unconditional faith, surpasses the manifest world, observing the effects of the reflection in the form of creation – *afterimage*⁴² by means of special sensitivity (imaginal ability – *khayāl*) and adjusting to acceptable symbolic meanings, i.e. by creating a reflection of the world of witnessing – a reflection of the imaginal world (*'ālam al-khajāl* or *al-khayāl*). He strives toward such forms as exclusive value or *aesthetic form of virtue and integrity*, which in turn qualifies the practice of *qadar/ṣinā'at* as *homo islamicus*'s response to **truth**⁴⁴ and as a system of possibly unlimited temporal determination without the author's stamp, i.e. without authorship, which is of secondary importance. It is a two-dimensional artistic act which is aimed at explicit demystification of the act of ornamental-precognitive assimilation and whereby *homo islamicus* returns to the natural aspiration to meet (return to) his Lord (which is manifested in serving, learning and love) by endeavoring to fulfill the undertaken task as a sincere Divine servant, slave, subject, and so forth (*'abd*) on the Earth.

As opposed to the first (sacral/ornamental) meaning, the general conservative-traditional evocatio⁴⁵ and representation of the whole spectrum of potential productive-reflective discourse based on the foundation of the pictoriality of Islamic messages based on faith (precognitive synthesis),⁴⁶ the second, more differentiated concept of Islamic characterization of productive-reflective discourse is – in terms of value – focused on

⁴¹ According to the explanation of Islamic thinkers, *sensory experiences* are based on the source and foundation of the world of nature, which is liable to destruction without a defined aspect of constancy. Since Islamic theologians rank these experiences as the lowest, they are characterized as a passive world compared to higher worlds of spiritual journey (the imaginal world and the world of mind). According to established Islamic philosophical teaching, there are four layers of the world: *Nāsūt* from ar. word *nās* – „people“, or *'ālam al-ṭabī'ah* – the „natural world“, where there time and space exist; *Malakūt* or *'ālam al-mithāl* – the „ideal world“, where there is no matter but there are shapes; *Jabarūt* or *'ālam al-ma'nā* – the „world of notions“, where there is no matter nor shapes; and *Lāhūt* or *'ālam al-ilāh* – the „transcendental world“, which is beyond human cognition and touch.

⁴² *Afterimage* –the reflection of eternal ideas in sensory objects (Plato); an image which, under favorable conditions, emerges immediately after the experience of the image of an object has ceased (viewing the image), i.e. after the optical stimulation has ceased, and which lasts for a short time (viewing the afterimage).

⁴³ By using the word *imaginal* we avoid the meaning of „illusory“ which in modern speech is associated with the term *imagination*, although the latter word can also be redefined so as to encompass its older meaning, which was distinguished from fantasy.

⁴⁴ See notes 31 and 32.

⁴⁵ See footnote 6.

What characterizes conservatism in *homo islamicus*, with his orientation to sacral productive-reflective *qadar/ṣinā'at*, is the invariability of the conception of action with respect to time and trends in the society. In addition, he has been granted a sense of belonging, identity and stability, which encourages him to develop a sense of duty and personal discipline, and to defend morality as the foundation of the community he acts in.

⁴⁶ *Precognitive synthesis*, i.e. this lexical unit refers to the process where *homo islamicus* deliberately builds and establishes his own cultural practice of *qadar/ṣinā'at* which strives to imitate all perfect Divine attributes pertaining to inner purity, adherence to *Sunnah*, the moral upgrading of the human soul, the elevation of a human being by honesty, sincerity and humility, as well as the understanding of the inner meaning and teaching of Islam and the understanding of *Tawḥīd* in this meaning, all in order to incorporate them in corresponding constructive values of productive-reflective disposition. It should be noted that, from the standpoint of the theory of knowledge, synthesis is a necessary step of the manifestation of cognitive activity of the mind, and is inevitably preceded by analysis. Besides, the synthesis sends the process back, and by using it, *homo islamicus* attempts to re-connect constituents that he received in the process of analysis, whereby he attempts to create and compose a new artistic whole.

singling out the „parallel“ traditional⁴⁷ tendency which points to another and different line, i.e. its focus on self-critical procedures directed towards challenging the limits of transitive activity (*action transiens*) within the profane collaborative-cognitive identification. (To be continued)

ILLUSTRATION ~ Illuminated double page Qur'an. Ilhanid Monarchy (Ilkhanate) made for ilkanid ruler Uljaytu. Persia, Baghdad or Mosul 14th century. In the background: Part of the tools (ar. *'alāt*) of a Muslim calligrapher and illuminator.

Indeed, by means of precognitive synthesis *homo islamicus* elevates basic expressive elements to the level of the general, and specific attributes of concepts to abstract ones, and sums up all the variety under a single act of artistic characterization. In this way, by means of the conscious use of the adopted appropriate elementary means of expression he reaches complex expressive possibilities.

⁴⁷ See footnote 7.

In the Islamic sense, *homo islamicus* functions in tradition, which thus essentially determines him during his historical productive-reflective *qadar*. This rootedness in tradition also allows him to adhere to Islam under the auspices of the entire civilization he belongs to, and to lead, with this civilizational structure, the kind of dialogue which reveals to him moments crucial for the actualization of his own being and forms of action - *qadar*/*šinā'at*.

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