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CALLIGRAPHY, AESTHETICS AND CULTURAL IDENTITY: QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM ILLUSTRATED MANUSCRIPTS

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ABSTRACT

The study delves into calligraphic illustrated manuscripts with a focus on both Western and Eastern cultures during medieval times exploring the evolution and creative potential of calligraphy as an ornamentation form across different regions and historical periods. This qualitative research primarily examines calligraphic manuscripts from Arabic to the Abbasid, and Omayyad, addressing key questions regarding the development of illumination art and calligraphy, connections between Christian and Muslim manuscripts, and the distinctions between Islamic Calligraphy and biblical typography. The data was collected by employing the qualitative method through conducting 4 in-depth interviews, with 2 traditional and 2 contemporary calligraphers, and 15 online open-ended questionnaires with the calligraphers. Also, Christian and Muslim illustrated manuscripts were analyzed through the discourse analysis method. This research findings shed light on the complex relationship between calligraphy, culture, and aesthetics, offering a comprehensive exploration of this intricate art

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form's significance and evolution. The study contributes valuable insights to the literature on calligraphy manuscripts, emphasizing the need for a deeper understanding of calligraphy's history and conceptual ties as an aesthetic art form.

INTRODUCTION

The art of Calligraphy is a testament to the human inclination to communicate, express creativity, and convey emotions through written words, which has played a significant role in the development and preservation of cultural heritage across the world. The exquisite beauty of calligraphy lies not only in its aesthetic qualities but also in its close relationship to the history, identity, and cultures of the societies that have fostered it. The convergence of calligraphy, culture, and aesthetics generated rich information and understanding about the evolution of civilizations. Calligraphy is a complex and artistically beautiful art form that has woven itself into the cultural fabric of both Eastern and Western civilizations, transcending time and space. Throughout human history, calligraphy has played a key role in fostering connections between individuals and their past, communicating current happenings, and safeguarding the knowledge of former generations for future generations (Classen, 2019). The subsequent discussion highlights the essence of these distinct yet interconnected traditions, shedding light on the shared values that underpin calligraphy as an art form.

In this backdrop, this study aims to disentangle the complex relationship between calligraphy and culture by analyzing the ways in which social contexts have shaped the development of calligraphic styles and techniques in both the Western and Eastern worlds. We seek to foster a deeper understanding of the enduring impact of calligraphic manuscripts on art, culture, and society by exploring the convergences and divergences in the usage of calligraphy within these two cultural spheres.

Historically, in Islam, calligraphy, which is derived from the Greek words Calligraphy (o kallos, meaning "beauty," and graphs, "writing,") has been a unique terrain because the iconoclastic tradition of Islam has sometimes discouraged any figurative imagery of the divine, making calligraphy one of the very rare examples of representational art in Islam (McIntosh, 2017). It has been established that calligraphy means to write beautifully and illumination is generally termed as ornamentation of written text borders in Muslim societies. One can find separate illuminated book fronts as well which only contain the name and subject of the book or in the case of the Quran (the holy book of Muslims), in which text is written in the middle of the highly embellished page. This style of writing text in the middle of illuminated borders was considered the beauty of the books which were handwritten in all cultures of the world till modern times (Blair & Bloom, 2017).

Thus, in this manner, the term Islamic illumination is the use of gold to paint geometric organic and floral forms and motifs to decorate the pages of the Quran and books of poetry which are usually found in a geometric grid that is usually hidden with the painting and illuminating. Geometric patterns that repeat, convey, and represent harmony that permeates all of existence as well as unity within diversity. Illuminated manuscripts are handwritten books decorated

with painted images of expensive materials, usually gold or silver. Animal skin, usually from a calf, sheep, or goat, was used to make the pages.

Roots and Origin of Islamic Calligraphy and Manuscript

After the dawn of Islam, over the Arabian Peninsula, the written words in the form of calligraphy resumed a level of significance never seen before. Muslims view the Quran in Arabic script as the tangible manifestation of God's words because the divine revelations were given to the Prophet Muhammad in Arabic which were later assembled by his followers in the book form called Quran. The special attention to keeping the religious text in Arabic was the main reason which helped in the development of more than 400 styles in writing Arabic Calligraphy which is a unique feature that is specifically associated with this language (Blair & Bloom, 2017). Every region puts a different approach to writing Arabic script which was an outcome of local writing styles that got merged while copying and writing sacred text thus forming a new style of writing which acquires new names also (Child, 1976).

The beginning of oral tradition gave rise to plenty of devoted *Hafiz e Quran* (the ones who would learn the Revelation by heart) as well. Among the companions, those with literacy served as the Prophet's scribes and were tasked with writing down the Revelations on parchment, stone tablets, palm branch ribs, camel ribs, shoulder blades, and wooden boards. They were the first to summon soon after the *Wahi* [Revelations] was received.

An inscription from Nabataea was found in Saudi Arabia's AlUla. This dialect of Aramaic is thought to have given rise to the Arabic alphabet. In Yemen, in the southern Arabian Peninsula, the first Arabic script, Arabic Musnad, which sprang from Aramaic Nabataean, was found.



Figure 1: Hijazi script (Codex Şan'ā' DAM, 2009)

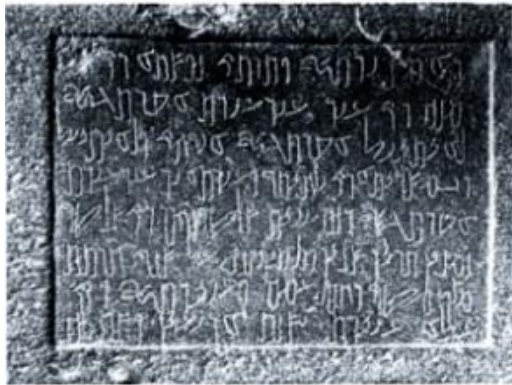


Figure 2: Nabataean tomb inscription from Madeba
McIntosh, M.A. (2017)



Figure 3: Alula; Saudi Arabia (Akerman, 2020)

The ultimate version of this angular writing emerged circa 500 BC, and it was in use until the sixth century. The name comes from the Hijaz region, which also contains Medina and the Holy City of Mecca. It is an Arabic writing style that is square and angular with just a hint of curvature. It was already in use at the emergence of Islam and is the earliest type of Arabic calligraphy (McIntosh, 2017).



Figure 1: Jazm Script, Saudia (Akerman, 2020)

The original manuscripts of the Qur'an were written in the Jamz script, which was used in many regional variants such as the Hiri, Anbari, Makki, and Madani. The most notable ones were the last two, which bore the names of two cities: *Makki* for Mecca and *Madani* for Medina. They were written in two distinct styles: Mabsut, which was elongated and straight-lined, and Muqawwar, which was easier to write in cursive (McIntosh, 2017).

The verses of the Qur'an were recorded in fragments and scattered throughout the world in the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad. The instruction for a compilation effort to be made to gather and combine all the verses of the Qur'an into one single book was not given until after the death of the Prophet, during the tenure of the First Caliphate Abu Bakar. The Quran was not successfully assembled and produced into a genuine book to be disseminated for the use of all Muslims until a few more years later, during the Caliphate of Umar al-Khattab. The circumstance is adequately described in the following excerpt, which serves to illustrate the events that took place:

During the Caliphate of Abu Bakr, seventy companions of the Prophet, who had memorized the Quran, were killed in the battle of Yamama in the twelfth year of the Hijrah (633 AD). This unfortunate event caused great anxiety and apprehension amongst the Prophet's senior companions, particularly Umar, who urged Abu Bakr to have the scattered fragments of the Quran collected in one volume. After initial hesitation, Abu Bakr agreed to the suggestion and commissioned Zayd ibn Thabit, who had served as the prophet's secretary, to execute this task. Zayd transferred on parchment, which was made from a calf hide or goat skin, the verses of the Quran from stone slabs, palm branches, and shoulder blades (Momin, 2012).

Later, Hazrat Usman compiled the Qur'an in the order that is used today. He defined the Revelations as recorded on paper during the times of the Prophet living in *Makkah* (Mecca) and then Madina after migration from Makkah. Since then, the same codes have been used all across the world to copy and preserve the Qur'an. Due to the Qur'an's significance in defining a Muslim's identity and its impact on Islamic culture, Islamic Arts based on Islamic Calligraphy have been influenced by the Qur'an.

The Arabic script is ideal for calligraphic embellishment because it has a wide variety of letters that can be altered in size and shape. Because the Prophet Muhammad forbade idolatry, Islamic creative traditions mainly rely on the use of geometric, floral, and textural patterns. This is seen as forbidding the use of human and animal forms in literature, textiles, and architecture. Islamic manuscripts with illustrations and calligraphy have long been highly esteemed. The first Qur'anic manuscripts were produced in the seventh century at the order of the caliph Abu Bakr. Soon after, aesthetic factors started to take center stage. The Arabic script offers a wide variety of letters that can be altered in size and shape, making it an ideal canvas for calligraphic embellishment.

Long before the illuminations were introduced in Muslim sacred text, one can trace the elements of rhythm and harmony in words that might be the calligrapher's spiritual understanding of the holy message. The same understanding further developed and takes a form of unique Islamic symbolism that still fascinates the beholders. It narrates a philosophical approach to the reciter that is mystical and soothing at the same time. At that time a culture of acceptance towards symbolic meanings and divine theories explained in them was the main reason for the further progress of this approach. The same thought was carried towards every region of the world by Sufi practitioners. This is a prominent defining line between Muslim and Christian sacred manuscripts. Although Christians say remain scribes found hundreds and maybe thousands of biblical texts the fame and diversity Arabic text embraced are matchless as compared to any other language to date (Ansorge, 2016). Anthony Welch has spoken as follows:

Written from right to left, the Arabic script at its best can be a flowing continuum of ascending verticals, descending curves, and temperate horizontals, achieving a measured balance between static perfection of individual form and paced and rhythmic movement. There is great variability in the form: words and letters can be compacted to a dense knot or drawn out to a

great length; they can be angular or curving; they can be small or large. The range of possibilities is almost infinite, and the scribes of Islam labored with a passion to unfold the promise of the script (as quoted in Mahmood, 2021).

The oldest known Arabic document, Al-Nam-Rah, is dated 328 AD and is engraved on a stone that a French archaeologist named Dussaud found close to Damascus. Many academics hail it as unmistakable proof that the modern Arabic script descended from the late Nabataean script because of its clear cursive writing.

Arabesques: Symbolism in Muslim Art and Aesthetics

Islamic art inherited from its early Byzantine and Sasanian ancestors a visual language that included scrolling patterns of floral and plant motifs which became so associated with Islamic art that they earned the name "arabesques" in the West. The Islamic world is largely dry, scorching, and devoid of flora. The early versions of the Qur'an were embellished with decorative patterns and motifs derived from nature. The natural elements such as leaves and flowers are modified into simple abstract forms. The patterns were extracted from geometrical shapes such as circles, ovals, squares, and cubes, and represent meanings that were set by scholars of medieval times. The different symbolic patterns including the octagon symbolize the image of the perfect man and the hexagon shows the sky, *Arsh*. The element of symbolism supported complex ideas and abstract thoughts (Schimmel, 1984). Symbolism in Muslim art discloses many aspects of mysticism. These symbols generally represent meanings that are beyond ordinary understanding, for example, the number of circles or square motifs on the border of a page represents the number of *ayats* (verses) on that page. In an old manuscript, the translation of the Qur'an in Persian [in *Khat e Nastalique*] is written as a design element along with Arabic text [in *Khat e Naskh*] which represents a taste for minute details.

The repetition of geometric forms and motifs in Muslim art is an element, which reflects harmony and balance. The element of repetition in Muslim art represents the idea of objects in nature in abundance. Further, this repetition reminds one of *zikr* [chanting the name of Allah] which is considered one of the important basic exercises for Sufi practices. These geometric patterns helped in the making of intricate motifs called arabesque. The use of arabesque in calligraphy left the beholder wonderstruck. The intricate borders of calligraphies and vivid color combinations provide a lot to explore within a composition.

Calligraphy and Manuscript Designs

The demand for illuminated Qur'ans initially gave rise to the calligraphic tradition, which was later utilized to adorn both sacred and secular artwork throughout the Islamic world. Calligraphy frequently coexisted with (or was incorporated into) paintings in books (Child, 1976). Different regions of the Islamic world developed significant court art traditions involving calligraphy and manuscript embellishment.

Omayyad Manuscripts

The center of Islamic power was moved from the Arabian Peninsula to Syria under Mu'awiya's rule (661–80). The significant historical city of Damascus was turned under Mu'awiya's successors into the center of an empire that stretched from the Atlantic to the Indus River. Islamic art is frequently regarded as having its roots in the Umayyad era. The late antique classical naturalistic tradition, which had been popular on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, had a significant aesthetic influence. The more formal styles created by the Byzantines and Sasanians served as a complement to this as well. However, the artist created new shapes, methods, and aesthetic standards that set their works apart from those created earlier. Thus, immediately after the fall of the Umayyad kingdom, a new form of artistic expression that was essentially Islamic arose through a process of acceptance, adaptation, and creation.



Figure 2: Omayyad Manuscripts(Maydane, 2019)

Abbasid Manuscripts

During the Abbasid period, Baghdad produced some of the earliest examples of masterful calligraphy (758-1258.) These works display a Byzantine influence (Mahmood, 2021). In the first three centuries of the Abbasid era, Baghdad and Samarra served as the economic and cultural hubs of the Islamic world. The repetition of abstract geometric or faux-vegetal forms, subsequently known in the West as "arabesque," as well as a novel method of carving surfaces known as the "beveled style" were both commonly utilized as wall decorations in Samarra.



Figure 3: Amajur Qur'an before 9th century C.E. (264 AH Cambridge University Library) (Leal, B. 2021)

The structure of Qur'anic texts also changed. A new type of script sometimes referred to as Kufic after the city of Kufa, but which was extensively employed across the Abbasid caliphate, became popular as a result of the focus placed on the lovely proportions of calligraphy. Verse or group-marking symbols were more prevalent in the ninth and tenth centuries. These symbols were typically circular shapes embellished with loops, swirls, or petals, and in more expensive manuscripts, they were illuminated in gold, as shown above. Amajur, the Abbasid ruler of Damascus in the 870s, had the Qur'an produced for him, and he gave it to a mosque in Tyre, Lebanon. With the exquisitely stylized letter shapes, the golden verse marker, and the lack of all the diacritical marks now employed in written Arabic, this script has the effect of being both a work of visual art and a piece of text: 'O ye who believe, persevere in patience and constancy; in such perseverance strengthen each other and fear God that ye may prosper!' Ben Yussuf Library, Marrakesh, Morocco. Shehab Believes:

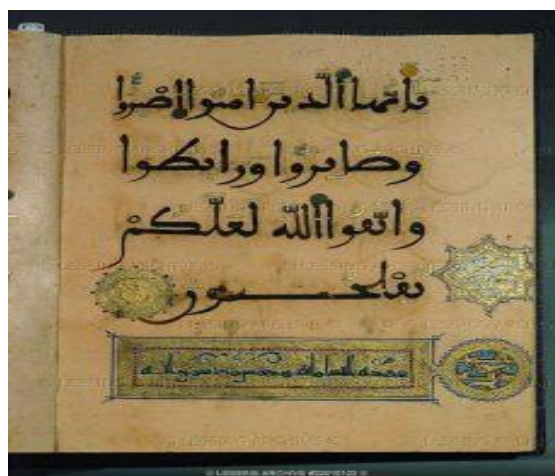


Figure 4: Qur'an manuscript, 13th century. Sura 200 (McIntosh, 2017)



Figure 8: In the Bibi-Khanym Mosque in Samarkand, (Akerman, 2020)



Figure 5: Sheikh Hamdullah, 15th and 16th centuries (Akerman, 2020)

The second one was decorative. Because zoomorphic and human representations were not accepted in religious spaces, calligraphy and geometric motifs, which we call Arabesque, were key to decorating internal spaces (as quoted in Akerman, 2020: chap 3).

Methodology

The goal of this qualitative study is to explore the diverse array of calligraphic illustrated manuscripts from Muslim and Christian traditions. The study seeks to explore the historical development, creative elements, and cross-cultural interactions within the domain of calligraphy as an ornamentation form by utilizing a combination of in-depth interviews, online surveys, and discourse analysis of the illuminated manuscripts. In order to gain an in-depth comprehension of the topic, the research involved interacting with a heterogeneous group of participants belonging to different educational and economic backgrounds by conducting four in-depth interviews; two with traditional and two with contemporary artists. Traditional artists had solid background knowledge of historical calligraphic methods while contemporary artists hold the modern perspective on the art form. In addition, the data was also gathered from fifteen calligraphers through online questionnaires in an effort to get a wider range of perspectives on the topic.

The purpose of the in-depth interviews was to obtain comprehensive narratives as well as expert insights from the selected calligraphers. Interview topics included the calligraphers' perspectives on the evolution of calligraphy, how it has influenced traditions and culture, and their insights on the culture and aesthetic value of calligraphy manuscripts. The purpose of the online questionnaires was to obtain a wide range of viewpoints and lived experiences from an additional set of calligraphers. The questionnaire covered topics such as geographical differences in calligraphy, the influence of religious and cultural backgrounds, and perspectives on the evolution of calligraphy as an art form. Discourse analysis was applied to Christian and Muslim illustrated manuscripts, allowing for an extensive review of the texts, symbols, and visual components. This method aimed to identify underlying themes, stylistic variations, and cultural ties among the manuscripts.

Rigorous qualitative analysis was performed on the information collected through questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and discourse analysis. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurrent themes, patterns, and linkages in the texts and narratives.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Discourse Analysis: Comparison of Muslim and Christian Illuminations

Considering the fact that in the Christian religion representation of humans was never forbidden. Thus, a great deal of artistic input can be seen in the portrayal of biblical themes. Western art owed a lot to the era of Christian religious art in the field of visual arts. For this reason, the written text was never treated as

spiritual guidance and explained the religious philosophy as it was practiced and evident in Muslim societies.

In Eastern societies, Calligraphy can also be seen in Japanese and Chinese cultures. One can trace the element of elegance and aesthetic approach in their script and compositions. So, it might be the reason that most Islamic societies are located in the eastern region thus this tendency can also be traced due to the natural bend toward documenting the written text. The natural flare associated with religious aptitude gave rise to the most beautiful written records on paper which can be seen as artistic narratives that are termed illuminated manuscripts. Eastern culture adores writing as a craft. Recently, western art has been reviewing this aspect as an art form. Typography was not considered an art form a century before. Now the ever-changing art scene is introducing many fresh approaches in terms of doing and understanding the art. Talking about the early age of Christianity, it is already discussed that they did their best in human representation in terms of religious subjects. But Islam strictly forbids human representation so ultimately the written text was used to spread religious messages instead of paintings and sculptures on religious topics.

Reviewing a few biblical and Muslim illuminated manuscripts will further maintain the authenticity of the argument that believed in the representation of high religious philosophy on paper in Muslim calligraphic manuscripts as compared to Christian illuminated biblical manuscripts. Although there are many examples from secular texts, this research paper focuses on religious texts from medieval times.



Here are two examples from Qur'an and Bible which are placed together for comparison. There one can see that the Bible is well crafted and well bound with glittering illuminated borders. The height of artistry is evident in terms of color scheme and composition. But keep the fact in mind that this document was only for high-rank Christian religious persons i.e., Pop and the religious personalities working under him. One page shows two-figure compositions. The upper half shows Mary with her baby and the lower half composition shows a group of people sitting in a close environment. This composition is the illustration of the text from the bible on the next page. The border around the

text reminds the outline of a church which allows a viewer to believe that the center of religious fulfillment can only be found in the Church. It was an effort to engage the reciter with the concrete reality of the Church as a binding force to understand the religion (Ansorge, 2016). This copy of the Bible belonged to Germany from the 14th century.

The second example is an image from a copy of the Qur'an. It belonged to the Fatimid period. The border is dealt with excellent elegance and intricacy. The verses show the first sura the h of the Qur'an "Al- Fatiha". This copy seemed to be in poor condition which confirms that it was read more often in comparison to the copy of the Bible (Rajkowski, 2015). It shows that these Qur'anic illuminations are not only for decorative purposes but were made for the reader to engage with the sacred message written on paper with the concept of all glory and beauty of the universe and good deeds described in the sacred text. These two examples from the Bible and Qur'an further enlighten us about the unique approach of Muslims to text as compared to the Bible. Again, human representation is vital and text revolves around it. The page from the Qur'an is simple Kufi Maghrabi khat in gold lettering that presents a soothing effect to the viewer.



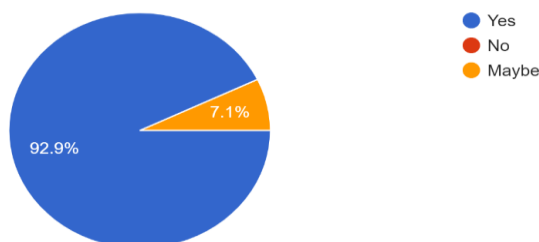
Figure 12: Blue Quran [Kufi] 9-10 century Fatimid Period (Akerman, 2020)



Figure 13: David on a split screen, like a modern film phone call (Keefe, 2022)

Perspectives of Muslim Calligraphers: Calligraphy and Illuminated Manuscript

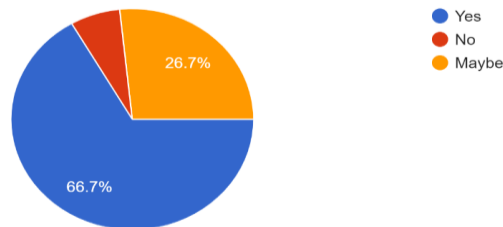
In response to the online Google forms, a question was asked if you have any affiliation with calligraphy script writing. The response was as under:



92.9% of practicing calligraphers claim that they have a religious affiliation with this profession. Calligraphy appears to be the most preminent of all the

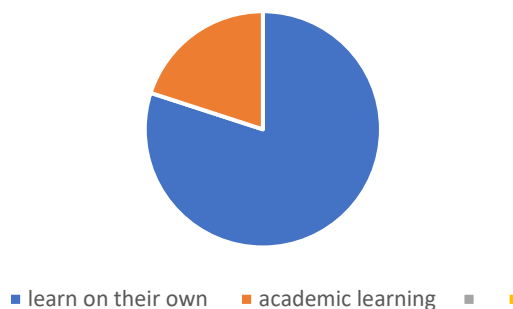
artistic disciplines the Islamic world has produced. Mosques worldwide proudly display the shahada and the bismillah, which are closely associated with Islam. In Islam, calligraphy is held in the highest regard. according to Islamic belief: God “taught with the pen, taught man that which he knew not” (Qur'an 96:4). It is understandable why writing is valued as a visual form of expression of faith (Akerman, 2020). In practicing calligraphy religious affiliation plays a vital role.

Calligraphy owes a great deal to the sacred in terms of its subject matter because of the production of Qur'anic illuminations. Qur'an, as compared to other books, is a unique book that is copied time and again in large numbers. The Qur'anic illuminations are marvelous and fulfill the merits of artistry. A copy of the Qur'an written in gold lettering, decorated with intricate arabesque is no doubt a piece of art. These copies of the Qur'an were kept as precious possessions and were not usually used for recitation purposes. Sometimes these Qur'ans were written *tabbarukan* [for gaining spiritual satisfaction] and were presented to *mudrassas* [religious schools] and mosques [Gohar Qalam, 2005].



Practicing an art form comes from the inner. It has a deep influence on society. 80% of the respondents learn calligraphy on their own having a religious affiliation with it.

Calligraphy learning



In response to a question, does Western calligraphic illumination influence Islamic calligraphic illumination? 33.3% of respondents claim that yes western illumination design influences Islamic designs, on the other hand, 26.7% of respondents claim that Western design does not have any influence on Muslim calligraphic illumination design. The word commonly used for illumination in Muslim societies is called *Tehzeeb* as Qureshi defines it:

It originated from *zahab*. This is an Arabic word that means gold. In this manner, the meaning of *Tehzeeb* is called gold plating or gilding (Irfan Qureshi, 2022).



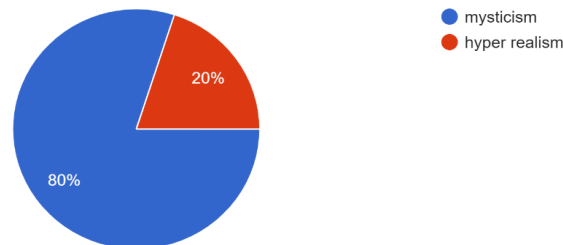
Figure 14: Muslim calligraphic illumination design (Keefe, 2022)



Figure 15: (Dervish, 2013)

The left illuminated manuscript is from the Book of Hours, the bible. The right Illuminated manuscript is from Abu dervish, the holy Qur'an. In the comparison of both images, one can identify the forms and features of manuscripts. Western calligraphers focus on text illumination and pictorial representation more than the idea. Their holy book was not accessible to the general public. It was in the hands of pops and they tell with their perspectives. Only monks, pops, and wealthy people afford to illuminate the early manuscripts of Bibles (Hasson, 2011).

The Islamic calligraphy shows the main focus was on calligraphy script. So, people can first read the script. The small geometric illumination around the script does not overshadow the actual text.

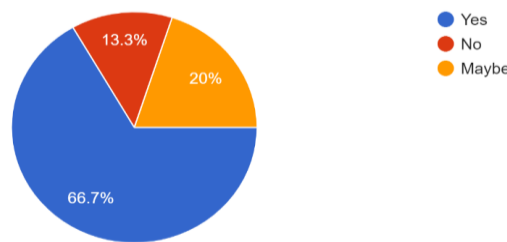


Westerns focus on hyper-realism. Renaissance movement focuses to adhere the minute details, hyperrealism also refers to the final piece's incorporation of ethereal lighting and shading techniques to increase the degree of reality shown in the image. The visual elements closest to the image's front extend considerably beyond the canvas's front view plane. One of the interviewees says that Westerners took the bible as a decorative book. Rather than a religious book. The focus was on decoration more than the script. In the Qur'an, calligraphy of the text was the prior focus. The geometric patterns were the second priority (personal communication; Aug 20, 2022).

Interviewee 4 claims that, In the time of Hazrat Umer bin Abdul Aziz, Masjid-e-Nabwi was expanded, and Muslim countries funded it. Calligraphers and illuminators come from around the world. Some Irani craft man's made pictures

and then he defines that imagery is forbidden and he says that work around motifs leaves as decoration purpose. So, the term *Tehzeeb* came from there (personal communication; Aug 17, 2022).

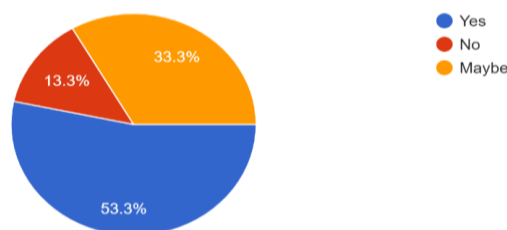
Muslims established their distinct art style, which adapts the existing art forms rather than adopting them. Along with Christianity and Judaism, Islam is one of the three most widely practiced monotheistic religions in the world (personal communication; Aug 17, 2022). Islamic calligraphy has emerged as a distinctively original aspect of Islamic culture as a result of the art form's close ties to the Qur'an and the distrust of realistic art as idolatry.



While doing calligraphy page division is one of the most important steps. Calculation of pages and planning of design and calligraphy is one of the core steps. As to frame calligraphy art and floral patterns, every geometric design begins with a circle. This is how calligraphy primarily derives from pure geometry. The most elaborately adorned areas of the building are those that are most accessible to observers. The fundamental idea is to create patterns of Islamic components through repetition. One of the interviewees in response to the same question claims that:

Page design is always important. I divide the paper according to Ayat and then plan it, so it doesn't cross the borders. All measurement depends on the Qalam size (kat) (personal communication; Aug 20, 2022).

A question arises in response to the above statement, is ornamentation necessary with calligraphy script? 53.3% of respondents' calligraphers say yes ornamentation is necessary with calligraphy. 13.3% responded that it is not important to do ornamentation with calligraphy.



The approach of illuminations in both societies shows a very different approach. In Christian society the word for a person who writes beautifully is Scribe. This

style was a skill and a craft. It was never taken up as a source of personal enlightenment through the word as compared to Islam where the sacred text is believed as the word of Allah Almighty and it was always used for spiritual enlightenment. The element of symbolism devised from nature and popularly known as arabesque is the beautiful art expression presented in Muslim art.

Besides this fact, the Muslims adapted and developed their distinct art style with the name of calligraphy. Art of beautiful writing with flowers and geometric patterns in it. The researcher comes across some valuable findings. Contrary to that concept, in Muslim art, the relation of a human being with his creator is developed through the word. The significance of words and their understanding always had importance in the life of a Muslim. The element of seeking spiritual guidance from sacred text always is associated with the art of calligraphy. The tradition of writing the Qur'an started in the life of Prophet Muhammad. He appreciated those who wrote it beautifully and decorated the manuscripts. So, the scene of competition develops during that time. People started exploring and finding ways to decorate the holy Qur'an. *Hijazi, Makki, Madni*, and other initial scripts were used in manuscripts but the term Islamic calligraphy was first designed and developed by Hazrat Ali in Kufa. The first official Qur'anic script was Kufic. All the previous fonts were with names of cities and the people who wrote them.

CONCLUSION

This study delves into how the art of calligraphy has a charismatic and spellbinding effect on ordinary viewers beyond time and space. In illuminations all the symbols represent meanings. These meanings affect the calligrapher and his understanding which is clearly shown in a calligraphic composition. The text was never dealt with as a lifeless motif. The words in these compositions were molded according to different calligraphic styles in such a way that these became the material representation of the voice. While considering the subject matter of a calligraphic composition, sound also plays an important role because the text has a close association with communication. It also shows an association of Muslim society with oral tradition where reading the Qur'an in a loud voice is appreciated by an audience. One [Muslim] can also recite loudly alone with some protocols.

If one considers calligraphic letters, every letter has its visual and verbal character. Every letter shows progress in the script. Sometimes calligraphic compositions were developed by repetition of a single letter. In old calligraphic books, these are the practice sheets by master calligraphers for beginners. In recent times these kinds of compositions are treated as calligraphic paintings. These compositions represent artistry created by the repetition of specific letters. In writing longer texts, some calligraphers joined words in such a manner that reading the text becomes a pleasure and the viewer needs to pause to consider the beauty of the text and how it moves on paper.

The influence for design elements was inspired by objects of nature which make a viewer think of their creator. The abstraction of nature shows that the Muslims never approved of making images realistically. These motifs are an effort to embody truth in an abstract form. The indirect contribution of truth i.e. the

abstracted forms of nature adds an element of mystery to a calligraphic composition. The aspects of mystery and shades of symbolism in calligraphy were further enhanced by the interpretation of calligraphic compositions according to Sufi thought. Thus, the relation of a human being with the world and the creator of this world is shown in a composition with the help of symbols, as the motives are the adoration of beauty found in nature. This beauty is the representation of a great creator. The viewer who does not have the exact knowledge of these symbols can appreciate the artwork by judging it on its merit of art. The metaphors and symbols used in fine arts also paid tribute to the representation of perfect beauty and perfect happiness, which contributes to the aesthetics of art.

Due to religious affiliation, people do calligraphy with their hearts and design the manuscript with full devotion. The more skill one gets in this genre, the more difficult it becomes for one to explain things, which are associated with universal truth. The complexity of things seems to get more broadened as a theme or subject matter of sacred art, as these are never expected to be perfect because the truth is not easy to embody in visuals or words. To understand these symbols, profound knowledge of Muslim geometry is required. They found more than one meaning of geometric forms by combining the ovals, circles, and octagonal shapes variety of new shapes were introduced.

Reviewing history, one realizes that every civilization defined principles of their art, whether sacred or secular. The fine arts further developed according to these principles. Every religion possesses a certain faith and it intends to influence the human mind positively, which later becomes part of its sacred art. So sacred art is the presentation of the whole religious concept in which every human being is required to spend his life according to principles projected through religion. In Christian religious art, the images (paintings, murals, sculptures) in churches were intended to create a strong bond between the human and its creator and to reinterpret the power of man and his superiority over other creatures of the world. The relation of man with this world is an important feature of Christian art. It also elucidates that the art of calligraphy belongs to a personal and somehow sacred expression of cultural and religious identity across cultures.

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