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INFINITE TRAVEL OF THE SOUL TO THE
SACRED CITY AND THE LUMINOUS CITY:
VISUAL DEPICTIONS OF MECCA
AND MEDINA IN DALĀ'IL AL-HAYRĀT

This work deals with the tradition of copying and book illumination in Bosnia, but also with the tradition of book copying in general and its significance, focusing in particular on the perspective and contribution of Sufi circles. It then deals with the presentation of *Dalā'il al-Hayrāt* (*Guidelines towards Good Deeds*, in Ottoman Turkish: *Delâ'ilü'l-Hayrat*), a renowned compilation of prayers: its contents, prescribed conditions of usage, as well as the status 'the Compilation' enjoys throughout the Islamic world, especially among followers of the Sufi orders. It highlights the importance of 'the Compilation' as one of the best artistically illuminated manuscripts of Islamic origin. In addition, it describes the life of Šayh Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn Sulaymān al-Ġazūlī (died 870/1465), who collected all the documented traditional forms of blessings of the prophet of Islam in this compilation. Particular attention was paid to the third part of this work, where artistic depictions of Mecca and Medina are presented, an element that makes this work ever more intriguing and appealing. Visual depictions of the two holy cities of Islam given herein are based on two manuscript codices kept at the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo.

THE MANUSCRIPT TRADITION IN BOSNIA

It is generally accepted that the first discoveries of Islamic religion, art and culture in the Balkans, including in today's Bosnia and Herzegovina, were brought and disseminated by Sufi adherents, following the Ottoman con-

quest of the region. At that time, they were the most influential characters in matters of spiritual life in the Empire, guided by the principle of *ancilla theologiae*, whereby cultural and artistic production was directly influenced by Islam, the dominant religion in the Empire. The Sufis were great preservers and promoters of Islamic art, particularly of calligraphy. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that many skilful Bosnian and Herzegovinian calligraphers arose from their ranks. Followers of the *darwīš/derviş* orders cherished art and their engagement was described by Seyyed Hossein Nasr as follows: “Sufis were cherishers of art, not because it was the goal of the Sufi way, but because following Sufism meant to become more and more aware of the omnipresent all-divine Beauty. In its light, the Sufis created beautiful things in accordance with the beauty of their own nature. They followed traditional artistic norms that reflect the beauty of *the Supreme Artisan of Crafts*”¹).

Those Bosnian Sufis, much like their brethren in other parts of the Islamic world, who transcribed and preserved copies of *Dalā'il al-Ḥayrāt*, were submerged in this divine beauty. In that way, their actions contributed to the development and enrichment of Islamic art. They produced pieces of extraordinary artistic maturity consisting of spiritual and other values that cannot be seen or touched except through our *spiritual organs of the transcendental cognition*.²

In addition, it is fascinating to observe that all works were written by hand until the late 19th century, even though the first printed Bible appeared in 1455 (the first printed book in general), while in Bosnia, as far as we know, the first printing house started to operate in 1519.³ Even so, this does not mean that the Islamic world was lagging behind. On the contrary, the pious believed transcribing a work by hand symbolised their connection with the *one and only creator*. This concept could be linked to a hadith referring to: “the human heart as lying between God’s two fingers”. The hadith is: “poetically interpreted in the sense that the human heart is the pencil in God’s hand, which the Creator uses to write everything that is crucial on the infinite board of creation”.⁴ The Arabic script itself – the script of the Qur’an – written from

¹ Nasr (2004: 25).

² More: Hafizović (2013: 31).

³ Džemal Čelić indicated that seventy-nine years after the Gutenberg printing house was founded, the first printing house in Bosnia and Herzegovina followed. But it did not last for long. More in: Čelić (1982: 21).

⁴ Schimmel (2001: 258).

right to left, begins with: “the field of action toward the heart”.⁵⁾ Therefore, it should not be surprising that careful attention was paid to transcription and particularly to creative writing.

A copying service was obviously well developed in Bosnia even before the Ottoman period and Islam and was particularly associated with the activities of numerous convents, which were faithful keepers of manuscripts. They continued their activity after the spread of Islam. Meanwhile, works of Islamic origin were transcribed in Islamic religious educational centres, mostly in *madrasas/medreses*.⁶⁾ They were copied for personal purposes, mostly by seminary students, in kneeling position, but also by domestic craftsmen and calligraphers – *hattāts/hattats*, scholars and different individuals, either on commission or for personal purposes. Equal attention was also paid to decorations of the copied or originally written works, as well as to bookbinding.

Bookbinding was a special kind of artistic work that spread following the rich medieval Bosnian manuscript tradition, which developed under the influence of the first books brought by the Ottomans to the Balkans, setting the model for the Sarajevo book artists – *muğallids/mücellits*.⁷⁾ An interesting fact that Hamdija Kreševljaković noticed is that, “all the *mücellits* were educated and very literate,” and that they, “must have been the most intelligent artisans in Sarajevo back in those days”.⁸⁾ The manuscripts were bound using leather bindings or other materials for preservation and refinement. Motifs of various shapes and sizes were then imprinted and additionally highlighted in gilt or various colours.

The same affection and effort were paid to the decoration of the inside of the covers as well. Even so, there were many examples of books without adornment.

Depending on their features, the pages of the manuscript were overwhelmingly decorated with stylistic, geometric and vegetal ornamentation. They were also rich in illustrations and miniatures of extraordinary artistic maturity and value. Nevertheless, the opening pages of the Qur’an were most beautifully illuminated. The first Qur’an chapter, Sūrat al-Fātiḥa (El-Fatiha), and the first five *āyāt* (verses) of the chapter Al-Baqara, were set and

⁵⁾ Burckhardt (2007: 152).

⁶⁾ More on the transcription services in *madrasas* in: Dobrača (1972: 67); Traljić (1973: 53).

⁷⁾ Janc (1956: 61).

⁸⁾ Kreševljaković (1979: 499).

written as diptychs by the neat hand of a skilful calligrapher. Such artistic maturity sometimes appears to be almost unparalleled. Equally decorative and worth admiring were *cunwāns/unvans*, which represent the beginning of certain chapters (*sūra*) or *ğuz'* (one of the equal thirty parts into which the text of the Qur'an was traditionally divided). Bright and shiny colours and splendid stylistic ornaments were used in such cases. It seems that vegetal and geometric patterns were the rule in Qur'an decoration, as well as in other works related to religious studies, while figurative illustrations were mostly used for poetic and historic works.⁹⁾ As far as our region is concerned, in terms of the art of illumination and miniature, Zdenka Munk was of the opinion that all illuminated manuscripts had a primary sacral purpose throughout history. Further on, she stated that such illuminated manuscripts were subjugated to "various religious rules, and within them, to specific rituals, which was also reflected in their iconography".¹⁰⁾ The prayer collections might have included slightly different artistic depictions as decorations, as we will see. Artistic depictions of Mecca and Medina, which were included in the collections of prayers, added to their curiosity value. Alexandra Bain commented on the prayers collection *Ancām*: "The combination of Qur'anic text with representational imagery is a potent and very unusual combination in the Islamic world".¹¹⁾

As Islam spread through Bosnia, so did the need for books. In preserved manuscripts, one can read that logic, philosophy and *tašawwuf/tasavvuf* (Sufism)¹²⁾ books were already being transcribed in Sarajevo in 1463. Manuscripts travelled and reached Bosnia and Sarajevo in three ways: with scholars and merchants who arrived from the East, with Bosnians who were craving for knowledge, especially Sufis, who left to seek education and the truth in the East, and with pilgrims. The latter – *pioneers in the sphere of spirituality*, but also *the bearers of the culture of life*¹³⁾ – frequently brought back very valuable pieces of work home, despite not always being aware of their value.

⁹⁾ Rizvić (1972: 76).

¹⁰⁾ Munk (1964: 10).

¹¹⁾ Bain (2001: 213).

¹²⁾ Bušatlić (2006: 187). Two streets also serve as proof of the well-developed and widely spread art of bookbinding and illumination in Sarajevo - Mudželitelivliki and Mudželitimali, where, as far as is known, the first shops of transcribers and bookbinders could be found since the first decades of the arrival of the Ottomans.

¹³⁾ Husić (2014: 179).

The renowned *Dalā'il al-Hayrāt*, 'Compilation of prayers' (*ṣalawāt/salāvat*) was probably also among these works. But it is hard to be precise about when exactly the manuscripts were transcribed for the first time in Bosnia. Based on the preserved samples of the manuscripts mentioned, it can be concluded that they were written in Bosnia in the 18th and 19th centuries. There must have been older transcribed samples from earlier centuries as well, but they have not survived. An interesting fact is that pilgrims from Bosnia brought pictures of Mecca as souvenirs during the time when the transcription of *Dalā'il al-Hayrāt* was at its peak.

The price of such works was also remarkable; some of the pictures were worth 4,800 *aqçe/akçe*. Aladin Husić, author of the study on *hağğ* from Bosnia during the Ottoman Period, stated that this was probably for their novelty, since pictures of Mecca had not been documented earlier.¹⁴⁾ According to Ismet Bušatlić's *Dalā'il al-Hayrāt* list, a manuscript dating back to the 1570s¹⁵⁾ was found among 26 manuscript samples, consisting of artistic depictions (including two commentaries from the *Dalā'il al-Hayrāt Compilation*). With no available manuscript from earlier centuries, it is difficult to discuss their stylistic or typological past. Further on, we shall reflect on 'the Compilation', its author and the significance and status 'the Compilation' enjoys.

ABOUT 'THE COMPILATION' AND ITS AUTHOR

*God and His angels bless the Prophet. O believers, do
you also bless him, and pray for his peace.*

(Koran, XXXIII, Al-Aḥzāb, 56)¹⁶⁾

Inspired by these words of the *All-Forgiving*, and striving for his pleasure, worshippers across the world bless Muhammad (Muḥammad, ṣallā Allāhu 'Alayhi wa-sallam), the prophet of Islam. After all, *the Just*: "revealed to His

¹⁴⁾ More in: Husić (2014: 142–143).

¹⁵⁾ Bušatlić (1980: 62). The given manuscript was kept in the Oriental Institute until it burnt down in flames of hatred 23 years ago. Today, the List of Ismet Bušatlić, for better or worse, is the only proof of this particular manuscript's existence - (as well as of many others) including depictions of Mecca, Medina and Ar-Rawḍa al-Muṭaḥhara (Revdai-mutahhere). The copyist is unknown.

¹⁶⁾ The translation of āyāt (verses) and extracts from the Koran listed in our work were taken from: *The Koran Interpreted*, a translation by Arthur J. Arberry.

slaves the highly ranked position His slave and Prophet assume¹⁷⁾ via the Qur'an. Muhammad is a *man of God*, for whom worlds had been created,¹⁸⁾ as referred to in one of the frequently cited traditions, which was very popular in Sufi literature.

Among numerous *ṣalawāt* compilations – forms of glorifying Mahomet after the mention of his name – one that especially stands out is the *Dalā'il al-Hayrāt Compilation*, which is, according to the majority of authors, one of the most popular religious books alongside the Qur'an.¹⁹⁾ After the Qur'an, it is its fragments and the compilations of *An'ām* prayers that were most often copied. The compilations of *ṣalawāt* mentioned were the ones most frequently transcribed and they are equally renowned and used in all parts of the Islamic world, especially among members of the *derviş* orders, who used the *ṣalawāt* and *ducā*/*dua* (prayers of supplication) compiled in *Dalā'il al-Hayrāt*, as short prayers for daily recitation (*wird/virt*).²⁰⁾

What additionally catches the eye are their artistic features, given that, with only a few exceptions, they usually included artistic depictions of two out of the three holy Muslim cities, such as scenes from the Prophet's Mosque in Medina and Al-Masğid al-Ḥarām in Mecca.²¹⁾ The exceptional calligraphy encompassing the pages of 'the Compilation', its unique illumination and the aforementioned images represent a work of art *par excellence*.

Present-day samples of *Dalā'il al-Hayrāt* are predominantly printed copies. They may include images of Ar-Rawḍa al-Muṭahhara (the Purest Grave) and *minbar* (pulpit) of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, or Al-Kacba in Mecca, which means that various compilations differ in their content. The differences are not only manifested in artistic depictions, but also occasionally in the very text of 'the Compilation'. Even though certain parts of the text are dissonant, *Dalā'il al-Hayrāt* must basically consist of an introduction (*muqaddima*/

¹⁷⁾ Ibn Kesir (2002: 1080).

¹⁸⁾ We refer to the famous *ḥadīth qudsī* "Were it not for you, o Muhammad, I would not have created the universe".

¹⁹⁾ Derman (2001: 26).

²⁰⁾ For a more detailed explanation of the term: Hadžibajrić (1988: 216); Hafizović (1999: 460).

²¹⁾ Inspired by artistic depictions from 'the Compilation', the painter Mustafa Faginović painted depictions of Mecca and Medina on the north-eastern inner wall of the Miščina (Kebkebir hajji Ahmed) Mosque in Sarajevo, for which the mosque is known. Nevertheless, this is not the only example. More: Halimić (2010: 12); Bušatlić (1980: 63).

mukaddime), eight chapters (*ḥizb/hizip*) and a closing prayer (*ducā*).²² Apart from the author's preface and instructions for reading *ṣalawāt* and various *ducā*, the introductory section also includes the 99 beautiful names of God, followed by the names of the Prophet Muhammad. Both sets were individually divided with punctuation marks, in the form of vegetal or rosette-shaped gold ornaments.

Before studying 'the Compilation', one should declare an intention (make a *niyya* or *niyet*) and turn to God asking for forgiveness of sins by reading the introductory, initial prayer (*ducā*). The reading of 'the Compilation' continues with clearly specified and prescribed parts for every day of the week with chapters divided accordingly. A colour palette, reduced to just a few colours, was used to specifically decorate the titles of the chapters, mostly done in gold. *Ṣalawāt* and other prayers from 'the Compilation' were not only meant for *dervişes*, but also for sympathizers of each *ṭarīqa/tarikat* (*muḥibb/muḥip*). One interesting fact is that, Mustafa Bey-zade (Nuruddin Šefirović) issued an *Iğāzat Nāma*²³ in 1200/1785–86, to Halil Ibn Ibrāhīm, for the outstanding recitation of *Dalā'il al-Hayrāt*. Halil Ibn Ibrahim was probably also one who transcribed 'the Compilation'.²⁴

There were several different sources of transmissions, referring to the events that inspired Šayh Abū cAbd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn Sulaymān al-Ġazūlī (died in 870/1465)²⁵ to collect documented traditional forms of *ṣalawāt*,²⁶ but they are not part of this topic. The basis of every intention is aimed at spiritual advancement, to reach a higher degree of knowledge by reciting *ṣalawāt* on Muhammad, and pleasing the *All Forgiving* at the same time, which is, at the end, the *summum bonum* of every worshipper.

Šayh Abū cAbd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn Sulaymān al-Ġazūlī was a renowned Sufi from Northern Africa and founder of the Ġazūlī branch of the Šādilī

²² Popara (2006: 42).

²³ A certificate issued by the Islamic Community on the basis of one's achievements and education within the field of Islamic sciences.

²⁴ Popara (2007: 45). There were many other examples. It is also known that one transcriber of a Compilation from the Oriental Institute, "obtained the permission to use this work as a prayer book". The permission was granted by Veljudin Ahmed from Lower Tuzla. See: Ždralović (1988: 250).

²⁵ Vassâf (2011: 297).

²⁶ Vassâf (2011: 298).

order. He was born in Sūs, Morocco, to a Berber tribe of Ġazūla²⁷⁾, at the end of the 14th or beginning of the 15th century. As far as we are aware, he studied in his native country and then pursued his education in Fes, finished a *madrasa*, and with it acquired linguistic and religious knowledge. After finishing the *madrasa*, he went to perform *haġġ*, or the most important pilgrimage for Muslims, and according to some sources, he stayed in Mecca for the next forty years, while, according to others, only seven. During that period, he also resided in Medina and Jerusalem (Al-Quds), before returning to Fes. Upon his return to Morocco, he joined the Šādilī order of the Šūfis. He collected all documented traditional forms of *šalawāt* into ‘the Renowned Compilation’, the *Dalā’il al-Hayrāt*. Nevertheless, it is not known whether the first compilation included any of the artistic depictions mentioned, nor when exactly ornamentation started to be used in practice, nor the occurrence of such depictions. According to some authors, there are certain assumptions that originally ‘the Compilation’ was not illustrated.²⁸⁾

After spending – according to some sources – fourteen years of his life in seclusion (*halwa*), the Šayh attracted and gathered ten thousand followers. As the number of his supporters grew, along with his influence, the governor of the Sūs area banished him, afraid of a rebellion. The *šayh* settled in the village of Āfūġāl, accompanied by a large number of his students, where he stayed until he passed away in 870/1465.²⁹⁾

Apart from *Dalā’il al-Hayrāt*, two other compilations by him are also popular: *Ĥizb al-falāḥ* and *Ĥizb al-Ġazūlī*.³⁰⁾ Some authors state that he wrote several works in fields of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and *tašawwuf*.³¹⁾ His other works probably remained in the shadow of the *Dalā’il al-Hayrāt*, which so far has been transcribed, illustrated, multiplied and used for five and a half century throughout the Muslim World, inclusive of Bosnia. This certainly shows the respect and love of Muslims for Muhammad: for the book, the script, the word and the art. The aforementioned Compilation was subject to many comments, which additionally contributed to the status it enjoyed among scholars and common people.

²⁷⁾ Uludaġ (1993: 515).

²⁸⁾ Witkam (2007: 71).

²⁹⁾ Uludaġ (1993: 515); at present Al-Ġazūlī’s remains are buried in Marrākuš, Ben Cheneb (1965).

³⁰⁾ Uludaġ (1993: 515).

³¹⁾ Popara (2006: 42).

Further in this article, we shall reflect on two copies of *Dalā'il al-Hayrāt*, written at the beginning of the 19th century, with depictions of the focal points of the Islamic world: *the Blessed City* of Mecca and Medina, the *City of the Glory*.

MECCA AND MEDINA IN THE ŞALAWĀT COMPILATION
OF DALĀ'IL AL-HAYRĀT FROM TWO MANUSCRIPTS IN THE
ORIENTAL INSTITUTE IN SARAJEVO

A ṭawāf around Al-Kacba is of little use to the forlorn, if Al-Kacba of their hearts is not lit by eternal sunlight.

(Fevzija Mostarac: *Bulbulistan*)

Like a single self-existent micro-cosmos within a whole world of its own, Islamic manuscripts, together with their illustrations, are the second most important medium of Islamic art, although the majority of art historians believe its greatest accomplishments relate to architecture. Therefore, the greatest attention and analysis has always been focussed on monumental architectural achievements, whereas other spheres were generally neglected and ignored. Islamic art rests on unconditional loyalty to the principle of *tawḥīd* (uniqueness, faith in the one and only God, the Shaper – Al-Muṣawwir, the Authentic Creator – Al-Bāri', the one that cannot be artistically represented, for one is helpless before His Beauty). Islamic art was founded on the sayings of Muhammad, the messenger of God's word. Therefore, the *creative* productivity of Muslim artists has always been orientated towards calligraphy, illustrations and the ornamental decoration of manuscripts.

Micro-cosmoses of that kind are the ones kept in the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo, in two manuscripts of the *Dalā'il al-Hayrāt*. They are registered, respectively, under numbers R 52 and R 57.³²⁾ Even a glance at the pages of 'the Compilation', without scratching the surface of the message or delving into the depths of their inner meaning, will provoke admiration, at least among those who appreciate the beauty of the Arabic script. Both manuscripts have been bound in leather, one of which has a fore-edge flap. One is decorated with golden rosettes, the other with vegetal and geometric ornaments, also made in gold. The manuscript no R 27 is kept in a partially damaged leather case with vegetal ornaments. The manuscripts were written on thin and

³²⁾ Gazić (2009).

silky, yet high quality, paper. One was transcribed by Ismācīl ad-Dihnī Ibn Muḥammad-efendī as-Sarā'ī³³⁾ (from Sarajevo) in 1216/1801, while the other was transcribed by Aš-Šayh Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Rāšid as-Sacdī,³⁴⁾ forty-one years later. Ismācīl ad-Dihnī Ibn Muḥammad-efendī as-Sarā'ī was a calligrapher from Sarajevo who had mastered the art of calligraphy at the hands of Ḥāggī Hasan al-Wafā'ī. He also established his own calligraphy school in Sarajevo.³⁵⁾ Apart from the Compilation mentioned, he also transcribed an *An'ām* compilation, now kept in the Gazi Husrev-Bey Library in Sarajevo.³⁶⁾ Unfortunately, there is insufficient data available regarding the other copyist, but based on his title, we can assume that he was a šayh of the Sacdī ṭarīqa, whose adherents were present in the Balkans, with Sacdī *tekkes* in Kosovo, Macedonia, southern Serbia and Belgrade.³⁷⁾

The calligraphy was skilfully and masterly employed in both of the works written in the *nashī* script, which can be characterised as being of exceptional artistic merit. The basic text was written in black ink, while certain notes, comments or whole sentences, were highlighted in red. The *cunwāns*, carried out and decorated very skilfully, also catch the eye. They were made in the shape of a broken pointed arch (crown) and were comprised of intertwined, colourful, vegetal elements. Their slightly sharp but harmonious contrast pricks our curiosity. *cUnwāns*, and the text consisting of several verses, were enclosed by a thick, predominantly golden frame and each sentence was divided by differently written punctuation marks, also in gold. The closing sentences or notes of certain chapters did not strictly follow the line of the frame where the basic text was placed, but rather narrowed down towards the bottom of the page.

Additional space at the sides was left for illuminations, usually filled with triangles, one facing the other, as if they reflected each other in a mirror. The text of the note of manuscript no R 52 also narrowed down towards the bottom of the page and was enclosed by a trapeze-like frame. The note was written in red ink and provided an explanation for the following artistic depiction. The note about the copyist and the date of transcription of compilation no R 57 was placed in a similar looking frame, while free fields in

³³⁾ Gazić (2009: 38–39).

³⁴⁾ Gazić (2009: 38–39).

³⁵⁾ Bušatlić (2006: 266).

³⁶⁾ More: Fajić (2003: 580).

³⁷⁾ More: Von Schlegell (1995: 731).

both compilations are filled with stylized vegetal motifs. The technique of narrowing down was used on the final page of the manuscript, so that the text would not end in the middle of the page, making the manuscript pages more aesthetically delightful.

The outer frame along the basic text was enriched with a thin red line created by a long pencil stroke. This was supported by a second, considerably thinner, inner-golden frame. The margins of certain pages of 'the Compilation' include one or other comment or note related to the text, which were written in red or black ink, where skilful calligraphy was applied as in the basic text. Elegantly extended rosettes were also harmoniously included. Their purpose in general, was to mark the place where the *sağda/secde* is required (part of the praying ritual where the front of your head, knees and hands are on the floor), or to mark the beginning of a new chapter or any other part. In the compilations, they correspond to a *hizb* in number, whereas the ones in 'the Compilation' (no. R 52) are rather nobler, and contain richer illustrations.

It seems that the artistic depictions that emerged in *Dalā'il al-Hayrāt* were primarily aimed at providing a visual explanation of the text, as in the first illustrated works that were translated from different world languages to Arabic. Illustrations of Mecca and Medina depicted on the pages of 'the Compilation' were not in any way intended to serve as decorative features, but rather as explanations. They appear to visually explain the Islamic religious expression *Lā ilāha illā Allāhu wa-Muḥammadun rasūl Allāh!* Countless associations could be made. Understanding the latter could also represent the *spiritual basis* of the two illustrations mentioned in the compilations. For some people back then, they simply represented the first and possibly only *encounter* with the focal points of Islam. Finally, such depictions are important to those who are pious, given that, as Annemarie Schimmel states: "the blessing of the Prophet's spiritual presence is mediated through them".³⁸⁾

Architectural sights, whereby architectural buildings, and the most important elements of the holy places, were shown from a top-down perspective, dominated the artistic depictions in the *Dalā'il al-Hayrāt*.³⁹⁾ Some depictions skilfully portrayed a pronounced sense of perspective and space, while others were less skilful and becoming. Stylistic depictions of Al-Kacba in Al-Masğid al-Ḥarām, or depictions of the Prophet's Mosque in a typical ambiance, were

³⁸⁾ Schimmel (2001: 115).

³⁹⁾ Bušatlić (1985: 39).

placed in a rectangle of smaller dimensions (11 x 6 cm, or 11 x 6.5 cm) with a thick golden frame, which is identical to the frame of 'the Compilation's' basic text. The celestial blue reached as far as the semi-circular or multi-foil arch, which additionally contributed to the miniature decoration, while a further inner frame, formed by arches, enclosed the depiction. The arches and celestial dome strikingly resemble medieval frames of numerous images or miniatures of Western origin.

The depictions of Mecca and Medina, dating back to earlier centuries, were not suitable for those kind of frames. In one of the older depictions, the columns, formed by the inner frame, shaped the outlined part of the mosque (hall).⁴⁰⁾ It seems that the 16th century miniatures were made by combining different perspectives, while two-dimensional shapes were used for architectural buildings and other elements. Despite the individual style of the 16th century Ottoman miniature, it was certainly strongly influenced from Persia, probably due to a large number of miniaturists who came to the Ottoman metropolis after the occupation of their country. Stylistic comparisons of miniatures that emerged in this region, featuring 18th and 19th century elements, could be found in a wider area of the Ottoman Empire.

Depictions of Mecca and Medina in the given compilations share clear similarities in spatial organisation and features. Mecca ("the spiritual heart of big and small men, the micro and macro-cosmos"⁴¹⁾) is the most holy complex dressed in black and, according to tradition, Al-Kacba is an exact copy of the heavenly Al-Kacba in the seventh heaven. The architectural complex surrounding Al-Kacba appears to continue onto the next page, creating an ambience around the Prophet's grave and other more important features of this honourable place, with few physical modifications and changes to other buildings. The composition was set vertically, displaying a continuous series of buildings surrounding and *watching over* the sacred places. Details such as rocks and hills were barely included. Here and there, an isolated building or a palm tree can be spotted in the background. Both depictions of Medina include the Al-Baqīc Cemetery, placed at the very bottom of the hill in the very back of the image. It is clearly evident that the depictions were not topographically correct, but that issue was never addressed. Since it was firmly believed that a column of light arises above the grave of Muhammad, the illuminators captured that light in both of their depictions of Medina.

⁴⁰⁾ Hattstein (2007: 12).

⁴¹⁾ Hafizović (2015: 172).

Even if their pencil or thinner brush strokes in gold were slightly rough, the illuminators increased the significance of Al-Fītūrī's *parcel of dust above the Prophet's bones, which creates the column of light*.⁴²⁾

Even though a lot of affection and attention has been devoted to the depictions, they were carried out in a simple and naive manner. Everything was totally subordinate to highlighting its content. The simplicity in the scenery depiction was aimed not to distract from the central part of the image and its value.

Images, which were subject to our analysis, were painted on a golden background, which should additionally highlight their importance. They resemble images depicting events from the Bible or mosaic depictions of Byzantine emperors and saints, usually with a golden background. Gold and silver have a very important role in these kind of fine arts, emphasising the vividness of colours and clarity of the image.⁴³⁾ Covering the background with small golden leaves made the gilt.⁴⁴⁾ The background has been somewhat damaged in both depictions in Manuscript R 57, given that white spots were subsequently painted.

The depictions are also similar in colour. They are dominated by white, light blue, green and brown on a vivacious golden background, providing an exceptionally complementary contrast. Here and there, however, certain nuances appear, that according to all the rules applied in this form of art, disturb the harmony and aesthetic delight.

Schematic depictions of Mecca and Medina are not particularly valuable in terms of the fine arts. On the contrary, their quality, aesthetics, and distinctive artistic features are reflected in the architectural sights or honourable places they actually represent, on the basis of their spiritual background. The compilations used in and deriving from our region serve as proof of an unconditional commitment to the Lord of all worlds, manifested in the love and affection for *the Dearest to God*. They also stand for a relentless quest for knowledge, loyalty to love and beauty and the whole cycle of life towards his infinite mercy.

⁴²⁾ Annemarie Schimmel quoted the lines of a modern Sudanese author, which refer to the column of light, i: "Above the bones of the Prophet, every particle of dust shall represent a column of light". See: Schimmel (2001: 116).

⁴³⁾ Bušatlić (1985: 61).

⁴⁴⁾ Rizvić (1972: 76).

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Fig. 1. The opening pages of *Dalā'il al-Hayrāt* (fol. 1b-2a). *cUnwān* decorated with floral motifs on a golden background, with no title given. Manuscript Compilation of the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo, R 52

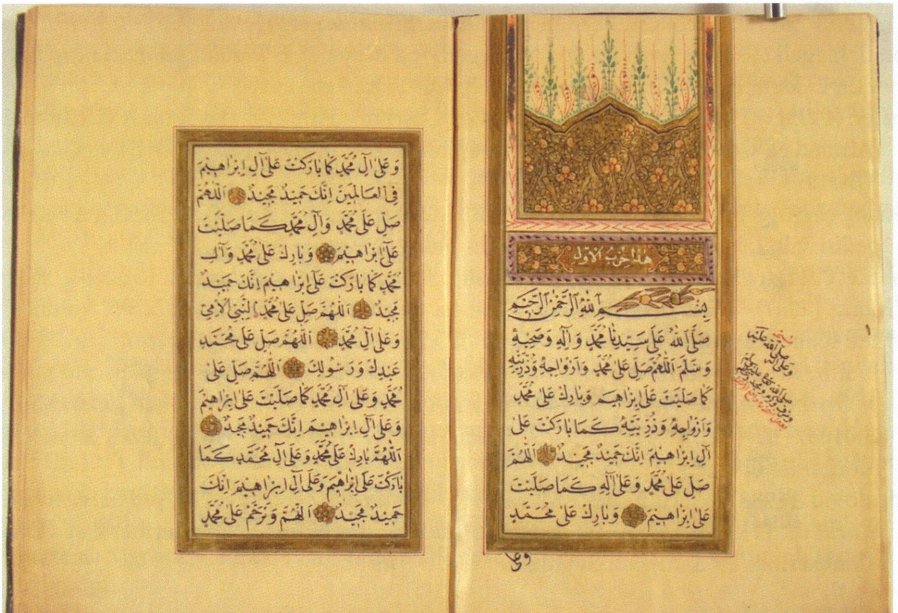


Fig. 2. *Dalā'il al-Hayrāt* (fol. 18b-19a). *cUnwān* and the title of *hizb* in gold, with title. Manuscript Compilation of the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo, R 57

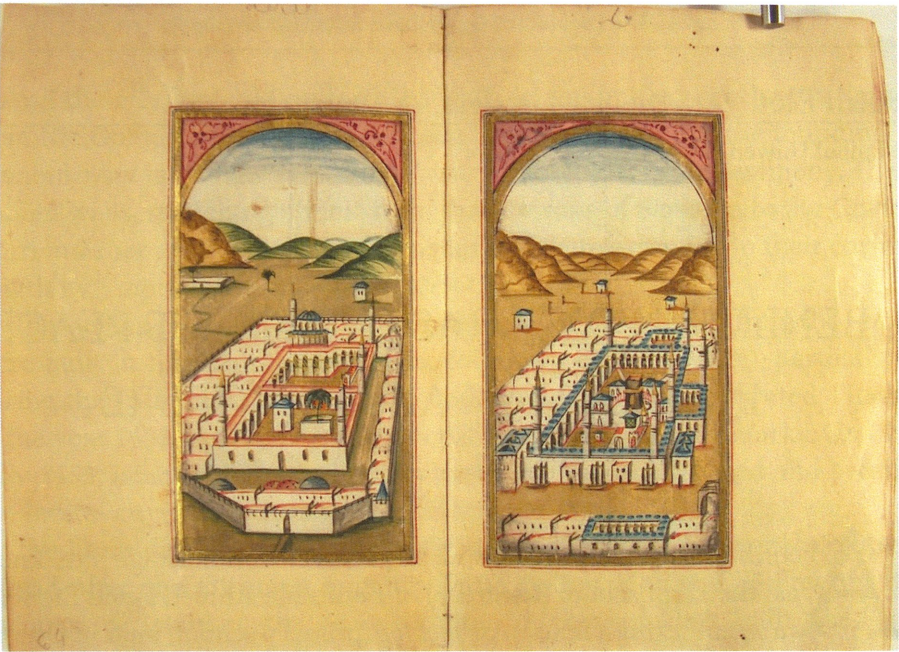


Fig. 3. Artistic depiction of Mecca (right) and Medina (left) *The Dalā'il al-Hayrāt* (fol. 63b–64a). Manuscript Compilation of the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo, R 52

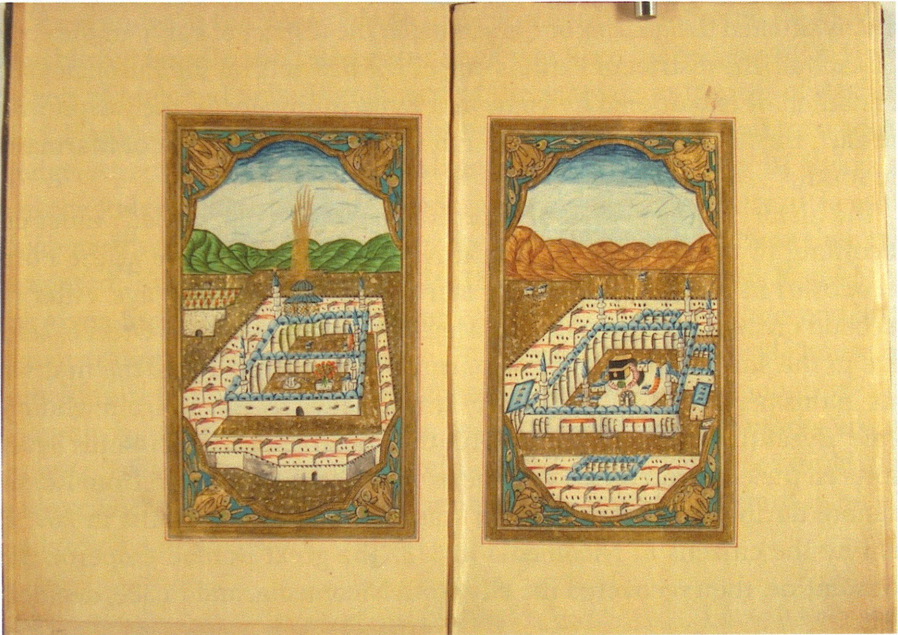


Fig. 4. Artistic depiction of Mecca (right) and Medina (left) *The Dalā'il al-Hayrāt* (fol.16b–17a). Manuscript Compilation of the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo, R 57