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NOTES ON THE FORMATION OF HILYA DESIGN: CALLIGRAPHY-ILLUMINATION INTERACTION AND NUMERAL SYMBOLISM

**Hilye Tasarımının Oluşumuna İlişkin Notlar:
Hat-Tezhip Etkileşimi ve Sayı Sembolizmi**

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Abstract: *In Ottoman tradition of thought the Prophet Muhammad represents the complete human being (al-insan al-kamil), who has reached the highest psychological, physical and spiritual stage of being. In this case the main purpose of the hilya as a work of calligraphy and illumination is to aesthetically evoke the physical appearance and moral character of the Prophet Muhammad. Moreover, the complex symbolism of the hilya as an expression of prophetic glory also reflects the cosmological thought of the Ottoman community.*

The subject of this article is to examine the classical hilya design attributed to the famous Ottoman calligrapher Hâfız Osman in the context of calligraphy-illumination interaction and number symbolism. Examining classical examples of Turkish-Islamic arts of the book, we will try to observe that the conventional hilya design passed through various stages during the process of its formation. In this case the theoretical roots of Hâfız Osman's hilya form and the probability of his inspiration by the aesthetic designs of the previous periods will be examined through the decorative manuscripts in religious and non-religious topics.

Keywords: *Hilya, Hâfız Osman, Ottoman arts of the book, calligraphy, illumination, numeral symbolism.*

Öz: *Osmanlı düşünce geleneğinde Hz. Muhammed, psikolojik, fiziksel ve manevi açıdan en yüce varlık mertebesine ulaşmış yetkin insanı (el-insanü'l-kamil) temsil etmektedir. Bu bakımdan, hat ve tezhip sanatının uygulandığı bir eser olarak hilyenin asıl amacı, Hz. Muhammed'in fiziksel görünüşünün ve ahlaki özelliklerinin estetik ifadesini ortaya koymaktır. Peygamberlik makamının yüceliğini gözler önüne seren hilyedeki mürekkep sembolizm, aynı zamanda Osmanlı toplumunun kozmolojik düşüncesini de yansıtmaktadır. Bu makalenin konusu, ünlü Osmanlı hattat Hâfız Osman'a atfedilen klasik hilye tasarımının hat-tezhip etkileşimi ve sayı sembolizmi bağlamında incelenmesidir. Makalede Türk/İslam kitap sanatlarının klasik örneklerini incelemek suretiyle, geleneksel hilye tasarımının oluşum sürecinin çeşitli aşamalardan geçtiğini irdelemeye çalışacağız. Buna binaen, Hâfız Osman tarafından geliştirilen hilye formunun teorik kökleri araştırılacak ve gerek dini gerekse de dini olmayan konulardaki bezemeli yazmalar üzerinden sanatkarın önceki dönemlere ait estetik tasarımlardan esinlenme olasılığı incelemeye tabi tutulacaktır.*

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Hilye, Hâfız Osman, Osmanlı kitap sanatları, hat, tezhip, sayı sembolizmi.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In Turkish-Islamic culture, the Prophet Muhammad is not only a religious personage who mediated the socialization of Islamic principles and rules in a particular period of history, he is considered as the ideal example of a social and individual life that encompasses all phases of history, the greatest example of a recipient of divine grace and blessing. That is why we see manifestations of the love of the Prophet, not only in religious books, but also in almost all living spaces, in the customs related to daily life, in literature, music and fine arts. The love of the Prophet which is also considered as a demonstration of the love of God, has found its most obvious reflections in literature through the formation of *na't*, *hilya* and *shamâil-nâma* genres (Erdoğan, 2013). One of the most important Ottoman works in this regard was the poem *Hilya* by Khâqanî Mehmed Beg (Hakanî, 2011). After Khâqanî's *hilya*, this kind of work became more widespread (Uzun, 1998, pp. 44-47). Through the development of simple and harmonious *hilyas*, the illustrious *hilya* form (*hilye-i şerîf*), the product of the Ottoman worldview emerged as a unique form of composition in calligraphy (Schimmel, 2007, p. 42).

The Arabic word *hilya* literally means ornament, jewellery, trappings, beautiful creation and beautiful face. The term denotes a genre of Ottoman Turkish literature, dealing with the physical description, appearance and character of the Prophet Muhammad (Uzun, 1998, p. 44). In the Ottoman tradition, there was a belief that reading and possessing Muhammad's description protected a person from trouble in this world and the next and it became customary to carry such descriptions like a talisman on one's person. In the 17th century *hilya* developed into an art form with a standard layout defined by the calligrapher Hâfiz Osman (d.1698) (Derman, 2003, p. 617). According to some art historians the authenticity of Hâfiz Osman's *hilya* form is open to question. They take the formation date of this form back a hundred years and attribute it to Ahmed al-Qarahisarî (d.1556) (Abdulkadiroğlu, 1991, pp. 48-52), but this view is not widely accepted.

Hâfiz Osman (1642-1698) was one of the masters who played an important role in the history of Ottoman calligraphy. He was born in Istanbul in 1642 where his father was the *muezzin* of the Haseki Sultan Mosque. At first, he was a student of Dervish Ali (d.1673), the greatest Ottoman calligrapher. And his other masters were Suyolcu-zâdeh Mustafa Ayyubi Efendi (d.1686) and Nefes-zâdeh Ismail Efendi (d.1679). Hâfiz Osman obtained his *ijazah* in calligraphy when he was only seventeen years old. Throughout his life he made many masterpieces of Islamic calligraphy and

was tutor in calligraphy to two Ottoman sultans (Mustafa II and Ahmed III). These incredible works earned him the title of *Second Sheikh* after Sheikh Hamdullah (d.1520), the founder of the Ottoman calligraphic tradition (Alparslan, 1999, pp. 64-102; Safwat, 1996, pp. 115-117).

No matter how far back the date of the hilya's formation with standard layout is taken, it is clear that this design had emerged from a certain period of history and, over time, had undergone a change/development in terms of both shape and content (**Fig. 1**). In other words, it is very likely that the hilya form designed by Hâfiz Osman did not appear suddenly and that the artist had been influenced by the aesthetic designs of the previous periods.

2. THE STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS OF HILYA DESIGN

The hilya layout developed by Hâfiz Osman generally consists of eleven textual and decorative sections arranged within three zones (A–C) (Derman, 1998, pp. 35-37; Derman, 2017, pp. 65-67).

1. *baş makam* (header or place of eminence): This first section of text (zone A) in the hilya is always devoted to the *basmalah* or related quotation from the Holy Qur'an (Qur'an 27: 30).¹

2. *göbek* (belly): This is a central cartouche which contains all or the first part of the main text about the Prophet Muhammad's appearance and character, based on hadith accounts. This part of the hilya may be circular, oval, or square in shape.

3. *hilal* (crescent): The *göbek* is encircled by a crescent moon. It is an optional section of the hilya with no text and is usually gilded. Here the *göbek* and *hilâl* symbolize the sun and moon, because in Islamic thought the Prophet Muhammad is often likened to the sun and moon.

4, 5, 6, 7. *köşeler* (corners): The *göbek* is surrounded by four rounded compartments in which are usually written the names of the *çiharyâr* (four companions): Abu Bakr, 'Umar, Uthman and 'Ali. In some hilya models, these areas are used for different titles of the Prophet Muhammad or the names of his ten companions, or some of the Divine Names (al-Esmâ al-Husnâ).

8. *âyet* or *kuşak* (verse or belt): This section below the *göbek* and *hilal* contains one of the three Qur'anic verses about the Prophet Muhammad.

¹ The mentioned verse is: "Innahu min Sulayman wa-innahu bi-sm Allah al-Rahman al-Rahim" (It is from Solomon, and it says, 'In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy').

9. *etek* (skirt or lower part): This part of the hilya contains the conclusion of the text begun in the *göbek*, a short prayer for the Prophet, and the signature of the calligrapher.

10, 11. *koltuklar* (armpits): These are two panels empty of text, on either side of the *etek* that may be illuminated.

In addition to the above-mentioned structural elements, the general scheme of the *hilya* can also include an inner frame (*iç pervaz*) and "outer frame" (*dış pervaz*), two ornamental borders in correct proportion to the text.

According to the general graphic design, it is possible to sum up the parts of hilya under three main headings and to present the hilya as a design consisting of three graphic sections. The first of these sections, which are all designed in the form of a rectangle, is the head station (Zone A). The second is the body (*gövde*), which contains the belly, crescent, and corners (Zone B), and the third is the lower part part containing the verse, skirt and armpits (Zone C). The header is reminiscent of the *sure başı* (heading of a sura) form which is familiar to us in Islamic manuscript illumination (**Fig. 2**). Examination of highly illuminated manuscripts, shows that this form existed in Qur'an manuscripts, as well as in scientific literary works long before the 17th century.

Likewise, the lower part of the hilya (Zone C) can also be regarded as a general *qit'a* (piece or section) design. As Uğur Derman emphasises the *qit'a* "has come to be used as a technical term to describe a specific type of calligraphic work that is rectangular in shape, is oriented either vertically or horizontally." (Derman, 2004, p. 37; Alparslan, 2002, pp. 505-506). It is possible to trace the history of this calligraphic design to a time before Hâfiz Osman's hilya. For example, many independent *qit'a* examples written by Sheikh Hamdullah have come down to us (Serin, 2007, pp. 107-140, 197-207) (**Fig. 3**). Moreover, it is known that this calligraphic form had been applied to Qur'an manuscripts before the 17th century, the best example being the *Mushaf* produced by Ahmed al-Qarahisarî (TSMK, H.S.5).²

The body section is the most important part that adds originality to the hilya in terms of design. In other words, the hilya is a graphic form which is designed by adding the *qit'a* and *sure başı* parts to the body part. Modern research on hilya design mention two important features of the body. First of these is that the body part should include a large part or all of the hilya text. Although the usual form of this part is circular, there are also

² For facsimile edition of this manuscript copy see: Karahisarî, 2015.

examples which are oval or even rectangular.³

The second characteristic of the body part is that it contains the richest section (the area between the crescent and belly) of the hilya's illumination (Derman, 1998, p. 36). While all this may be true, an evaluation of the body from a different point of view is also possible. We offer this evaluation on the basis of the symbolism of the *number four* that stands out in the body design, as well as a calligraphy-illumination interaction, which we consider important in the determination of the hilya's form in general.

3. THE SYMBOLISM OF THE NUMBER FOUR AND THE INTERACTION OF CALLIGRAPHY AND ILLUMINATION IN HILYA DESIGN

The Muslim artist demonstrates an aesthetic action by his art works, but also inevitably conveys a sensibility rooted in his subconscious thoughts. His choice of colours and motifs, as well as the forms and compositions he produces, are an inescapable product of his world of ideas. Thus, the artist largely expresses the cultural-aesthetic codes and mentality of his tradition. Without this compound quality in the creative spirit, it would not be possible to talk about the tradition of Islamic art. As Burckhardt emphasizes:

“There is no Moslem artist who has not inherited from his predecessors. If he should disregard the models that tradition offers him, he would ipso facto prove his ignorance of their intrinsic meaning and spiritual worth; being ignorant of that, he could not put his heart into those forms. Instead of tradition, there would only be sterile repetition.” (Burckhardt, 1987, pp. 214-215).

The symbolism and ritual value invested in the number four was quite popular in antiquity and the Middle Ages. It is possible to find different expressions of the symbolism of four in traditional Islamic thought. For example, according to Islamic belief, the number of sacred books is four: the Torah, Psalms, Gospels and the Qur'an. The four recipients of these books (Moses, David, Jesus and Muhammad) are also considered the chosen prophets. The four major angels (Gabriel, Azrael, Israfil and Michael) in Islamic Sufi thought are considered the *patriarchs of the Truth* (Arslanoğlu, 1997, p. 30). As Schimmel mentions, in the Sufi tradition:

“The ascent to the Divine can be divided into 4 steps: the shari'a, or divinely inspired law; the tariqa, or narrow mystical path; haqiqa, truth, and finally ma'rifa, divinely inspired intuitive knowledge. One travels as it were from nasut (humanity), through malakut (the angelic world) and jabarut (the stage of divine

³ For this kind of hilya example by Abdullah Zuhdi (SHM, 15519-Y.112) see. Bilgi, 2004, p. 94.

power), to lahut (divinity).” (Schimmel, 1993, p. 96).

It seems that the main purpose of all these steps is to become the perfect or complete human being (*al-insan al-kamil*). According to the spiritual tradition of Islam, the complete human being, as a culmination of human perfection is the microcosmic synthesis of creation. When a human develops a divine character, he becomes the *evident prototype*, the presence of the manifestation of the divine names. In other words, he becomes a mirror which reflects the Divine Reality, the highest grade of all divine attributes (Morrow, 2014, pp. 62-64).

This explains why adopting the moral characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad is so important for Muslims. He represents the complete human being (*al-insan al-kamil*), who has reached the highest psychological, physical and spiritual stage of being.⁴ The Muhammadan Reality (*al-haqiqah al-muhammadiyah*) therefore is not only the highest human prototype on Earth but also the central figure in Islamic theological cosmology, reflecting divine meaning of the creation.⁵ As the reason and purpose of existence this *reality* is expressed in the Islamic mystical tradition by the Qudsî hadith: “Were it not for you, I would not have created the cosmos” (Law laka, law laka, lamâ khalaqtu al-aflâka) (Demirci, 1997, pp. 179-180).

It is also possible to follow traces of this thought through the diagrams in two medieval manuscript copies. The first one is an earlier manuscript copy of Ibn al-Arabî’s (d.1204) work named “*al-Futuhât al-Makkiyyah*” (Fig.4).⁶ As Semra Ogel has mentioned, in these diagrams Ibn

⁴ An important point to note here is: The main purpose of the expression the physical characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad in the Hilya text is not simply the transfer of a physical beauty template. As a matter of fact, the primary responsibility of a Muslim is not to look like the Prophet in the physical sense, but to be corroborated with his morality. Therefore, these statements, whose common features are moderation and balance, should be considered within the framework of physiognomy which is called *‘ilm al-firâsat* or *‘ilm al-qiyâfat* in Islamic tradition and the theory of temperament, and should be evaluated in the context of corresponding moral virtues. The moral contents of the verses and hadiths written after the mentioned physical features signify this too. For the development of the science of physiognomy in the medieval Islamic world see. Hoyland, 2005, pp. 361-402; Lelić, 2017, pp. 609-646.

⁵ As Gruber states, in the “...*philosophical works and Sufi manuals, particularly those composed by famous mystics (...) the Prophet is praised as the perfect or complete man (al-insan al-kamil), as well as a vehicle or channel (wasila), an isthmus or boundary point (barzakh), and a medium or intermediary (wasita) between God and man.*” For the different aspects of the relationship between Islamic Sufi thought and representation of the Prophet Muhammad in Islamic painting see. Gruber, 2009, pp. 229-262.

⁶ For more information on two early manuscript copies (Bayezid State Library, 3743, fol.

al-Arabî integrates the concepts related to the universe and humanity structure within the geometric figures. Especially in the diagram composed of the four set of circles intersecting around a central circle, the order of the universe is expressed through the common images that fuse philosophy, Sufism and art (Ögel, 1986, pp. 102-103). The second manuscript includes the “Gul-i Sad-Berg” of the famous Khalwati-Ushshaqi sheikh Salahi Efendi (d.1738). In this copy of “Gul-i Sad-Berg” there is a diagram showing the explanation of the author's views by the science of *jafr* or *abjad* and geometrical composition (**Fig.5**) (Salahi Efendi, Yazma Bagıslar 2365, fol. 104b). The main theme of the diagram gives us the opportunity to comment that different combinations of the divine names manifested in the Prophet Muhammad reveal the world of plurality.

So, the symbolism of four played a prominent role not only in Islamic mysticism but also in medieval Islamic philosophy and science. Because the number four is the root and beginning of all number, all the foundation of every invention must be settled upon it. For medieval Muslim scholars this number meant a key to the different concepts of cosmological thought (Wells, 1981, p. 37). The theories of *al-anâsir al-arbaa* (the four elements) and *al-akhlât al-arbaa* (the four humours) (Nasr, 1987, pp. 220-223; Ackerknecht, 1955, pp. 49-51; Ormos, 1987-1988, pp. 601-607.) are two examples of these concepts being related to each other in a completely integrated whole. These theories played a central role in various fields of medieval Islamic thought (physics, psychology, medicine), as in the West. Their first roots appeared in ancient Greece and were then passed to the Islamic world through the translation of Greek medical/philosophical works. The great Muslim philosophers and scientists such as Avicenna, Averroes, Rhazes etc. followed these concepts. For example, Jâbir b. al-Hayyân, who had a gnostic interpretation of Islamic thought, gave an important place to the four elements concept in his esoteric and alchemical balance theory. According to Jabir, the beings in the world consist of four elements composed of certain combinations. In addition to the four numbers of elements in nature, there are four seasons in a year and four main organs in the human body (Karlığa, 1991, pp. 149-151).

This symbolism of four has also informed Islamic art, both in terms of master-apprentice relations and practical applications. For instance, according to the *ahi* tradition, the apprentice gets his *ijaza*, when the master

160b; TIEM, 1848, fol. 47b) of “al-Futuhât al-Makkiyyah” including this drawing see. Ögel, 1986, pp. 102-103, 117. I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Zeren Tanındı because of she kindly drew my attention to this work, and therefore to the geometric drawings.

is satisfied with him. During the ijaza ceremony *four men* exhale to confer spiritual strength: the master, the father of the path, brother on the path on the right and another brother on the path on the left. The wise man/master mentions four admonitions, when he wraps the belt of the apprentice: Stand by serving, sit with dignity, speak with steadiness, leave with permission (Arslanoğlu, 1997, p. 26, 28, 42).

Another remarkable point is that each of two main motif groups in the art of illumination (khatayî and rûmî) which are placed on the helix are divided into four parts. The first of these groups consists of *leaf, cinque, rosebud* and *khatayî* motifs. And second one includes *sade rumî, sarılma rumî, hurde rumî* and *işlemeli rumî* motifs.

It is possible to observe traces of such religious-cultural and philosophical-scientific codes of thought in the conventions of Islamic art (at least in the arts of the book). Several motifs, patterns and compositions in the art of illumination, as well as numerous decorative and iconographic expressions in manuscript miniatures have these features. For example, on account of one Quranic verse⁷ the image concerning four rivers in paradise carries a significant meaning in Islamic architecture and miniature painting. There are good examples in a manuscript copy of “Bâburnâma” (Book of Bâbûr) (Victoria and Albert Museum, no. IM.276-1913) (Stronge, 2002, p. 91) and an illustrated album leaf dated (British Museum, no.1974,0617,0.3.26) (Rogers, 1993, p. 54). Thus, “*many gardens in Iran and Moghul India were divided by 4 canals into the so-called charbagh (4 gardens); this motif was often applied to mausoleums to suggest an earthly representation of paradisiacal bliss.*” (Schimmel, 1993, p. 94).

The image of four in patterns and motifs used for miniature paintings manifests itself usually in the ornaments on architectural structures (such as a wall, a door, a window or dome) and other material things (such as a throne, a fabric, a tent, a carpet, a sheath and a shield). In some miniatures and illuminations, this image is reflected in the form of small motifs or details, but in some paintings it forms dense areas of both motif and composition. An abstract illumination in the manuscript copy of Sa'dî Shirazî's “Bûstân” (Orchard) (**Fig. 6**) is an excellent example of this. The illuminations and miniatures in this manuscript written by the calligrapher

⁷ The mentioned verse of Qur'an is: “Is the description of Paradise, which the righteous are promised, wherein are *rivers of water* unaltered, *rivers of milk* the taste of which never changes, *rivers of wine* delicious to those who drink, and *rivers of purified honey*...” (Qur'an 47: 15).

Sultan Ali (Herat, 893/1488) are attributed to the artist Yârî Mudhahhib⁸ and the famous painter Bihzad (Ettinghausen, 1960, pp. 1212-1213; Barry, 2004, pp. 191-193; Lentz, Lowry, 1989, pp. 260, 359).⁹

This is a primary aspect of the body in Hâfiz Osman's hilya design: it is one of the clearest examples of the symbolism of four reflected in the Islamic arts of the book. The four corners of the body in which the names of the Righteous Caliphs (al-hulafâ al-rashidun) are usually written emphasize the symbolism of four in terms of illustration form. One of the most beautiful reflections of this idea in the painting art is found in a miniature of the 13th century manuscript of Firdawsi's famous work "Shahnama" (Book of Kings) (Freer and Sackler Gallery F1929.26; Soucek, 1988, p. 194, fig.1; Shani, 2006, pp. 2-16, fig.1; Taşkent, 2016, p. 208). In this miniature the Prophet sits cross-legged and enthroned, wearing his large white head shawl over his blue robe. Just like the text of hilya, in this miniature the Righteous Caliphs; Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman and Ali surround him from on four sides. However, the figure of the Caliph Ali is in the upper left corner, unlike his location in the text of the hilya (**Fig. 7**).

As a second aspect, we note the possibility that the calligraphic form has been determined by the illumination. According to the general convention in Islamic arts of the book, calligraphy has a precedence in comparison with the art of illumination. The art of illumination and painting are generally considered helpful and secondary elements for the decoration of calligraphic composition.

As mentioned above, the body is the most important section which gives originality to the hilya form. And the artistic examples that remind us of the design of this section can be seen in illumination and miniature paintings before the 17th Century. Apparently, decoration (illumination or painting) was not just an ornamental feature for the hilya, on the contrary, it had been the main factor in designs created by Hâfiz Osman, which became the conventional form of this particular art.

It is possible to establish this argument through the evidence of ornamental manuscripts of religious texts - (Qur'an, tafsir, hadith, fiqh) and

⁸ The same geometric design is also seen in "unwan" page illumination of Arifi's "Halnâmah" (Saltykov-Schedrin State Public Library, Dorn 440, fol. 1b). Related illumination of this manuscript copied in 901/1495-6 in Herat is attributed to Yârî Mudhahhib. Akimushkin, Ivanov, 1979, p. 46, 49.

⁹ For earlier and similar examples of this form in the art of illumination see: Özen, 2003, pp. 38-39; James, 1381, cat.5; Ferdawsi, 1350/1971, pp. 5-6; Welch, Welch, 1982, pp. 57-60; Brend, 1991, pp. 137-139, pl.93.

non-religious ones (e.g. medicine, astrology, philosophy, literature, history) works. The only difference between these two types of manuscripts lies in the features of their decoration. Non-religious manuscripts allow analysis of through miniature representations of creatures, religious works do not usually contain miniatures.

One of the most important works that supports our case is a Quranic manuscript which is now at the Walters Art Museum (Johnston, 1997, p. 122).¹⁰ The illumination in this manuscript, probably prepared in the time of Timur, is a concrete expression of the powerful conception of illumination in the 15th Century. The double-page illuminations remind us of the body design of a hilya (**Fig. 8**): large parts of the pages are dedicated to the illumination, and in contrast to what is usual, the text surrounding the decoration remains secondary. The general page design consists of a large rounded area in the middle and four small medallions around this area. There is a medallion with blue background in the centre of the decorative middle area. This medallion is decorated with gilded rumî motifs; and the areas between rumî twigs are divided into black, green and red cartouches. The golden lines separating cartouches from each other curve toward the centre and form an eight-pointed geometric figure. The four small medallions, which clearly remind us of the corners of a hilya (ciharyar), have blue backgrounds decorated with gold-gilded rumî motifs. Here, both the four black cartouches formed by gilded rumî twigs and the four red rosebud motifs placed between cartouches can be characterized as examples of number symbolism.

More interesting is the fact that one of the double-page decorations in the manuscript is reminiscent of a hilya design with an oval belly (**Fig. 9**). This is not the only example of a hilya belly designed in an oval shape; the same form was applied in other Qur'an manuscripts (TIEM 224) too. As understood from the colophon of the second manuscript dated 923/1517, its calligrapher is Khalilullah b. Mahmud Shah and the illumination artist is Muhammed b. Ali (TIEM 224, fol. 532b-533a; Unustasi, 2010, pp. 376-381)

An application of the design in literary works is seen in the colophon page of a manuscript copy of Ashiq Ali Pasha's (d.1332) "Divan". This manuscript copy, dedicated to the famous Mamluk Emir Yashbak Min Mahdi (d.1481) and dated to the last quarter of the 15th century is preserved

¹⁰ According to related archive documents, in 1897 Henry Walters paid Ottoman collector Dikran Kelekian for this manuscript \$2750, an astronomical amount compared to other works. See. Simpson, 2001, p. 106.

in the Süleymaniye Library in Turkey (**Fig. 10**).¹¹ The main illumination field of the colophon page consists of a medallion in the centre and four round rosettes surrounding it in the four corners. The border of the medallion is illuminated with rumî patterns and the four corner rosettes are filled with floral motifs. Both medallion and rosettes are surrounded by a gilded border which is filled with *zencirek* motifs.

In addition to these above-mentioned individual applications, there are other decorative versions in which one or both of the upper and lower parts are supported by horizontal rectangular areas. A decorative design in the manuscript copy of Abu Yusuf's (d.798) treatise named "Kitab al-Kharaj" (**Fig. 11**) (Rogers, 1996, p. 83, 86.)¹² is one of these examples. The scribe of the manuscript dated 888/1483 is not named, but the script and the illumination are reminiscent of works copied by the Mamluks. The composition is similar to the illuminated frontispiece designs of two other manuscript copies produced in 14th century. One of these manuscripts contains "Sharh al-Qanun li-Ibn Sina" of Qutb al-Din Mahmud al-Shirazi (Khalili Collection, MSS 776, fol. 1a; Rogers, 2010, pp. 168–169) and other one includes "Taj al-Maâsir" of Hasan al-Nisabûrî (**Fig. 12**) (BnF, Suppl. Persan 1332, fol. 1a; Richard, 1997, p. 50). In the illumination design of the latter manuscript, the symbolism of four is particularly evident. There is a major illuminated medallion in the centre which contains a lotus bouquet surrounded by four floral patterns at the corners. The central medallion is filled with the floral motifs which are designed like four branches moving in four directions, reminiscent of the *çarkıfelek* (wheel of fortune) motif.

Likewise, the application of the decorative belly form in non-religious works can be shown with a "Mathnawî" copy. According to the colophon, this manuscript was copied by Hasan b. Ahmed b. Muhammad al-Kirimi in 784/1382-83 (Tanındı, 2007, p. 173, 177). The decorative frontispiece of the book was designed as three sections: There is a large square in the middle, and two horizontal rectangles in the upper and lower parts. The design is reminiscent of the body part of the hilya as reflected in the large square. In the centre of this square, there is an octagonal medallion with red background colour and lobed edges. The central medallion is

¹¹ Zeren Tanındı has compared this copy with several manuscripts in the same library (Hamidiye 550, Ayasofya 3626, Fatih 3645) and has mentioned the possibility that its illuminations reflecting the Mamluk style belonged to the calligrapher Shihab al-Din al-Qudsi. Tanındı, 2012, pp. 267-281.

¹² The single-page frontispiece illumination of Muhammad Awfi's "Jawami al-Hikayât" is a different example of this kind of composition. See. Wright, 2006, p. 258, pl.39.

surrounded four half and four quarter medallions with blue backgrounds. The gold-gilded geometric drawings surrounding the wavy corners of half and quarter medallions create four horizontal and vertical symbols of infinity. These geometric drawings reveal the symbols of infinity forming four-cornered star images placed on the four sides of the central medallion (**Fig. 13**).

The last example of an interaction between the composition of the calligraphy and the illumination in the formation of a hilya is the calligraphy composition created by Ahmed al-Qarahisarî. Some of his other works, the manuscript of “Surat al-Enam” produced in 954/1547-1548 (TIEM 1438, fol. 2a; Unustası, 2010, pp. 386-387) can also be considered from this point of view: the horizontal rectangular areas in the upper and lower parts (like the header and skirt), and the central circle filled with script (like the belly), and the four-point decoration surrounding this circle (like the corners) prefigure the characteristics of Hâfiz Osman’s hilya design. Despite this, there is no definite evidence that Ahmed al-Qarahisarî ever designed a hilya in the familiar sense of the word.

It is also noteworthy that the body of the hilya design was taken from some miniatures, not in terms of content, but simply of form. A miniature painting in Muhammad b. Isa al-Aksarayî’s book named “Nihâyat al-Su’l” has such a feature (British Library Add. MS. 18866; Hill, 2001, p. 252. In the relevant folio of this Mamluk work copied by Ahmed b. Omar b. Aḥmed al-Misrî in 773/1371 (fol. 99a, 292a), four horsemen are depicted revolving around a round lake (fol. 140a).¹³ Although the general content of the work is about horse riding, the images of lake and four horsemen suggest a source of inspiration for the arrangement of the hilya’s body form.

The same is visible in the painting of four angels bearing the world in the manuscript copy of Muhammad al-Tûsî’s treatise named “Ajâ’ib al-Makhlûqât” (**Fig. 14**) (Richard, 1997, no.33; Rührdanz, 1999, pp. 455-475). In this miniature, the four angels and the circular space in which the seven planets are described through the colours reminds us of the belly and corners of the later hilya form. Another example of a miniature reflecting the planetary theory in classical Islamic cosmology and the symbolism of four in the arts of the book is available in Khajah al-Kirmanî’s “Khamisa” (Quintet)

¹³ There is a similar miniature in another manuscript copy of “Nihayat al-Su’l”, which is copied by Umar ibn Abdullah ibn Umar al-Shafîi in 1366 and painted by Ali (Chester Beatty Library, Add. MS 1, fol. 118b). For more information about this copy see: Atıl, 1981, pp. 262-263.

manuscript dated 1438 (Freer and Sackler Gallery, S.1986.34).¹⁴ The first thing that stands out in the double-page frontispiece of the manuscript produced in Shiraz is the hexagonal *shamsa* form with wavy corners, and the angel images surrounding this form from all sides (**Fig. 15**).

The paintings of the 12th century medical treatise named “Kitâb al-Diryâq” (*Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Arabe 2964, fol. 1a-1b*)¹⁵ also provide a good example of four angel images and the symbolism of four. Transferring to the context of the effects of planets on human life and horoscopes, there is a most striking example in the miniature in the horoscope prepared for Iskender Sultan, the grandchild of Timur. The manuscript which features this double-page miniature decoration was composed by Mahmud bin Yahya al-Kâshî in 1411 in Shiraz (**Fig.16**) (Grabar, 2009, pp. 58-59; Lentz, Lowry, 1989, cat.36).

4. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the hilya as a work of calligraphy and illumination is to aesthetically evoke of the physical appearance and moral character of the Prophet Muhammad. Different hilya forms point to different perspectives in expressing the same nature. But the meaning of hilya is not limited to this; the hilya’s complex symbolism also reflects the cosmological thought of the Ottoman community. The hilya as an expression of prophetic glory sets out the meaning of the existence of Man (the perfected human being) as the most privileged being on earth, and the image of the highest form and condition of life.

While Muslim poets and writers developed the hilya as a literary genre, Ottoman calligraphers and illuminators developed it into an art form. The first recorded example of the hilya panel is generally believed to have been produced by the famous calligrapher Hâfiz Osman in the 17th century. But it is unthinkable that such a perfect graphical design emerged all at once. It is possible to sum up the parts of hilya under three main headings and to present the hilya as a design consisting of three graphic sections. In its usual graphic form, the hilya design is created by adding to the body section two other parts: *qit'a* and *sure başı*. Both of these parts were occurring long before the 17th century in the Islamic arts of the book. The body section was the most important element providing originality to the

¹⁴ For more information about this copy of Khamsa (Quintet) including illuminated pages and ten miniatures see: Binyon, Wilkinson, Gray, 1971, pp. 72-73, pl. LIII-B; Grabar, 2009, p. 57.

¹⁵ For more information on this work see: Grabar, 2009, p. 56; *Pancaroglu, 2001, pp. 155-172; Kerner, 2010, pp. 25-39.*

design of the hilya. The first important aspect of the body in Hâfız Osman's hilya is its being a clear example of the symbolism of four in the Islamic arts of the book. Secondly, the calligraphic form may have been formed by the conventions of the illumination. Decoration (illumination or painting) appears not to have had just an ornamental function in terms of hilya. On the contrary, it had been the main factor in revealing the most characteristic design created by Hâfız Osman. It is possible to establish this through the decorative manuscripts in religious (Quran, tafsir, hadith, fiqh) and non-religious (medicine, astrology, philosophy, literature, history) topics.

Examining classical examples of Islamic arts of the book, we can observe that the conventional hilya design passed through various stages during the process of its formation. The first of these was providing support to the body from the upper or lower or both upper and lower parts with horizontal rectangular areas reminiscent of the header form. The second was designing the belly as a round, oval or rectangular shape. Finally, the filling of the belly and corners with calligraphy.

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6. LIST OF FIGURES

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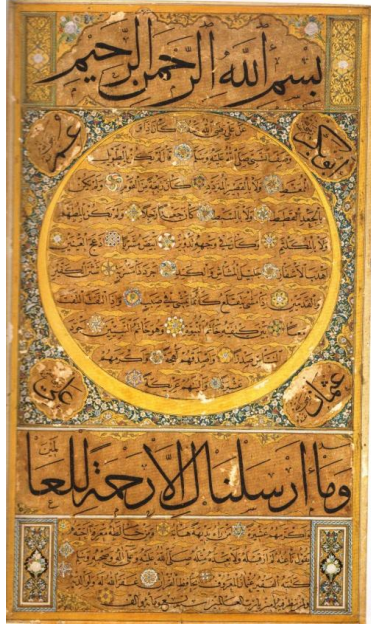


Fig. 1. TSMK. GY.1430,
Hâfiz Osman's hilya

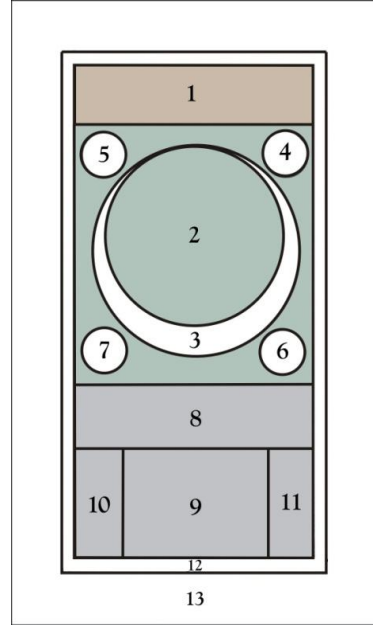


Fig. 2. The Structural Elements of
Hilya Design



Fig.3. a) TSMK.GY.269/16,
Sheikh Hamdullah's Qit'a



b) TSMK. GY.1430, Hâfiz
Osman's Hilya (detail)

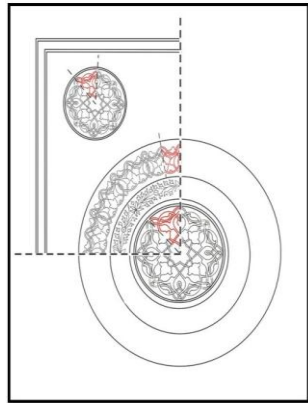
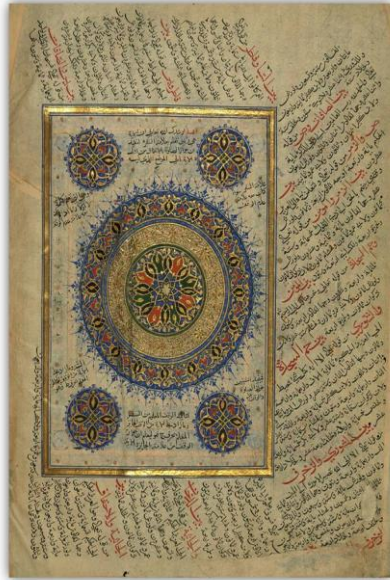


Fig. 8. The Walters Art Museum,
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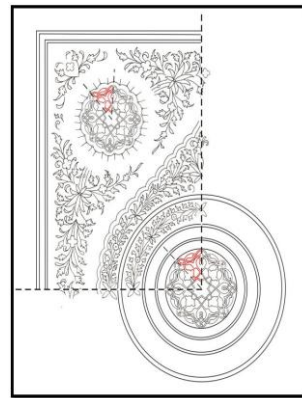
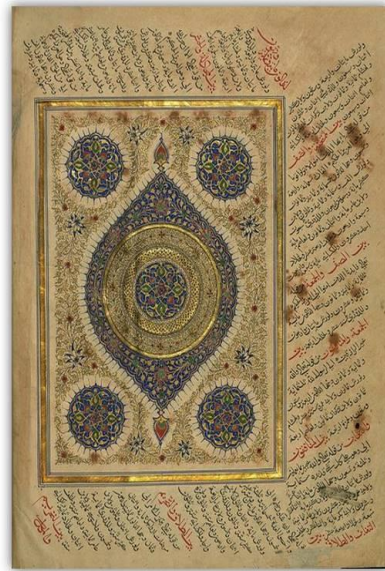


Fig. 9. The Walters Art Museum,
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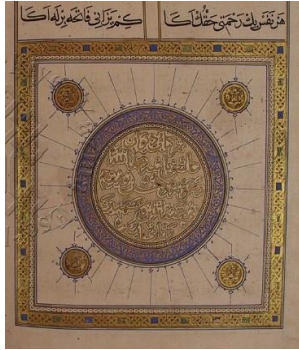


Fig. 10. Laleli 1752
M2, fol. 480b.

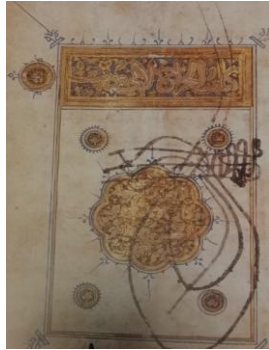


Fig. 11. Khalili Coll.
MSS 230, fol. 1a.



Fig. 12. BnF. Suppl.
Persan 1332, fol. 1a.

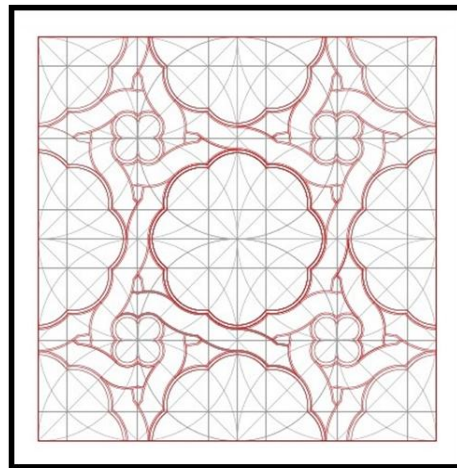
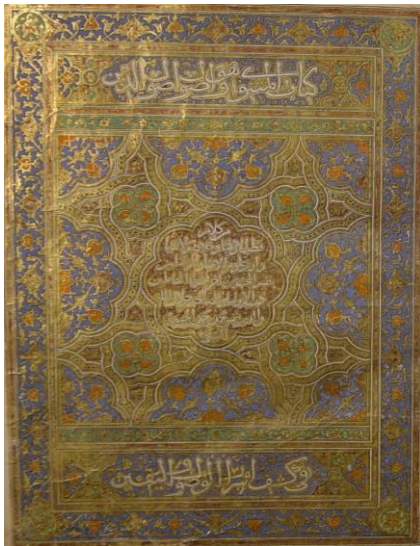


Fig. 13. KKM 53, fol. 1a.



Fig. 14. The Walters Art Museum
W.593, fol.9b.

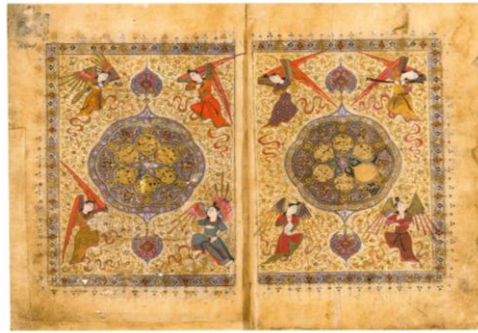


Fig. 15. Freer and Sackler Gallery
S.1986.34.

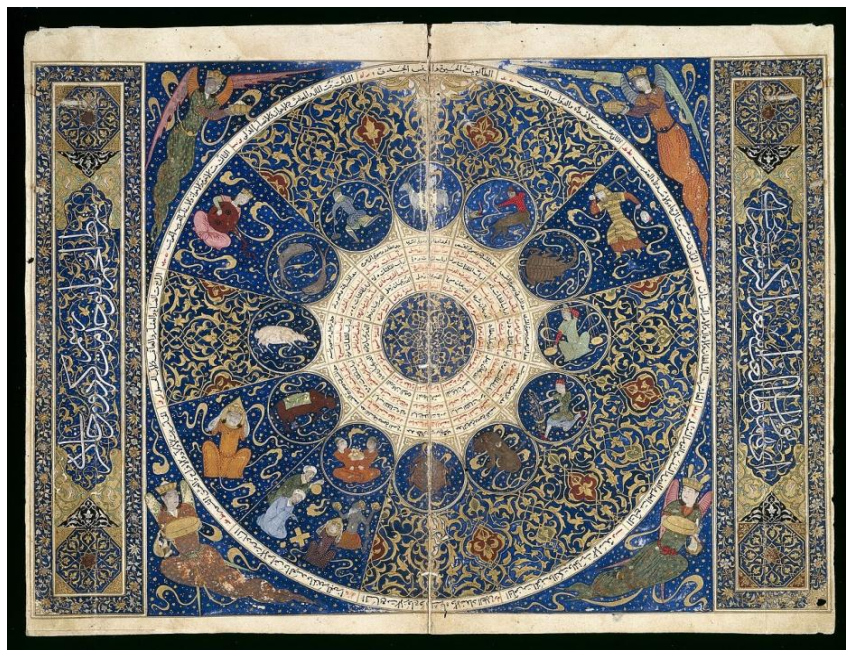


Fig. 16. Welcome Institute Library, Persian Ms.474, fol.18b-19a.