> and animals. I replied: It seems to me that they certainly are not behaving properly, for while they gaze upon those pictures they are not directing their hearts exclusively to their father in heaven. Nevertheless, in this case, there is no trespass against the biblical prohibition, 'You shall not make either a sculpture or any image' [Exod 20:3], as we deduce from the [precedent] recorded in the Talmudic chapter, 'All the Statues,' regarding Rabban Gamaliel [whose models of the moon's phases were considered unproblematic] 'because other people produced [the models] for him' [*bAZ* 54b]. Furthermore, there are no grounds for even the precautionary suspicion of [idolatry] regarding the illuminations [in prayerbooks], since they are merely patches of pigment lacking sufficient tangibility. We only have precautionary grounds to suspect [idolatry] with respect to a protruding, engraved seal, but not with an intaglio seal, and all the more so in this case where [the image of birds and animals in prayerbooks] is neither protruding nor intaglio. [The image in a prayerbook] is merely [flat] pigment. (Bland 2001: 292)

Against the background of these authoritative premodern texts, the fertile production and consumption of the visual arts throughout Jewish history ought no longer cause any astonishment or raise the objection of heterodoxy. That Jewish cultures have applied their strictures against representing the deity to the practice of all forms of visual art cannot be maintained. That the HB, as interpreted by the rabbinic traditions, is a manifesto for absolute aniconism cannot be historically defended. That the visual arts have always flourished within Jewish life cannot be gainsaid.

Bibliography: ■ K. P. Bland, *The Artless Jew: Medieval and Modern Affirmations and Denials of the Visual* (Princeton, N.J. 2000). ■ K. P. Bland, "Defending, Enjoying, and Regulating the Visual," in *Judaism in Practice* (ed. L. Fine; Princeton, N.J. 2001) 281–97. ■ S. Fine, *Art and Judaism in the Graeco-Roman World: Toward a New Jewish Archaeology* (New York 2005). ■ J. Gutmann, *Hebrew Manuscript Painting* (New York 1978). ■ V. B. Mann, *Jewish Texts on the Visual Arts* (New York 2000). ■ S. Sabar, *Ketubbah: Jewish Marriage Contracts* (Philadelphia 1990).

Kalman P. Bland

III. Islam

Though the two are inseparably linked, "aniconism" should be distinguished from "iconoclasm." The latter term signifies the impulse to purge or exclude any kind of plastic image or visual representation from rites of devotion and sanctuary environments, while the former encompasses a much broader range of attitudes regarding figural representation or depiction (*taṣwīr*) in general, ranging from bland indifference to extreme hostility.

1. Foundations. Many have assumed that Islamic aniconism, like its Jewish counterpart, is anchored in the tradition's ancient hostility to idolatry, which played a formative role in the emergence of Islam in an environment in which the worship of idols was supposedly rampant. While some have suggested that the paganism of the *Jāhiliyya* or "Age of Ignorance" was deliberately exaggerated or even invented outright by early Muslim authors, a rich body of archaeological and textual evidence clearly attests to the popularity of cult images in Arabian polytheism in pre-Islamic times. Curiously, there is no explicit qurʾānic mandate against figural imagery per se. What we see here instead, in virtually every passage that mentions *aṣnām* or *awthān* (the plurals of *ṣanam* and *wathan* respectively; either term can be interpreted as "cult statues," though this is open to debate), is a conspicuous alignment of idol worship with other varieties of wrongdoing and error.

Notably, many of the qurʾānic denunciations of *aṣnām* and *awthān* are placed in the mouth of Abraham, and may thus be thought to be biblically or midrashically inspired (for example, the Qurʾān understands Abraham's father Azar to be a maker and seller of idols, a theme held in common with rabbinic tradition). One presumes that these allusions are intended to establish an unambiguous Abrahamic precedent for Muhammad's own iconoclasm, and the association of iconoclasm with Abraham remains potent today. Elias has convincingly demonstrated that the significance of the Taliban's campaign against the Buddhist artifacts of Afghanistan in 2001, which culminated in the much-lamented demolition of the monumental Buddhas of Bamiyan, cannot be properly understood without appreciating the Taliban's deliberate evocation of Abraham; this is signaled most of all by the fact that the campaign was deliberately timed to coincide with the Ḥajj season and Eid al-Aḍḥā, the Abrahamic associations of which are extremely conspicuous.

However, it is important to note that when the Qurʾān refers to the images putatively worshipped by the Prophet's contemporaries and that his followers are to avoid, it prefers more oblique terms such as *jibt* and *ṭaghūt* to describe their objects of worship and not *aṣnām* or *awthān*; this potentially undercuts any attempt to cast Abraham's iconoclasm as a symbolic precursor to Muḥammad's. Nevertheless, the figure of Muḥammad is central to the phenomenon under consideration here in two ways. First, though other factors came into play later, it is reasonable to assume that traditions about the Prophet's purging the Kaʿba of idols after the "conquest" of Mecca in Ramadan 8/January 630 or his destruction of the sacred grove of the goddess al-ʿUzza in the valley of Nakhla may have provided some impetus for (and thus the rationale behind) the development of a pervasive rejection of images in Islamic culture generally. Indeed, Muslim iconoclasts have often imagined their hostility to depiction to be mandated by the *Sunna,* and notably, the ḥadīth literature is far more explicit than the Qurʾān in its condemnation of *taṣwīr* as a matter of principle. Thus, numerous traditions in the ca-

nonical collections attest to Muḥammad's statements that artists will be punished on the Day of Resurrection and commanded to bring their images to life, or that angels avoid homes in which pictures are found.

Second, while violence against images was sporadic in the early and medieval periods, there has been a marked intensification not only of iconophobia but active iconoclasm in Islamic society in recent centuries; this is often manifest in the pious interventions commonly found in illuminated manuscripts, in which representations of living things are rendered "dead" through a decapitating pen-stroke, or faces erased completely (*see* → plate 16). There is some irony to the fact that the most acute case of Muslim public opposition to visual representation in modern times centered on the depiction of the Prophet by nonbelievers. This was vividly demonstrated by the so-called "Cartoon Controversy" that erupted after the publication of satirical cartoons of Muḥammad in the Danish newspaper *Jyllandsposten* in 2005 and their subsequent republication by media outlets throughout the world. There is copious evidence from premodern Islamic cultures demonstrating that figural imagery – including portrayals of Muḥammad himself – was at one time acceptable, at least in private contexts; for many modern Muslims, however, the rejection of all figural representation, not least of all any portrayal of the Prophet whatsoever, is seen as absolutely essential to true Islam.

2. Early Muslim Aniconism and the Limits of Representation. It seems that the primitive Muslim community was largely indifferent to the question of representation, and that the deliberate rejection of images, at least in public contexts, was a direct response to the specific forms and uses of depiction in the communities of the late antique Near East that were assimilated into the Islamic polity after the Arab conquests. Hodgson sees a combination of factors contributing to a hostility to visual representation among pious circles: while qurʾānic passages denouncing idolaters surely provided some *justification* for iconophobia, the early Muslim reaction against visual depictions was primarily inspired, in his view, by the egalitarianism of the "Shariah-minded" (i.e., the proto-Sunnī leadership), who denounced images on the basis of a "moralistic populism" that associated painting, sculpture, and other media of representation with luxury and royal excess. Thus, on one level, aniconism is analogous to the well-known prohibitions on the wearing of silk or gold to be found in the ḥadīth literature, and may have been a particular reaction against the opulence of the Sasanian court and the Persian aristocracy.

Aniconism was an even more pressing issue in the liturgical context, however, given the extreme popularity of icons and the cult of images in Eastern Christian communities; the starkness of the mosque is surely a direct reaction against the overwhelming tendency towards iconolatry in Syria, Egypt and elsewhere, which the early Muslims would have had endless opportunity to observe. Hodgson conjectures that the rejection of any kind of symbolism in specifically religious contexts is based in a concern not to allow any extraneous image or sentiment to intrude into what should be an exclusive focus on God himself in the act of worship. Insofar as *any* art, religious or secular, serves to create a moment of communion with the transcendent, a rigorist could argue that since God and his revelation are the sole manifestation of truth to his creatures, any art, figural or nonfigural, infringes upon the absolute unity of the divine.

In contrast to Hodgson's characterization of Islamic aniconism, Grabar and others have emphasized a different animus behind the tendency to avoid figural imagery in public monuments. Beginning in the later 7th century, images may have been avoided in the decorative programs of such important Islamic sites as the Dome of the Rock and the Aqṣā Mosque primarily as a deliberate strategy of distinction, insofar as Byzantine monuments were readily identified by their proclivity to incorporate specific forms of visual expression, not least of all the icon. Muslim aniconism thus had clear political, if not polemical, implications. This would seem to be corroborated by the fact that the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik (reigned 685–705), the builder of the Dome of the Rock, also undertook a more or less simultaneous "Islamicizing" reform of the currency employed in his empire, substituting a new aniconic style of coinage with conspicuously Islamic slogans for the Byzantine-style coins bearing figural images with Christian overtones that his predecessors had preferred. Intriguingly, Christian literary sources (admittedly less reliable than the numismatic evidence) impute iconoclastic campaigns of a peculiar kind to both ʿAbd al-Malik's governor in Egypt and his son Yazīd II (reigned 720–24): both are said to have forcibly removed crosses from churches found in their domains.

The parameters of aniconic discourse in modern Islam have not changed much since ʿAbd al-Malik's time. The rejection of images still serves the dual purpose of asserting power *within* the Muslim community, in that iconoclasts claim the moral authority supposedly contingent upon asserting a "pure" Islam, and challenging the hegemony of those *outside* the community, in drawing a sharp boundary between the pious, aniconic Self and the idolatrous Other.

The rise of a deliberate preference for aniconism in public and religious contexts in the late 7th century contrasts sharply with the perennial popu-

larity, or at least permissibility, of figural representation in "secular" contexts – the frescoes and sculptural decoration of Umayyad palaces, e.g., or the ubiquitous figural imagery deployed in manuscript illumination, which could even include depictions of the Prophet himself on account of their restriction to private use. The royal predilection for such figural art has little to do with the moral laxity of courts, as some would assume, and much more to do with Islamic culture's receptivity to the established conventions of the iconography of power in the Near East. Diverse material evidence may be explained in this way, from Iranian princes' patronage of silver vessels with hunting scenes, in clear imitation of Sasanian models, to the proliferation of royal portraiture in the early modern gunpowder empires, in clear imitation of western European models.

As Bulliet has shown, a regression to the figural in Islamic society may also be indicative of social tensions. His analysis of different pottery styles in evidence in early medieval Nishapur shows that factional rivalries between groups competing for social prominence could be manifest in the styles of pottery patronized by each group: one faction with roots in the traditional Islamic elite of the early conquest period seems to have favored a more characteristically "Islamic" aniconic ware with Kūfan precursors, while another, with more conspicuously "nationalist" attitudes, apparently preferred pottery decorated with traditional Iranian visual motifs, including the use of figural imagery.

From the caliphal period, down to the flourishing of painting in the 11th and 12th centuries, in which the depiction of living things was commonplace, virtually to the present day, Islamic aniconism often reflects not an outright rejection of the figural so much as what Grabar terms an egalitarianism of form. Here, the figural may be no more and no less important than other visual elements such as the vegetal flourish and the arabesque. When the figural mode is employed, it may be marked by a conspicuous emphasis on color and line and a corresponding avoidance of the depth and weight that are so essential to Western naturalism – the "apotheosis of visuality," as Hodgson puts it. In the end, such an approach is not opposed to but rather *complements* the outright avoidance of the figural characteristic of aniconism proper. Both may be considered to be animated by the same ethos: a conviction that human art, no matter how ingenious and masterful, can never adequately capture the reality of the living being shaped and inspired by the divine Creator.

Bibliography: ■ R. W. Bulliet, "Pottery Styles and Social Status in Medieval Khurasan," in *Archaeology, Annales, and Ethnohistory* (ed. A. B. Knapp; Cambridge 1992) 75–82. ■ J. J. Elias, "(Un)making Idolatry from Mecca to Bamiyan," *Future Anterior* 4 (2007) 13–29. ■ O. Grabar, "Islam and Iconoclasm," in *Iconoclasm: Papers given at the Ninth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, March 1975* (eds. A. Bryer/J. Herrin; Birmingham 1977) 45–52. ■ G. R. Hawting, "Idols and Images," *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān* 2 (Leiden 2002) 481–84. ■ M. G. S. Hodgson, "Islâm and Image," *HR* 3 (1964) 220–60.

Michael Pregill

IV. As Problem for Visual Arts

Aniconism is the artistic practice of depictions without the use of anthropomorphic or figural forms, especially in reference to God. It is identified as the appropriate visual mode for those religious traditions that adhere to the injunctions against idolatry, visual ambiguities, and humanism.

See further →Iconoclasm; →Ten Commandments

Diane Apostolos-Cappadona

ادمی و دیگر بر صورة ثور وسیوم بر صورة شیر وچهارم
بر صورة نسر وپیغمبر صلی الله علیه وسلم قول امیه بن
ابی الصلب بشنید وازان شگفت داشت که جگونه
حملهٔ عرش را درین بیت جمع کرده است وَمِنْهُمُ الْمَلَكُ الَّذِي
يُقَالُ لَهُ الرُّوحُ روح ملکی است که در یک صف
بایستد وجملهٔ ملایک در صفی از بر ای کرامت او عند الله
تعالی ومنهم اسرافیل علیه السلام هو مبلغ الاوامر وناخ الارواح
فِي الْأَجْسَادِ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ