

In Memoriam Dorothea Duda (1937–2017)

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Dorothea Duda was the more rare type of an independent scholar and had a charming personality. Trained in both Art History and Islamic Studies with Oriental languages, and internationally renowned for her Islamic art publications, she did not hold a permanent job in academia but worked in multiple projects, choosing the research topics of her own interest.

Duda was born on 20 December 1937, in Breslau, then part of the German *Reich*, today Wrocław in Poland, center of the historical region Silesia, into an Austrian family of academics. Her father Herbert Wilhelm Duda (Linz 1900–Vienna 1975) was a scholar of Oriental Studies (PhD University of Leipzig, Germany; diploma *École nationale des langues orientales vivantes*, Paris, France) and at that time associate professor at the University of Breslau. Her mother Felicia Lerm (Hanover 1904–Rohrbach 2003) was an academic librarian, for some time working in the library of the Istanbul branch of the German Archaeological Institute, and later translated a voluminous French book on Islamic art into German.¹ Her younger sister Sibylle Duda (born 1940) studied sociology and wrote on the social history of women. During World War II, from 1941 to 1943, the family lived in Sofia, Bulgaria, where the father directed the local German Scientific Institute (*Deutsches Wissenschaftliches Institut*) while also working as a visiting professor at the State University. At that time, Dorothea Duda learned to speak Bulgarian fluently. The Dudas subsequently moved to Austria, where the father became a professor for Turcology at the University of Vienna. Dorothea finished high school in Vienna, as the only girl in a class of boys, in 1956.

Visual arts were the main interest of Dorothea Duda, while the family tradition brought her to pursue it in the realm of Islam. She graduated from the University of Vienna with a major in Art History and a minor in Islamic Studies. The student master record in the archive of the Department of Art History notes as qualifying thesis, then required for acceptance as full student, a stylistic comparison of Gothic sculpture in Austria in the winter term 1957/58.² Duda attended seminar classes on medieval and early modern European painting, sculpture and architecture with the young Renate Wagner (-Rieger, 1921–1980).³ There was no specific teaching on Islamic art at the Department, and it was the historian of European art Karl Maria Swoboda (1889–1977), with some interest in Asian art, who supervised her doctoral thesis on

I gratefully acknowledge information and input from Sibylle Duda (who also provided the photo), Barbara Flemming, and Friedrich Polleroß. Numbers in brackets refer to entries in the bibliography of Dorothea Duda's scholarly writings, at the end of this obituary.

- 1 Alexandre Papadopoulo, *Islamische Kunst* (first published as: *L'islam et l'art musulman*), transl. and ed. by Felicia Duda-Lerm, Freiburg: Herder, 1977 (Große Epochen der Weltkunst, Ars Antiqua; 2). Dorothea Duda had been asked to review the French original and was instrumental in connecting her mother to the publisher.
- 2 Department of Art History, archive, "Stammblatt: Duda, Dorothea." "Vergleich zwischen der Klosterneuburger Madonna und den stilverwandten Madonnenstatuen aus dem Unteren Belvedere," supervised by Swoboda. The hand-typed 15 pages are kept in the Department archive.
- 3 Seminar papers: "Raffaels frühe Madonnen im Verhältnis zu Leonardo und Michelangelo, ihre Chronologie und Ikonographie," "Elia Castello: Stilableitung der Plastiken," "Die Portale romanischer Zeit in Österreich und ihr Verhältnis zu jenen Italiens und Deutschlands"; *ibid*.

Persian painting. In Islamic Studies, she mastered the three major source languages, Arabic, Persian, and (Ottoman) Turkish, as was expected then and is recommendable today. In study stays abroad, then not as common as today, in Florence, Istanbul, and Paris, she pursued Islamic art interests. At that time, it was normal that university studies in the humanities would lead directly, after an interim exam (1961), to the doctoral thesis. Duda worked on fourteenth-century book illustration under the Jalā'irids in Tabriz and Baghdad, a theme and period that back then were understudied in Islamic art scholarship, and graduated in 1964 (no. 1). This was a style-historical study, and its main merit was the discussion of material in the scarcely known Diez albums, kept then in Tübingen and now in Berlin, and albums in Istanbul. The publication of doctoral theses was not a requirement in Austria, but a few years later Duda presented her results in two articles in *Der Islam*, a leading German journal of Islamic Studies (no. 8, 9) that occasionally includes art topics ever since Ernst Herzfeld's seminal article on the genesis of Islamic art.

Immediately after doctoral graduation, Dorothea Duda entered the career path of a fortuitous chain of projects that led through Germany to countries of Islamic art in the Maghrib and Mashriq, West and East of the Mediterranean. An assignment with the State Museums of (West-)Berlin (1964 and 1966–1968) provided her with hands-on experience in dealing with objects, in particular metalwork at the Museum for Islamic Art, that proved beneficial in her later works (no. 36). In between there was the Lebanon. She started fieldwork for a project in Beirut (1965–1966) funded by the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft* (German Oriental Society), on the private collection of house interiors in the mansion of Henri Pharaon. The resulting book monograph (no. 34) was widely reviewed, making Duda internationally known, despite it being written in German (at the time less of an obstacle to international scholars than today). It pointed to a new interest in domestic architecture and environment in Islamic art scholarship that later became more visible through the studies of architecture and interiors in Cairo and Syria. As one reviewer noted: “for the first time we have the sort of ideal information needed for historical and esthetic considerations.”²⁴ Then there was her work in Spain. Employed by the German Archaeological Institute in Madrid (1968–1971), Dorothea Duda studied ceramics and glass objects from Arab and Mudéjar sites, mostly from excavations (no. 38–44) but also in standing building like the Great Mosque of Córdoba (no. 42). Then there was Iraq. For three years she worked for the Baghdad station of the German Archaeological Institute (1971–1973) researching and publishing ceramics of the Parthian period from the German long-term excavations at Uruk-Warka (no. 45–46). Extensive travel in each of the countries and their neighbours provided her with a broad knowledge of their arts and architectures, and visual and material cultures.

Back in Vienna by 1974, Duda returned to the medium of her doctoral thesis, book illustration, and started working on what was to become her *opus magnum*, positioning herself as a foremost expert in the field: a catalogue of the illustrated manuscripts from the Islamic periods in the Austrian National Library in Vienna, the republican successor of the Imperial Library of the Austro-Hungarian Habsburg rulers. This was an enormous and complicated project, eventually formed into three books, each with two volumes for a descriptive catalogue and illustrations (no. 4–6). Funded by the Austrian Research Fund it was part of a larger project series that was administered at the Austrian Academy of Sciences and organized by the art historian Otto Pächt (1902–1988), specialist in medieval European book painting

4 Oleg Grabar, review of *Innenarchitektur syrischer Stadthäuser des 16. bis 18. Jahrhunderts* (Beirut, 1971), by Dorothea Duda, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 6:4/1975, 510–511.

and professor at the University of Vienna's Department of Art History. While working on the project, Duda embarked on various spin-off studies of individual works (no. 2–3, 10–16), including the rarely surviving and studied medium of large playing cards with figural motifs (no. 3, 11). Later followed a number of encyclopaedia entries on various subjects of the arts of the book (no. 22–33).

The Indian miniatures that were used in the Rococo interior decoration of an orientalisering room in Schönbrunn Palace, the *Millionenzimmer* (Room of Millions), became another research topic. Duda was consulted when the original miniatures were replaced by copies, and since then studied them in preliminary articles (16–21) and finally a monograph that awaits posthumous publication (7). Duda's one-time diversion into university teaching also related to her expertise in manuscript illustration: an introduction to Islamic arts of the book in the Department of Art History at the University of Vienna held in the winter term 1982/83.⁵

While we await the publication of Dorothea Duda's book on the early modern European usage of Indian miniatures in the interior design of a major Austrian palace, her greatest and most lasting achievement in scholarship on Islamic art is probably the altogether six text and image volumes on the illustrated Persian, Arabic, and Ottoman Turkish manuscripts (studied and published by her in that order) kept in the Austrian National Library – a major example of fundamental research (no. 4–6). Prior to her publications, these manuscripts had been known only through lists and catalogues of philologists who paid marginal attention to the illustrations, if at all. Duda's method of studying and presenting this material was considered exemplary by all reviewers who commented on the publications. The structure of the entries is succinct, the mostly formal stylistic analysis and commentary unusually detailed, frequently entering into comparisons with works in other places, and often digressing into larger discussions of topics of book art. In fact, some entries constitute small monographs on the illustrations and the manuscript. Philological and orientalist training enabled Duda to comment on the manuscript and the history of the book; to identify and correctly read the inscriptions inside and around the illustrations, including signatures, dates, and glosses; to check the structure of the manuscript, information in title pages and colophon, and the placement of the images in the text. The vast material was made extremely well accessible in each of the three books through no less than seven indices, very helpful and handy: author names; book titles; artist names, i.e., painters, calligraphers, copyists, bookbinders, etc.; places of production (called "styles" in the sense of 'schools,' by today somewhat inappropriate); names of who commissioned and who ordered the manuscripts, i.e., patrons; places (mostly attributed) of the book-bindings; and a most useful index of visual (called "iconographical") motifs. With these cross-sections the volumes acquired the character of an encyclopaedic handbook. It was probably rarely read this way: the catalogue genre was hiding the discussions; and the threshold of being written in German encouraged international users to merely employ the factual information.

Dorothea Duda was a *Privatgelehrte*, not in the sense of private funding, but as someone free of the ever-increasing demands that accompany permanent positions in universities and institutions. The odds of meeting Duda in her late years in Vienna were high when public lectures on themes of Islamic art or Oriental Studies were held. Called "Dorle" (a diminutive

⁵ Department of Art History, archive, record 82215. The request to the university, written by head of department Günther Heinz (1927–1992), explained the importance of permanently including the history of Islamic art in the Department's teaching and research: letter to Faculty of Humanities, University of Vienna, 16 March 1982.

of her first name) by close friends, she regularly was among the audience of such events, often at the Department of Art History. She was a generous person, and each time I enjoyed chatting with her, moving through all sorts of subjects, including but not limited to the field of Islamic Art History and its protagonists, and I learned from her on several aspects of the history of the field.

Dorothea Duda passed away at the age of 79 on 13 January 2017. She was buried in the family grave in Klaffer am Hochficht, situated in the region *Oberes Mühlviertel* in Upper Austria.

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Re-Assessing Art of Islamic Countries in the Modern Period

Markus Ritter

These lines briefly rehearse the papers in the Thirteenth Colloquium of the Ernst Herzfeld Society held in Vienna in 2017, and introduce the contributions that grew from it and are published in the first half of this volume. While the colloquium was devoted to “Re-Assessing Nineteenth-Century Art in Islamic Countries,” many papers have demonstrated a relation of artistic changes to the global modernization of the period, going back to the eighteenth and continuing into the twentieth centuries. Others have shown continuities of local nineteenth-century art and its practices from the preceding century. Hence a broader title has been chosen for these lines, which also covers one of the contributions from the section on on-going research, outside the main theme of the colloquium.¹

In the *tour d’horizon* offered by the papers in the colloquium, visual arts and architecture in Islamic countries of the nineteenth century appeared vibrant and innovative. Assessing them has been and is being met with difficulties. Art in the nineteenth century and in the modern period at large has been excluded from most narratives of the history of Islamic art and architecture, even though it was the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries that saw the European formation of the generic term ‘Islamic art’ and its adoption in Islamic countries. Indeed, the global interconnections of art in the modern period, of its practices, artists, patrons, and audiences, question the suitability of the term. To some degree the nineteenth century remains “the unknown century” in terms of conceptualization and of an understanding grounded in survey studies of media, themes, and objects – as has been said some fifty years ago for European art of the same period.²

Among the difficulties is a lack of conceptual categories. Art in the period is often framed by formulaic binaries, such as a divide or transition between a ‘traditional’ past and a ‘modern’ and ‘innovative’ present; or an interdependence of ‘local’ or Islamic and ‘global,’ European or ‘Western’ art traditions and practices. They are informed by foregrounding the acceptance of European models, as ‘Europeanization,’ ‘Westernization,’ and in an inverted perspective and conscious adoption as ‘Occidentalism,’ or in an opposite inversion as ‘traditionalism.’ In a formal and stylistic perspective, the hybrid character of artworks drawing on various models has been characterized as ‘eclecticism’ including phenomena of a ‘revival’ of historic forms. Another difficulty is the lack, despite recent efforts, of coherent surveys and studies of artworks from the period that would allow to see more general lines of characteristics and establish more nuanced views between them.³

1 See the full program at <<https://ernst-herzfeld-gesellschaft.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/EHG-Wien-Programm-06-20-17-B.pdf>> (last access: June 22, 2022); and the program of the colloquium at the end of this volume, p. 223.

2 The quotation refers to the title of Zeitler 1966, the introductory chapter, in a survey of nineteenth-century European art.

3 A variety of individual topics is addressed in the collective volume of Behrens-Abouseif/Vernoit (eds) 2006. A selective survey of some media through objects and centered on local art regions is provided by Vernoit 1997. See most recently, continuing the label and frame of ‘Islamic’ in the book title, Graves/Seggerman (eds) 2022.

Since their inception, the colloquia of the Ernst Herzfeld Society have also served as a fore for themes of art in the modern period, including historiography, heritage studies, and archaeology. Over a dozen such contributions were published in the past seven volumes of the *Beiträge zur islamischen Kunst und Archäologie*. A large portion discussed the European reception of Islamic art in orientalizing forms of architecture and the applied arts.⁴ An even larger part were studies on the historiography of excavations and restorations of Islamic sites during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.⁵ A lesser number were studies on art produced in Islamic countries, on painting and calligraphy, and on architecture and urbanism.⁶ The Vienna colloquium, thus, deliberately focused on arts and architecture in Islamic countries during the nineteenth century.

The approaches in the papers were diverse. Most participants looked at visual arts as a medium that conveys a message or acts in other ways as a signifier. Many papers were informed by a historical or anthropological approach. Just a few papers addressed aesthetic and formal questions, and it may be no coincidence that they dealt with calligraphy whose productive and innovative output in the nineteenth century has been long acknowledged. Maryam Ekhtiar discussed aesthetic categories and interpretations of one genre made by one specific Iranian artist,⁷ and Khatereh Fahimi the oeuvre of women calligraphers in Iran. An implicit case of innovation was present in papers dealing with media or techniques that by definition were new in the nineteenth century: Ralph Bodenstein's contribution on the architecture of factories as a new building task in Egypt; and contributions on photography in the Ottoman Empire, by Erin Hyde Nolan on the *carte-de-visite* and Sultanic albums, and by Ahmet Ersoy on illustrated journals.⁸ Several papers explored artworks in the context of popular forms of piety, such as Zahra Ahari on a square in Tehran, where the local concept of a place for religious feasts was overlaid with the urban concept of a European public square; or Roxana Zenhari and Elika Palenzona-Djalili on depictions of Ali and modes of sufism in the new medium of lithography and the continued medium of lacquer painted mirror cases in the middle and later parts of the century.

Some papers emphasized the use of textual and literary sources as an important tool for understanding perceptions and terminology, in other words thinking related to arts in the period: Vahid Vahdat on how descriptions of Europe were interpreted and made understandable on the basis of local formal and material traditions;⁹ Mehrdad Qayyoomi Bidhendi on the shifting meaning of terms for the modern architect, and how this related to perceptions of architecture; Nazanin Shahidi on graffiti as a source for a social history of architecture. Others looked into the question of changed perceptions on the past and how this would relate to modern thinking in a local context, comparable or related to historicist concepts: Ahmet Ersoy, in his evening lecture, expanded on Ottoman architecture; Stefan Weber dwelled on various examples from the Islamic Mediterranean; and Paul Luft focused on the Qajar revival of the ancient medium of rock relief in Iran. The phenomenon of (self-)orientalization

4 Troelenberg 2008; Hagedorn 2008; Gussone 2010; Gussone 2012.

5 Kröger 2014; Shaw 2017; Giese 2017; Rose 2021; Rosser-Owen/Haddon 2021.

6 Bombardier 2017; Seyed Mousavi 2021; Badat 2020. – Hakim 2017; Schäfer/Kinzel 2021; and Laura Hindelang in the second half of the present volume, p. 209.

7 Cf. Maryam Ekhtiar, "Calligraphy Painting by Isma'il Jalayir, ca. 1860, Purchase, 2017 NoRuz at The Met Benefit, 2018 2018.26," *Met Collects* 11/2018 <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/online-features/metcollects/calligraphy-painting>> (last access: June 27, 2022).

8 Cf. Bodenstein 2014. See Nolan 2019. See Ersoy 2016.

9 See Vahdat 2017.