

The Recovery of the Muslims' Past and the Others

Islamic Perspective of History

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2011CE/1453AH

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the Others
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IIUM Press

Published by:
IIUM Press
International Islamic University Malaysia

First Edition, 2011
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Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Ataullah Bogdan Kopanski: The Recovery of Muslims' Past & the Others
Islamic Perspective of History

ISBN: 978-967-418-061-4

Member of Majlis Penerbitan Ilmiah Malaysia - MAPIM
(Malaysian Scholarly Publishing Council)

Printed by :
IIUM PRINTING SDN.BHD.
No. 1, Jalan Industri Batu Caves 1/3
Taman Perindustrian Batu Caves
Batu Caves Centre Point
68100 Batu Caves
Selangor Darul Ehsan
Tel: +603-6188 1542 / 44 / 45 Fax +603-6188 1543
EMAIL: iiumprinting@yahoo.com

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CHAPTER 4

Sino-Arabic Script in Islamic Art and Architecture in China with Special Reference to Xi'an Mosque

Ghassan Taha Yaseen and Djamel Dilmi

Abstract:

The Islamic art has played a significant role in the cultural, social, historical and religious development of Muslim Chinese in China. Its development was unique in response to cultural needs of the minority Muslim groups in China. The Islamic calligraphy, for example, was widely used in architecture, especially in interior and exterior decoration of mosques and other religious buildings. The aim of this study is to interpret the Sino-Arabic script of the great mosque of Xi'an. To achieve this, the Sino-Arabic script of calligraphy will be examined in order to determine its characteristics and the nature of the effects to which they have been subjected. The research collected a broad range of information through a field survey that was carried out in the Great Mosque of Xi'an in China on October 2007.¹ The field survey also benefitted from input by renowned Muslim Chinese calligrapher Haji Noor Deen Mi Gouanggiang. The research hopes to further increase the body of knowledge on unique cultural heritage of Islam in China.

The study of Sino-Arabic calligraphy and its application in Islamic art and architecture as a part of heritage that was produced by Muslims in China. This research is divided into four parts. The first part sets out the background of the study and its significance of calligraphy in Chinese culture and significance of calligraphy to Islamic culture. The second part presents the significance of calligraphy in both Chinese and Islamic cultures and their styles of writing. The third part focuses on the development of Islamic calligraphy in China. The fourth part is the main parts of this study and will

¹ The field survey to the mosque was accompanied by the renowned calligrapher Haji Noor Deen Mi Gouanggiang. Who was the first Chinese Muslim to be awarded the Egyptian Certificate of Arabic Calligraphy and to be admitted as a member of the Association of Egyptian Calligraphy.