

**ISLAMIC ABSTRACTIVE MOTIFS INTERPRETATION IN PERSIAN
ART: A HISTORICAL STUDY OF HERAT SCHOOL PAINTING**

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**ACADEMY OF ISLAMIC STUDIES
UNIVERSITI MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR
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OF HERAT SCHOOL PAINTING**

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ISLAMIC ABSTRACTIVE MOTIFS INTERPRETATION IN PERSIAN ART: A HISTORICAL STUDY OF HERAT SCHOOL PAINTING

ABSTRACT

Features of Persian art including meticulous designs, great complexity and the romantic and heroic stories illustrated in the paintings in the 15th century underwent drastic changes in Herat. One of the most distinctive features of the Herat School was its continual use of various decorative motifs in painting. The Herat style in Persian art emerged with the Timurids under the patronage of Shahrukh who contributed remarkably to social and cultural developments in Iran. By delving deeply into the works of the early centuries of Islam to the present, one can perceive that it is the “ornament” that is of a special position in the Herat School of Islamic art as the most important school in the Timurid Dynasty and Persian painting history, for the development of forms and colours in Persian forms with Chinese influence in the Mongol Dynasty. The objectives of this research include analysing Islamic motifs in Persian painting, studying the theoretical foundations of Islamic motifs and Persian painting schools to examine the causes of the creation of the Islamic art motifs in the Herat School of Painting. The researcher analysed five paintings from *Shahnameh-y-Baysonquri* by using Panofsky’s theory about iconography and iconology to interpret Islamic motifs used in the Herat School of Painting. The researcher found affective factors in the Herat School for abstractive motifs and explained their meaning. The research adopts a qualitative based on library research using journals articles, art and art history books. Persian painters in the Timurid Dynasty used arabesque, geometric and Khataee motifs as decorations. Iranian painters created movement, rhythm, emotion, space and the relationship between them using arabesque shapes to represent the beauty of objects that is inherent to the beauty of God. The principle of monotheism is the most significant codification of the abstract geometric, Eslimee and Khataee decorative designs and Islamic thought influenced Iranian painting significantly.

Keywords: Islamic art, Persian painting, Herat school, Abstract, Geometric

**ISLAMIC ABSTRACTIVE MOTIFS INTERPRETATION IN PERSIAN ART:
A HISTORICAL STUDY OF HERAT SCHOOL PAINTING**

ABSTRAK

Motifs mengenali ciri-ciri kesenian Parsi, seseorang seharusnya memahami beberapa perkara termasuk: ketelitian reka bentuk, kerumitan karya, cerita-cerita romantik dan kisah pahlawan yang digambarkan dalam lukisan Parsi pada abad ke-15, yang keseniannya melalui perubahan drastik di Herat. Salah satu ciri khas Herat School ialah penggunaan pelbagai motif dekoratif dalam lukisan. Gaya Herat dalam kesenian Parsi berkembang seiring golongan Timurid, di bawah naungan Shahrukh, yang memberikan sumbangan luar biasa kepada perkembangan sosial dan budaya di Iran. Dengan mendalami karya Islam terawal hingga kini, seseorang dapat melihat bahawa “perhiasan” itu menduduki tempat istimewa dalam kesenian Islam Herat School. Herat School ini merupakan aliran terpenting dalam dinasti Timurid apabila dikaitkan dengan sejarah lukisan Parsi, dan untuk perkembangan bentuk dan warna dalam acuan Parsi dengan pengaruh Cina semasa dinasti Mongol. Objektif kajian ini ialah menganalisa motif-motif Islam dalam lukisan Parsi, mengkaji asas teori motif-motif Islam, perbandingan antara aliran-aliran kesenian Parsi untuk mengkaji asal usul penciptaan motif kesenian Islam yang ada pada lukisan-lukisan di bawah Herat School, dan menganalisa lukisan-lukisan tersebut untuk mengklasifikasikan motif-motif Islam yang digunakan sebagai motif hiasan dalam lukisan Parsi. Penyelidik menganalisa lima lukisan daripada Shahnameh-y-Baysonquri yang merupakan buku seni Herat School yang paling terkenal dan utama. Penyelidik menganalisa motif hiasan abstraktif teori terdapat dalam buku utama Herat School melalui teori Panofsky berkenaan ikonografi dan ikonologi. Penyelidik menemui faktor yang cekap dalam Herat School untuk motif arabesque dan motif geometri. Penyelidik juga menunjukkan peranan pelukis dan makna motif arabesque dalam lukisan-lukisan Herat School. Penyelidikan ini menggunakan kaedah kualitatif dengan memberi tumpuan kepada makalah-makalah, buku-buku seni dan buku-buku sejarah seni. Hasilnya, penyelidikan ini mendapati bahawa pelukis teori melalui titah raja-raja Timurid dari bandar-bandar Iran yang lain menggunakan motif Islam dalam karya mereka. Pelukis Parsi semasa dinasti Timurid telah menggunakan motif arabesque, geometrik dan Khataee sebagai perhiasan pada lukisan mereka. Pelukis Iran pula, teori mewujudkan

pergerakan, irama, emosi, ruang dan hubungan di antara kesemuanya, telah menggunakan bentuk arabesque dan tujuan mereka adalah untuk menggambarkan bahawa keindahan suatu objek adalah hakiki dengan keindahan Tuhan. Malah, prinsip monoteisme adalah perwujudan yang paling penting dalam reka bentuk dekoratif geometri, eslimee dan Khataee yang abstrak dan pemikiran Islam telah memberi pengaruh penting kepada lukisan Iran.

Kata Kunci: Islamic art, Persian painting, Herat school, Abstract, Geometric

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

BC: Before Christ (Gregorian Calendar)

AD: Anno Domini (After Christ, Gregorian Calendar)

AH: After Hijrah (Islamic Calendar)

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- Map

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

A scientific research includes a deliberate procedure that centers around being goal and get-together a large number of data for examination with the goal that the specialist can arrive at a resolution. The first step in the process is to distinguish an issue or build an exploration question that might be identified as a problem. This chapter concludes the structure of research, so I will begin by writing about background of study to find lacunae of the subject is chosen. By finding the problem we need to know research questions and the objectives, then I will move to significance of the study. Then I will report a review of the literature. Since the issue has been distinguished, we need to become familiar with the theme under scrutiny. To do this I survey the writing identified with the exploration issue. This progression gives essential information about the issue territory. The audit of writing additionally teaches about what examines have been directed previously, how these examinations were led and the ends in the issue zone. At the end of this chapter I will show that how would I design this study, the way of collecting data and analysing them, also will show how I analyse samples by the theory.

Persian painting has inspired and captivated artists due to meticulous designs, great complexity and the romantic and heroic stories illustrated in the paintings. As a type of art which is around 500 years old, it has lived up to the rulers' expectations since the Mongolian era and has entered the realm of decorative art (Gray, 1930). Acknowledging these features of Persian art, Dadi considers it an influential art that has affected elite Muslim art of North India (Dadi, 2006).

In the 15th century, Persian art underwent drastic changes in Herat. There was a wide disparity in Persian art during the aforementioned period compared to principles of the impressive period of Islamic art. One of the most distinctive features of the Herat

School was its continual use of various decorative motifs in painting. As the Timurid's, under the patronage of Shahrukh, contributed remarkably to social and cultural developments in Iran, the Herat style in Persian art emerged (mostly in the era of Sharukh's fifth son Baysonqor Mirza).

By delving deeply into the works of the early centuries of Islam to the present, one can perceive that it is the "ornament" that is of a special position in the Islamic art (Blair & Bloom, 2003). As a result, one of the main aspects of art in the Islamic countries in different eras, especially in Iran, was decorative motifs that had their origins in the religious and cultural beliefs and traditions. The artists were so enthusiastic about it so much that they began to offer their works in the form of beautiful patterns. They believed that although people might not realise the symbolic implications and importance of their works, they would be used for decorating rooms and they would gradually gain credibility.

Although these abstract motifs had symbolic functions and meanings within the scope of the art of the Muslim world, they continued to serve as the fundamental principles of art which were referred to as the Islamic culture and identity. A study of the recognition of the Islamic patterns in Persian painting will help investigate the origin of common motifs and determine and classify them in Islamic art from the past to the present.

Persian art, as it was modified in Herat, has distinctive features which perpetuate its significance in Islamic art. However, it has not yet been subject to adequate research especially with regard to the motifs used in Persian art in Herat. It is unfortunate that the field of Persian art and particularly the Islamic art of Persia has not been studied to any appreciable extent with a view to understanding its symbolic significance. Therefore, the researcher was motivated to conduct a study and examine the motifs used in this art. This

was mostly conducted by selecting samples that can depict the differences between the Herat School and other schools.

In this study, the researcher wishes to delve briefly into an aspect of this hitherto relatively unexplored field and treat the question of Islamic pattern recognition, and it pertains to the Persian miniature.

1.2 Background of the Study

It is strongly believed that the scholarship in the field of Islamic art and architecture still has many important under-researched areas behind its visual aspects that need to be explored and analysed (Burckhardt, 2009a). The word “Islamic”, as applied to art, refers to those people who have grown and lived under rulers who professed the faith of Islam or in cultures and societies which have been strongly influenced by the modes of life and thought characteristic of Islam. The phrase Islamic arts refers to the arts practised by the vast populations of the Middle East and elsewhere that adopted the Islamic faith from the 7th century onward (Bonner, 2003).

Khataei (2016) believes that Islamic art has a huge trove of deep spiritual meaning and wisdom because this art is rooted in a deep divine and spiritual thinking foundation. Islamic art benefits from the creation of new forms, and utilisation of ancient Iran’s images and art to create a new attitude and meaning. It can, in turn, result in the establishment of a rich culture in Islamic civilisation. Moreover, Bonner (2003) posits the effects of Islamic art have been more complex and have led to the development of several remarkable traditions of multiple-level design. This form of ornament augments a bold primary motif by incorporation smaller scale secondary elements into the background areas.

Another aspect of Islamic art is a geometrical pattern which was rare in the Islamic fascination with multi-level ornaments that found wide favour within each of the three principal modes of Islamic artistic expression. These principal modes include floral design, calligraphy, and geometrical patterns. The tradition of multiple-level floral designs reached maturity during the 14th century, and while notable examples can be found throughout the Islamic world, the Timurid's emphasis on this tradition resulted in designs of consistently the highest quality (Tyabji, 2003). Khan (2009) believes that Islamic artists showed more initiative and attention towards art and architecture. They produced beautiful products in book illumination and calligraphy, and they used mostly floral motifs and also drew in an abstract style. These artists developed attractive decorative designs such as winding stems, abstract leaves, blooming flowers and buds.

Believing in the formation of Islamic art as a pinnacle is the art of the Middle East, Grabar (2006) stated that both Muslims and non-Muslims appreciated works of art in this region. On the other hand, Nasr (1990) posits that Islamic thought does not allow the reduction of the higher to the lower, of the intellectual to the corporeal or the sacred to the mundane. But even from the non-Islamic point of view the very nature of Islamic art and the sciences and spiritual realisation necessary for its creation would make it evident to any impartial observer not blinded by the various ideologies which parade as all-consuming worldviews today in place of traditional religion that whatever relation exists between Islamic art and the Islamic revelation, it cannot be simply on the plane of sociopolitical changes brought about by Islam. The answer must be sought in the Islamic religion itself (Dadi, 2006).

In general, four types of ornamentation can be found in Islamic art: calligraphy, figural forms (human and animal), vegetal motifs, and geometric patterns (Khataei, 2016). The introduction of flower and plant motifs, arabesque style and use of letters has made

painting rich and within reach of commoners. Traditional Islamic world arts were beautifully integrated and mingled with human life (Blair & Bloom, 2003).

The corpus of Persian manuscript painting spanning from c. 1300 to 1900 CE is vast and varied and incorporates illustrated manuscripts on universal history, scientific treatises, mystical poems, and biographies of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), to name just a few. While trying to offer a diachronic overview and helpful paradigms to organise and discuss heterogeneous materials, scholars of Islamic art (working largely within art historical models that were first created for the categorisation and study of European art) have tended to approach the history of Persian manuscript painting through the temporal model of rise and decline. Within this linear construct, Timurid and Safavid painting of the 15th and 16th centuries, falling at a chronological midpoint, came to represent the so-called 'classical' style of Persian manuscript painting. Blossoming after an experimental prelude under Ilkhanid patronage, and preceding an imagined demise in the nineteenth century under the influence of European representational styles that penetrated Qajar art, both Timurid and Safavid painting have been cast as perfect moments of 'classicism' for the pictorial arts of Iran (Gruber, 2006).

One of the schools of miniature painting that existed in the 15th century in Herat, the capital of the Timurid dynasty is Herat School. This school is the most important school in Persian painting. It is a paradigm in painting that shows a comeback to Persian painting from Chinese influences. Herat School is also full of lux forms and colours. The development of the urban life and culture of feudal Herat created the necessary conditions for the flourish of the art of miniature painting. Book illumination, being in establish harmony with more advance painting and practical art, acquired an unprecedented importance within the whole system of manuscript design.

Gray (1930) concluded the imagery of miniatures of the Herat School is derivative from nature, fresh and full of bright colours and flowing lines. A spring garden with prospering trees, meadows, break frame and buildings decorated with plants and geometric designs form the traditional decorative background against which this movement has developed. Flat tones without light and shade modelling are also characteristic of the Herat School. The intense local tones are usually harmonious and do not give an impression of gaudiness. The elaborate designs combined with deep colours constitute the distinctive characteristic of the Herat School and its impact on Persian painting.

1.3 Background of Timurid Empire

Timur was born in 736 AH / 1335 AD. He declared himself the successor to the Mughal Khans in Transoxiana and established the Timurid dynasty in Iran, Central Asia, and South Asia in 771 AH / 1370 AD.

Timur, known as Timur the Lame, conquered Balkh and established an independent state by defeating Amir Hussein, one of the descendants of Ghazghan in Kabul claiming to be the successor to his ancestors. After five years, 772-777 AH / 1370-1375 AD, Timur attacked Kharazm three times, and in the tenth year of his reign, he succeeded in conquering that area.

Timur brought the plain of Qibchaq and Mongolia under his control. He then, in 783 AH, sent his son, headed an army, to capture Khorasan and joined them himself. He also captured Neishabur and Herat, and then captured Mazandaran, where Malik Bavand was ruling until 750 AH. He captured Azerbaijan, Lorestan, Armenia, Georgia, and Shirwan in a three-year attack that lasted 788-790 AH. In 801 AH, Timur also seized

India and then returned to Samarkand. His attack on Yerevan lasted from 802 to 807 AH. In 803 AH, he fought with the Ottomans and took several cities. At the same time, he sent envoys to Egypt and then decided to attack that country, meanwhile he captured Aleppo, Damascus, and Baghdad. In 804 AH, Bayazid the first defeated the Ottoman sultan. After that, he decided to conquer China and went with his troops to the river Sihon, but became ill and died in 807 AH/ 1405AD at the age of 71.

From 778 AH / 1377 AD to his death in 807 AH / 1405 AD, Timur ruled a large part of the world for 29 years. Timur emerged during the turbulence, weakness, and disintegration of the Islamic lands, the lack of a strong and centralized government, and the growth of the local weak governments.

The progress made by Timur from Transcaucasia to the Near East completely changed the situation in Iran. The emerging changes and developments were not limited to the political affairs of Iran or the structure of the government, but also affected to a significant extent the racial composition of Iran and its socioeconomic status as well as its cultural development (Lockhart & Jackson, 1986).

Although, in Iranian political history, the Timurid period had a significant difference with the previous periods in terms of the structure and nature of the government, it was ethnically the continuation of the rule of the Middle Asian Turks and beyond Transoxiana in Iran. Because from the Ghaznavid dynasty ruling to the Safavid era, almost none of the ruling dynasties in Iran were Iranians, and each was somehow from the natives of Central Asia.

The dynasty founded by Timur had two important features that distinguished it from other dynasties ruling Iran. The first was the nature of the militarism of Timur's own

rule to the extent that a vast empire was left for his successors after his death; and the second one was the flourishing of the Iranians cultural and intellectual life in the second half of the Timurid rule.

During this period, especially during the rule of Shahrukh, Alqh Baig, and Sultan Hussein Bayqara, there were significant advances in art, architecture, and literature. The contrast and difference in the two distinct stages of the Timurid Age and the profound effects of each on the Iranian community made this era a significant age.

The Timurid Empire can be divided into two separate periods. At first, Timur's sons and descendants divided the empire and each of them ruled part of it, but soon the Timurid Empire became two broad territories in the East and the West. The territory of Shahrukh was originally in the East and limited to Khorasan, but after several years, almost the majority of the territories which were under the command of Timur came under the control of Shahrukh.

The era of Shahrukh's rule was brilliant and magnificent compared to other Timurid periods, because, despite the fact that he had enough power in the battles, he spent a lot of time devoting himself to the construction of the devastation remained since Timur, due to his peaceful spirit, and attached his attention to the people of knowledge (Browne, 2013).

Shahrukh went to Samarkand in 811 AH. Also, he restored Marv; and from 817 to 819 AH, he governed Fars and Kerman. Eventually, Shahrukh managed to regain all the territories of Timur, except the West and Syria. Shahrukh died near Rey in 850 AH. Alqh Baig, Shahrukh's son, succeeded him, but after two years he was defeated by his nephew, Ala al-Dawlah.

Since then, the Timurid territories witnessed the clashes of the children of Timur over the throne for many years. Sultan Hussein Bayqara, one of the descendants of Timur, became the king in Marv in 861 AH when Khorasan was disturbed and he conquered Astarabad in 862 AH / 1459 AD. In 873 AH/ 1469 AD, he conquered Herat as well. He was a literary and artistic person, and a brave warrior, he ruled Herat for 37 years. Badi-ul-Zaman, his son and his successor, was the last ruler of the Timurid dynasty in Iran (Browne, 2013).

The nineteenth century is a privilege and a distinguished one from the other centuries for the sake of its enlightenment and rational growth which is partly due to the Timurid kings because many of the Timurid kings were poets, artists, and scholars and usually invited genius men to their courts. The policies of Shahrukh among the Timurid kings were unique in the progress of the historical studies. Alqh Baig, Shahrukh's son, was a poet and wise in religious sciences; and Hussein Bayqara was an artist and poet. Among the last kings of Timurid, Hussein Bayqara was a calligrapher (Browne, 2013).



Figure 1.1: Timurid Impire Map During Timur

Timur's attack on Iran began with the invasion of Khurasan and Sistan in a period characterized by turbulence and unrest. Timur managed to establish a relatively calm and stable situation which was maintained during the reign of his son Shahrukh. Although this stability continued during the early part of the Shahrukh's successor, it did not last any further due to rivalry over the governance of the land among his family. The new turbulent situation was eventually brought to an end by Shaibanids in the east and Safavids in the west.

Timur's invasion of Persia which started by destroying many cities and cultural shrines had also a marked effect in political, social and cultural changes of Iranian people during the Timurid era.

Herat reached its period of the greatest importance in the fifteenth century as one of the major Timurid cities, and the remains of the colossal buildings erected by this dynasty dominate the city and its surrounding yet today.

1.4 Statement of Problem and Research Questions

Researching Islamic art started in the renaissance and peaked in the middle of the 19th century. The first books about Islamic arts during that time were about ornamental motifs based on the ethnological study. Then, researchers started to search for knowing the rules of Islamic art in the second part of the 19th century. At that time, Western scholars were following general rules regardless of time and did not pay attention to ethnology. At the end of this century, scholars turned to the genealogy and tried to find Islamic art based on classical ancient Greek and Roman arts. It was a kind of orientalist approach to understanding Islamic arts focused on Islamic arts visually and overlooked its deeper underpinnings.

More accurate research of Islamic art started in the 20th century when scholars started exploring the relationship between the religion of Islam and Islamic art. There were two approaches to this. On the one side, there are phenomenologists like Henry Corbin and Annemarie Schimmel who focused on Islamic culture more than visual arts. There were also historians who studied the historiography of Islamic art.

In the second half of the 20th century, scholars like Rene Guénon started to explain the characteristics and values of Islamic art and culture based on the religious revival. But at the end of 20th century, scholars like Richard Ettinghausen and Oleg Grabar believed they should study Islamic art based on its historical substrate with attention to the relationship between Islamic art and the religion of Islam via historical documents.

Grabar (1987) notes that the study of Islamic art acquired its intellectual and in part of academic autonomy. The account of travellers to remote and exotic lands and occasional catalogues of private or public collections had dominated the field. Around 1880 this began to be transformed into surveys no doubt limited in scope for the most part, but implying idiosyncratic, even if ill-defined, characters in the art from Muslim lands. By the end of the 19th century, the more formidable orientalists gave scholarly direction and a technical methodology to what is called “Archaeology Arab”. From then on, the study of Islamic art was well on its way in a few major institutions in Europe and America (Grabar, 2006).

On the other hand, Nasr (1990) believes that Islamic art has been the subject of study by Western scholars since the 19th century and by Western-trained Muslim savants for several decades. It has, moreover, come to receive special attention during the past two or three decades by the larger public as a distinct category of art. Numerous works have appeared in every European language on the history, technical formation, social setting, and other aspects of this art. A few books and articles have been devoted to its

spiritual significance and meaning, but these have been few and far between. Except for the writings of Burckhardt (2009a), which cast special light upon the intellectual, symbolic, and spiritual dimensions of Islamic art, there are very few works which look upon Islamic art as the manifestation in the world of forms of the spiritual realities (al-haqa'iq) of the Islamic revelation as coloured by its earthly embodiments (Khan, 2009).

Grabar believes that research in the past is needed for better understanding the true bases of identity (Grabar, 1987). There are common forms between all artworks in the historical and geographical area of the Islamic world that justify the adjective of Islamic to all of them (ibid). Grabar is sure that there are unknown interpretations for understanding Islamic art aesthetics (Grabar, 1992).

Otherwise, lots of Islamic art history research has been done by the non-Muslim influenced by their worldview and not by Islamic thinking and culture. Therefore, the redefinition of the content of the art history texts based on Islamic thinking can lead to more accurate interpretations.

As the researcher mentioned before, the Herat School is one of the most important schools during Islamic Iran. It is the most important schools in Persian painting history due to different painting forms and colours that strengthened the Persian style against the Chinese impact at that time. However, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, the analyses of the Herat School and Timurid paintings have focused on the basic level of understanding meaning, aesthetics and forms of Persian painting, certain lines and colours, particular sections of different figures and natural objects such as human beings, animals, plants, houses and tools. However, it seems that the interpretation of the Islamic motifs used in the Herat School of Painting needs careful attention. Most studies about Islamic art especially Islamic motifs in Persian painting are not based on Iranian-Islamic thinking. Studying the abstractive motifs can lead the readers to better understand the

boundaries of Islamic art, and familiarise them with different perspectives in Persian art. However, due to the paucity of research in this regard, the essence of this issue is still obscure. This issue was also raised by Abdi (2012) who felt the need for a study of iconology of Persian art.

To interpret Islamic patterns in the Herat School of Painting, the researcher has to ask certain questions to reach a better understanding with regard to the subject. Answering these questions would not only aid in the better insight into this school in the Timurid Dynasty but would also clarify the status of Islamic patterns in Persian painting. In this study, the researcher seeks to answer the following four questions:

1. What are the Islamic interpretable motifs in Persian painting?
2. What is the characteristic of Islamic motifs in the Herat School of Painting?
3. Why are the Islamic motifs used in Persian painting?
4. How are Islamic motifs in Persian painting interpreted?

1.5 Research Objectives

This research determined the frequently repeated Islamic patterns in the Herat School in Persian painting from the past up to the present in order to have a deeper understanding of the motifs. Therefore, the main objectives of the study are:

- 1.5.1 To examine Persian painting schools during the Timurid Dynasty.
- 1.5.2 To analyse abstractive Islamic motifs in the Herat School of Painting.
- 1.5.3 To analytically interpreting Islamic abstract motifs in the Herat School of Painting.

1.6 The Significance of the Study

The role of abstract motifs in Persian painting is in no uncertain terms significant. These patterns have been of interest to people of different generations, as they are signs of

proximity to Allah. This idea is the underlying assumption in Islam, the religion of Iran, which has been depicted in the art of the region. This type of art endeavoured to accord focus of the audience to spiritual concepts of religion rather than nature. As the motifs are abstract, the real forms of human and nature were not used in them. Indeed, abstract motifs in Iranian illustration were formed while enjoying from a spiritual perspective on painting and its elements along with symbolically complicated plant forms.

Ornamental motifs in Iranian art have revealed themselves in different forms. The fundamental elements of decoration in Iranian art are curved, arabesque, and plant designs, geometric shapes, knotting style, patterns on friezes, lines, and animal and human forms. Many artists have utilised these designs and patterns in different fields such as book designing, tiling, brick, stucco-work, stone, wood, metals, pottery, clothing, carpet, etc. These motifs have been used for decorating holy places and ritual objects as well as everyday things.

The mystical aspect is one of the most important features of Islamic arts that can be manifested in the forms of plants, lines, animals, men, and geometry. Geometric shapes and mysteries mainly represent the principle of Tawhid, the Oneness of Allah, which is the founding principle of Islam.

The mystical aspects of Islamic culture and art based on the Quran and Islamic teachings emphasise the importance of abstract designs. The study of such designs and patterns can play a significant part in demonstrating the true place of artworks and the hidden concepts.

The research engages in a formal analysis of the Herat School of Painting to interpret abstract motifs in Persian painting. It concentrates on the part of the art history in Iran which shows the revival of Iranian painting forms and design. Also, the research shows effective factors in the Herat School and analyses selected works to better understand the

changes in the Herat School and the Islamic thought behind the motifs. This is beneficial to the visual arts, art history, Islamic history and civilisation students and researchers for a better understanding of the values of Islamic thought in Persian painting. From the study, many museums will gain better insight into the factors that distinguish the Herat School from other schools in the Timurid Dynasty.

1.7 Literature Review

The origin of Islam can be traced to the 7th Century AD in Saudi Arabia. Islam is thus the youngest of the great world religions. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (circa 570-632 AD) introduced Islam in 610 AD.

1.7.1 Islamic Art in General

By the early 8th century, the Arab armies had carried Islam westwards as far as Spain, and eastwards to Samarqand and the Indus valley. Under later rulers, there was further expansion into present-day Turkey and deeper into the Indian subcontinent. As a world religion, Islam is no longer confined to these lands: it is also found in North-West China and South-East Asia, and it is represented in Europe and the New World (Madadpour, 2014).

The advent of Islam in the Middle East and surrounding areas had a significant effect on the culture, civilisation, and lifestyle of the region. It sought racial equality, spiritual interests and traditions. It also attempted to provide its followers with the rule about their common needs. Therefore, Islamic art which is associated with Islamic culture and society is considered to be an inseparable part of religious beliefs. It is a kind of religious and spiritual art with a supernatural view of the material world. Holding such a viewpoint and purifying it as well as ignoring the natural and material relations of the

world, Islamic artists do their best to create unearthly or supernatural works (Shadghazvini, 2010).

Shadghazvini (2010) believes that the prohibition on a realistic illustration by Islam is one of the most important factors in creating works of Islamic art. It plays a major role in forming abstract designs, floral, plant patterns, and decoration in Iranian art and should be subject to more investigation. But some scholars such as Zaki Mohammad Hasan believed that there is no Surah in Quran that is about prohibition of illustration (Hasan, 2010).

The advent of Islam in Iran changed its artistic trends. Accurate information with regard to painting when Islam entered Iran is scant. However, the Abbasids used the Sassanian art as a pattern to embellish their palaces, making precious objects and coins. The Abbasid Caliphate moved the capital from Damascus to Baghdad. As a result, cities like Bukhara and Samarkand became centres of cultural activity which acted independently of the central government. Examples of art from this period include murals around the old city of Nishapur and painted pottery from Nishapur which have remained from the 2nd and 3rd Centuries. In the 9th Century AD and during the Abbasid period, pottery with beautifully-coloured designs and new modes were increased dramatically (Canby, 2005).

The “Islamic” attribute in Islamic art does not imply the works of a particular religion since many works of Islamic art do not have much to do with Islam. Many of the works of Islamic art were created by Jews and Christians. Islamic attribute in terms of Islamic art cannot be compared with Buddhist or Christian attributes in terms of “Buddhist art” and “Christian art”. Also, Islamic art is different from Chinese or Spanish art because there is no land where all people are Muslims. Therefore, if there is an art called the Islamic art, it will be the one which affects the geographic or ethnographic

traditions and changes them, or the one which makes a kind of co-existence between the modes of behaviour and the worldly Islamic artistic expression and local practices (Grabar, 1987).

Islamic art refers to a group of artworks with common characteristics. Among the diverse and seemingly different works in the vast geographical area of Islam, there is a form of sharing, and this aspect justifies the use of the Islamic attribute to all of them (Grabar, 1987).

Grabar believes that this aspect of the contribution is not one of the common religious meanings of these works and not of the categories of forms used in them, but of the category of a view dominant over them. This viewpoint, of course, is influenced by the religion of Islam; it is not an ideological and time-free effect but an effect in the historical and geographical contexts. In this sense, this viewpoint has not been directly derived from the Islamic religion, but because of the Muslims' encountering with particular historical and geographical conditions, based on the historical needs and the preservation of their integrity and differentiation with other societies, due to the emphasis on the political authority of the Muslims (Grabar, 1987).

Grabar also believes that the tastes of Iranians have been influenced by religion even in non-religious and customary affairs. He also explains the relationship between the historical context and the characteristics of Iranian paintings, such as the use of exiting colours, the immateriality of space, the associations of gentle emotions, and the combination of poems and epic. He connects the special atmosphere of Persian paintings with Persian poetry and Islamic mysticism. He explicitly affirms the relation between the profound elements of Iranian paintings and Islamic thought (Grabar, 2000).

1.7.2 Islamic Art before the Timurid Dynasty

As in many cases, the artists of the Seljuk period consolidated previous patterns in art and implemented forms and ideas that had long been known. It could be stated that the gentility of Seljuk art is exaggerated. Another feature of Seljuk art is that although the Seljuks were Turks, it is hard to point to any exactly Turkish elements in the art of Iran and its eastern provinces during their rule, with the likely exception of the moon or face in figural depiction.

Seljuk paintings had a strong tale enriched by a complex iconography in which the animals which were depicted in many of the pictures represent a symbolic meaning, e.g., sharpness, loyalty, treachery, and courage. However, the clear dependence of both fine ceramics and fine metalwork on manuscript and illumination shows the high profile that such art enjoyed in the Seljuk period (Robert Hillenbrand, 1999).



Figure 1.2: The Musician, Painting on Tile, First Part of the 12th Century.

Although the Mongolian invasion almost completely ruined miniatures from the Seljuk Dynasty, some Seljuk Qurans with geometric motifs and the Kufic script were safeguarded. It must be noted that Iraq, mostly influenced by Iranian artists, was considered an important centre for painting books during the Seljuk Dynasty.

Later, the Mongol invasion (1219-1222) caused the complete destruction of the cities of Transoxiana and Khorasan. It also resulted in the migration of artists and artisans. This hindered the growth of the arts in the region. The Mongol invasion by Hulagu, the descendants of Genghis Khan, took place in 1258 and ended the Abbasid rule. Hulagu founded the Ilkhanid Dynasty in Iran.

The Ilkhanid Dynasty affected the Iranian painting in two distinct modes. First, the effect of the Ilkhanid Dynasty on Iranian painting was transferring the Chinese traditions as new inspiration for artists. Secondly, Ilkhanids assigned a group of artists to work in the royal library or workshops. This decision expanded in a new cultural environment. Mughal minister Khajeh-Rashid-al-Rashidi built a town with beautiful buildings called Rabe Rashidi near Tabriz and gathered Iranian and foreign scholars and artists. He was motivated to compile a book about the history of different nations, including the Mongol which resulted in the founding of this city. Mongol paintings show that there was a wide gap between the Ilkhanid artists and the painting in the Seljuk period (Pakbaz, 2006).

The Mongols also promoted the Iranian culture as they formed cultural ties between Iran, the East and the West. By establishing such international ties, Rashid-ol-din received aid from the French, Armenians and Chinese to write his intended book.

Chinese painting style from the Tang period can be seen in Jame-al-tawarikh paintings. This is the result of connecting Eastern and Western art by Ilkhanids. Another example is the depiction of tall bodies in some paintings inspired by Byzantine patterns. Another example is the application of silver in Iranian paintings which was under the influence of the Christians. Paintings from this period are replete with impacts from China and Chinese art. Nevertheless, Iranian artists had their unique way of painting mountains, clouds and water (Gray, 1930).



Figure 1.3: Death of Alexander, From Demotte Shahnameh.

Mongol painting is replete with various cultures. It included elements from older Iranian cultures. For instance, old Sasanian elements can be found in this period in the form of angel wings or cactus plants. The most important feature of the Mongol period was colour (Gray, 1930). For example, battle scenes were depicted with red backgrounds which had white clouds. The battle scenes were filled with empty spaces and dust instead of rainy clouds. In some occasions, Goldenrod was used instead of golden yellow fields. In the case of golden backgrounds, the clouds may have been painted red. In general,

sharp and contrasting colours were used instead of darker colours. Along with that, a combination of colours and using warm colours were among the main features of this period. Following the Mongol domination over Iran during the Ilkhanid era, artists in Baghdad and Tabriz created different methods for producing pictorial books on history, plants and animals. Chinese artists who came to Iran via the Mongols had a short-term impact on the way Persian miniaturists worked in the early 13th century. However, soon the Iranian miniaturists and painters could miniaturise and portray graceful human shapes, normal animals, rough mountains and the beautiful sky in proportion to their sizes.

The recession of the Ilkhanid Empire provided a chance for local governments to emerge across Persia. This period which lasted till the end of the 14th century was the golden era during which the painting styles of Western and Southern Persia most effectively came together. In the temporary period between the downfall of the Mongolian Ilkhans and the start of Timur's attacks, the Jalayerid Dynasty enjoyed a more stable position, which allowed it to rule from Baghdad to Tabriz for more than half a century (1340-1411) (Hosseini-rad, 2007).

These events also affected Iranian art. The interval between the collapse of the Mongolian Ilkhans and the beginning of Timur's attacks paved the way for the painters of Shiraz and Tabriz to take advantage of each other's experiences, leading to forming a pure painting style at the Jalayerid court in Baghdad.

The most famous figure at the time of the extinction of the Mongol Ilkhanid Dynasty and the rise of Amir Goorkany in the Iran Dynasty was Ale-Jalayer. Many of the modifications that can be observed in images of the Timurid period are the result of Ale-Jalayer. The Jalairids who was a Mongol Jalayir Dynasty in the Timurid Dynasty ruled over Iraq and western Persia between 1335-1432 and connected the Mongol art school and Persian art schools (Zaki, 1996).



Figure 1.4: Gabriel Enters the Battleground. Khavaran Nameh, 1476.

Bright colours and spring sceneries are seen in the manuscripts which belong to the last decade of the 14th century. Such paintings represent Persian art in that era. This period is also suitable for body painting and a good relationship between pictures and text is found. These issues indicate that Jalayerids supported Persian art and attempted to present it to people.

In 1336, Sultan Abu Said Bahadur Khan, the last Mongol king passed away. Later, Amir Timur-e-Goorkany, a Transoxiana offspring, who was also known as one of the world's greatest victors, gained power and dominated the surrounding lands in 1370. In 1405, he expanded his territory to the Mediterranean lands, the North to the South of Moscow, and to Delhi. In 1380, Timur first attacked Iran's Plumbing Division - Khorasan and Sistan. He passed through Herat and Sabzevar and conquered the cities of Isfahan, Shiraz and Persian lands, Yazd, Kerman, and Lorestan (Ferrier, 1989).

As the researcher mentioned in the previous parts, knowing about Islamic art and the happening before Timurid dynasty, specially the period just before this time is important and will help to this study because, there were some important changes between this time and the Timurid dynasty. The changes which completely related to the Persian-Islamic identity. As the mentioned above Chinese motifs have been seen in the Persian painting during Mongol dynasty and before that, but removed in Timurid dynasty. In fact, by studying the Mongol dynasty painting we know the time that painting in Iran came back to the Persian identity from Chinese influence. It is important to be a part of literature review to study and discussion to find which part of the continuum between the Mongol and Timurid dynasty is missing between studies have done.

Moreover, studying the affective background of a specific case study is one of the most important approach in the art history studies to find the all missing rings between different parts of the study. The researcher will expand more about the Persian art history in the following chapters, to show the similarities between Persian and Islamic thought through the history from the past till the Islamic period and the influence of them to each other.

1.7.3 Establishment of the Herat School of Painting

Timur had bilateral relationships with many countries, e.g., France, England and Spain. Iran's relations with other countries in the Timurid period were extensive. For example, the king of Spain sent an ambassador to Iran in order to strengthen relations with Timur. Eventually, people from various parts of the world entered Iran so much that Iran's relationship with the East had never been as firm as in the Timur era. As a result of these bilateral relationships, scientific and technical staff along with officers were deployed and exchanged between Iran and the Far East (Taheri, 1975).

One of the main characteristics of Timur which aided art and artists in his era is that despite his brutality he was an art lover. One of his commands to artists was to draw the curtains with the glorious splendour of the war (Ferrier, 1989).

This general trend was followed by his successor who was his son Shahrukh (1404-1447). Prior to his rule as a successor to his father, Shahrukh had been appointed the governor of Khorasan, Sistan, Ray and Mazandaran. Although initially faced with feuds and rebellions among provincial governors, he eventually secured his rule over all Persia and Transoxiana. He devoted considerable energy to the development of Herat and other cities, thus providing an opportunity for the School of Herat to flourish. With complete dominance over Herat, he acted as a patron of the arts.

Shahrukh was known to the courts of glory. He and his owners were concerned with the science and art. Time Condor and his son Baysonqor are two of the outstanding figures in the cultural, scientific and cultural revival, and considered to be unrivalled. They were the biggest patron of poets, writers, artists and musicians from different parts of the court.

Timur was a brutal Mongolian who raided lands and murdered people. However, he always had mercy on children, the elderly, craftsmen, and artists. The sons and descendants of Timur, who ruled provinces were appointed by the artists and craftsmen in a cultural centre in Shiraz, Isfahan, Tabriz, and Herat. All these centres were, in turn, dominated by Baghdad (Canby, 2005).

One of the events which affected art in this era was the advent of artists from Samarqand and Herat in Shiraz. As a result of exchanging ideas between artists, a drastic change in painting patterns was observed in the first of half of the 15th century. Some of these changes include the usage of more symmetrical textures, more beautiful landscapes, and more decorative components.

As a result, the 15th century Persian miniature painting was indissolubly linked with the name of Herat and is known as the Timurid School of Painting (Canby, 2005). However, it was not until the second half of the 15th century when the major modification in Persian painting was observed. Indeed, the difference between Persian art during the Mongol period and the traditions of the majestic period of Islamic art is observable. Iran, with its various cultures and diversity in visual art, tended to resurrect nationalism. Examples of such tendency can be observed in the paintings in which the Chinese and other foreign styles were consistently adapted in expressing Iranian subjects and creating a uniquely Persian style. Finally, it should be mentioned that the city of Herat was among the most significant centres of miniature painting during the Timurid period (1370-1506). As mentioned earlier, miniature painting is originally a Chinese form of art which was brought to Iran by familiarisation of Iranian artists with art in the Far East. The pivotal role of Herat art maintained in subsequent years due to the Safavid support.

Iranian painting in the 15th century is closely associated with the name of Herat and is recognised as the Timurid School of Painting (Khazaie, 2006). Due to its importance in illustration and Iranian art, a number of investigations have been conducted on Herat School of Painting. The Timurids' attention to art, specifically to miniature from Timur himself who invited artists from all over Persia to his court in Samarkand and then from his son, Shahrukh, who ordered the establishment of great libraries for reproducing and illustrating works of Iranian culture, made it one of the most glorious periods in Iranian art (Shadghazvini, 2010).

Three important schools of painting during the Timurid Dynasty include the following:

- i. Tabriz School
- ii. Shiraz School
- iii. Herat School

The Herat School was one of the most important schools of miniature painting in the 15th century in the capital of Timurid rule, Herat. It was considered a dominant paradigm in painting and decorating. Consequently, the illuminations of the manuscripts were in vogue.

During the reign of Amir Timur and his descendants, the art world experienced another brilliant and outstanding period of creative output. The art of miniature was serving as decorative designs in literature and books (Yalman, 2001).

Iranian painting in the Timurid Dynasty includes spryer, less symmetrical scenes than their modern counterparts produced in Shiraz. Their gentle colours, the precise design of their human and animal characters, their courtesy to the imitation of nature's calm landscapes and their relationship to architectural elements constitute important achievements of the School of Herat (Azhand, 2015).

Durriya Tyabji describes Persian painting as lofty art that depicted romantic and epic themes and reached its peak in the Timurid courts and the royal libraries. These old traditions of using the libraries started very early in the Islamic world. The ideal places and imaginative descriptions using bright colours, bold actions and gestures, decorative motifs and strong rhythms contrasted with naturalistic paintings are among the characteristics of the royal palaces and workshops (Tyabji, 2003).

By delving deeply into the works of the early centuries of Islam to the present, one can perceive that it is the "ornament" that is of a special position in the Islamic art. One of the main aspects of art in the Islamic countries, especially in Iran, was decorative motifs that had its origins in the religious and cultural beliefs and traditions (R. Hillenbrand, 2010).

Flowers are considered a vital Islamic symbol utilised by Iranian artists to connote the kingdom of heaven. They are of crucial importance in that both poets and artists give

them attention by creating the aesthetic senses and writing poetic expressions. Similarly, the Timurid professional artists tried to apply floral arabesques in their designs and patterns (Tyabji, 2003).

This Gulestan Shahnama which was developed in Herat under Baysonqor, with its elaborate parade of illumination, its prose preface encased in glittering golden clouds, and its few but often majestic paintings, embarks in a significantly different direction and it has seldom been on show at a major exhibition, the first time being in London in 1931. Despite general agreement thereafter that it was one of the supreme masterpieces of Persian painting, it has remained largely inaccessible ever since, and relatively few living scholars have seen it (R. Hillenbrand, 2010).

The fact that such a pronounced emphasis on illumination in the Herat School as, so to speak, an alternative aesthetic language to the more familiar one of illustration was destined not to be pursued with such intensity in later manuscripts, and thus failed to establish itself as a fashion, should not blind one to the possibility that, around 1430, this approach was seriously investigated (R. Hillenbrand, 2010).

During the rule of Amir Timur and his descendants, the art world witnessed excellent achievements and great changes. According to (Yalman, 2001), despite the atrocities that he committed, Timur was interested in art, literature and Hafez and Nezami's poems.

The art of miniature was called illustration when it was introduced as a literary work. As mentioned above, play on words and colourful phrases with a great depth of knowledge and philosophical ideas, the highest ethical standards, strong passions for all natural creatures, various verses and regular rhythms of stanzas, complicated styles and visual imagery, qualities of classic oriental literature are among the properties of the artists' works of this period which are directly related to the unique style of Persian poems

and artists. It should be noted that the growth of manuscript illumination and illustration made the Herat School the centre of Persian painting (Yalman, 2001).

Making use of a wide range of bright and pure hues is a distinctive feature that stands out in the Herat School. Naturally, all the pigments used by the artists at that time are mineral-based which could preserve their bright colours very well provided that they are kept in proper conditions. Silver was an exception. It will be oxidised into a rough-edged black over time. This element was largely employed to show water. Art lovers frequently utilise backgrounds whether they were a landscape or a building, precise details and freshness of plants and animals, materials of tents, carpets, and tile style. They also paid close attention to the dress of figures (Gray, 1930).

Compared to the contemporary schools like Shiraz, the works of the Herat School deal with livelier and less symmetrical scenes, sophisticated colours, precise designs of the human and animal characters, reproduction of nature's idyllic landscapes and the relationship to architectural elements (Azhand, 2015).

Artists were exclusively males who worked in different workshops. Among these art places, the royal workshop was the most prestigious, employing gifted artists from the major cities. However, the nature of the royal workshop is not clear. Artists had to accompany rulers on their travels. There were some artists who were able to work on private commissions. (Azimi, 2013).

Timur was interested in art, supporting works of art, artists and architecture. Most structures that he ordered to be built still stand in Samarkand, located in today's Uzbekistan. He always invited the most talented artisans from the lands he had conquered to come to the court in Samarkand. There he gave them artistic freedom to create and produce their favourite art. The golden age of Persian painting took place during the reign of the Timurids. Compared to the Safavid era with the impact of the Chinese style,

Timurid artists improved the Persian art of the book using paper, calligraphy, illumination, illustration and binding in their paintings. The Mongol Timurids were a great source of the style of Persian art during the Middle Ages (Riazi, 1996).

By reviewing the literature of this study we understand that, the first studies in the field of Islamic art, as the primary sources in the history of Islamic art, have often been carried out by Western orientalist and based not on their interpretations but on their general knowledge of the artistic works, we also would find that, the most studies on the Islamic art have been chronologic and cataloging ones; studies that aim to identify the artistic works of the Islamic period and their historical or stylistic classification. This kind of historical studies, which is the first and necessary step for doing researches on the Islamic art, has almost reached its original structure and framework; and the attempt to clarify some of its obscure and dark angles continues. However, interpretative studies on the Islamic art that address the meaning and nature of these works are very limited, and these few studies have serious questions about the research method and the results. It seems that the theoretical foundations of these works have not been completely edited, and we still need deep theoretical and philosophical discussions about the methodology of interpretive studies in the Islamic art.

Based on the previous studies, one can conclude that there are just a few comprehensive and thorough researches that can cover all historiographical and interpretive aspects of the recognition of Islamic art on the basis of art theories. In fact, by reviewing of this study, given that the most studies in the field of Islamic art or Persian painting during Islamic period base on Islamic thought, have not very deep approaches to their meaning.

By concluding of literature review of this study, we know that, there are two approach to Islamic arts studies done by scholars One attitude belongs to those thinkers

who believe that Islam brought those foundations and thoughts through which special arts and styles have been honored in the Islamic culture. In fact, Islam led Muslims to some thoughts which in turn led to formation of a particular art with special elements. Against this attitude, there is another theory based on the idea that Islamic holy texts such as the Holy Qur'an do not comment on artworks, or only comment on some of them and have negative attitudes towards them.

Also, there are different theories about the characteristics of Islamic elements. These opinions and theories can be described in two major attitudes. First one is that, the Islamic art is decorative, mundane, meaningless, and without borders and secret which was created following the pre-Islamic art. This idea, in agreement with the aforementioned first attitude, finds the Islamic art to be abstract and non-naturalistic, but calls the art created in the Islamic civilization as the only follower of the pre-Islamic art under the influence of the neighbor civilizations. This attitude does not consider the religious and mystical thoughts to play any fundamental roles in the formation of the Islamic art. In other words, this art, in the course of various periods, interacted with Islam and got benefits from it; but the basic trend of this art is independent of Islam. From the perspective of this theory, the purpose of the Muslim artists in creating art works was simply to create beauty, decoration, and observable arrays, and such works do not need to be interpreted.

According to the other view that we know by reviewing the literature of this study, the Islamic art, in addition to the abstract, decorative, and array aspects that shares with the second hypothesis, is meaningful, symbolic, and mysterious. Based on this view and despite the influence of the art of neighboring civilizations in the Islamic culture and civilization, the Islamic philosophical, mystical, and religious ideas created a combination and structure of art that were distinct from the pre-Islamic art. In this view, the Muslim

artists did not want to create artistic works just for decorating the appearance and surface arrays, but their purpose was to create artworks to move from the surface and appearance to the depth and abstract.

In fact, using artistic elements and components, the Islamic art pays attention to the abstract meaning; and by a symbolic expressing of a phenomenon, the artist makes the audience aware of the depth and abstraction. Since an artist cannot draw all the real facts in the world in a realistic way, he inevitably tends towards the abstract and non-naturalistic arts such as geometric, eslimi, and decorative ones; and he uses symbolic elements because they are more consistent with his rational and mystical foundations. The Islamic art can be interpreted as the use of symbol for deep expression and abstract meanings; therefore, it requires an exegetical interpretation.

In the following chapters of this study, the researcher will expand these views more, to reach the objectives of this study.

1.8 Research Methodology

This is a qualitative research that adopts historical content analysis. Using careful and thorough qualitative research methods can help improve quality measures and disseminate quality reports as well as support quality improvement efforts. This research examines the authenticity of the reports or observations made by others.

Sometimes we need to receive the necessary information by looking into the past rather than into the future. The historical research attempts to do this task. By doing detailed analyses of historical data, the research, to a lesser extent, determines relationships. It also attempts to offer solutions to prevent the common mistakes that are being made by teachers and users in research. To identify effective factors in the Herat

School, the researcher will explain the social, political and cultural elements in some parts of this study.

Having determined the research problem, the researcher endeavoured to find a suitable approach to conduct the study and to this end conducted a comprehensive search on articles and books with regard to Persian painting and Islamic Art. Databases such as Science Direct, Wiley Publications, ProQuest, Oxford, and Scopus were investigated. It aided the researcher to find invaluable resources with regard to Persian painting. Later, the researcher began to shortlist the most relevant resources.

One of the useful sources found for this study was that of Abdi (2012), an Iranian author on art, who writes that there is no research in Persian painting based on Iconology and Iconography. Her book- “An Introduction to Iconology” - is one of the rarest resources that has employed Western theories to introduce some method for interpreting Persian painting. In order to study and analyse the Islamic patterns used by the Iranian artists in the Herat School in the Timurid Dynasty, the researcher applied the method in her research.

The researcher tried to expand the objectives of the study by raising questions about Islamic patterns in the Herat School of Painting. Next, she carried out a literature review to introduce Persian painting history based on the research had done before from prehistoric times to the Timurid Dynasty and summarised information obtained from the main historical sources. While reviewing the sources, she emphasised the importance of the gist of the matter, the results of the study and the gaps.

This is a qualitative study based on exploring previously published works with regard to Persian painting and Islamic art. The researcher made use of qualitative content analysis in order to conduct the study. The qualitative content analysis is a type of analysis suitable for reviewing documents and is used in many disciplines in social sciences

(Merriam, 1989). It is defined by Burnham, Lutz, Grant, and Layton-Henry (2008) as an interpretation of documents by reading or listening to them. On the other hand, it has been selected by McNabb (2015) as a suitable approach to analysing documents.

Various scholars have introduced, more or less, similar approaches to conducting the qualitative content analysis. The researcher in this study has attempted to select an appropriate step-by-step procedure. To this end, the researcher made use of Hsieh and Shannon (2005) model of qualitative content analysis which incorporates seven difference steps:

- 1) Collecting data (documents); by collecting data concluded: historical background, theoretical and conceptual framework, in different chapters of this study through different documents like books and articles, researcher made a base reason for comparing and finding objectives of this study. By processing, organizing data and putting them into context, the researcher achieved some information to continue the research.
- 2) Comparison of the information; after collecting data and achieving information, the researcher, by comparing them in chapter three and four to obtain the informations that are needed for analysing samples.
- 3) Coding data; one of the coding data purpose in this research is classifying data, include: transforming data to a form suitable for analysing samples and interpreting them. Data coded according to different categories identified by reading the data collected. Also the researcher in chapter five by analysing samples, classified motifs and coded them to some categories to interpret them.

- 4) Merging relevant categories; by Iran art history investigation, finding common motifs and common thinking during different dynasties and using a theory to analysing samples, then merging these relevant categories, the researcher could analyse abstractive Islamic motifs in the Herat School of Painting.
- 5) Finding relations between categories; in chapter six the abstractive motifs have been interpreted by finding relation between categories include: historical background, abstractive motifs investigation, analysing samples and philosophers thought.
- 6) Interpretation of the selecting data and the findings; the researcher, at the end by selecting data tried to explain the answers that achieved in previous chapters.

1.8.1 Research Design

This study is a qualitative analysis and used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions and motivations of Islamic art in the Herat School. Sara Lewis believes, “we conduct qualitative research when we want to write in a literary, flexible style that conveys stories, of theatre, or poems, without the restrictions of formal academic ‘structures of writing. We conduct qualitative research because we want to understand the contexts or settings in which participants in a study address a problem or issue” and “we also use qualitative research because quantitative measures and the statistical analyses simply do not fit the problem” (Lewis, 2015).

This research started by discussing a problem, examine the literature that related to the problem, pose questions, collecting data and analyzing them, to this end, the researcher focused on the subjective interpretation of previously published texts. It should be

mentioned that this process was systematic and had a step-by-step procedure. The researcher made use of Hsieh and Shannon (2005) model of qualitative content analysis.

The underlying assumption and philosophy of the researcher in this study were not based on the positivist view that only accepts reality as it is observed. Rather, the researcher attempted to grasp the concept of Islamic motifs used in the Herat School through its manifestation in the mind of previous researchers and scholars. Thus, the reality in this study is accepted as it is perceived in the minds of individuals in society. This notion of reality is, to a great extent, in accordance with Vygotsky's (1987) social constructivist approach as cited by (Kim, 2001). Therefore, social constructivism is the underlying philosophy used in this study and as mentioned above, examining the literature and data that collected and analysed helps the researcher to find the answers of questions of this research.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

In order to discuss iconography and iconology, this research adopted Ervin Panofsky's theory. His theory is considered for conducting investigations on symbols, developing iconographic approaches and consequently establishing a new discipline called art history in modern art. Panofsky (1969) enumerates his art appreciation as follows:

1. Primary or natural matter,
2. Secondary or conventional matter (Iconography), and
3. Intrinsic meaning or content (Iconology).

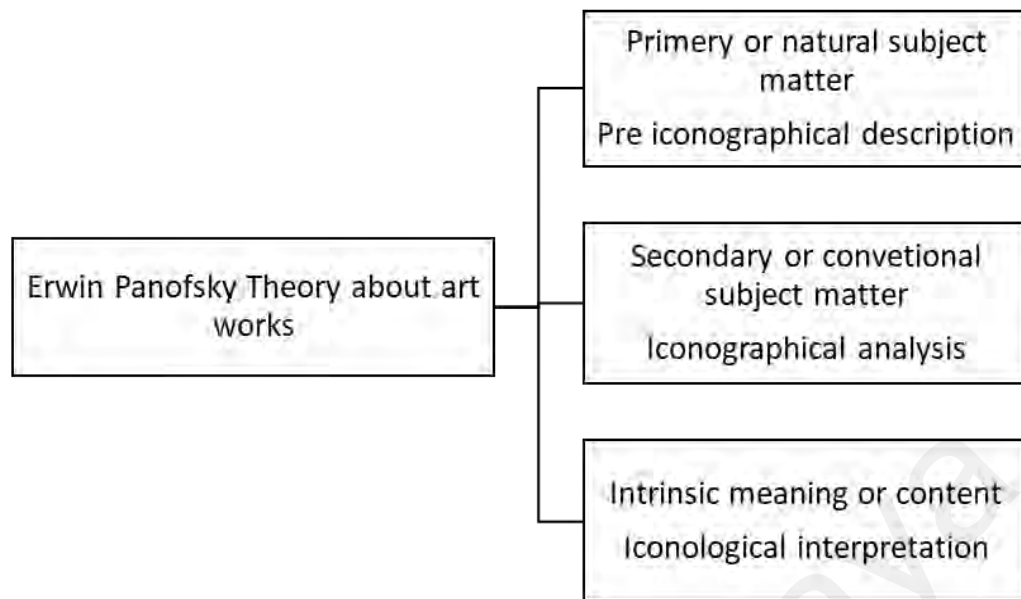


Figure 1.5: Panofsky's (1982) model in the analysis of artwork

As to the first level, what appears to be more important to audiences in order to explain and assess artwork is general elements of a picture depicting in, on, or by that painting, not the amount of their grasp and knowledge. To primary subject matter level of a painting any subject describe, such as buildings, natures or humans.

Iconography in his model, however, is used to refer to the equation between cultural and iconographic expertise displayed in or on a painting. It also includes mythological, fictional, religious, historical narrative or even non-narrative of artwork and finally, iconology helps us elicit a specific meaning from a painting. Panofsky (1969) believes that the concept of artwork would be understood regarding its cultural and historical aspects. That is why one may face some questions like "Why did an artist signify the last supper in this way?"

For Irving Lavin, Panofsky holds that despite individual and local varieties, all works of art are of the same properties in a certain time and place. As a result, there are always particular formal methods to change one commonality into another during the history which is called periodization (Panofsky, 1983) . Although it seems to be a simple

view, very experienced art historians may prefer to have an eye evaluation of artworks to determine their time and location. Hatt and Klonk (2006) consider iconography as an antithesis of formalism. Iconography is dealing with themes and ideas whereas formalism is concerned with the morphology of forms.

1.9.1 Conceptual Framework

The main interest of the researcher in this study was to explore the Islamic patterns and motifs in Persian art and the Herat School. To do so, the researcher made use of an established theoretical framework. Therefore, Panofsky's theory of analysis of artworks was used. Although this model was introduced in chapter one, the researcher attempts to have a closer look at the model in this section. Figure 1.5 depicts the model of Panofsky (Panofsky, 1983).

As can be understood from Figure 1.5 Panofsky has considered three main premises for analysing artworks. The first feature is the natural subject matter which requires a pre-iconological description. The second aspect is the conventional subject matter which is the iconological analysis and the third aspect is the intrinsic meaning which is referred to as the interpretation of the iconological content.

A very significant issue with regard to the theories used in a study is how the theory is operationalised in a way that results in answering the research questions. In order to implement this theory, the researcher aimed at using Hsieh and Shannon qualitative content analysis in this study (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Using the qualitative content analysis Shannon model that mentioned before the following steps were implemented in the study.

The documents including some books and articles selected for this study from Science Direct, Wiley Publications, ProQuest, Oxford, and Scopus underwent the above

mentioned steps to be analysed and interpreted. Meanwhile, the pre-iconological and iconological nature of the motifs was taken into account based on Panofsky (Panofsky, 1983). Also some samples are chosen for analysing base on the Panofsky's theory, from a book of Herat school during Timurid dynasty.

1.9.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Data analysis, as stated by Bogdan and Biklen (1998), is a process in which the researcher has to work with data. The approach the researcher takes to work with data depends on the type of data analysis selected. It is the data analysis which determines whether qualitative or quantitative analysis should be conducted. It also determines the particular approach to such types of analysis. In the case of this study, the researcher aimed at qualitative content analysis. To do so, the researcher began by exploring as many books and articles for the library research by historical approach, with regard to Islamic motifs in the Herat School as possible. After these documents were selected, the researcher attempted to organise the data, to see how the selected documents are related and what patterns can be emerged from them through interpretation. Creswell (2008) suggests that the researchers should be involved in both data collection and data analysis at the same time when they are conducting a qualitative analysis. This helps to realise when the researcher has arrived at the point of data saturation and when there is no need for further digging for new information. As a result of these recommendations, the researcher explains the data collection and analysis at two stages in this study, i.e., analysis of data during data collection, and analysis of data after data collection.

1.9.2.1 Analysis during Data Collection

As explained above and based on Creswell (2009), a significant portion of the analysis was conducted during the data collection. This analysis was mostly for ensuring data was saturated, and enough documents were collected. The researcher opted the main categories which should have been discussed for the purpose of this study until she felt that the main themes are repeated in documents, and no new aspect of the issue is discussed. This point was taken as the point of data saturation. It should be mentioned that the researcher referred to the scientific databases constantly to make sure no valuable source is neglected.

1.9.2.2 Analysis after Data Collection

Another important analysis to achieve the final results was conducted after selecting the documents. At this point, the researcher followed the procedure suggested by Sara Shannon that mentioned and explained before. The researcher disregarded the categories of data which seemed to be irrelevant to the main theme of the study and conduct the final analysis based only on the relevant data which was organised and synthesised by the researcher.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

Similar to other research projects which may suffer from certain limitations or delimitations, this study was limited by a number of issues which are explained in this section in detail.

Since it is not possible to cover all types of Islamic motifs in this study, the research aimed to identify the geometric shape, arabesque motifs and floral motifs in Herat School of Painting during the Timurid Dynasty from the 14th to 16th centuries.

These motifs are chosen for some reasons like using them much in Herat school during Timurid dynasty and repetition them by artists in Islamic art in many Islamic eras.

In addition, it would not have been possible to investigate all aspects of Iranian-Islamic art in a single study. Therefore, the researcher limited the research to an examination of abstractive motifs as mentioned above. In order to do so, the researcher used previous findings in the literature.

Furthermore, investigation of the effective Islamic thought, through Islamic philosophy is needed to interpreting the motifs, so the meaning of shapes base on Islamic thought in documents including books and articles is discussed in this study.

1.11 Operational Definition

An operational definition, when connected to information or data collection, is a reasonable, brief point by point meaning of a measure. The requirement for operational definitions is central when gathering a wide range of information. It is especially vital when a choice is being made about in the case of something is right or wrong, or when a visual check is being made where there is space for confusion. Since the level of operationalization can fluctuate itself, it can result in a more or less operational definition (Shoemaker, Tankard Jr, & Lasorsa, 2003).

Research is a process of steps used to collect and analyze information to increase our understanding of a topic or issue. It consists of three steps: pose a question, collect data to answer the question, and present an answer to the question (Creswell, 2008). Operational definitions are additionally used to characterize framework states as far as a particular, freely open procedure of readiness or approval testing, which is repeatable voluntarily.

Defining the problem is the first step of the research. In order to find a suitable research topic, the researcher studied articles and books and followed all subjects related to the history of Persian painting. The researcher frequented libraries in order to find sources and determine how scholars think about this subject and the problems they encountered. The researcher tried to identify the most important issues about Persian painting. The most important thing was there are just a few studies analysing the Herat School despite being the most important school in Persian painting history, especially concerning Islamic motifs.

The researcher defined five paintings of the famous Baysonqor Shahnameh in Golestan Palace in Iran to analyse its shapes. These five works are from the School of Herat with their sophisticated colours, the precise design of shape, their attention to the reproduction of nature's idyllic landscapes and their relationship to architectural elements which constitute important achievements of the School of Herat.

The researcher expanded the objective of the study followed by the questions about analysing shape, the role of artists and investigated affective factors in the Herat School of Painting. She reviewed the literature to show Persian painting history from prehistoric times to the Timurid Dynasty and the Herat School of Painting. In reviewing these sources, the emphasis has been on revealing the gist of the matter, the result of these studies and their gaps. A theoretical framework is the discussed and researcher showed the divisions of paintings using Erwin Panofsky's theory.

To identify the problems faced by the Herat School, the researcher engaged in the historical study of the Timurid Dynasty. All paintings were from the Baysonqor Shahnameh to highlight the properties of the Herat School.

The paintings are available in Golestan Palace in Tehran, and a book of Persian paintings include Baysonqory Shahnameh, has been published on the occasion of the

exhibition, masterpieces of the Persian painting, held at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary of Art in 2005.

As qualitative research, the thematic method should include inductive analysis going from the particular or detailed data to general codes and subjects. The researcher read the texts several times to understand the data before identifying key themes or patterns and organise them into coherent categories.

After collection data, everything was changed to written form and typed in Microsoft Word. The notes taken from books and articles were collected thematically. For doing, the main subjects were considered and after re-examining the data. Their respective codes identified the issues about each theme and grouped accordingly.

1.12 Organisation of the Thesis

This research comprises seven chapters. The first chapter introduced Islamic art and the Herat School of Painting. The researcher defined the research questions, objectives problems statement and the gaps in Islamic art. Also the research design and steps to do this research conclude; collecting data (documents), comparison of the information, coding data, merging relevant categories, finding relations between categories and interpretation of the selecting data and the findings is explained. In addition, iconography and iconology theory to analysing sample is explained.

In the second chapter, the researcher elaborates the characteristics of Persian painting and theoretical meaning of the Islamic patterns used in the Herat School such as Interpretation, symbol and geometry, to better understanding of research objectives, that is clear to interpreting Islamic abstractive motifs we need to know what are the motifs and what we mean when are talking about interpretation.

The third chapter discusses with a brief history of abstractive motifs in Iran and the art and civilisation of Iran from the beginning to the 13th century AH. Historical approach by searching in background of Persian art from the beginning of art in Iran till the Iranian art and civilisation in 13th century makes clear the necessity of Islamic art interpretation.

The fourth chapter is an explanation of the other schools of Persian painting during the Timurid Dynasty. Shiraz and Tabriz are two another school's simultaneous equation Herat school history during Timurid dynasty in Iran. These three schools of painting are linked and affected to each other.

The fifth chapter analyses some masterpieces from the Herat School to better understand the Islamic patterns used in Persian painting during the Islamic period. Refer to the theory by Panofsky, analysing Islamic motifs could be possible by iconology and iconography.

Moreover, the sixth chapter examines the factors inspiring the creation of the Islamic art motifs in the Herat School of Painting. To archive finding of the study, researcher explains the impact of Islamic culture on Herat school and the concept of abstract motifs such as floral and geometrical shapes.

Chapter seven concludes the research finding and give some suggestion for future. The ended chapter shows that how Islamic motifs can be interpreted in the Iranian painting of Herat School to achieve that, what are the deep meaning of them.

1.13 Summary

Herat school painting is the most important school painting in Persian world. Chapter one introduced the Herat School of Painting. The school existed in the 15th century in Herat - the capital of the Timurid Dynasty. A brief background of Persian art was presented at

the beginning of the chapter based on previous research. In the background, issues related to the Herat School of Painting, Islamic art and Islamic patterns were elaborated. Statement of the problem in this research explained why there is a need for a study of the motifs used in the Herat School, especially due to the rarity of research with regard to motifs in the Herat School. The researcher also asked certain questions to reach a better understanding of Persian art motifs, their values and how Islamic patterns in Persian painting are recognised. Moreover, the relevant theories and conceptual framework used to conduct this study were explained.

In addition, the researcher expanded the review of the literature to include the concept of Persian art, and the Herat School understood to the readership. Although the analysis is conducted in later chapters, the researcher explained the data analysis procedure.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

2.1 Introduction

As I showed the structure of this study in first chapter, Islamic abstractive motifs interpret, is one of objectives in this research. To this aim we need to know about Islamic art, interpretation and some other subjects that related to doing this research, so this is crucial in aim of thesis in order to explain literature review and the theoretical framework of the research in this chapter. In the second chapter, I will begin by examining the Herat school painting that is during Timurid dynasty, then move to explaining Islamic art and continue by explaining the shapes which have meaning in Islamic thought referring to Muslims scholars and philosophers.

A wide variety of investigations have been conducted on the impact of the elements of different Persian, Byzantine, Hindu and Mongolian cultures on Islamic art. However, more research is needed to explore the combination and the interactive relationship among them (Dadi, 2006). A number of factors such as different civilisations, cultures, ages, social situations and artists' professions have been influenced and changed the Persian painting or illustration over the Islamic history. Therefore, a lot of different artworks are produced during this time (Akbari, 2010).

Persian painting with its expression or meaning was a major reason for Iranian artists to create and perform their artworks at that time. They used the Iranian people's culture and traditions to offer their illustrations or books. Although they dealt with the same subject, they followed a distinctive style.

It was the second half of the 15th century when Persian painting witnessed the main changes in Herat. Blair believed that one could find remarkable differences in the

Persian art by comparing it during the Mongol period and the Islamic art period with its special traditions (Amoli, 2000).

Persian art in the 15th century which had a close link with Herat is well-known as the Timurid School of Painting. Timur's son, Shahrukh, who was the governor of Khorasan, Sistan, Ray and Mazandaran became the ruler after his father's death in 1405. He ruled until 1446. At the beginning of his rule, he encountered animosities from provincial governors, but he eventually managed to stabilise his power over Persia and Transoxiana. He also devoted remarkable time and attention to advancing Herat and other cities. This contributed to the success of the Herat School.

Chinese painting and artists' works who applied a lot of Chinese motifs or patterns affected the Persian painting during the Mongol dynasty. With the emergence of the Herat School, they gradually substituted Islamic motifs with Persian shapes and designs for Chinese motifs.

2.2 Herat School of Painting (1378-1507AD/780-913AH)

The progression of the painting methods during the 15th and 16th centuries made rapid changes in the Persian painting by establishing the Timurid and Safavid royal workshops in the scope of poetry. Although the Chinese art affected Iranian art schools, they managed to remove foreign characteristics from their paintings.

The leading art schools in the Timurid period were Shiraz, Herat and Tabriz schools which began to eliminate such elements. The Shiraz School was well-known for its smooth and magnificent designs of birds and flowers, the light hues such as gold and silver colours, and the use of tall and young ladies. Herat School was renowned for applying bright and warm colours and demonstrating details in its art. For instance, it was successful in depicting gentle hills of scattered flowers and plants with broad leaves and

blossoms as well as sharp rocks along rivers. The Tabriz School, however, was under the influence of Shiraz and Herat artists.

By studying the accounts of Faramarz Mourns Death of His Father and His Uncle, Zavareh and Lohrasb Ascend the Throne in Baysonqory Shahnameh; we can conclude that there is integration between the architectures and landscapes. In the Heart School, most motifs are mainly related to the views of hunting, battles, landscapes and details of flowers and birds. Keep in mind that patterns and designs of clothes, weapons, carpets, and interior decorations have been demonstrated accurately and attractively.

A number of sociologists and researchers believe that, despite the manuscript prepared for Shahrukh, the copies reproduced for his son Baysonqor Mirza (1423-1458) are at the peak of Persian painting. Baysonqor Mirza encouraged the artists of his time to make a variety of books such as the Shahnameh, Kelileh and Dimna and Golestan Saadi. They wrote and painted on different kinds of fabrics, leathers, ceramics, metals and jewellery in his court. The geometric structures and order of the paintings at his age are based on the level of the coordination among horizontal, oblique, and subtle rhythms of colours throughout the artworks. Most of the compositions used in the manuscripts of that time were the source of inspiration for painting in the next periods. These designs were sealed until the late Timurid period.

The use of bright and pure colours is considered to be one of the most remarkable qualities of the Persian miniature. Natural substances of such hues are mineral. The bright colours except for silver which is generally used for showing water can be preserved well under appropriate conditions. The backgrounds and clothes are painted very skilfully. Moreover, the great quality of the forms is evident in the details of the fabric of tents, carpets, tiles, plants and animals.

As for the features of the Herat School of Painting, they are generally composed of less symmetrical views than their contemporary ones created in Shiraz. Also, the highly complicated hues, use of people and animals, focus on the recreation of nature's beautiful and peaceful landscapes, and different architectural components are the main properties of the Herat School.

Hosseini Rad (2005) stated, Iranian painting in Timurid dynasty includes spryer, less symmetrical scenes than their modern counterparts produced in Shiraz. Their gentle colours, the precise design of their human and animal characters, their courtesy to the imitation of nature's calm landscapes and their relationship to architectural elements constitute important achievements of the school of Heratin the second half of the 15th century

Gray (1930) stated the Timurid paintings are much more distinct than anything that had gone before. At all periods the sheer property well was a possibility. There is no longer a flat drop-curtain in these paintings, but figures appear on many different planes and the natural scenery plays an equally prominent part in the whole.

2.2.1 Islamic Art

Today, we can encounter a vast range of artworks entitled Islamic art. Some scholars have suggested various definitions for the term Islamic art. However, it seems that a generally accepted definition is lacking. They tried to introduce it as sacred art, art of the Muslim world, Muslim art, art with religious and Islamic art, Arabic art, abstract art, geometric art, and compound art, none of which can be considered as a comprehensive concept of Islamic art since each opinion is used to describe a single angle of this art.

Islamic art is the common outcome of all the Islamic nations, some of which like Iran has a significant contribution. The nations' art is the consequence of the presence of

different traditions and tribal attachments as well as the soul of the Islamic teachings (Nasr, 2001).

The formation of Islamic art has been under the influence of various factors, especially Iranian and Byzantine art elements (Cirlot, 2006). The Sassanian and Byzantine Empires had powerful methods of their own in different art fields, specifically architecture. One can discover the tracks by studying the Islamic art aesthetically and technically (Khan, 2009).

Islamic art emerged in the beginning as a process of accommodation of foreign artistic elements into Islamic consciousness and then grew to prosper on its own on the basis of Islamic principles. As a result, it created its distinctive artistic traits within the framework of 'unity in diversity' and 'diversity in unity' (Takestani, 2007).

Nasr points out that this art represents the divine unity, the attachment of all creatures to Allah the One, the world's mortality, and the positive quality of the creation in a magnificent and stunning way. It relies on a kind of knowledge called wisdom which has a spiritual nature (Khan, 2009).

Within a religious and Islamic framework, Islamic art emerged as a specific language or expression and gradually find its identity through the effects of pre-Islamic cultures and art. While preserving its identity, it has been able to guide its changes during the different periods towards the direction of Allah.

In Islam, the term art tends to be used to refer to constructing things based on their nature with potential beauty. Accordingly, a Muslim artist is to create the beauty which is the essence of art and manifest the value of matters enjoying from Allah the Almighty (Burckhardt, 2009a).

“Islamic art is the very concept that implies from its name without any ambiguities” (Walker, 1999). Islamic art has had the same identity over the time. Allah has been the centre of its attention (Shayegan, 1992).

One of the features of Islamic art is that it is constantly consistent with the soul of this kind of art. This agreement is evident in the architecture of the holy places. It continues to deal with beauty because, among all divine attributes which are manifested in the world, it is beauty that reminds us of the absolute being.

Naghizadeh asserts that the origin of Islamic art dates back to the Islamic worldview and revelation (Naghizadeh, 2000). In addition, to show the relationship between the revelation and Islamic art, one can refer to the organic connection between God’s worship and contemplation about Him as it is mentioned in the Holy Quran, the reflective nature of such art, that is, His praise which is the ultimate aim of all Islamic rites and practices in Islam, and the role that audiovisual arts play in each Muslim’s life in particular and the Muslim world in general (Malekpour, 2012).

This art appears not to be Islamic when a Muslim tries to be only its producer or creator. It comes from the Islamic inspiration. Moreover, its identity reflects the inner truths of the divine inspiration. This kind of art can lead humanity to the inner seclusion of the Islamic inspiration since it results from Islam’s inner aspect. In terms of emergence, Islamic art is the fruit of Islamic spirituality and in terms of the recognition of the origin; it is helpful in supporting the spiritual life. It is the result of the manifestation of unity in the light of pluralities.

2.2.2 The Impact of Islamic Thought on Islamic Art

The Holy Quran including various dimensions of the Islamic culture such as the Islamic jurisprudence, worldview, law, tradition, ethics, economy, trade, mathematics,

astronomy, politics, philosophy, mysticism, literature, and art is the basis of Islam (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

From the perspective of the Holy Quran and Sunnah (tradition), Islam is a series of teachings and instructions encompassing Muslims' individual, family, social, political, economic, and international lives. One of the features of the Islamic culture is unifying different sciences and viewpoints depending on the Quranic foundations in terms of Tawhid or Monotheism (Creswell, 2009). Islamic art uses a specific way of decorating things which rely on the most important foundation of Islam, i.e. Tawhid. Despite various art approaches, it is of a coherent and unique style in different places and periods.

The term Tawhid on which all cultural aspects of Islam is based can be defined as the oneness of Allah. Tawhid means purifying Allah from creatures' characteristics and differentiating between Him and all things without being separated from them (Eskandarpour, 1999). The unity and solidarity among the shapes, spaces, and styles of the Islamic art in different eras of the Muslim world culminate from the Tawhid insight hidden in the nature of the Islamic art.

Forms in Islamic art suggest eternal truths. They belong to a meaning or an expression. They have also been separated from historical conditions and requirements. Such features within artworks have caused an artist's individualism to be removed and the beauty and significance replaced with the manifest of the general truth.

According to Islamic teachings, beauty and perfection in everything lie in its praise to Allah. In other words, anything that manifests the divine attributes is of beauty and perfection. It indicates that beauty in the Islamic art is not related to individual and racial genius; rather it is indebted to the religion of Islam. Its role is to manifest inner characteristics in things. Therefore, beauty is in art itself and enjoys internal and external aspects.

Muslims prefer Tanzieh (divine sanctity) and Tajrid (purification) to Tashbih (assimilating or comprising Allah with created things). Thus, by eliminating any kind of man-like illustrations, the Islamic art provides a setting for them to know Allah through balance, serenity, peace, and purity.

What is mentioned as stillness or motionlessness in Islamic art is the absence of individual and material motives and desires. It only preserves eternal elements. This is the reason why abstract and geometric decorations have improved in it.

The remarkable development and prevalence of geometric decorations and knots, as well as different types of arabesque and Khataee patterns, are not only to compensate the gap from imposing sanctions on or forbidding paintings and illustrations, but also to negate and breach pictorial art. Arabesque styles are logical, mathematical, rhythmical, and harmonious. These traits are of highly significant for the soul of the Islam religion to maintain the balance between intellect and love (Walker, 1999).

2.3 Interpretation

Interpretation is familiarity with the original and true meaning of term, shape, function, form, by rendering it to its original position. It is a method which goes beyond the surface structure of the terms into the deep structure (inside) of the meaning. This method is a metaphysical knowledge and journeys from the surface of phenomena into depth and inner realities (Corbin & Horine, 1976).

Corbin also proposes three levels for the audience to receive texts that include:

1. First Level is the superficial level of meaning which refers to the linguistic level of the signs and is known and concerned as signifier and signified in natural language.

2. Second Level is the second level of meaning (connotative) which we give to linguistic signs that the language does not imply those meanings.
3. Third Level is the realisation of meanings in person. The third level, in fact, is to internalise and experience the event.

Achieving this level of receiving a text is to achieve to the truth of the event and its null meaning, and that is the true interpretation of the text. This will take place only regarding our evolution and open the insight and subtle spiritual senses (ibid).

2.4 Symbol

The term symbol is generally understood to mean any sign in different forms of the human culture. Any signal such as a letter, a number, a shape, an abbreviation, a word, and a sentence that represents a special concept is considered to be a symbol (Mirzaee, 2012).

Philosophers, scholars, and mystics have mostly paid attention to the aspect of the world's connection to its origin, mystically suggesting that the universe is a perfect example of heaven (Khan, 2009). Symbolically speaking, the external world indicates the internal world. Suppose a symbol signifies a thing. The question raised here is that what is the specific relationship between the sign and signified sign? The term of the symbol is specifically associated with situations, worlds, experiences and facts which are different from common and everyday experience prevalent among people. In fact, it represents the capability of our soul that can be realised through revelation, inspiration, dream, and spiritual status. Its various forms may be actualised in the shape of mystical events and rituals, mythology, poetry, and pure art.

A sign is an arbitrary mark whose relation between the signified and signifier is based on some agreements. For instance, the signs used for roads and in some sciences such as logic and math are of fixed meanings. They appear to be collective as well as

understandable for a majority of people. In allegory and symbol, the signifier keeps the signified hidden behind words and pictures.

The signified of a symbol indicates a content which is within the range of our sensory experience and perception. By way of illustration, a dove, a lion, a rose bespeaks peace, bravery, and love respectively. Such comparison comes from agreements or traditions. For instance, a dragon depending on these terms can signify good or evil.

In the Islamic culture, a symbol conveys an inner meaning that can be realised in words and pictures. The invisible world shows the inside of this world. Our understanding of this world requires intuitive wisdom, inner perception, self-purification, spiritual and mystical endeavour and austerity. It indicates the marriage and oneness between symbols and the symbolised. A symbol seems not to be an imposed occurrence and an accidental affair. Rather, there is an intrinsic nature between a symbol and a meaning.

The term symbol in a special content refers to the different aspects of the facts of phenomena. Sheikh Mahmood Shabestari in his well-known work named *Gulshan-e-raz* (the Secret Rose Garden) notes that the truths of things within the scope of Allah's knowledge are called the subsistent. They denote the emergence of the essence as well as the nature of things.

Mundus Imaginalis points to the position of symbolic pictures. These images are the determined pictures of the subsistent in *mundus imaginalis*. A symbol receives its image from the sensory world and its meaning or content from the truths of the subsistent.

An artist can achieve the subsistent in the light of imagination, accomplish the inner truths of the world in the form of symbols, and then create his/her artwork while reviewing the subsistent. The symbolic pictures manifest the truths in their works.

The most important characteristic of a symbol is its polysemy or multiple meanings. Senses and instances of the subsistent can be realised and manifested in terms

of the degree of religious and spiritual wisdom and experience of the audience. In other words, the symbolic language fails to consider an absolute or final meaning for people and things. It is its salient feature. On the one hand, a symbol can carry a wide variety of meanings, but on the other hand, senses can be changed in a vast number of symbols depending on different conditions and imaginations.

As for the multiple meanings of a symbol, the polysemy of a symbol may occur as a result of being different ideas about it and an elegy in it. The presence of duality, a confrontation between two meanings in a symbol which is related to each other based on a correlational relationship, sometimes displays these two parts complementary. Occasionally, the two complementary parts become such a striking contrast that every section has a reverse or negative relationship with another one from an external perspective. The confrontation would be undeniable as it ascends to higher levels. The two components will be consistent with each other in terms of being complementary before they achieve a common unity, i.e., the origin. Being complementary of two meanings for a symbol acts as an intermediary between confrontation and unity. The two parts of any duality convey an opposite meaning. These two reverse viewpoints in the same symbol per se are perfectly acceptable. Since each viewpoint appears to be correct, neither of them is considered to be the other aspect (Guénon, 2001).

This means that confrontation in a symbol can reach unity while the symbol is in between. For example, fire can burn and be burned. These two qualities may be interpreted as the wrath and mercy of Allah the Almighty while His Wrath and Mercy are completely united. In other words, a symbol will remain between confrontation and unity as fire, on the one hand, shows confrontation but on the other demonstrates unity.

2.5 Mundus Imaginalis or the Imaginary and the Imaginal

The Cartesian dualistic view of reality caused European science and philosophy to experience two alternative areas: the world of mind and the world of space. As for space, whether it will be the linear model of Newtonian physics or the curved space of reality, it is dealt with non-physical space without man's emotional involvement in its creation. In other words, it is endowed with its natural existence. It is the very feature that the sacred art, especially Persian art, has enjoyed (Nasr, 1990).

An imaginary or utopian world must have signs of things. First, the order of reality which is earmarked as mundus imaginalis, by the Islamic philosophers will be discussed, then, the part of the body responsible for recognising the reality, i.e., the imaginative consciousness or the cognitive imagination will be reviewed. Finally, a various number of instances will be analysed to describe the detailed map of the interworld (Corbin & Horine, 1976).

For the disciplines of modern philosophy and psychology, imagination has been considered to be an inexplicable question. Alam-E-Mithel selected the term mundus imaginalis for imagination which may seem unconventional. Moreover, some researchers to refer to it have used the Persian phrase Na-koja-abad, which means land of nowhere and differs from the utopia as an imaginary perfect world (Corbin & Horine, 1976).

2.6 Geometry

According to the Ekhvan-al-safa, geometry shows the path to the strength of thought and imagination to comprehend the essence of the self and things (Akbari, 2010). In the Islamic worldview, art is considered to be a major industry. It means that there is a clear connection between art and science, especially geometry science. Geometry helps an artist create harmonious forms and patterns from abstract and geometric shapes.

Geometry's application in the Islamic architecture and art is not limited to its physical and quantity aspect. It is a high-quality feature that emerges from the concept of appropriation. The rules of appropriation are generally based on dividing a circle into regular shapes inscribed in it. Hence, all the appropriations within a structure finally stem from a circle. It is an obvious symbol of the Unity of Existence containing possible shapes of all the being. Domes, porticos, and arches are good examples of coding.

The shapes used in art and architecture are inseparable from the traditional concept of mathematics, especially geometry or geometric forms. Numbers and geometric shapes are not restricted to their quantity aspects; rather they have symbolic properties and good quality. In other words, any shape or style can represent unity and mirror high quality superior to any splitting or separation.

Islamic geometric art which is mainly related to the concept arabesque, by dictionary definition, consists of decorative works of art suitable for flat surfaces with intersecting geometric patterns of the polygon, circular, interlocked, and curved lines (Walker, 1999).

2.6.1 Types of Lines and their Symbolic Properties

Ikhwan-al-Safa classified lines into three kinds: straight lines, arch lines, and curved lines. The curved lines are comprised of straight lines and arch or circular lines. Different kinds of arch lines are full circles, semicircles, less than semicircles, and greater than semicircles.

In Sufism, the term "line" is used to refer to the truth of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). That is why it constitutes secrecy, manifestation, inner, and outer. For al-Tahanavi (1862), a line means spiritualism, one of the closest and highest ranks of the

existence of the Truth. It is the secret of the absence of identity in an abstract and anonymous way (Akbari, 2010).

For seekers or wayfarers, the term line is equated with “determination of spiritualism” which is considered one of the closest ranks of the existence. Moreover, they believe that it can be defined as the glorious world or abstract spiritualism. They also say that the line means the reappearance of the suspension of spirits into bodies (Amoli, 2000).

Today, experts in the visual arts believe that a vertical line represents perseverance, courage, bravery, independence, resistance, stability and balance. A horizontal line implies feelings, symbolising a female against a vertical line which is the symbol of a male. As to the coordination between brightness and darkness, a vertical line is considered to be white and the symbol of “day”, but a horizontal line is black and the symbol of “night”.

An oblique line is like a vertical line which seems to be imbalanced. It is considered as the best symbol of instability, imbalance, non-dynamism, and collapse. Juxtaposing this line with a vertical line can to some extent make it equal or balanced.

A curved line can suggest peace and tranquillity as well as beauty whereas a zigzag pattern shows fear, worry, and anxiety.

A horizontal line displays the superiority or excellence of logical thought or reason, but a vertical line demonstrates irrationality (Cirlot, 2006).

Comparing different shapes created by vertical and horizontal lines, Elystor studied vertical lines in terms of an active principle and horizontal ones based on an inactive principle. For him, straight lines continue to display activities which were already done while curved lines represent passivity (Akbari, 2010).

Symbolism emphasises the importance of vertical height for shapes and assumes it as an upward movement, dynamism, ethical and spiritual concepts.

In the ancient Egyptian handwriting system, Hieroglyphics, a wavy line with small sharp ridges is the symbol of water and shows the level of water. When this symbol increases by three times, it portrays the volume of water, symbolising the ancient ocean and the primary material.

It should be noted that a spiral line represents a change of a force and/or a phase. It is a rotation which starts from a point and continues to infinity. It is also the symbol of the moon, fertility, beat, rhythm of the daily life, and survival with an unstable motion. A snail spiral donates birth, death, and rebirth, too. A flat spiral is mostly similar to a labyrinth and a centrifugal and centripetal rotation.

During the primitive civilisations of Asia, America, and even Polynesia, spiral shapes represent a trip leading a diseased soul to the ultimate destination. In other words, these lines describe a journey one's soul makes on an unknown path after his death to guide it towards the centre of the eternal creatures (Akbari, 2010).

2.7 Surface and its Symbolic Features

A surface is used to refer to a form which is encompassed by a line or lines. Al-Tahanavi says that Ikhwan-al-Safa defines a plane as “a roof or anything that has length and width”. A plane is divided on the basis of the quality into three types: flat, concave, and convex (Akbari, 2010).

Ikhwan-al-Safa state that flat surfaces are grouped into two types:

1. Planes formed by arch lines
2. Planes made by straight lines

Circles, semicircles, and ovals are good examples of the first group. Triangles, squares, pentagons, hexagons, octagons are typical instances of the second group. A plane is considered to be the extremity of a figure; a line, the end of a plane; and a point, the extremity of a line. A line inevitably begins with a point. A plane inevitably leads to a line or lines, and an object to a surface (Akbari, 2010).

2.8 Circle and its main Symbolic Properties

Al-Tahanavi mentions that a circle is a flat plane which is circumscribed by a curved or circular line. Lines which come out from the central point of a circle are equal (Akbari, 2010). A circle contains a central point, a radius, and a circumference.

Ikhwan-al-Safa also say that according to Euclid's book, the shape of a circle is the largest form in polygons (Akbari, 2010). A circle is a form bounded by a line. There is a certain point within it that all straight lines come out into two reverse directions equally. A semicircle is a shape which is bounded by two lines – an arch line and a direct line. A circle is considered to be the perfect geometrical shape in which every line is symmetric from the centre. There is no beginning for the circle. It is the symbol of boundlessness or infinity like the sky. It also symbolises the infinite spirit of the universe, the undivided unity of the exalted origin, the revolution of the sky, and the image of the eternity.

Aristotle calls a circle the most beautiful and perfect shape. Frithjof Schuon, a contemporary philosopher, believes that a circle is an expanded point which is the symbol of the absolute or exalted essence. The radii of a circle represent radiation, and its circumference indicates the reflection and drawing of the centre. The total plane of a circle also shows being or existence (Nasr, 1990).

What God the Almighty creates in the universe is in the shape of a circle. An obvious example is the sky (Burckhardt, 2009a). Burckhardt also remarks that a sphere or a ball in geometry lies between a form and formlessness or in a point without any dimension. He believes that spheres and circles result from the radiation of an original point. According to a Latin sentence from the Middle Ages, Allah is the rational form whose centre lies everywhere, and circumference exists nowhere (Shayegan, 1992).

2.9 Features of Abstract Islamic Patterns

Although Islamic art's growth appears not to be separated from the natural and environmental effects, its illustration is of an abstract nature in comparison with Western art whose illustration seems to be realism. For example, when it comes to arabesque designs in plant-based paintings, wherever branches, leaves, and flowers are juxtaposed and interlocked, one can notice the difference based on the geometric lines around them. The use of paintings ornamented with plants in Islamic art to some extent depends on the illustration of living things (Malekpour, 2012).

However, due to forbidding illustrating man and animals, the Islamic ban has normally reduced its fame. Art critics say that the illustration and ornamentation of things with flowers lacking life and growth in Islamic art is related to one's faith. They believe that the reason for the absence of developing flower - designed art has been thanks to the natural environment of the Islamic nations where they rarely experienced spring, the season of growing plants.

We can find actual paintings of plants and trees in The Dome of the Rock (Qubbat-al-Sakhrah) and the Great Mosque of Damascus where the first plant-based designs were used. But as mentioned, these realism works of art were performed by Byzantine artists who were supported by the Umayyad. The plant-based decorations applied in Samarra

Mosque in Iraq reveal the ability and skill of Muslim artists in knowingly utilising pictures of the leaves and branches of the vine tree with scroll patterns. Nevertheless, realism methods of art gradually spread over Iran and Turkey in the 13th century. It would later influence Chinese and Mongol art.

A Muslim artist attempted to design branches and leaves meticulously and elegantly, especially around minarets and windows. Stucco decorated with regular leaves and sprouts within a long scroll design in the margin of the walls of Sultan Qalawun's tomb located in Cairo was used in 1284 and 1285. Moreover, some examples of illustrations ornamented with flowers with circular and rectangular decorative frames that were well-known in the 15th century can be found in this tomb. This type of art was also applied to decorating pottery, carving, and tilework.

2.10 Persian Painting Characteristics

Nasr believes that nowadays it is accepted in scientific circles that religious art and civilisation of any tribe or nation represent the religious facts governing them. Persian painting is based on separately dividing two-dimensional space of an image since this is how each horizon of two-dimensional space of painting can be regarded as a symbol of a rank of being as well as a rank of awareness and wisdom (Khan, 2009).

Persian painting is of movement from one horizon to another between two-dimensional space and three-dimensional space. However, this movement never results in creating pure three-dimensional space.

The introverted quality of works of Persian painting is an important issue. For example, in the Timurid *Zafarnameh* (proclamation of victory), which is considered as one of the works of the Timurid era in 1527 and is being kept in Golestan Palace in Iran,

the portrait of Sultan Murad I of the Ottoman Empire is not depicted in the middle of the painting, rather it involves a little part in harmony with other components of the painting.

Coincidence or simultaneousness is another element which one will witness in Persian painting. According to Iranian art, the time and place can be broken, and a large number of windows can be open to the world. It means that both inside and outside of a building in accordance with the principle of the two-dimensional surface is demonstrated in an illustration simultaneously.

Another point in Persian painting is light which is used everywhere in Iranian painting without any shadows. According to Persian painting, there are no satanic forces and wickedness in bright space. Instead, what you can see are pure and divine forces. In addition, the night is illustrated along with the azure sky, a crescent moon, or illumination of stars.

Strictly speaking, by studying Persian paintings specifically the ones in the Timurid age in the Heart School, one can conclude that none of the illustrations, faces, persons, states, and positions appears to be real. They have been designed without any shadows, sceneries, and colours. Animals have no real hue. Camels, for instance, have been drawn in different colours such as pink, purple, yellow or blue. Furthermore, clothes and other things have often been illustrated with arabesque motifs and geometric patterns. The artist has reached the independent world with a specific view and intended to show the principle of non-realism because the Islamic painter never imitates the external realities.

It is also worth mentioning that Persian illustration relies on curved lines. In other words, the construction of the painting is based on snail movements. This spiral state is drawn in a painting so gracefully as though the line of vision is high above persons and landscapes. It causes a feeling of non-realism to be strengthened in figures. Such

movements are generally used for drawing on heads, eyes, or hands regarding the shape of the body. These curved movements make a painting combination have variety, flexibility, and dynamic.

The cognitive content of the snail curve is used to refer to the fact that Allah the Almighty is the Creator of the universe and doing paintings means making a tiny world. This miniature space is generated based on the Aristotelian philosophy by man for man, which means that these movements extend from the Heaven to the Earth through the circles in the form of snails to finally reach human beings.

The curves symbolise spiral movements descending from Allah to man and return Him. They have been used by Muslim Sufis or mystics abundantly. Remember that the most important religious ritual in Islam is making Tawaf, seven turns of circumambulation around the Kaabah or Al-Ḥajar-al-Aswad, the Black Stone of Mecca. This spiral movement indicates Allah's manifestation. By investigating Persian paintings, one can also reach this conclusion that Iranian painters try to reveal the existence of Allah the Exalted in their paintings by considering the aesthetic principle and using various forms and colours not by following the content.

2.10.1 Special Characteristics of Herat School of Painting

Great attention was paid to rewriting and illustrating Shahnameh at the time of Shahrukh and his successors especially Baysonqor. Other works of literature such as Khamsa of Nizami, Saadi's Bustan and Gulestan as well as Kelileh and Demneh are the books that were attention in that time.

Foreign elements were gradually removed from Persian paintings and then a number of major changes were made to colours and forms during this time so that a lot of experts believe that it turned the Herat School into a perfect Persian Painting School.

Applying Iranian-Islamic motifs to architectural styles and decorations and other space helped this school develop further.

The changes to the paintings in the Timurid era can be traced to a century before its establishment. Baghdad managed to gain a considerable reputation among these centres. Therefore, the artworks created there was a turning point in Persian painting and calligraphy. With some changes, this school first continued in Shiraz and then in Herat.

The Herat School of Painting has specific properties. One of these traits is the use of decorative motifs, particularly geometric and abstract designs like arabesque and Khataee motifs (Figure 2.1).

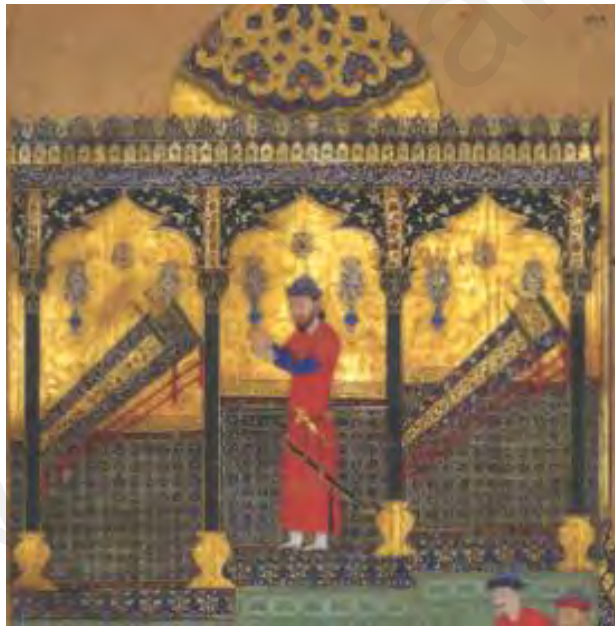


Figure 2.1: A Part of Faramarz Mourns Death of his Father and his Uncle, Zavareh

A large number of one-page or two-page compositions with several written lines were common at this school. Although some sub-components and loan elements from China such as women's and men's clothes were still found, other Chinese elements used at previous schools in abundance were eliminated and Iranian decorative methods were replaced. Moreover, people played a minor role, but landscape paintings had a major role

at Herat School. Colourful prevalent texts were substituted for gold which represents the rays of the sun and day. The night was painted in blue and was starry. The painters of the Herat School enjoyed a variety of plants. Despite the artists of other schools like the Shiraz School who used imaginary flowers, the painters of the Herat School watched and studied plants carefully, especially flowers (Figure 2.2). They refused to draw the version of nature. However, they painted them symmetrically. Furthermore, most paintings consisted of happy space in the form of hunting grounds and beautiful mansions with glorious sunshine and large trees covered in blossom.



Figure 2.2: A Part of Golnaz, the Maid, and Ganjvar Ardavan Meet Ardeshir.

2.11 Summary

To reach the objectives, the researcher needs to explain the concepts of Islamic art motifs. This chapter reviewed the theoretical framework of Islamic art that helps to better understand the meaning of Islamic motifs in the Herat School of Painting.

Classifying the theoretical foundation of Islamic motifs helps to better understand the symbolic meanings of Islamic motifs in Persian painting. We can see a different range of artworks entitled Islamic art, and some scholars have suggested various meanings for

Islamic art. Islamic art is the common outcome of all the Islamic nations in different areas in the Islam world. The nations' art is the result of the presence of different traditions and tribal attachments as well as the unit soul of the Islam.

Knowing Islamic art and the interpretation of Islamic motifs requires looking beyond the surface structure of the terms into the deep structure of the meaning. This leads us to the true meaning of Islamic arts. Interpretation of Islamic motifs would help explain Islamic thought behind Persian painting, special in the Timurid Dynasty. The chapter also included the meaning of different lines and their symbolic meaning in Islamic thinking.

Universiti Malaysia

CHAPTER 3: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PERSIAN ART

3.1 Introduction

Having argued in the previous chapters that, Herat School of Painting during Timurid dynasty is important for removing Chinese Painting effect and backing to Persian basis during the history before that time. As a result of description abstractive Islamic motifs in Herat School of Painting which established in the last chapter, we need to know about history of art and civilisation before Timurid dynasty in Iran. This chapter will present a historical background of Persian art from the beginning of art in Iran till the Timurid dynasty. This is pivotal in research question in order to knowing Islamic abstractive motifs proceeding and the reasons of using these kind of motifs in Persian painting. It is also possible to make a link between this chapter and the whole of this study.

Persian visual art was observable on ancient pottery of Sialk Kashan Hills, and Hesar Hill of Damghan. The former residents of such places were adroit potters, though they used to make their living by farming (Pakbaz, 2006). Two main features of pottery in such places were particular colours and forms. In terms of colour, the potters used red, brown and black colours to manifest the geometric designs. As for forms, various animals and human forms were depicted in their art of pottery. This type of visual art reached the peak of perfection in the Copper and Stone Age around 3500 BC. Artists in this era drew lines and shapes by using meticulous principles.

Persian art is in no certain a sine quo non in visual art. This is well depicted in the pewters in Lorestan province which date back to between the 8th century and the 12th century BC. An example of such art is plaque which is engraved on the quiver for example in visual features of the objects in bronze. Such art is also used to retell stories of the past. For example, plates with engraved inscription gather various events and recite the story

based on which the plates were engraved. These stories include, but are not limited to, bull lying on the seven-sphere, or animals that stand on either side of a sacred tree. Other stories include anthropomorphic creatures who fight lions. Although human shapes and bodies are depicted in a static form in such stories, animals are mostly dynamic and more natural. Such features of Lorestan visual art indicate the summit of evolution in the prehistoric tradition of Iran (Pakbaz, 2006).

Human and animal shapes, circle and square shapes, and motifs such as mountains, raging water, sun and moon are the most common image in the old pictures of Iran. In relatively recent artworks, there are supernatural qualities. Fusion of human and animal that walks on two legs and a quadruped have wings, a snake with a head like a cat, an animal that behaves like a human, etc. The most of these symbolic patterns, with little difference in Mesopotamia and other West Asia areas, also be found. Some common themes in Lorestan's pewters and Ceramic Silk are re-appeared in Achaemenid. According to mythology, painting, religious beliefs and cultural interactions, any resemblance to the thematic artworks relating to various times and places is unacceptable.

Pakbaz (2006) attempted to identify the motifs in Iranian visual art. He listed a number of motifs, i.e., lancer guardian, lion and mixed animals. Simple lines and patterns were used to depict the guards from one side, eyes from the opposite side and also clothes. In the stone walls of Persepolis, visual art gets a slightly different form. It includes long lines which envoys tributary nations. Such long lines are also used to depict court procedures, the king in prayer for his nation, and animals living in peace and harmony. The form of the king with wings above his head also reveals the divinity of the king. It also indicates calmness and serenity.

While Achaemenids followed the rules and regulations of traditional abstract symbolisation, the Greek art was based on naturalism. It should be mentioned that the

main reason for such variety in world art is not unfamiliarity of Iranians with Greek art; indeed, the Greeks had lived in Achaemenid court, and their art had already reached Iran. Achaemenid art was concerned with the living world, though the Greek art was concerned with the dead world.

One of the events that had considerable influence on Iranian art was Alexander's Raid in 330 BC the Achaemenid land was occupied by the Greeks and, following Alexander's death, was split among the high-ranked generals. Solocos governed Iran and the Eastern lands. Parthians had Aryan origins and lived along the nomadic steppes between the Caspian and Aral. They redeployed power in north-eastern Iran and founded the Parthian state in 250 BC. M (Marzban, 2014).

The advent of the Greeks in West Asia, especially during the Seleucid and Parthian period spread the Greek language, literature, and culture in West Asia. This issue stabilised the presence of Greek culture in Iran and Asia. Following these incidents, Balkhi was chosen as an independent Greek state established in Transoxiana and Bactria. The influx of Aryans toppled the government. However, the nomadic invaders settled down in these areas. The marble statues as an artwork which can be observed in such areas were created under the influence of Western art.

Parthian art had never received the Achaemenid court style art. The main characteristics of Parthian art were stiffness and strength of body, decorator and the details in the clothing and jewellery. The normal side view can be very often observed in Lorestan pewters. Such features were critically important in Parthian art. To make the images more impressive, the Parthian art depicted the full-face gazing at the spectators. The depiction of the full face may also represent the side view. The garment also showed peoples' authority or social and family background. The garment was among the main

features of art in that period. The most common garment is the one on top of the knee-waist gown that fell onto baggy pants (Ghirshman, 1964).

The Parthian artists were adroit in the visualisation of personal details. They made use of abstract designs to decorate clothes. Later, such designs led to the development of new patterns in Islamic art. Parthian artists bisected a circle of the helix and put it back together and developed a decorative element that called arabesque later. Parthian painting is considered significant as it formed the foundation of Islamic art which emerged later (Pakbaz, 2006).

Other historical events influenced Iranian art. During the Sassanian Empire, new social and political conditions emerged which, in turn, influenced the development of Iranian art. Meanwhile, Ardashir I succeeded the last Parthian king and founded the great empire which became a strong rival against Roman and Byzantine. Eventually, Sassanid art foundation was poured in Ardashir I time (Marzban, 2014).

Another influential factor on Iranian art in this era was the influence of Western countries. Although the Sasanian art was formed by ancient elements of Sassanid Persia and Western Asia, so much that it revived the Achaemenid traditions, it was also influenced by Western art. Sasanian art emphasised order by application of plant and animal motifs with symbolic meanings that were common in Sassanian art. Sassanian period witnessed a significant evolution of Iranian aesthetics. Sassanid art also played a significant role in the development of literature and art in other eras.

3.2 The Beginning of Art in Iran

Iran's artistic manifestations return to the Neolithic period around the eighth millennium BC. Examples of the oldest works left in this area can be found in the paintings of the caves of the Lorestan region (Figure 3.1) (Pakbaz, 2006). The continuation of this

cultural-artistic transformation is observed in other areas of the Zagros Mountains. The first examples of pottery existed before the eighth millennium BC. The shape and decoration of ceramics in different parts of the Iranian plateau vary, but they often have the same style of construction, materials and characteristics (Marzban, 2014).

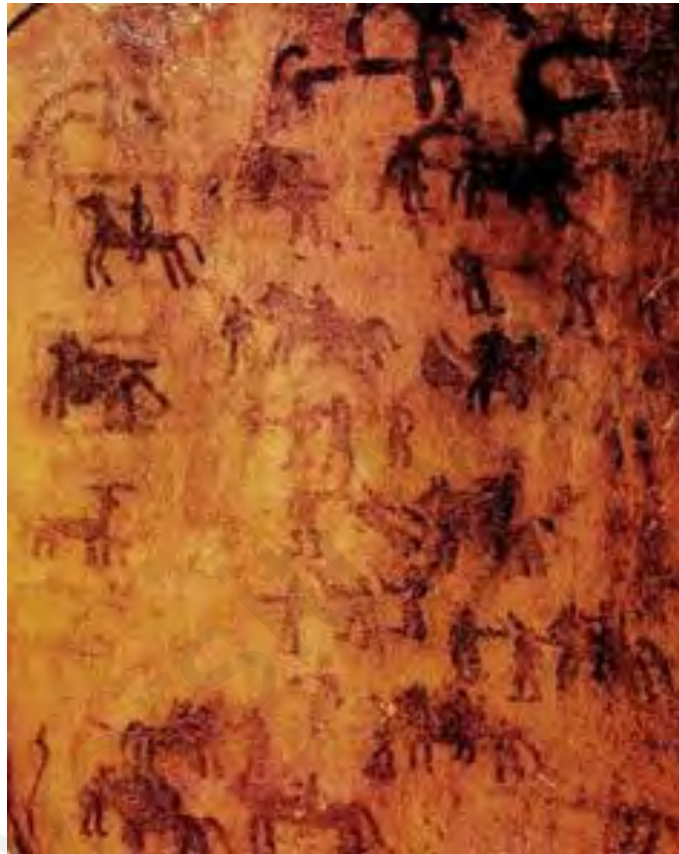


Figure 3.1: Painting in Dusheh Cave. Lorestan, Iran.

Iran's Neolithic to Chalcolithic period began in the middle of the 7000 BC, and the remains of the works are mainly made of polished stone. The community of that day was made up of a group of people or clans who lived in a fertile plain and provided their livelihoods through agriculture and livestock. But in this ancient era, the incomplete findings and views on the understanding of the ethnic groups or races lived in Iran are very obscure (Marzban, 2014).

The third-fifth millennium BC in Iran is known as Chalcolithic. Copper was used to making some tools and objects, and stone tools were still in use. Painted potteries and carved seals with symbols and geometric shapes and illustrations were common. In the late fourth millennium BC, an ethnically well-known people with an evolutionary civilisation called Elamites established the country of Elam in the southwest of Iran, including Khuzestan and the southern part of the two rivers of the Dejah and Furat, whose capital was Susa (Stokstad, 2014).

In the period known as the Copper and Stone Age, the most typical type of pottery is red and yellow colour painted in black with geometric designs that are mostly hatched. It seems that the history of the painted pottery in Iran dates back to the fifth millennium BC which were painted using animal and geometric motifs. The use of a pottery wheel and the production of perfectly symmetrical potteries is about the fourth millennium BC in the areas of the Silk Hill, Hesar Hill and Susa (Pope, Ackerman, & Besterman, 1964). These pottery objects include bowls, open edge dishes, jars and cups with bases. Their colour is usually beige, or light yellow painted in black or brown, with geometric, animalistic, and composite motifs (Figure 3.2).



Figure 3.2: Pottery jar from Susa, 4000 BC.

Following the discovery of the areas in the plain of Lut, including the Yahya Hill near Kerman, another civilisation dating to the fourth millennium BC was uncovered. The major works made in these areas are mainly the stone samples which were exported to other ancient regions. This commerce route was from Susa to Mesopotamia (Figure 3.3) (Ashrafi & Ahoodashti, 2009).



Figure 3.3: Stony Impress, 3000 BC

Based on the findings of the burned city (Share-e-Sukhteh in Sistan) with a history of about the third millennium BC, it seems that this city was considered to be the most important centre for bronze works in Eastern Iran.

From the middle of the 5th millennium BC, civilisations were created in the central and northeastern parts of Iran, the most notable of them in terms of the ancient findings are: Silk civilisation which is a hill near Kashan reveals the early livelihood of the farmers' community. The other civilisation is Cheshmeh Ali in southeastern Tehran where stony and bony tools and advanced painted potteries were explored. Another civilisation is Hesar Hill near Damghan, belonging to the third millennium BC and in its excavations, in addition to stoneware and pottery, metal objects were also found. Other civilisation centres were identified from the findings in Gorgan and in different areas of

the Qazvin plain belonging to that period. But the most important phenomenon of the third millennium BC in south-eastern Iran was the invention of a cuneiform script by the Elamites (Pope et al., 1964).

The Lut Plain and the burned city were known as the most prosperous civilisations in south-eastern Iran in the late third millennium BC which had a connection with the lands of Eilam and Mesopotamia. The other suitable location for these areas in the south-eastern region and the Lut Plain area is seen in the Shahdad area in Kerman. This area is known for its red potteries, visual lines and signs of the use of a variety of statues and amazing tombs alongside each other. One of the findings of this section is the flag of Shahdad (Figure 3.4) (Ayatollahi, 2003).

In the second millennium BC, monolithic monumental potteries were seen in Western Iran. These potteries are typically painted in dark brown on a light-yellow background. Their motifs include a collection of the complex geometric motifs derived from the evolution of the pottery tradition in the Western regions of Iran (Figure 3.5).



Figure 3.4: Flag of Shahdad, 3000 BC



Figure 3.5: Pottery of Gyan Hill, 2000 BC

3.3 Elam Art and Civilisation

The Elam government was regarded as a connecting link between these civilisations due to its close neighbours and close ties with the civilisations of the Lut plain, the centre of the Plateau and Mesopotamia. Nevertheless, it could show the independent cultural and artistic aspects. Elamites, along with the emergence of the world's first visual lines in the civilisations of the Lut and Sumer plains (the first settlers settled in Mesopotamia in the 4th millennium BC and created the civilisation of this region), created a pictogram-pictograph (A type of writing with visual imaging used in the early civilisations such as Egypt and Iran) called Initial Elamite or Starter Elamite. This script was changed into a simpler script with about 300 signs as Elamite Cuneiform Script (Figure 3.6) (Pope et al., 1964).

Residents of the 4th millennium BC in Susa enjoyed very advanced pottery and painted pottery art that gradually diminished with the development of bronze. Gradually, bronze, silver and golden dishes replaced the previous potteries (Stokstad, 2014). Hence, the Elamite potteries, although well-designed, did not have the character and quality of the former potteries of Susa regarding shape and design. The potteries of this period lasted

about 700 years have multiple colours (red, purple, orange and black), or they are monochrome (Ayatollahi, 2003).



Figure 3.6: Pictogram-Pictograph of Elam

Most dishes are in the form of plain jars with a circular body, short neck and wide mouth. The motifs are more on the shoulder of the dishes or the whole of the dish. The designs include broken lines, triangles, diamonds, and quarters, separated by longitudinal and transverse divisions. In addition to geometric designs, in a number of dishes, the paintings of a variety of creatures such as snakes, scorpions, fishes, horned and legendary animals, eagles, cows, natural landscapes, humans, architectural structures and flying birds can be seen (Pakbaz, 2006).

Besides these dishes, small pottery statues and simple and cylinder stamps were made. The most notable statues of Elamite are bronze. The metal statue of the queen of the prince Napirasu, the wife of the ruler of Susa, is one of the statues that it is important due to the development of the casting technique and the manner of Elamite clothing (Figure 3.7) (Marzban, 2014).



Figure 3.7: Metal statue of the queen of the prince Napirasu, Susa 2000 BC

Another example of Elamite art is on a stone tablet with an embossed motif of spinning and knitting discovered in Susa. This tablet, with a realistic look, is another feature of Elamite art.

The elamite architecture also reflects the evolution of architecture in the Middle Eastern civilisations where the main materials were brick and mortar. The greatest architectural building of this civilisation is the Chogha Zanbil Ziggurat (a multi-story temple like a tower). This is the largest brick building in the world and the oldest one in Iran. In this temple, tiles for decorating were also used for the first time in the Iranian architecture, relying on the techniques of glazing.

In the entrance of the temple, a row of narrow bars of opaque glass is used, which may be considered the first application of glass in the history of world architecture. The wooden doors of the building are covered with decorations of glass, gold, silver and ivory

in different designs and in the form of moarraaq (art in which different material pieces are arranged in different shapes together to create a single shape).

Based on the motifs of the Elamite period, it is possible to understand the music of that era. Some of them are shown with the presence of musicians and singers (Figure 3.8) (Ashrafi & Ahoodashti, 2009).

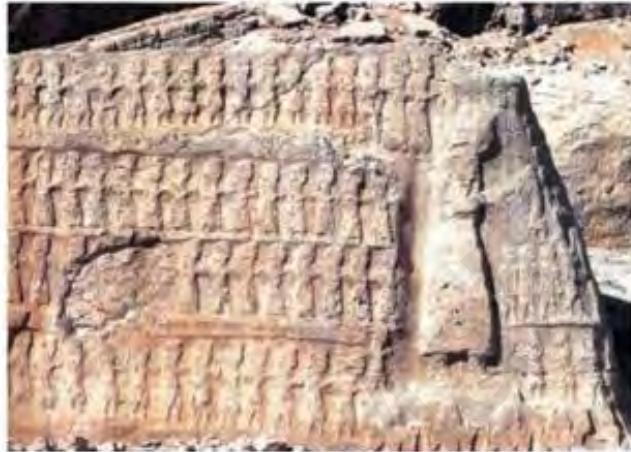


Figure 3.8: Stony Relief of Elamit, Khuzestan, 2000 BC

The cylindrical seals of the Elamites (the carved tools used to transfer a particular piece of text or script on a soft clay), embossed images and concise linear motifs are the other artistic achievements of this civilisation (Marzban, 2014)

This civilisation lasted more than two thousand years (during the three reigns of the ancient, Middle and New Elam) and was eventually ended by the Assyrians. But the reflection of its art can be seen in the Aryan states, especially during the Achaemenid era. The second half of the second millennium BC, the Iranian plateau especially the Western parts and the southern slopes of the Alborz Mountains welcomed the nomad tribes. According to archaeological findings, it seems that these tribes moved from the northeast to the east of the Caspian Sea to various parts of Iran. It seems that these people spoke in Indo-European languages and they passed a large extent of lands from the Central Asian Mountains to Europe where they settled. The most important settlement areas are in the

central plateau of Iran, Hasanlu (south of Urumieh Lake), Khorvin (Qazvin Plain), Silak (Kashan), Gyan Hill (Nahavand), Amlash civilisation, Marlik Hill (Gilan), and Lorestan (Herzfeld, 1935).

In around 1400 BC, new potteries were created by some of the aforementioned tribesmen. These potteries are mostly grey, although samples of red and light-yellow colours are also found. Grey or black potteries were often made in areas close to the Western regions and belonging to the first Iron Age (Pakbaz, 2006).

The best examples of this period are the construction of dishes in various shapes, tripods, cups with bases with or without a handle, and some in simple bowls, with bases and in different sizes (Figure 3.9). These potteries, sometimes decorated with sophisticated styles and handles and tubes, are a portrayal of certain animals or birds with a distinct shape of beaks (Pakbaz, 2006).



Figure 3.9: Potteries, 1000 to 800 BC

Grey objects made during this period are normally provided for funerals and away from daily needs. The burial in this period was accompanied by the construction of a simple tomb in which the bodies were buried with special containers, weapons and jewellery, decorative seals, and small metal connectors of cloths.

The typical potteries of the first Iron Age (from 1400 to 1200 BC) is the combination of potteries and statues found on the Marlik Hill (Figure 3.10). In this ancient region, a collection of the magnificent works of golden, silver and bronze dishes with geometric decorations and legendary animals such as winged cows or zebus are found (Pope et al., 1964).

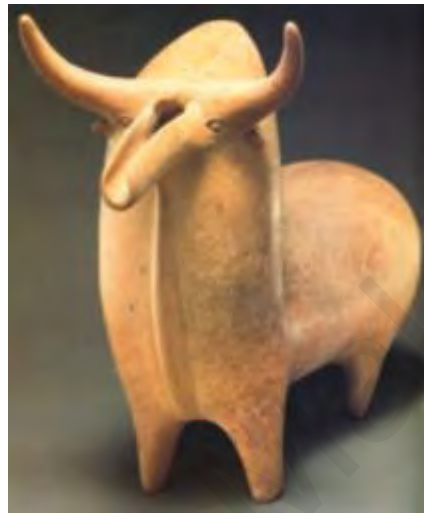


Figure 3.10: Potteries Zebu, Marlik Hill, 1000 BC

In the second era of the Iron Age (about 1000 to 1200 BC) in the Silak region of Kashan, examples of the evolution of dishes with wide mouth and a long base with animal shapes and geometric designs in red colour and cream background are seen (Figure 3.11) (Pope et al., 1964).



Figure 3.11: Potteries Dish, Silak Region of Kashan, 1000 BC

Around the 12th century BC, the Iron Age began to emerge. In Lorestan, which was close to the centre of Susa and affected by the culture and art of Elam, a civilisation emerged which progressed in bronze and iron works. Excessive metal artefacts, mainly obtained in tombs, include carved bronze tools and various types of weapons and religious objects containing the secretly concepts of the creatures in the forms of animals and mythological creatures, the faces and small statues, different types of bronze pins and mirror, and dishes created in the twelve to eighth centuries BC and possibly by the Medes (Marzban, 2014).

3.4 Medes Art and Civilisation

In around 800 BC, a new state emerged on the Iranian plateau, especially in the mountainous region of the West. The new government, founded on the basis of the cultural ties between the various ethnic groups and the common areas of its ruling, established the first unified state of the Iran plateau known as the Medes (Porada, 1969).

After settling in the Western regions of Iran with the influence of the advanced architecture of these areas, especially the Elamite civilisation, they were able to create a change in the architecture of the region. According to the findings of the Ziwiye region and the discovered potteries, it seems that there were interactions between the Medes and other peoples living on the Iranian plateau and the Scyths (relatives of Iranian ethnic groups living in the eastern regions of the Caspian Sea and Turkestan which later lived in Sistan and Zagros). This effect is a kind of tendency to animal shapes and themes among the art of these tribes, whose advanced form can be seen later in the Achaemenid art (Mahboubian, 1995).

One of the Medes arts in Iran is metalworking. Among the important areas of metalworking and its relevant arts is the treasure of Ziwiye (in the present Kurdistan

region in Iran), which is the beginning of the art of metalworking of Medes and Achaemenid arts. These treasures include necklaces, armour, pins and swords made wholly up of gold. The silver and golden pots, furniture made up of the carved ivories, and golden, silver and iron weapons are also seen. Indicative motifs in these works include animal motifs like lion heads, mountain goats with spiral horns, horses, bulls with artistic heritage, and the motifs of the indigenous people (Ghirshman, 1964).

Archaeologists, in addition to the treasures of Ziwiye in Kurdistan and the Treasure of Gihon (treasures belonging to the Achaemenids in the border region of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan) in Central Asia, attributed the works obtained from the Kelardasht region (Mazandaran in the north Iran) to the art of the Medes. One of these works is the Kelardasht golden cup, decorated with embossed motifs of several lions (Barnett, 1962).

The relation between the potteries of the Medes is remarkable for their style and appearance with the Sialk potteries of the first millennium BC. Major pottery centres of this era include Noshi Jon Thapeh areas in Malayer, Babajani in Lorestan, Bisotun in Kermanshah, Ziwiye in Kurdistan and Kelardasht in Mazandaran. The potters during the Medes period were pioneers in the development and spread of glaze to cover potteries. However, it had already existed in the Elamite civilisation (Figure 3.12) (Cook, 1983).



Figure 3.12: Pottery of the Medes, First Millennium BC

From the example of the glazed pottery dishes derived from the Ziwiye region with plant and animal motifs, it seems that the Medes were familiar with the appropriate design and painting methods on different surfaces, and perhaps it could be described as an example of the painting of the Medes age (Figure 3.13) (Pakbaz, 2006).

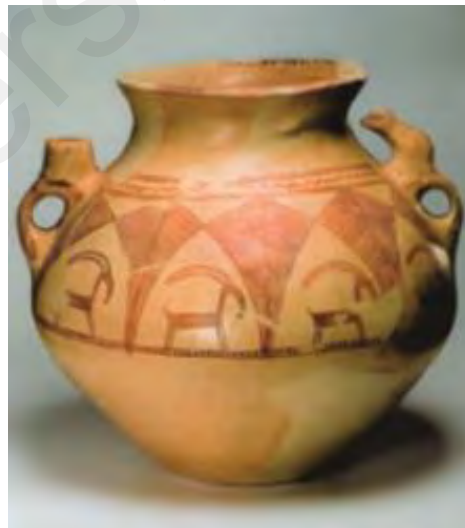


Figure 3.13: Glazed Pottery Dish, Ziwiye, Kurdistan, 1000 BC

3.5 Achaemenid Art and Civilisation

The Persians came to power following the Medes. This state coexisted with the Medes in the 8th century BC in the south and southwest areas of Lake Urmia. But around 700 BC, they settled in the southern regions of the Zagros valleys and were able to build their first local government by Achaemenid. They expanded their territory to the ancient regions of Khuzestan and Fars. The Persians then dominated over the Medes and rebuilt their state by the Cyrus, one of the largest realms of the ancient rule under the name of the Achaemenids.

Based on the inscriptions of Bistun (Kermanshah), Nqshe-e-Rustam (Fars) and Persepolis (Fars), the lands under the flag of this state include Mad, Elam, Parth, Babylon, Assyria, Lydia (current Armenia and Turkey), Finiqia (current Syria and Lebanon), Egypt, Habasha, Libya, Armenia, the Black Sea coast of Greece, the Mediterranean and Aegean, Balkh, Kabul, India, Scythia, Khawrazm, and Saudi Arabia (Herzfeld, 1935).

Achaemenid art focused on symmetric architecture and the tendency to use motifs and images of animals in respect for the supreme personality of humanity (Porada, 1969). By integrating indigenous elements and elements of the affiliated nations and using materials, they were able to realise an ideal, majestic, and non-violent attitude. The Achaemenid art, with the simultaneous use of naturalism (in the drawing of flowers, plants and animals) and abstraction (fictitious birds and sacred manifestations), gained clarity, simplicity, elegance, precision and balance in the artistic expression over which logic dominated. The broad Achaemenid realm created artistic interaction between Iran and its subordinate territories. The Achaemenid artists, with an emphasis on indigenous achievements, creating unity and harmony among all these arts, created a kind of Iranian style art that enjoyed a national identity. The Iranian contribution to the formation of

Achaemenid art must be considered in combining elegance, harmony and magnificence of the collection of these arts (Pakbaz, 2006).

The most important buildings of this period are huge and magnificent palaces, and there are no temples in this period because the Achaemenids used to worship in high places under the sky, and the construction of temples was not in line with their beliefs. The first architectural works of art the Pasargadae (the first Achaemenid capital) and the Apadana Palace in Susa (the second capital of the Achaemenid capital).

The most important architecture of the Achaemenid era is the construction of Persepolis or Pars. This building is on the slopes of the Mount Rahmat and overlooks the vast plain of Marvdasht in Fars, and it seems to be a ceremonial palace for the ritual ceremonies and celebrations of the time. The building of Persepolis consists of palaces, pillared halls and numerous monuments on high land. Its entrance is a wide staircase, 110 steps on each side. These staircases are decorated with three rows of Persian and Medes soldiers, the eternal soldiers, and representatives from the 28 native nations offering gifts.

The importance of the decoration for Achaemenids led to the growth of carvings and embossed art. An example of this is the carving of the stairs leading to Apadana Palace. This illustrates the scene of a lion attacking a cow which is a symbol of the moderation of the night and day or the seasons or victory (Figure 3.14) (Pope et al., 1964).



Figure 3.14: Carving of a lion attacking a cow, Apadana Palace, 500 BC

Another manifestation of the Achaemenid carvings is the presentation of the movements and manner of human beings. There is a repeated order in the figures that have less mobility than the motifs of animals and sculpted in the usual way of that period.

The presence of cuneiform inscriptions in three languages of the Ancient Persia, Elamite and Babylon in the Ganjnameh of Hamedan and the embossed art of Bisotun in Kermanshah reveals the script and writing of the Achaemenid culture. The Persian cuneiform is a simple script with 42 letters.

Other Achaemenid industries and arts were seal making and sculpture mainly on the gemstones. These seals are artistically unique in terms of composition, delicacy, and conceptualism. The seals of this era were made in three cylindrical, flat, and circular methods.

Examples of metalwork of this era include the Rhyton cups made of gold and a combination of animal motifs (Figure 3.15).



Figure 3.15: Gold Rhyton Cup, Achaemenid Era

3.6 Parthian Art and Civilisation

In the 3rd century BC, the decay and formation of local governments with Greek tendencies took place, and the Parthians, who were from the Aryan tribes living in north-

eastern Iran, gradually dominated their neighbourhoods, relying on their skills in fighting, riding, and shooting. They established their state and ruled one of the largest government for 500 years under the name of the first Parthian ruler. They had three capitals, due to their vast environments, including Nisa (the first Parthian capital near the present Ashgabat in Turkmenistan), Sad darwazeh in the south of Damghan and Tisfun in Iraq. Their common language was Parthian Pahlavi, but they used Greek for business and political affairs. On the one hand, this led to the establishment of the Parthian government and, on the other, it paved the way for sun worshipping in the Greek and Roman civilisations.

The Parthians were concerned about the development of their territories, security and trade in these areas. They tried to preserve the traditions of Iran for about three hundred years. From the middle of the first century AD, the Pahlavi language replaced the Greek letters in the Iranian script (Marzban, 2014). At the time, the influence of the Greek tendencies, which the Parthians did not dispute due to political considerations, gradually deteriorated. In the second half of the second century, the Silk Road trade boomed in the Parthian territory, which boosted artistic exchanges and interaction of art, especially on the Silk Road.

The works of the Parthian period can be divided into three groups. First, those adapted from the former oriental, Iranian and Greek works. Second, the art of the Parthians, the art of combining the former elements with cultural and artistic characteristics in the first century BC and the third group, the art of decadence which includes the works of the second century AD until the end of the Parthian period.

Although this government is the longest era in Iran, the disparate effects of this age have made it impossible to have a true picture of the art of this period. The same can be traced to the artistic heritage of the Parthians, including the soft and free flow of lines

and imaginative motifs, the features that underlie the art of the Sassanid era and are still observed in Iranian art (Mahboubian, 1995).

Parthian art is rooted in the art of the orient because the ritualistic designs, the interest in elegance and details, the attention to the details and decorations, and the way of displaying the features of the Parthian art have an eastern source. In addition, the common issues in the artwork of this period, including human figures, vows, celebrations, hunting, sacrifices, and horseback riding are another reason for this claim (Pakbaz, 2006).

The most important achievement of Parthian art is architecture and urbanisation, especially circular urbanism, and the invention of porch, dome, arc and cradle arch (Barnett, 1962). During this period, the Achaemenid pillared halls lose their importance and in order to make large spaces, columns were constructed in the porches for the decoration purposes and lose their original use. The central open-air courtyards and the narrow porches are characteristic of the buildings of this period which later become the pattern for the construction of four-porch buildings of the Islamic era. The exterior part of the buildings in Parthian period were often Greek but their inner part followed the oriental and Persian styles; thus, the architecture of these works had a composite nature. In addition to palaces such as the Palace of Nisa, and the palace of the Khajeh Mountain, other monuments of this era are also the Temple of the Sun in Hatra (Girshman).

The Parthian period is also the epitome of wall painting which played an important role in the architectural decoration of this era. The most important centres of this art are the Mount Khajeh in Sistan and Dawarapus in Syria. These paintings have simple and decorative designs that incorporate the motifs of plants, animals and humans along with free movements. These designs were executed using unmixed colours and special Iranian designs such as lotus (Pakbaz, 2006).

3.7 Sassanid Art and Civilisation

In the third century, a group of Iranian tribes living in the Fars region succeeded in gaining political and religious power in Iran and establishing an independent state. The basis of their thinking was the cultural and artistic originality of the past, and they insisted on restoring this originality. Through the Zoroastrianism and Achaemenid culture as the spiritual power and the collector of various ethnic groups of Iran, they created a new political, military and religious organisation that lasted for more than 400 years (226-651 AC) (Pope et al., 1964).

In their era, the Sassanids created court art that was dominated by religious attitudes on the one hand and traced the archaeological traditions of Iran during the Achaemenid and Parthian periods. On the other hand, they followed the artistic trends of the East and West. They achieved their identity and style and became an influential and inspirational power in their time (Cook, 1983).

The Sassanids pursued the Parthian architectural style and, while developing this style, especially in the construction of dome buildings and pillar-less large halls, showed their superiority over the previous periods. They used rectangular maps for construction, and their main materials were rocks, mud and clay (Ashrafi & Ahoodashti, 2009).

Among the most important remains of the Sassanid era are Kasra Arch (Al-Madaen), the Kish Palace in Kish Island in the south of Iran, and the Ctesiphon Palace (in Tisfun near Baghdad built by the Parthians and it was the capital of the Parthians and Sassanid) with stucco on the walls and mosaic floors (Pope et al., 1964).

Many researchers attributed the new initiatives in the principles of urbanisation and architecture, the construction of bridges, caravanserais and fire temples to the Sassanids. Also, the use of the squinch in the four corners of the building designed to create a dome was first appeared in the Sassanid architecture, i.e., the Ctesiphon Palace,

and was later considered in the Islamic period. The design and plan of the Bishapur Palace in the form of a cross is also an architectural innovation of this period, which is the main source of the map of fire temples and a four-porch style (a kind of map of a building with four porches on the sides of the central courtyard) of the Islamic period (Pakbaz, 2006).

Stucco and mosaics are the important decorations of the Sassanid architecture implemented with themes such as designs of plants, birds, animals and human scenes. This decorative style was a cover for the brick architecture (Ashrafi & Ahoodashti, 2009).

The most striking drawings of the Sassanid era can be found in the Manichaeism illustration tradition, wall paintings and narrations of that period. Manichaeism art of painting appeared in their religious book called *Arzhang*. The illuminations of this book include flower margins, geometric and abstract designs, along with paintings of human and birds that underlie the tradition of book illustration in later periods, especially the Islamic era (Ehteshami, 2014).

The Sassanid painting tradition remained stable and inspired the artists of the next era; its obvious effect can be observed in the Safavid wall paintings. Fabric production was also significantly improved during the Sassanid era, and textile workshops were established in different places such as Bishapur, Shushtar and Jondishapur (the most important scientific centre of the Sassanid period in Khuzestan near Susa) (Cohen, 2014).

Today, many of these textiles are seen in museums. These fabrics were mostly woven in two or five colours, decorated with real or imagery images of animals and birds as well as circular and elliptical shapes (Figure 3.16).



Figure 3.16: Sassanid Fabric, 6-7th AC

Pottery did not make much progress in the Sassanid era since the main attention was gold and silver metal dishes. This art was limited to the manufacture of the dishes to meet the daily needs of the people. From the available works, it is believed that the pottery of this era continued the tradition of pottery in the Parthian period. The decorations of these pottery dishes were influenced by metal works in the form of the carved and moulded works decorated with plants and geometric shapes and sometimes written texts in the Pahlavi script.

Since the construction of the gold and silver dishes in the metalwork of the Sassanid period was of particular importance, these dishes can be considered in terms of shape, style and decorations. Other important metallic pieces of this era are coins. On one side of these coins there were the images of the Sassanid kings, and on the other side, the pictures of the holy buildings are seen with a phrase in Pahlavi script.

At the end of this era, factors such as the domination of the priests on all affairs of people's lives and their dissatisfaction with this, the internal revolts, and the killing of the Manawi and Mazdaki Dynasties expanded. The differences between the royal court and the royal family, the slogans regarding freedom, equality and justice among the people, as well as the weakness of the military forces due to long resistance against the foreign enemies resulted in the fall of the Sassanid dynasty.

3.8 Iranian Art and Civilisation from the First to the Third Centuries AH (Islamic Period)

The advent of Islam created a profound transformation in the political, economic, and religious life of societies because the religion of Islam was going to struggle with the oppressors. Hence, it was able to motivate large groups of people to conquer the world in the name of God. The spread of Islam was such that it could integrate the civilisations of the East and cultivate them with a new culture. It did not take long for this system to provide new opportunities for the emergence of the Iranian thought and its manifestation in art and architecture.

After the Muslim Arabs overcame the Sassanids, the ancient Iranian culture did not disappear but began a new era with the spiritual power of Islam. The pre-Islamic traditions in Iran continued and brought new results (Pakbaz, 2006). At the end of the 3rd century AH, it is possible to see the greatness of the intellectual and the great works of Iranian arts in the Islamic world. The full establishment of the Islamic culture in Iran during this period is very significant for social, political and economic reasons. In this era, ancient arts were revived, new arts were invented and Iran gradually regained its national life and its independent spirit so that during the third and fourth centuries AH, we witness the birth of poetry, calligraphy and beautiful artistic manifestations in Iran.

The formation of art in this period is the continuation of some of the earlier artistic traditions that were considered and used in accordance with the needs of the Islamic beliefs. These arts were also supported by the people of different parts of the world with the Islamic culture and belief. So that after the Muslims' victory until the end of the third century AH, architecture was developed based on the Sassanid architecture tradition (Canby, 2005).

The works and descriptive reports of some of the early mosques of this period show a kind of harmony between the Sassanid architecture with arches and pillars with the needs and characteristics of Islam (Cook, 1983). At the end of the 2nd century AH, the new construction methods following the Sassanid tradition were able to create special works in the Islamic architecture. The necessity and need for a new applied architecture enabled the creation of unique works including mosques, schools, tombs, etc. based on the needs of the Islamic era. Other arts including pottery, painting, metalworking, calligraphy, and book writing were also considered.

No examples of book illustration were seen in Iran during the 2nd century AH, and the only available sample is the Arjang Mani (found in the Turfan region, an area between Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia in China, with a Uighur culture in the second and third centuries) (Figure 1.93) (Pakbaz, 2006). Several works, especially the wall illustrations of the era of the Islamic regimes (Umayyad and Abbasid) or pottery paintings indicate the continuation of the Sassanid painting tradition in the Islamic period. But there are no specific references to this era.



Figure 3.17: Page from a Manichaeism book, 8-9th AC

The Umayyad Caliphs (41-132 AH / 662-750 AD) followed the Sassanid kings to build and decorate palaces, use precious objects, and even mint the coins. One can see the reflection of Iranian pre-Islamic art in the wall paintings (112 AH / 730 AD) in Qasr al-Hair in Damascus (Pakbaz, 2006).

Banu Abbas (132-237 AH / 750-826 AD) came to power with the help of Iranians, and the centre of the Islamic caliphate was transferred from Damascus to Baghdad (near Tisfun, the capital of the Sassanian Empire). Subsequently, Iranians enjoyed a particular position in the Abbasid government, and Iranian artists may involve in the construction and arrangement of the Abbasids' palaces (Pakbaz, 2006).

The Persian elements are seen in the walls of the Palace of Jawsaq al-Khaqani in Samarra, which belongs to the first half of the third century AH and is considered to be the works of the Abbasid period. The images of animals and plants used in the paintings of this palace are derived from the art of the Sassanid period (Canby, 2005).

During the early centuries, the Islamic architectural system was rooted in the Sassanid tradition, and some of the Sassanid palaces and fire temples became mosques without modification. Among the remarkable examples of this conversion are the ancient fire temples of Masjid Soleyman and the Stone Temple of Darab Gerd. Since the mosque is a special place that not only has a religious centrality but also is a political institution, it is also an educational institution and a place for judging. Gradually some changes happened in its construction. At first, the overall structure of the mosque was constructed with pillar-equipped Shabestan and courtyards, facing the Muslim Qiblah. Of the oldest known mosques in Iran, one can mention the Tarikhaneh (temple or mosque) Damghan (Figure 3.18), the Fahraj Yazd Mosque, Shoosh Mosque, and the Jame' Mosque of Isfahan (Harvey, 2007).

Of other developments in the structure of the Islamic architecture is a school that is introduced by the construction of a courtyard, dome pavilions, and porches in four sides of the courtyard. This structure is based on the Iranian models, which combined with the mosque in its development to bring the best model of the architecture of the mosque and school.



Figure 3.18: Damghan Mosque, 1-3rd Centuries AH

In the Islamic era, the use of brick was preferred because of the simplicity and the creation of different combinations. Because brick was more durable than wood, working with brick was also faster and more flexible than rock, and it could make any building with any capability, which would provide opportunities for the manifestation of building decorations.

In the 3rd century AH, special attention was paid to the construction of a sanctuary in mosques, and this element was used in the following centuries. Another element that was considered since the 3rd century is the construction of tombstones that are rooted in the Sassanid fire temples. The oldest of them is the Tomb of Amir Esmaeel Samani which was inspired for the structure of the tombs in the next centuries. The presence of two elements, i.e., the porch and dome in the main form of the space made the religious buildings of Iran magnificent. The porch, or the room, pavilion or portico, is a kind of architecture that has many proportions in the eastern climate. The dome is the culmination of the design of the arch, which was greatly improved in the Islamic architecture. These features were known in this era's architecture especially in the Khorasani style.

In addition to architecture, pottery represents the oldest Iranian art and perhaps is the best documentation of the Iranian artistic life in the Islamic era. Pottery works are very close to people's lives. Also, in comparison, it seems that the progress of the pottery of the early Islamic period is more than that in the Sassanid period. In this evolution, the green and brown enamels of the Sassanid period persist, but due to the importance of pottery and its replacement with the metal works, at that time, more decorative and elegant techniques were introduced in the pottery. This attention to pottery in the Islamic era could create many potteries.

In the 3rd century AH, goldsmiths' painting on pottery was developed as an innovative substitute for silver and gold dishes. Hence, development in this art was to make the shape of the dishes in harmony with their application (Figure 3.19).



Figure 3.19: Goldsmith's Painting On Pottery, 3th AH

The most commonly used potteries in this period were blue and dark blue on the white cover, as well as blue and green (Pakbaz, 2006). Another development in this period is decorating pottery with calligraphic art (Figure 3.20). This development is rooted in the formation of the art of calligraphy and its place in the art of book writing and writing the Qur'an in the 3rd century AH. The art of calligraphy had a profound and decisive influence on the designers of this period, and it was able to manifest all the arts of its time, from the buildings to the applied objects.



Figure 3.20: Decorating Pottery by Calligraphy, Neishabur, 3-4th AH

Although the reading of the Kufi script, which is one of the oldest scripts of the Islamic period, faced problems, it was corrected by the Iranian artists, and another script was created by Muhammad b. Ali Farsi, known as Ibn Muqla. The Kufi script was still used in various ways as a decorative script for five centuries in different areas. This script was used as the most commonly used decorative design on the metal and clay dishes, textiles, or epigraphs. But with the evolution of the script, the Kufi script created six items known as the six scripts that are Muhaqqaq, Reyhan, Thuluth, Naskh, Reqa, and Tuwqi' (Kuhnel, 1971).

3.9 Iranian Art and Civilisation in the Fourth to Sixth Centuries AH

During the 4th to 6th centuries AH, different governments, including Al Boyah, Al-Ziar, Seljuk, Atabakan and Khwarazmshahiyan, ruled and these different regimes in various regions of Iran led to significant artworks. The works were seen simultaneously during the Abbasid Caliphate due to the competition with the central government of the Islamic world. However, this historical period is the most important period of synchronisation between the Persian literature and the Islamic art with numerous literary works of the Persian language and literature.

With the flourishing of Persian literature, the art of book illustration was also widespread. During this era, the arts of illumination and calligraphy in the writing of the Holy Qur'an are remarkable. In this period, books also included leather covers with popular designs of the era.

Ghaznavi Turks' domination did not stop Iran's cultural and artistic progress. The reign of Mahmud Ghaznavi (389-421 AH / 971-1030 AD) in Eastern Iran (Iran in the early Islamic period including parts of current Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Sham, and Bahrain)

coincided with the flourishing of Khorasani style poetry and the emergence of Shahnameh by Ferdowsi.

The most significant artistic works in book illustration were painting and illustration, which were used not only in manuscripts, but also in other arts, including wall painting, stone carving, metalworking, and more. Hence, in the painting of this period, the unity between the previous painting techniques is significant. Widespread walls, potteries, and manuscripts were decorated with paintings (Pakbaz, 2006). The most important feature of the art of this era is the use of the red background, the filling of the ground with the Eslimee design, the plain fabrics, and the abstract drawing of plant designs. Other features of this period are also short statues, full faces with tight mouths and oblique eyes (remained from Manichaeism painting traditions) (Motlagh, 2002).

According to historical documents, the first example of a painting of this period is the book entitled Andarnameh (Qabusnameh). But the most notable illustrated Persian book is “Warqa and Gulshah”, in which the link between poetry and painting is fully evident (Figur1.31) (Pakbaz, 2006). The painting of this period is rooted in the ancient Iranian illustration.



Figure 3.21: A Page from Warqa and Gulshah Book, 4-6th Centuries AH

Between the 4th and 6th centuries AH, the skill of knitting fabrics was perfected. The material of these fabrics was often silk, the heritage of the Sassanid art and tradition. One of the unique designs is the design of the lion and peacock on both sides of the tree of life depicted in a circle. There is also a wide leaf with big points, extracted from the style of enamel pottery. The existence of insects such as butterflies in this type of design and texture is a kind of innovation in motifs (Quandt, 2010).

Metalworker also built many objects in this period in various metalworking methods, and most of the shapes and designs left behind are the designs of animals, birds, or mixed creatures. The main indicator of the shape of the dishes in different applications is the design of the birds and branches of trees with shamrock decorations (three-leaf herbs) and bergamot (central decoration in circular or elliptical shapes). Most of these designs are also found on stucco and pottery (Quandt, 2010). Pottery art gradually progressed regarding quantity and quality alongside the bronze metalworking. The baking of special and thin potteries that was decorated with delicate plant designs and covered with transparent glazes was possible during this period. Dishes with enamel decorations that are comparable regarding the elegance and variation of the motifs with the manuscripts of this period is evidenced by the collaboration of painters and potters. The themes of most of these paintings on dishes were parties and fights, and sometimes fictitious topics derived from the Persian literature. Among other things, during this period, the construction of the mosque appeared in new constructional ways.

The most important architectural developments in this period can be seen in the complete integration of porch and dome and the conversion of the Shabestan of the mosques to the porch, the construction of four-porch buildings, wide and short porches, and facet arches (Figure 1.33). Considering the bricks, the construction of minarets and

tombstones, the use of single-glazed tiles, stucco and a conical dome are among the other architectural features of this period.



Figure 3.22: Gonbad-E Kavus, 4-5th AH

The first Iranian tombs were built in the form of towers in the 4th and 5th centuries AH. Different types of towers can be seen as a tower of tomb with a round map, including Gonbad-e Kavus (Figure 3.22), or cubical tombs with a polygonal map, including the towers of Kharqan, as well as polygonal and combination towers, including Gonbad-e-Surkh and Gonbad-e-Kabud in Maragheh (Figure 3.23) (Quandt, 2010). Another innovation of this period is minarets.



Figure 3.23: Gonbad-e-Kabud in Maragheh, 4-5th AH

Attention to the non-religious architecture was due to the necessity and need of the rulers of this period in the form of palaces, caravansaries and other buildings for the purposes of trade, commerce and travel including caravansaries. In all the buildings of this period, materials and techniques of arch construction, dome and various elements of architecture were exploited. Also, the inscription was used in all sections of the building which besides the decorative motifs, it took its functional aspects into account (Salameh, 1980).

The Seljuk period (428-552 AH / 1037-1194 AD) is also one of the most important periods in the history of the Islamic art and Persian literature. During this period, Nezami composed his Khamseh; also, architecture, metalwork and pottery were popularised.

3.10 Iranian Art and Civilisation in the Seventh and Eighth AH Centuries

In the 7th and 8th centuries AH, the Mongol invasions to Iran led to disorder. But with the influence of the Iranian intellectuals and politicians in the ruling system of the Mongolian regime, the conditions changed. People educated with a brutal and bloodthirsty viewpoint had become art-fan rulers. One of the most important cultural events in this period was

the construction of the Rab'-e-Rashidi (a collection of scientific-cultural buildings, including a mosque, a library, and a school built in the late 17th century AH in Tabriz). This period witnesses the establishment of some of the most massive and complex buildings, as well as different arts. This period is the basis for the emergence of different Mongolian governments, including Ilkhanid, Jalayeriyan, and Al Muzaffar. In the architecture of during this period, the construction of tall tombs for elders and nobles became popular. However, the tombs were decorated with glazed tiles, and there was an octagonal dome or pyramid over them, an example of which could be seen in the architecture of the Dome of Soltaniyeh (Figure 3.24).



Figure 3.24: Dome of Soltaniyeh, 8th Century AH

The most important architectural evolution in this period is the tall buildings, the tall domes, the octagonal designs, the two-shell domes, and the narrow and long porches. Also, taller ceilings of the rooms and the height of the minarets, and the buildings decorated with tiles, colourful plaster, and mogharnas. One of the most significant architectural works of this period is the Jame' Mosque of Waramin, Jame' Mosque of

Yazd, Jame' Mosque of Kerman, and other buildings such as the Maragheh Observatory and Ilkhani Palace in Takht-e Soleyman. Also, the most prominent architectural decorations can be found in the construction of sanctuary of the Jame' Mosque of Isfahan. Another development in the field of tile is moarraaq replacing the brickwork and its integration with tile (Gause, 2014).

In this era, the Iranian artists found some of the features of the Chinese art, such as attention to details, painting the mountains in forms of layers, twisted clouds, hatching, drawing of water in the form of scales, and combining it with the Byzantine art, such as the use of silver and facial expressions of individuals to give it the Iranian style as an innovation. The most prominent works of this period are Ferdowsi's Shahnameh and historic illustrated books.

During the domination of the Mongolian Ilkhanid over Iran (654-750 AH / 1256-1349 AD), the painters of Shiraz succeeded in inheriting Iran's earlier artistic traditions in painting.

Another tradition of a painting of this historical period is seen in the Jalayeri School where a kind of transformation emerged, and it could create a way in the tradition of painting which continued in the Timurid period. This school was inherited from the tradition of the Ilkhanid School in Tabriz, Shiraz and Baghdad (Pakbaz, 2006). Along with the evolution of the Persian literature and the emergence of new literary styles, a kind of poetic atmosphere and fantasy illustration were created by the harmony between the body and image atmosphere, colour variation, circular composition, skilful decoration and atmosphere separation. From the works of this period, one can mention the Khwaju Kermani Divan (poetry book) and also the Hoday and Hodayoun Collection (Figure 3.25) (Pakbaz, 2006).



Figure 3.25: Hoday and Hodayoun, Khwaju Kirmani Divan, 799 AH

In the middle of the 8th century AH / 14th century AD, after the domination of the Jalayeriyan over the territory of the Ilkhanid, Baghdad became an active art centre, though followed a different path. Painters in Baghdad continued the way of the painters of Tabriz, and the process of experiences that had begun with the introduction of Chinese elements into Iranian painting continued in Baghdad under the protection of Sultan Ahmed Jalayer. One of the works of this period is Khwaju Kirmani Divan (799 AH). One of the pictures of this book is the signature of “Junayd-Sultan”, which represents his position as the

painter of the court of Sultan Ahmed Jalayer. This is the earliest work of an Iranian painter whose signature and artist name are in the picture (Pakbaz, 2006).

One of the paintings of this book relates to the romance of Hoday and Hodayoon composed by Khwaju Kirmani, who portrays Hoday (Prince of Persia) on horseback beside the palace of Hodayoon (the Prince of China) (Figure 3.24). Hodayoon looks down from the highest part of the palace and sees the rows of the birds flying on the boundary of the exterior view, the lush gardens and colourful palace tiles. In this architectural image, the walls and doors are decorated beside nature and man. No part of the image is left empty of colour and painting, and the painter portrays the details of the story.

Since the beginning of the 8th century AH and almost simultaneously with the Baghdad School, which followed the School of Tabriz, Shiraz workshops were set up by the support of the emirs of Inju (a royal family ruled by the Mongols in Fars) who followed a method of celebrating the history of Iran to consolidate their political position. That is why the Chinese school common in the Tabriz School and its continued existence in Baghdad made little impact on the painting of the Shiraz School (Azhand, 2015).

The cultural and artistic flourishing of Shiraz during the period of Mozaffarian (713-795 AH / 1314-1393 AD) continued (the poems of Hafez at this time became famous). In the late eighth century, a new method was created in royal workshops. Both books of poetry were further composed and illustrated, and the style and method of work changed (Pakbaz, 2006). Due to the interaction between Shiraz and other art centres in Tabriz and Baghdad, the shining colours used in the Shiraz School influenced the work of painters in Baghdad and Tabriz.

Calligraphy was also popular at this time and had undergone some changes. This development took place in three regions of Fars, Khorasan and Azerbaijan. The

calligraphers of this art period expanded their arts in various applications for the construction of monuments and book manuscripts. Also, the creation of Nastaliq by Mir Ali Tabrizi goes back to the Jalayeriyan period.

Pottery was also paid attention during the 7th and 8th centuries AH. Kashan and Ray were the most important pottery centres in this period. The potters of Kashan had significant growth in pottery due to the regional facilities. They also used drawing, calligraphy and painting in decorating potteries.

Despite the few examples of metal works in this period, including metal candlesticks, it was still not possible to clarify the method of producing this art in the 7th and 8th centuries AH but in some illustrated versions, there are various metal tools. Wood art was also important in this period on the basis of the remains of the works.

The design and texture of the fabric changed completely during this period. Pre-Islamic designs were no longer prevalent, and instead of dark colours in the field of fabric were common. It was the only way to make the metal fibres highlighted and contrasted. The striped fabrics and those designed with lotus were popular. Imaginary shapes of birds and animals were repeatedly sewed with metal strings on the fabrics. During these two centuries, the design in various works of fabric, stamping, painting, and book illustration is seen in the form of free designs, with elements such as lotus flowers, dragons, simurgh, twisted clouds, flying birds and other animals.

3.11 Iranian Art and Civilisation in the Late Eighth and Ninth Centuries AH

With the ruling of Timur and his successors, a comprehensive effort was made to bring the artistic sources of their territory to a royal culture, such as the manifestation of the art of the predecessors and neighbours of their realm. Timur was able to expand the

magnificent building features throughout his entire territory, and magnificent monuments were decorated with colourful tiled facades (Taheri, 1975).

On the other hand, the arts of painting and illustration came into their golden age so that the complete Iranian painting school was created due to the Iranian style and the development and expansion of the related arts, including calligraphy and covering books. In the Timurid period, Samarkand was called the Green City and became the early centre of Timurid rule. Following that, two major centres with fine works of art could be Shiraz and Herat, which are also known as the two main artistic schools.

Since the late 8th century AH, the invasion of Timur Gurkani was launched from north-eastern Iran, and after a short time, the whole of the country came under his ruling. But the family's support of art was more in Shiraz than in Herat, and the painters of this period found a formal and regular style, a clear example of which can be seen in the images of the Baysonqury Shahnameh.

As mentioned, the art of book illustration and painting in this period flourishes and creates the schools of Shiraz and Herat. The most important development of painting continues with the domination of the red colour in the Shiraz School. The blue colour also dominates the continuation of the artistic tradition of the Jalayeri era in the Herat School (Hoseinirad, 2005).

One of the most important changes in painting after the 9th century is to draw faces (Figure 3.26) (Abutaleb, 1987).

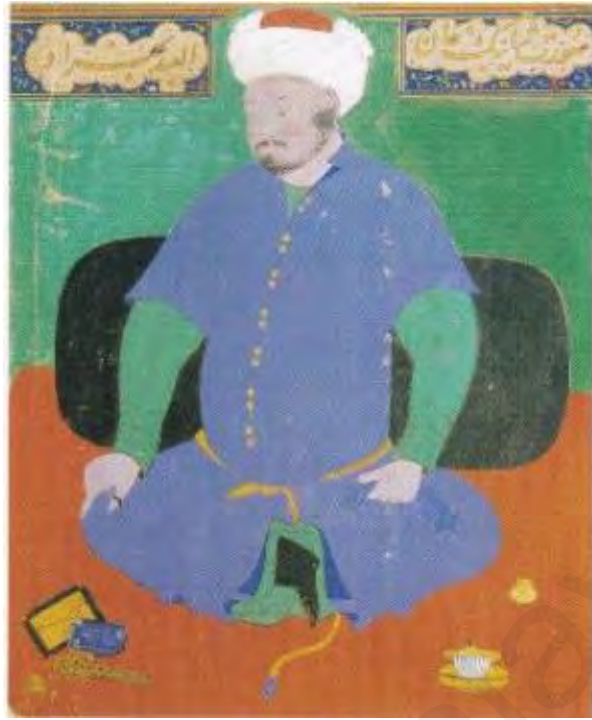


Figure 3.26: Face painting by Behzad, 914 AH

The characteristic feature of painting and illustration in this period is the creation of a balance in size, composition and colouring. In this style of painting, the human body united the image on the contrary of architecture with natural landscape. Here, the painter uses his ability to visualise a new world whose peak can be seen in the Baysunqury Shahnameh. One can see the continuation of the artistic attitude of the Herat School differently in the Turkoman School and the Tabriz School during the Safavid period due to the presence of Behzad and the Bukhara school due to the presence of Behzad's students.

Since the reign of Sultan Hussein Buyqara (842-911 AH / 1438-1506 AD) in Herat (873 AH), poetry and music, painting and wall illustration, architecture and gardening, and a variety of other arts had flourished. Herat experienced another period of cultural flourishing during the years of the reign of Hussein Buyqora. He composed poetry and respected the literature and artists. Mir Ali Shir-Nawaie, the Minister of Sultan Hussein

Buyqora, was also a poet; and Abdul Rahman Jami, a famous Sufi and poet of that era, introduced him to Naqshbandi Dervishes (Abutaleb, 1987).

With the support of Mir Ali Shir-Nawaie, a community formed by the literary and artistic figures such as Muhammed Mirkhand (historian), Hussein Vaiez Kashefi (literate), Sultan Ali Mashhadi (calligrapher), Kamal al-Din Behzad (painter), and Yari (illuminator). They used to discuss the philosophical, literary and artistic issues created the new Herat School of Painting.

Kamal al-Din Behzad (854-942 AH /1445-1550 AD) is an innovator painter who was portraying faces and the real events. He was portraying the historical events based on his contemporaries' reports. In his book illustration, his works are divided into two categories, pieces with distinct stories and mystical parts without a particular story, and their interpretation and transmission require a deeper understanding. Behzad's paintings also include imaginary impressions of a real event (Yamani, 2008).

Kamal al-Din Behzad, in contrast to previous painters, paid attention to the real world. Therefore, in all his drawings, human beings, animals and nature are depicted with their special features. He revived the uniform and senseless images in the previous painters' works, made the forms of the faces colourful and transformed nature and architecture into human life. He sometimes even painted the land without plants to show the movements and relationships of the bodies more clearly. The humanist content of his works in the Iranian painting history was unique. The importance of Behzad's innovations is due to his attention to observing the general framework of the Iranian painting aesthetics and repeating the same line and colour qualities and the same special essence of the Iranian painting in his realistic approach (Pakbaz, 2006).

3.12 Iranian Art and Civilisation in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries AH

During the Safavid period, Iran's art centres concentrated in the Western and central parts of the country. By preserving the ancient traditions of the Iranian art, they could establish an important special place in the Iranian civilisation. Like other dynasties, during this period, the artists tried to produce important works for the Islamic purposes.

The most magnificent mosques were beautifully decorated with decorations and calligraphy inscriptions at that time. Also, due to the importance of the education in the Islamic culture, schools with large two-story porches, such as the Chahar Bagh School in Isfahan, were built.

Religious buildings during this period were decorated with beautiful tiles, flowers and bushes. The architecture style of this period, which was most prominent in Isfahan, paid attention to different ways in various artistic experiences, including palaces, roads, urbanisation, and public places. Many works of non-religious buildings, such as the Chehel-Soton Palace, Eight Paradise (Hasht Behesht), (Figure 3.27), markets and caravansaries in major cities and along the main roads of business and commerce were built.

The Safavid Dynasty was initially able to fix its artistic position with the presence of Kamal al-Din Behzad (a distinguished master of the Herat School), who was the head of the Royal Library in Tabriz. After Behzad, his disciples followed him. This artistic course combines the traditions of the Herat School with the local feature of the Tabriz School, which was performed by Sultan Muhammad. The golden colour was used too much, and the subjects of the paintings were the subject matter of the court and sometimes of the daily life (Pope, 1945).



Figure 3.27: Hasht Behesht, Safavid Dynasty

The painting followed a kind of spiral composition, whose index can be seen in Shah Tahmaseb's *Shahnameh* version during this period (Figure 3.28).

After Tabriz, for a short time, an artistic school appeared in Mashhad (in the second half of the 10th century AH), in which the features of the Tabriz School came to be combined with local elements and a new style was appeared. In this school, the most attention is paid to the common themes and the drawing of the old trees with spiral trunks and branches and the use of the white colour. The result of this artistic experience can be found in Jami's book entitled "Haft Orang".



Figure 3.28: A page from Shah Tahmaseb's Shahnameh

In the late 10th century AH (947 AH), in the presence of the art School of Qazvin, the court artists were assigned to do wall painting. Hence, some artists started the production of this art due to the commercial approach and customers' orders. For this reason, the tradition of book illustration was slightly weakened. In the School of Qazvin, one can find the development of the Mashhad style in this artistic era, the reduction of colour diversity and the images in the paintings occurred (Ennis & Momani, 2013). Nevertheless, there is still the tradition of Shahnameh painting. Wall painting in other places also evolved in the subsequent periods. By this time, calligraphers usually signed their works, but due to the value of the position of the painter, an evolutionary paradigm was created among the writers, calligraphers and painters, and the painters also signed their works. This method was customary after Junayd (the painter in the Jalayeriyan era).

With the start of the reign of Shah Abbas I (996 AH), the Iranian art revived again, and many artists, including painters, calligraphers and architects were at his service. After the transfer of the capital to Isfahan (1006 AH), the construction and decoration of the palaces and public buildings began. During the reign of Shah Abbas I, art was very much supported on his behalf, but one can see the degeneration in creativity in this period as well (Pakbaz, 2006). One of the Safavid arts property during Shah Abbas I is the modernity approach and looking to the western world by artists. During this time some artists started to do mural by following European artists style because of being the western artist in Iran. The influence of European artist made some changes included closing to the naturalism in Persian painting (Canby, 2009).

Reza Abbasi (the famous painter of the Safavid period and the founder of the Isfahan School) is one of the most famous artists of the court of Shah Abbas. His works show the peak of the transition began in the middle of the 10th century AH. He faithfully adhered to Behzad's realism tradition and showed his tendency to observe and record reality in his single-faced and monogram designs (Figure 3.29).



Figure 3.29: Isfahan School, Reza Abbasi, Safavid Dynasty

In the middle of the 11th century AH, with the choice of Isfahan as the capital of the Safavid era, there were developments in painting. The independent method of Reza Abbasi was formed with the tendency to realism. The global trading approach and the presence of Dutch and European artists also had a great influence on the visual arts of this period. Although the Iranian art during the Safavid period had a great influence on the art of the Gurkani (Indian Moguls) of Kashmir and the Ottomans, it was also influenced by the European art, and a kind of the artistic painting was popular in Iran called Farangi Sazi. This new approach led the artists to to discard the former styles and Persian-based subjects and focus on the day-to-day portraiture and painting of the natural landscapes and outlooks. They also created a combination of the artistic traditions with the European influences (Figure 3.30) (Mottaqi, 2015).



Figure 3.30: Oil Painting, Isfahan, 11th AH

The consequence of this evolution is the creation of the multiple tendencies, such as the prevalence of morraqa, wall painting, painting the flowers and birds, and ethnographic practices (the manner in which the theme is the daily life of the lay people) (Figure 3.31). In this period, most of the arts enjoyed the artistic experience of the painters directly or indirectly.



Figure 3.31: Flower and Bird, Isfahan, 11th AH

One of the most influential arts of painting in this period is weaving cloth and carpet. Textile development, with its very rich background in this era, dates back to the first half of the 10th century. The reputation of the produced carpets is due to the use of silk fibres with Eslimee, Khataee, and Shamseh designs. Also, the use of silk in this period was the basis for the production of exquisite fabrics, including Zarbat, which was very much appreciated by the court. These fabrics were woven with a colourful background of gold woven including paintings. The art of weaving evolved greatly with the velvet fabric along with the flowers and birds designs. Painting in textiles was difficult because the artists from Yazd and Kashan created many innovations in this field (Figure 3.32).



Figure 3.32: Painting in textiles, Safavid Dynasty 11th AH

3.13 Iranian Art and Civilisation in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries AH

In the 12th and 13th centuries AH, different states emerged after the extinction of the Safavid Dynasty and the collapse of the central state by ending the civic chaos in Iran. In this period, the local governments came to power, which could be referred to Afsharieh, Zandieh and Qajarites.

During the reign of Shah Abbas I and his successors, the European came to Iran. Most of them brought the king several gifts including the painted curtains. In addition, some of the writings of the European ambassadors and tourists confirm that a number of the European painters were working in Isfahan (Pakbaz, 2006).

In the 11th century AH, the Armenian merchants played an important role in the foreign trade of Iran, and along with the various goods brought from Europe to Iran, there were also oil paintings. Examples of these paintings can now be seen at the Museum of the Vank Church in Isfahan, including “The Corpse of Christ” by Annibale Carracci (Saei & Alikhani, 2015).

Thus, an eclectic nature was reflected in the three groups of the paintings of this period: first, in the collection of the historical wall paintings executed on the walls of the Chehel-Soton Hall in Isfahan, in several smaller rooms, and on the outer walls of the

building, as well as on the gate of the Naghsh-e-Jahan Square. The second example is seen in a series of the natural-size oil paintings of men and women with the Iranian cloths in the second half of the 11th century. The third sample is seen in a number of the miniature designs for manuscripts, none of which are entirely the European works. For example, the oil painted curtains with outstanding designs, light shadows, and the European landscape elements, but the state of the standing of the bodies and their clothes depicted the painting of the School of Isfahan (Hoseinirad, 2005).

In the period of Afshariyeh (1148-1163 AH / 1736-1796 AD), due to the continuity of the Farangi Sazi in the Safavid period, some examples of the works of the artists who were still living in this period are observed (Figure 3.33). Nader Shah Palace (the founder of the Afshariyeh dynasty) as the architectural example of this period was also constructed with the influence of the Indian architecture.



Figure 3.33: Painting of Afsharid Dynasty, 12th Century AH

In the period of Zandieh (1208-1163 AH / 1751-1794 AD), relative calm was first established and a kind of art was created as the “School of Zand” or “School of Flower” in Shiraz because the greatest attention was paid to the paintings of flowers and birds and lacquer paintings (a kind of painting where the final work was covered with a thick layer of the transparent oil). This art is known as a development in the Safavid era and then transmitted by Zandieh to the Qajar period.

The paintings of the Zand Dynasty, which continued the Safavid tradition to go on the Farangi Sazi were briefly transformed into the Qajar period. It can be said that the school called “Qajari” started in the Zandieh era.

The paintings of the Zandieh period, known as the “Flower School”, include different aspects of various subjects, as well as large-scale oil paintings, lacquer paintings, flowers and birds. The basic transformation of this period can be found in new artistic practices, especially paintings on various objects, including mirror frame and jewellers’ boxes.

In the Qajar period, which took a relatively long time, initially, a kind of traditional tendency with the magnificence of the ancient values is seen. The art of this period enjoys the transferring tradition of the Safavid artistic heritage through the Zandieh era. Hence, the art of this period is known as “Zand and Qajar” (Tawfiq, 2016). But in general, artistic traditions were created in the Qajar period with many tendencies. However, the artistic tendency to preserve the artefacts of the Safavid and Zandieh Dynasties deteriorated gradually. This art includes wall painting, single copies, oil lacquer paintings behind glasses and on stones, and constructing numerous palaces and buildings.

The style of painting in this period coincides with the architecture and the tendency towards the glorious appearance. The tendency towards Western art and Farangi

Sazi in this period can be seen only in the nature views that covered the background of the paintings (Figure 3.34).



Figure 3.34: Portrait of Fathali Shah, Tehran, 1213 AH

Following the establishment of Dar al-Funun and Dar al-Sanayeh Schools in the Qajar period as the first state-sponsored art education centres, a kind of full tendency to the European art and the tendency of the court art to these arts became more. European art tendencies can be seen in landscaping and moving away from the Iranian art. Like painting, architectural developments in this period are visible with the combination of the traditional elements and the appearance of the European.

The reed calligraphy in this period, which is mostly in the style of Nastaliq, is due to the use of new artistic forms of writing called Siyah Mashq or a kind of writing suitable for the lithography industry. Due to the attention of the people to the artworks, there is also a popular tendency in the art of this period, which can be seen in the works of lithography, book design, painted curtains, tiles and wall murals in the public and religious places (Figure 3.35).



Figure 3.35: A Page from thousand and one night, 1269 AH

The growing relationship with the West and the presence of the Iranian scholars in this era familiar with European culture paved the way for the formation and use of the new media, including publishing newspapers, the press, photography, and even cinema. However, the tendency to use the very fast-paced photography itself caused a recession in painting. This rapid process led to many changes in the cultural and social contexts to modernisation.

At the same time of the formation of the Constitutional Revolution, a tendency towards the arts with the traditional and religious backgrounds and even folk is seen such as painting behind the glass (oil painting in a reverse way on the glass so as to be displayed on the other side of the glass) to illustrate the religious stories.

Another approach of the artists during the Qajar period is the formation of a Ghahveh Khaneh painting which was formed in the public places with a tendency towards the religious and epic themes in various forms of curtains, paintings and wall paintings.

This type of painting was presented in the form of oil paintings and by the expression of the events in the form of a story (Figure 1.16) (Kaplan, 2016).



Figure 3.36: Ghahveh Khaneh painting, Mansour Vafae, Contemporary Artist

The latest artistic trend of the Qajar period is the formation of the academy and official art which was formed by the establishment of the Sanayeh School by Kamal al-Mulk. The product of this school is an Iranian painting with Western and poetic art tendencies and the perspectives of real places (Figure 3.37).



Figure 3.37: Painting by Kamal al-Mulk, 13th AH

3.14 Summary

This chapter presented the historical background of art in Iran until the 16th century AH. Chapter three discussed Iran's artistic manifestations that return to the Neolithic period around the eighth millennium BC. By comparing art historians, we find that the shape and decoration of artworks in different parts of Iran have the same style of construction, materials and characteristics, but there are differences in motifs. By way of the history of art, we can see the changes in shapes in Iranian art during the time before and after the Islamic period. This helps us to understand how Islamic thinking affected the motifs in the Herat School of Painting.

Universiti Malaysia

CHAPTER 4: ABSTRACTIVE MOTIFS AND SCHOOLS DURING TIMURID DYNASTY

4.1 Introduction

As a result of this study that formed in the previous chapters, abstractive motifs is repeated in Persian painting and other arts, during the history from the beginning of art in Iran till the Islamic period and after that. In this chapter I will examine abstractive motifs and the schools during Timurid dynasty. The first step in answering the second question of this research that is “what is the characteristics of Islamic motifs in the Herat school of painting?”, is to explaining abstractive Islamic motifs of Herat school. In this chapter I also will talk about other schools which affected each other during Timurid dynasty and then to know more about repetition motifs in different art works, move to the investigating the other arts in the Timurid dynasty.

4.2 Abstract Motifs of Herat School of Painting

The term abstract is used to refer to an artistic ornamental pattern with surface decorations which have rhythmic linear forms of scrolling and interlacing leaves, curling stems, and plain lines. A set of circular forms and a large number of regulations with mainly symmetrical patterns and curling stems of plants are termed arabesque motifs. Plants and animals, as well as regular divisions of the Parthian era, are considered to be the main elements of this style. A line called sling connects arabesque motifs to each other. It causes them to be shown non-uniform.

As in the last chapter described Persian art history, the pre-Islamic Iranian artists also were interested in illustrating the world affairs. Abstract motifs and symbolism were

also used in the previous periods in Iran, improving the relevant methods to understand the world better.

Khataee designs, which were used for painting Baysonqory Shahnameh, contain beautiful plants, flowers, and leaves on twisting stalks. These natural patterns connected to each other by slings are less abstract than arabesque motifs. Another group of abstract motifs is geometric designs including forms, colours, and lines to produce a constitution roughly independent of visual objects in the world.

Abstraction means leaving the real world to describe and portray imaginations in our minds. This journey can be begun in two forms: partial or complete. It should be noted that art appears to be abstract because an accurate and true description may be difficult to be achieved.

4.2.1 Geometric Shapes of Herat School of Painting

Another element of Islamic art contains geometric patterns and designs. There are two reasons why Muslim artists used and expanded geometric forms. The first reason was that abstract geometric forms were applied in mosques because they made the audience think about spiritual values whereas illustrating living things caused them to pay attention to the world desires. Therefore, geometry became the basis of Muslims' art. Artists were allowed to use their imagination and creativity freely. Thus, a new form of art that was based on mathematical forms such as squares, circles, and triangles were shaped.

The second reason was that geometry made significant progress at that time in the world of Islam. This position helped Islamic art expand rapidly. Recent discoveries about the scroll designs of the Topkapi Museum which is dated to the 15th century indicate that Islamic artists and architects systematically enjoyed geometric shapes. Besides, Muslim artisans and craftsmen managed to create theoretical rules for these forms in aesthetics. It rejected most orientalist's claims that progress of Islamic art was accidental.

An arabesque style includes a number of continuous and intersecting parts. Although each element seems to be complete and independent, it constitutes a part of the whole. The most common use of the arabesque style includes a two-dimensional pattern which can cover surfaces such as ceilings, walls, and carpets. Having studied around 200 cases, Bourgoïn concluded that this type of art requires remarkable knowledge of practical geometry that its artists should be aware of. He argued that an arabesque design contains a completely strong and circular system and ultimately leads to one of the simple nine-side shapes. This pattern may be made up of straight lines, curved lines, or a combination of these lines.

Arabesque designs were sometimes ornamented with flowers or their parts like stems and leaves. They were occasionally formed from a combination of art decorated with flowers and geometric patterns. Closely interwoven forms and extremely systematic and attractive movements represent a contemplative feeling which can lead the audience to Allah.

Geometric art's reputation and development are indebted to Muslim artists even though the origin of the emergence of this art needs to be discussed and researched further. Innovative geometric shapes have been discovered in Iran, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria, and India. However, it was Muslims who were very skilful in performing this art in all periods.

Regular geometric forms such as circles, squares, and triangles are considered to be geometric symbols in Islamic art in Iran. The combination of these shapes and the creation of special geometric motifs from them have been prevalent in the Iranian painting to preserve symbolic values and decorated space (Figure 4.1).

Arabesque motifs include the composition of regular circular divisions whose innovation dates back to the stucco of the era of the Arsacid Dynasty. Artists achieved

new methods by using their favourite designs so that they could halve the circles replete with the bunch of ivy and place them on each other. They succeeded gradually in producing ornamental elements from this set of works which were later improved under the influence of the Islamic teachings forbidding realism paintings (Pakbaz, 2006).

The term “arabesque” is generally understood to mean a kind of decoration whether it will be in the form of abstract plants or interwoven geometric lines (Figure 4.2). Although this form looks like a melody or a work of art, it can maintain its strong connection with plants.

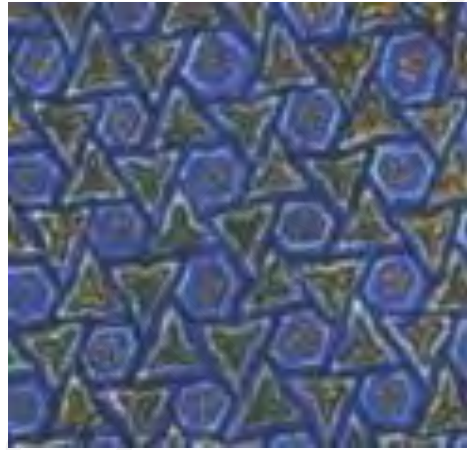


Figure 4.1: A Part of Lohrasb Ascends to the Throne.



Figure 4.2: A Part of Lohrasb Ascends to Throne.

Human, plant, animal, and geometric patterns are typical symbolic forms in Islamic art. These shapes have been offered abstractly in Islamic art and architecture, reflecting an artist’s ideas towards realities elicited from the Islamic culture.

The manifestation and development of symbolic geometric forms over different Islamic periods can be found in geometric knots, arabesque decorations, Khataee patterns of manuscripts, and architectural structures of various buildings such as mosques, caravanserais, and cities.

4.2.2 Arabesque Motifs of Herat School of Painting

Arabesque is one of the main motifs in Iranian art which due to its systematic and endless embranchment, leads to a balanced and complex whole. Each branch, in turn, is divided into other branches, and reciprocally repeats the curved lines, alternating, rhythmic, and endless movements, and also creates a balanced and independent plan. The motif was first introduced in the pre-Islamic Iranian works and completed in the Islamic Age (Eskandarpour, 1999).

The name arabesque first used in the Seljuk period in the 11th and 12th centuries and the Timurid period from the 14th to 16th centuries AD (Takestani, 2007). Arabesque is the most well-known decorative element in all Islamic periods. The efforts of the Muslim artists to develop and enhance Islamic designs led to the introduction of the motif which is rooted in the history and art of pre-Islamic Iran, dependent on Islamic civilisation, under the name of arabesque (Mirzaee, 2012).

Besides the Islamic lands, the use of arabesque motif has also been prevalent among the Asian tribes, the Near East, and Europe. However in the Islamic culture and civilisation, due to the adaptation of the visual and structural features of this motif with the spirit of Islam, its hidden values take special notice.

As the spirit of Islam has a direct connection and spiritual propinquity with the broad flow of abstract forms and images, it absorbs these ancient elements and turns them into the most abstract and generic commonly used versions. That is, it integrates them

and grants them a new rational insight that can somewhat be said to have a spiritual elegance (Burckhardt, 2009a).

Since the 14th century, the arabesque motifs have been used on a large scale on the decoration of monuments, the outer surfaces of domes, and big doorways. Apart from the idea that impels the artist to create such motifs, the artistic expression of the motifs is very contemplative. The repetition of this motif along the main lines creates balance and solidity. Arabesque at times runs across the surface, or cumulous appears in a part of the plan, and ultimately creates harmony between part and whole. The motif, which itself is a decorative design, using other decorations, introduced other kinds of sub-designs, such as leaf arabesque, dragon arabesque, snake arabesque, flower arabesque, and thus increasingly contributed to the richness of Iranian decorative art.

4.2.3 Floral Motifs (Khataee) of Herat School of Painting

In addition to the arabesque, another category of the herbaceous motif in Islamic art is Khataee. The appellation is not clear enough. It is a flower rolled across the surface and on the initiative of the artist, spreads a variety of abstract flowers, leaves, and buds on it (Figure 4.3).



Figure 4.3: A Part of Lohrasb Ascends to Throne.

The different types of Palmet, Roset, Lotus, and Acanthus Leaf which were extensively used in the Achaemenid masonry and Sassanid artworks, could be considered as the prototypes of the motif.

Due to the endless movement of the stems and the variety of flowers, buds, leaves and other related motifs, Khataee has an infinite variety from various dishes and rugs to dome surfaces, and to whatever Iranian artists create, it appears in. Round, butterfly, Shah Abbasi, and whirligig flowers, and types of leaves and buds are examples of countless paintings that Iranian artists have developed through Khataee stem and spread throughout the plan.

Even though both the arabesque and Khataee motifs are of herbaceous origin, their components never intermingled, but each one independently developed, and, in proportion to the context, as two distinct motifs have always interwoven and evolved together.

4.3 Other Schools in the Timurid Dynasty

Iranian art, especially painting, has experienced various developments over the course of time. Undoubtedly, the peak of the flourishing of this long-standing art in Iran has been formed in Islamic periods. Meanwhile, Iranian painting schools in Tabriz turned into the political and artistic capital of Iran in the context of the geographical and political situation in the period of the Ilkhanids, prior to the Timurid period and the formation of the Herat School, and then in the Safavid period, after the Timurid Dynasty.

On the other hand, in the 14th and 15th centuries, along with cultural movements and art schools in Tabriz, artists from other parts of Iran created works of art as well. Among the most important gathering centres for the artists in this era are Tabriz, Shiraz

and Baghdad. Shiraz is considered to be the main base of art and artists in this period. The Shiraz Painting School is considered a bridge between Tabriz-Baghdad painting schools (during the Ilkhani-Al-Jalayer periods) and the Herat School of Painting (during the Timurid period). This school provided the groundwork for the Herat School and played a significant role in its development and richness. This school was the model of the primary school of Herat, and therefore it is necessary to know and investigate it.

4.3.1 Shiraz School in Al-Injou Era (1354-1356 AD)

The Injuids who were descendants of the rulers under the rule of the Ilkhanids, after Atabakan, came to rule in Fars and ruled over Shiraz between 1324 and 1356 AD (725-756 AH). Ultimately, Al-e-Mozaffar defeated them. At this time, Shiraz enjoyed relative stability and created a suitable platform for the development of culture and art and became the venue for the gathering of artists.

The first artworks of this school of art were produced during the years 1339 to 1392 AD (740 to 795 AH). This time coincided with the time that the Jalairid Dynasty ruled Baghdad and Tabriz, and in this regard, the works of the Jalayeri School has a large share of the commonality of the school of Shiraz and has taken some effects of it.

Shiraz workshops, under the support of emirs of Injou, began extensive work in illustrating literary texts especially the Shahnameh, and religious texts especially the Qur'an. At this time, some of these illustrated works that came out of these workshops were exported to India, Turkey, and some parts of Iran, whereby the style of painting and illumination of Shiraz went to other places. For example, the effect of these art works can be distinguished by painting of the East Indian court (Pakbaz, 2006).

4.3.2 Features of Shiraz School (Al-Injou Period)

The works were produced in Shiraz since the middle of the 14th century AD (the 7th century AH). It means since the era of the Ilkhanids, confirm that painting artists of Shiraz continued their ancestors' traditions and experiences. One of the most important events in the field of illustrating books and manuscripts in this era is the preparation of a large-format version. The illustrated versions of this era are large and almost the same size and rewritten with a type of Naskh. The pages of these texts are framed with two red lines (Figure 4.4). Adjusting and decorating the margins of the pages are the same, and the titles of the chapters are mainly written in Sols (Adamova; Robert Hillenbrand, 2017).



Figure 4.4: Ardavan in Front of Ardeshir, Demotte Shahnameh

The colour combination is one of the most important pieces of decorative motifs in the painting of this school. Therefore, the ornamental plant (Tazhib/illumination) in Shiraz School, despite the simplicity, has especial magnificent. The golden colour is an important colour used in the illumination of Shiraz School because of using too much, although lazuli colour is also used in combination with white, red, green and black colours, along with the golden colour (Moataghedi, 2008).

In this era, plant and geometric images were used in a new way in the context of manuscript illumination, and it also can be seen in the subsequent schools (Figure 4.5). The use of subtle tabulation alongside the margins of the decorative motifs, as well as the use of symmetrical and inverse rotation of Eslimee, shading and delicate lines are also the characteristic of Shiraz School in the period of the Injuids (Moataghedi, 2008).



Figure 4.5: Death of Alexander, From Demotte Shahnameh.

4.3.3 Shiraz School in Al-E-Mozaffar Period (1355-1392 AD, 756-795 AH)

With the advent of Amir Mobarez al-Din Mohammad in 1355 AD (756 AH) and his ultimate victory over al-e-Injo in Fars and Isfahan and the formation of the Mozaffarian Dynasty in the regions of Fars, Isfahan, Kerman, Yazd, and the coasts of the Persian Gulf and Hormoz and then Tabriz, a religious Iranian-Islamic policy replaced Iranianism policy of the Injuids. Then, with the advent of the Shah Shojae monarchy (1358 AD, 760 AH) and determining Shiraz as the capital, it heralded a period of freedom of speech for scholars. Shah Shojae's successors ruled until 1392 AD. After the assassination of Shah Mansour, Shah Shojae's nephew and the last king of Al-e-Mozaffar, and the arrest of all the members of the Muzaffari family and their massacre by order of Timur, the period of Mozaffarid in Shiraz and around it came to an end, and the period of the Timurid Dynasty began (Azhand, 2015).

The period of Al-e-Mozaffar is a promotion of poetry and Persian literature, which has deep links with painting and book illustration in Iran. Poets such as Khoja Hafez, Obeid Zakani and Khajavi-e-Kermani were supported by the Sultans of this dynasty, especially Shah Shojae. Most of the members of the Mozaffarid family were renowned for interest in art and literature.

4.3.4 Characteristics of Shiraz School in the Al-E-Muzaffar Period (1355-1392 AD, 756-795AH)

The copies that remained from book illustration in the period of Al-e-Mozaffar reflect a fundamental change in this business. Illustrating and illuminating manuscripts are similar to its practice in the Jalairid period in Tabriz. An important part of these developments that should be investigated is the quality of calligraphy and manuscript style, illumination features (plants and arabesque motifs) as well as the type, quality and colour of paper.

One of the most remarkable features of the Shiraz School in the period of Al-e-Mozaffar is the evolution of page layout, which is one of the important characteristics of the book illustration in this period (Figure 4.6). The sculptors of the Al-e-Mozaffar art workshops introduced new experiences of book illustration by making changes in the style of illumination between the years 1349 to 1397 AD (750 to 800 AH). Due to the attention of the artists to small size books, a new combination was created between the two old and new styles. This was the most important event in the field of illumination and decoration of manuscripts (Richard, 2007).

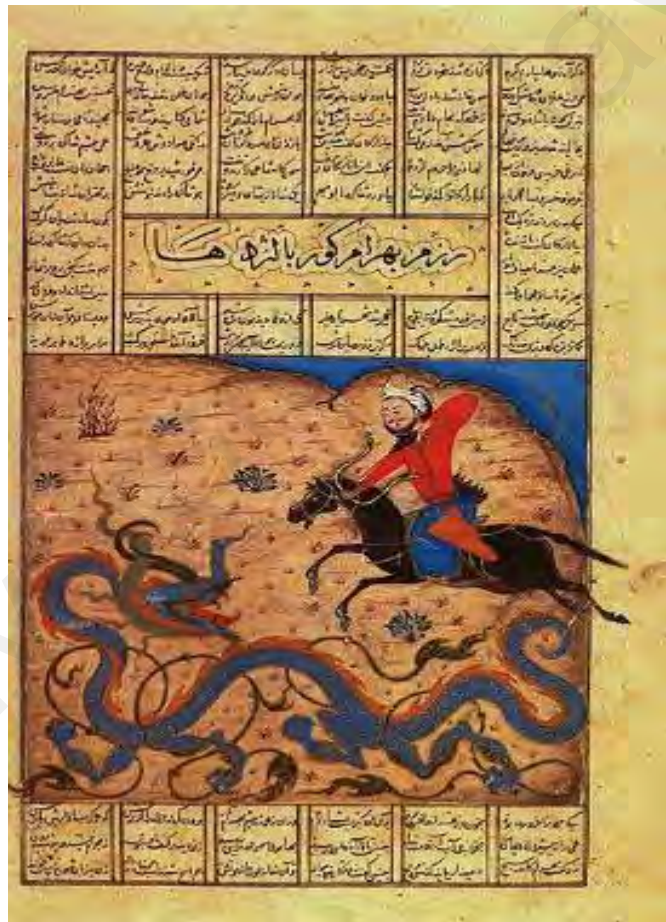


Figure 4.6: Bahram Gur Kills the Dragon.

One of the characteristics of decorative motifs and illuminated copies in the period of Al-e-Mozaffar is the blend of the geometric Eslimee forms with plants in a lazuli

background; and in some versions red, green, orange, light cyan and brown are used (Moataghedi, 2008).

In this period, the illumination artists used illumination with geometric shapes and plant designs in some of the manuscripts, whereas before that, decorative motifs were used specifically for the Quranic illustrations with gold and lazuli in its copies (Moataghedi, 2008).

The artists of this period created very delicate art in which flowers and plants designs were intertwined with Eslimee motifs, and various colour combinations were used within its geometric divisions (Figure 4.7). Compared with the period of al-Injou, in this period, colour variety and luminosity become more important. Colour variation is evident in the version of the Khajavi-e-Kermani manuscript in 1396 AD (799 AH), and each of the colours has a special brightness. The harmonious hot and cold colours have created beautiful and vibrant spaces, and the balance of the page has been well-formed by colour (Azimi, 2013).



Figure 4.7: Tashi Khatoon Quran, Astan-E-Quds Museum

4.3.5 School of Shiraz during the Timurid Period

The second period of activity of the Shiraz School is related to the Timurid era, and the works of this period are known under the name of the Shiraz School of Timurid. With the advent of the Timurid Dynasty, Shiraz turned into a centre of the Timurid painting school, and the innovations of painting and illumination of the Timurid period originated in the painting and illustration of the school of Shiraz, Tabriz and Baghdad in the late 14th century AD (8AH).

The Timurid period is one of the most important periods in the history of painting and illumination in Iran. Many believe that the greatest achievement of the Timurid era is the art of painting and book publishing, book illustration and bookbinding, and in this period the art has a unique unity and logic. Precision in the presentation of details, coherence, symmetry of elements, proportional division of surfaces, geometric adjustment of motifs, harmonious combination with the lines and elements of the painting, and balanced composition of colour are some of the characteristics of the paintings of this era, which were conducted by the artists of Shiraz and Herat (Riazi, 1996).

After the demise of Timur in 1404 AD (807 AH) and the beginning of his son Shahrukh's rule, with Islamic tendencies and with the help of the Iranian Muslims and the transfer of the capital from Samarkand to Herat, gradually the Islamic principles and institutions replaced the tribal ideology of the Timurids. The combination of different styles of artists in different regions of Iran with the cultural orientations of the Timurids created a creative environment of the arts, and Shiraz was one of those creative and innovative environments. The presence of the artist and learned princes such as Iskandar Sultan in Shiraz, provided a stage for the cultural and artistic advancement so that these princes were competing in the field of literature and art, and they were trying for the

development of artistic book illustration and the establishment of art workshops in their libraries (Azhand, 2015).

4.3.6 Characteristics of Shiraz School (During Timurid Period)

Stylistically, book illustration in the Timurid period is, in fact, a blend of the basic painting characteristics of Al-e-Mozaffar and Al-e-Jalayer. The most important feature of copy-making in the period of Ibrahim Sultan (1410-1414 AD) was to support the production of literary and scientific texts. Ibrahim Sultan, who was the ruler after Iskandar Sultan (1414-1433 AD) in Shiraz, employed artists from Shiraz to illustrate the epic and historical versions of the Shahnameh. Another characteristic of the Shiraz School during the period of Ibrahim Sultan was the book illustration of the historical texts like Zafarnameh by Sharaf-al-Din Ali Yazdi (Figure 4.8), and the beautiful illumination of the Quranic transcripts that he carried out (Azhand, 2015).

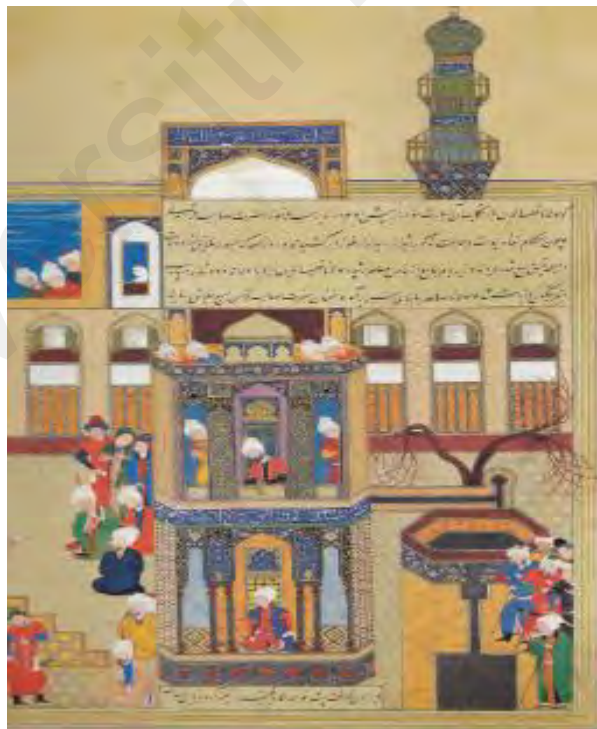


Figure 4.8: Capture of Qotb-Od-din Qormi, Zafarnameh

Some of the characteristics of the manuscripts of the school of Shiraz in this period are: The colour composition used in the school of Shiraz is rich but not always harmonious. The preparation of the colours and the manner they are used for painting is different from those of the Herat School since softer and deeper colours were intended (Pope, 1945).

In the paintings and illumination of this period, colours are highly scattered and not combined in one place, and the cold and hot colours were drawn alongside each other carefully. Colours such as yellow, dark green, red, and cyan blue created completely original Iranian surfaces. Altogether in the nineteenth century, the brightness and diversity of colours are more than those of the eighth century (Azimi, 2013). At that time, the colours became more varied and more refined, and the colours of purple, pink, red and very fresh green, yellow, and gold brown were added to other colours (Figure 4.9).



Figure 4.9: Gabriel Enters the Battleground, Khavaran Nameh

In the arrays and drawings of this period, the elements of writing in the composition were of particular importance, and the general rule was that by placing two or four inscriptions on the top and bottom of the images, a symmetrical and geometric

structure was created in the visual space. If the vertical axis is drawn between the upper and lower inscriptions, space will be divided into several proportional parts, and most of the subjects and events will be concentrated in the middle section and below the horizon line (Canby, 2005).

In many poem books, which are small in size, the scribe has written part of the text in the centre and the other in the margin of the page. Some of the pages have triangular illumination, and others have animal motifs. The images on their illustrated pages are highly original in terms of composition and very consistent in colours (Canby, 2005).

4.3.7 Painting in First Tabriz School (During Timurid Dynasty)

When Hulagu Khan established the Ilkhanid Dynasty in Iran, the Ilkhanids employed the Iranian elites from the very beginning. Hulagu Khan was not a Muslim and did not know Persian, but some of his successors, such as Ghazan Khan and Oljaito, chose the religion of Islam. Interestingly, the last king of the dynasty, Abu-Sa'id, was composing poems in Persian. Due to its political, economic, social and cultural status, Tabriz was a good centre for gatherings of the artists, and many of the artists moved to Tabriz from different parts of Iran. This era experienced the emergence of the first Tabriz School. The first Iranian-Mongolian Tabriz School has to be considered as one of the first Iranian painting schools (Zaki, 1996).

At the time of the Ilkhanid Dynasty, there was a strong relationship between Iran and the Far East, because the two dynasties ruling China and Iran during the 13th and 14th centuries (7th and 8th centuries AH) were Mongolian. Also, the Mongols living in Iran had brought artists, craftsmen and translators from China to Iran. Also, during this period, with the establishment of the famous library called Rab'-e-Rashidi by Khajeh

Rashiduddin in Tabriz, artists from most parts of Iran and even from neighbouring countries migrated to Tabriz.

Although many of the sciences degenerated due to the invasion of the Mongols and Tatars, because these dynasties were interested in painting, and they always had painting artists, during the period of their dominance, this art experienced significant evolution and artists emerged who had a great influence on the painting schools after them (Madadpour, 2014).

Looking at the evolution of Iranian painting, the influences of Chinese paintings in Iranian painting led to the removal of the Seljuk painting school (12th and 13th centuries AD). But the transformation of Iranian painting, which began in the Moghul period, reached its peak during the Safavid Dynasty (16th century AD). Therefore, the first schools of Tabriz (Mogul), Shiraz and Herat, which were between the Seljuk and Safavid periods, can be considered as the connecting link between Seljuk and Safavid schools and the return to Iranian-Islamic identity.

The government of the Ilkhanids (1256-1335AD) had two important implications for Iranian painting: the transfer of Chinese art traditions to Iran as a new source of inspiration for painters, and the founding of a kind of artistic work that created the tradition of group work of artists in libraries and royal workshops. The Ilkhanids provided the conditions for the mixing of various forms of painting such as Chinese, Byzantine, Baghdad, and Buddhist in Iranian ways. Also during this period, the influence of the Byzantine painting elements in Persian art became popular due to the connection of a number of Moghul emirs and the presence of a number of clerics and Christians (Amirhoseini, 2012).

4.3.8 Characteristics of the Works of First Tabriz School

One of the most prominent features of the first Tabriz School is the introduction of Chinese elements into Iranian paintings which include wavy and curved intensive clouds, very complex trunks of trees, high cliffs, sharp peaks and smooth plains that in general created a heterogeneous landscape with Iranian painting (Pakbaz, 2006).

The clearest element in the painting of Iran during this period which was borrowed from China is the form of mountains and trees (Gray, 1930). One of the features of the Mongolian school was the presence of Chinese art styles which are seen in the people's portraits, the actual drawing of nature, the drawing of the plants with the precision that is not common in the Seljuk school as well as the proportions and accuracy of the drawing of the components in the painting of animals. Also, Iranian artists borrowed some decorative items, especially the shapes of the clouds and some of the legendary animals as the features of the Chinese art, from the arts of the Far East (Zaki, 1996).

Other elements that are characteristic of Iranian art during the Mongol period are the presence of Byzantine elements. The presence of these elements can be found in showing cloth lines and the use of shade and light on them. The presence of other factors such as the golden sky, the scattering of the trunks and leaves of the trees, and the collapse of the picture frame with the horseshoes and standard riders are the characteristics of the Mongolian painters of the year 1329 AH (Canby, 2005).

The characteristics of the painting of the Tabriz School are the active movement of figures of human beings and animals, the variety of lines of clothes, the use of more populated scenes, the use of more colours and their composition which were added to the characteristics of the painting of Baghdad and paintings of the Seljuk era (Canby, 2005). Some of the most famous illustrious books of this era are Kalila and Demna, Jami al-Tawarikh and Manafi' al-Hayawan.

In the painting of Alexander's death from Ferdowsi's Shahnameh in accordance with the first Tabriz School, Iranian elements are seen in the decorated sections including patches, wall decoration and laminate flooring in which there are Eslimee, Khataee and geometric shapes filling the spaces in a fantastic way. Chinese elements in portraits of the people mourning on Alexander's corpus painting (Figure 4.10) and the shades and lights in the lines of the garment have been derived from Byzantine elements.



Figure 4.10: Prophet's ascension, From Jami al-Tawarikh

In the painting of the Prophet's ascension (Figure 4.11), derived from Jami al-Tawarikh, the influence of the Chinese elements (clouds, faces, hills), also the effect of the Byzantine elements (shades and lights of the garments), and the Iranian elements in the decorations behind the angel in the right corner, and a brightening crown and shield in the angel's hand on the left are observable. This horizontal work is based on Chinese petitions.

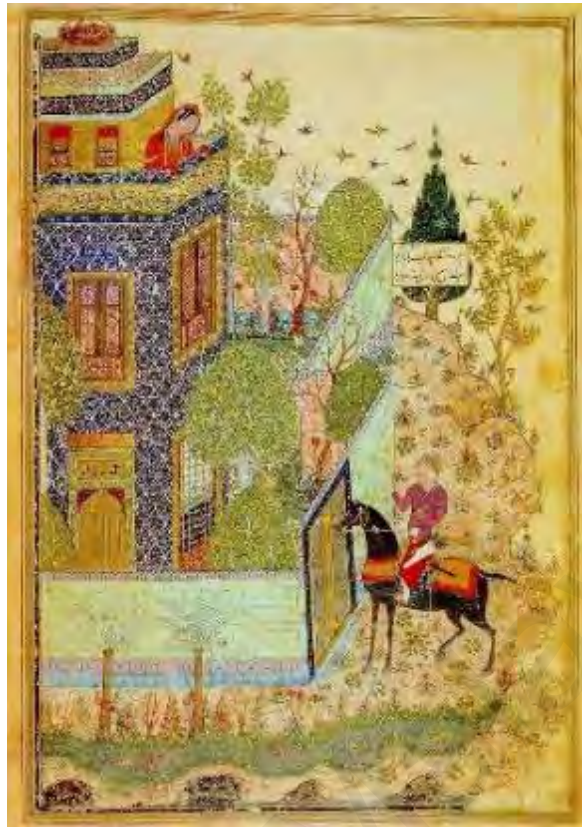


Figure 4.11: Hoday and Hodayoun, Jalairid School

By the end of the 8th century, the power of the Mongol Ilkhanids decreased, and the Jalairid captured Tabriz. Painting in the Jalairid period was promoted in both Tabriz and Baghdad and led to the formation of the Painting School of Herat. During the Jalairid School, many features of first Tabriz School especially the Chinese elements and architectural decorations begun in the Mogul period continued.

The works of the Jalairid School include fine tile decorations and Chinese knots in the buildings. The distinction between the paintings of the Jalairid period in Tabriz-Baghdad or Tabriz first school is the shrinking of human images that is influenced by the role of the landscape and the nature painted in the work (Figure 3.3).

Although in the first Tabriz School of Painting, we see the presence of Chinese, Byzantine, Baghdadi, and Buddhist elements, over time, these elements especially the Chinese elements, found Iranian style and were an integral part of many Iranian paintings.

It should be noted that these elements are very rare in the works of the Herat School and the basis for the formation of Herat School is the presence and formation of the first Tabriz School in the Ilkhanid period.

4.4 Investigation of the Other Arts in the Timurid Period

A review of the arts of the 15th (AD) / 9th (AH) century as well as the views of the historians and art experts suggests that art was expanded in the fields of architecture and book designing, while similar abstract Islamic designs were used in these arts. The study of other Timurid arts, in particular, the arts that used similar abstract motifs, helps to understand better the concepts used in Iranian paintings during this period. After Shahrukh and Baysonqor founded libraries in Shiraz and Herat in 1397 to 1420 AD, artists and craftsmen gradually came there from different cities of Iran. These workshops also advanced other arts such as illumination and book covering.

4.4.1 Illumination

The Timurid period is one of the most important and thriving eras in the art of illumination. The word illumination has various interpretations and definitions. In some references, illumination (Tazhib), which is an Arabic word, has meant gilding and covering in gold (Moein, 1985). From the definitions used for illumination, it can be concluded that illumination is referred to as a collection of decorative motifs which include a variety of arabesque (Eslimee) and Khataee designs.

Arabesque motifs, as mentioned above, include a variety of geometric and abstract designs that as their names declare they were formalised after Islam. Eslimee motifs in combination with Khataee designs that include a variety of leaves and flowers, make combined forms of illumination. Arabesque and Khataee motifs complement each other, meaning lover and beloved, and a manifestation of male and female (Pashazanous, 2009).

Illumination in the modern sense can be found in Manichaean painting which includes an image, writing and decorating, and trying to display pictures and decorations with the idea that was based on goodness and evil.

Since the beginning of the 15th century (AD) / 9th (AH) century, most of the pages of the court poetry books had been illuminated. The art of illumination reached its complete stage during the Timurid period, continued in the Safavid era and got its peak. Looking at the arts of the Timurid era, there were different types of illumination in this period (Ahmadzadeh).

4.4.1.1 Shamseh (Roundel)

Shamseh is designed separately or with the “Sar-Shamseh” to the initial page of the illuminated books during the different dynasty. Sometimes, Shamseh is designed on the initial pages of books with another four Lachak (Figure 4.12).

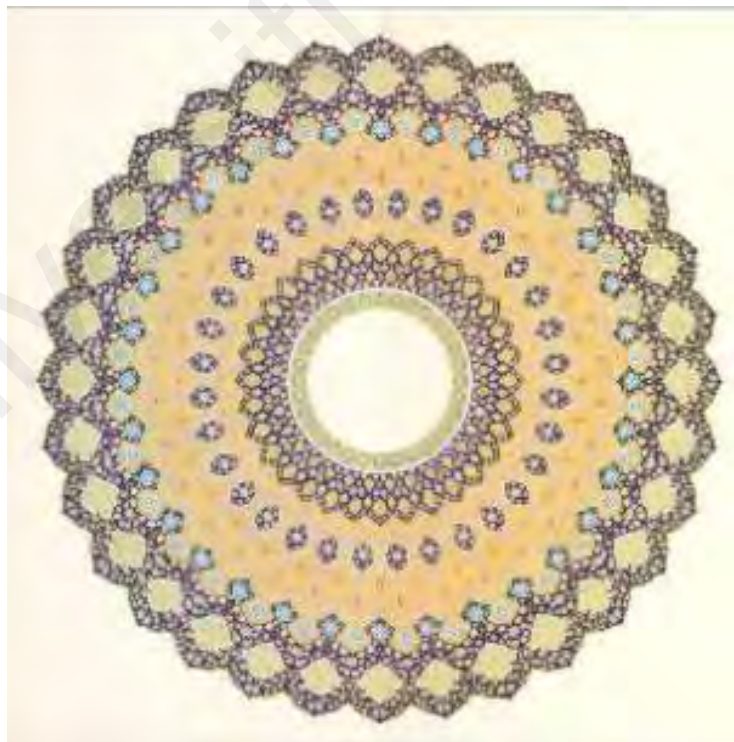


Figure 4.12: Shamseh, Done by the Researcher

4.4.1.2 Taj (Crown)

Being painted in the same way as the Sar-Lowh (epigraph) with some differences in the shape, Taj is made by applying a dome or a Taj and a Nim Toranj over a Sar-Lowh (Figure 4.13).



Figure 4.13: Taj

4.4.1.3 Mehrab

Mehrab is similar to a semi-circular niche in the wall of mosques that indicated Qibla that inspired illuminators and carpet designers for centuries (Figure 4.14).



Figure 4.14: Mehrab

4.4.1.4 Sar-Lowh (Epigraph)

The “epigraph” is a decorative feature painted to the top of the initial pages of the ancient illuminated writings, such as the Holy Quran, acting as a gateway to commence the book. Different designs of beautiful epigraphs were used to adorn the initials of such books as Khamseh-y-Nezami, the Iranian poet (12th Century AD). Sometimes, a smaller medallion was painted on the brink of the epigraph (Figure 4.15).



Figure 4.15: Sar-Lowh

4.4.1.5 Katibeh (Inscription)

Applied to the top of the initial pages of different chapters of storybooks or poetry books, Katibeh comprises several designs. In ancient writings such as the Shahnameh-y-Ferdowsi or Khamseh-y-Nezami, it was a common practice to paint an illuminated Katibeh in which were written scraps of each tale at the beginning of each chapter (Figure 4.16).



Figure 4.16: Katibeh

4.4.1.6 Lachak (Pendentive)

Half of a square is called a Pendentive Pattern. The artist inserts the Pendentive Patterns into the corners of pages ornamented with calligraphic scripts, or into the brink of the cruciform scripts as a beautifying feature (Figure 4.17).



Figure 4.17: Lachak

4.4.1.7 Lachak Toranj (Quarter Medallion)

Regarding its name, the “Quarter Medallion” pattern is one-fourth of a “Medallion” pattern, bearing the shape of both the “Pendentive” and the “medallion” patterns thereby joining four quarter medallion patterns to each other resulting in a medallion pattern.

Having a closer look at the edge of a quarter medallion pattern, you will see the subtle role of the movement of an arabesque branch, as cited before, in creating the form, and the art of illumination (Figure 4.18).

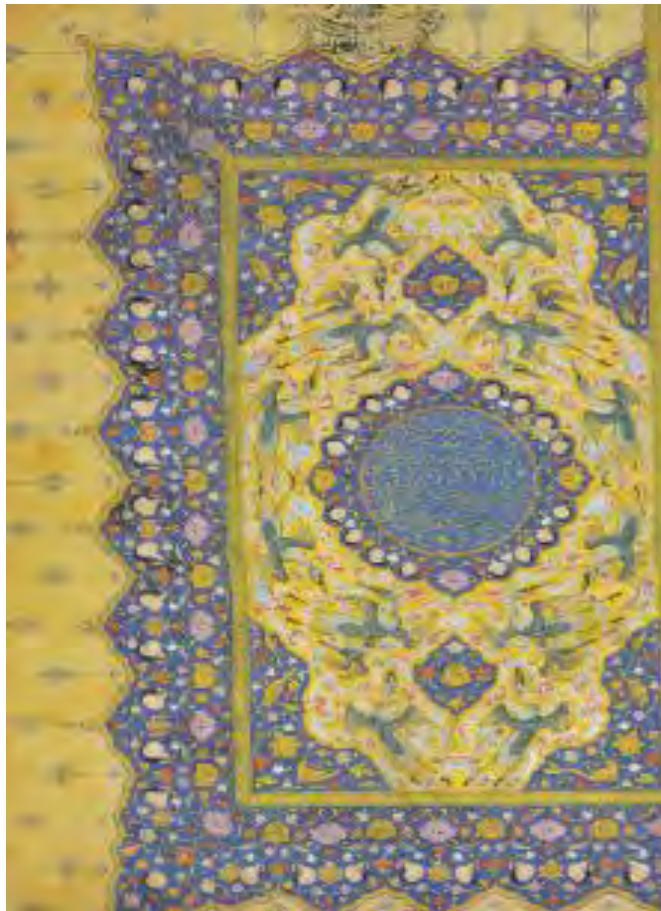


Figure 4.18: Lachak Toranj, Masterpieces of Persian Painting

4.4.1.8 Toranj (Medallion)

Being among the patterns of the Iranian decorative arts, the “medallion” pattern is usually set amidst the designs independently, made of flowers, foliage and arabesques motifs and at times, resembling the tooled lanterns. Naturally, a medallion is designed in different sizes-large, medium and small, with various patterns, applied chiefly in the carpet weaving, painting and illumination. In the illuminated manuscripts, the medallion pattern is designed to adorn the margins of the holy Koran’s pages and the divisions of its sections is usually painted on the back of the title page. Occasionally, two symmetrical smaller patterns namely Sar-Toranj are added to the two ends of the medallion pattern (Figure 4.19).

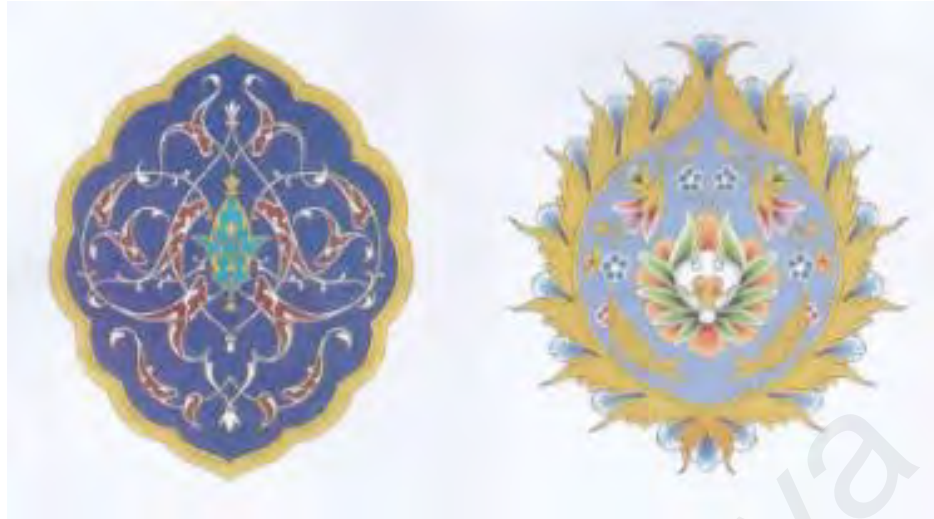


Figure 4.19: Toranj

4.4.1.9 Sar-Toranj

A small medallion set atop the larger medallion pattern and added to the two ends of medallion or painted in the margin of the pages is called the Sar-Toranj (Figure4.20).



Figure 4.20: Sar-Toranj

4.4.1.10 Nim Toranj (Half Medallion)

As regard to its name, the “Half Medallion” is half of a medallion pattern. It is applied in the margins of some painting or as a feature to create joints the “Quarter Medallion” and the “Pendentive” patterns (Figure 4.21).



Figure 4.21: Nim Toranj

4.4.1.11 Vagireh

Vagireh is a type of designing in the art of illumination in which a single motif is repeated to make a design; for instance, in designing a “Shamseh” (roundel) on the initial page of book, the Shamseh will be divided into similar section namely Vagireh, each section is designed with a single pattern (Figure 4.22).

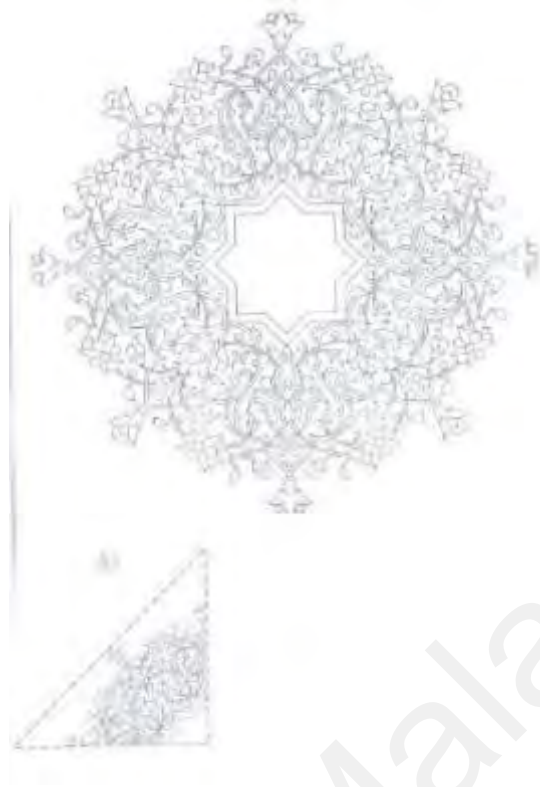


Figure 4.22: Vagireh

4.4.1.12 Sharafeh (Merlon)

Sharafeh Designs around Shamseh, bringing forward a sun spreading over rays, Sharafeh comprises ornate lines -sometimes lines without ornate- which are depicted, in azure, around the terminal charts of books and ornate inlaid works (Figure 4.23).

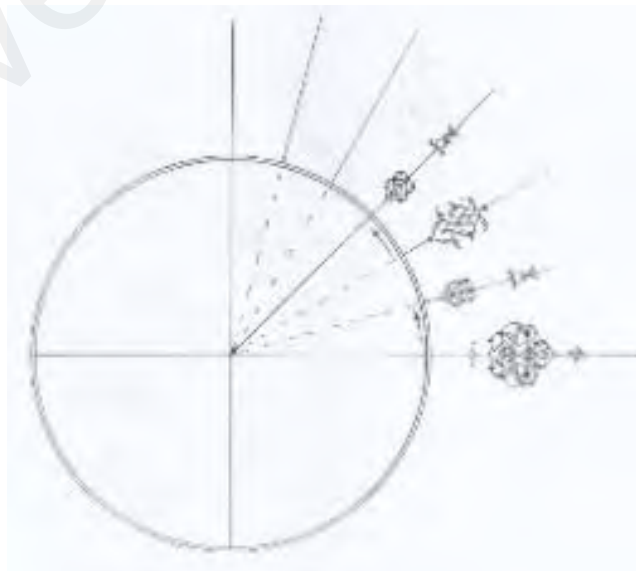


Figure 4.23: Sharafeh

4.4.1.13 Lotus and Shah Abbasi Flowers

Lotus is one of the most practical motifs has been used by illuminator artist during the different century. It is the same as a famous planet that id referred to in stories from Greek and Roman mythology. Shah Abbasi flower is one of the basic forms in Iranian ornamental floral motifs which is used as the Khataee design in Persian painting (Figure 4.24).



Figure 4.24: Shah Abbasi flower

4.4.2 Book Coverage (Book Banding)

What is certain is that the role of libraries and workshops of the Timurid period has been very effective in shaping and developing the art of book designing. Even though bookbinding and covering were carried out in places other than libraries, the left precious volumes indicate that the major developments in this art had been in libraries, especially those connected to the court of kings and princes.

The most basic point that can be traced to the study of the volumes left by the Timurid period is the remarkable skill in the gliding and decorations of the books covers.

The use of the images of plants and animals, especially legendary and imaginary ones, is one of the features of this art in that period (Figure 4.25).

Binding in the 16th century seems to be done in two different ways. One kind was the covers made in the kings and princes' court libraries, and it is natural that this group includes precious covers for the valuable editions. The use of animal images and designs is also found in the work of this group of binders (Eerkhani, 2009).



Figure 4.25: Quran Binding. Timurid Dynasty

The report by Jafar Baysonqor, a calligrapher and the head of the Baysonqor Library in Herat, in which he reported about the affairs and progress of the works of the binders (Parsaquds, 1978).

Some people used to do binding while they were working on the market. The reference by Jafar ibn Muhammad Jafari, the 19th century historian, to the binders market in his book titled “New History of Yazd” confirms the issue (Afshar, 1960).

4.4.3 Architecture

Persian painting is associated with arts such as poetry, calligraphy and architecture. The most significant and prominent monuments of the Timurid period were established between the end of the 14th (AD) / the 8th (AH) and the beginning of the 15th (AD) / 9th (AH) (Shayestehfar, 2010).

Throughout history, Herat was regarded as the platform for the crossroads of Eastern and Western civilisations, and therefore attracted the attention of the Timurid Dynasty. After the death of Timur, the Timurid Dynasty continued to develop under the direction of his son, Shahrukh. Herat was chosen as the capital, the arts began to commence in there, and several monuments with decorations were built (Kianee, 1996).

The Timurid architecture was influenced by some of the Ilkhanid elements in the small local governments. Building magnificent domes were very common in the Timurid period. Regarding decoration in this period, for the first time, large surfaces were decorated with glazed tiles. The domes were decorated with glossy rectangular clay in blue and turquoise. Tile decorations include plant elements, flowers and bushes, geometric shapes and linear margins. The most beautiful of them is in the Goharshad Mosque in Mashhad (Figure 4.26).



Figure 4.26: Goharshad Mosque in Mashhad

Among the many schools appeared in Iran in the 15th (AD) / 9th (AH) century, the main style of the Timurid architecture flourished in the triangular area between the three cities of Mashhad, Samarkand and Herat. The emphasis on the maximum magnitude, attention to the internal and external diversity of the building, logical and proportional design, the invention of new types of domes and vaults and the richness of colourful decorations are some of the important features of the Timurid architecture (Tabibian, 2012).

Decorating in Islamic art and architecture constitutes a sacred (spiritual) space; it is a visual expression for the denunciation of matter, to find meaning and spiritual dimensions (Faghfouree, 2017).

The Muslim artist, with his religious ideas, tries to create a spiritual atmosphere with a decorative design, and decorate the unformed material with geometric designs, Eslimee and Khataee motifs, and lines. In addition to visual beauty, these decorations represent the cultural and religious secrets (Burckhardt, 2009b).

The study of the architecture of the Timurid period shows that the use of decorative motifs along with calligraphy has been one of the main principles in the design of the mosques during this period. The inscriptions left from the architectural monuments of the Timurid period were decorated with Khataee and arabesque motifs found alongside the geometric tiles.

One of the most important inscriptions of the Goharshad Mosque in Mashhad in this period belongs to the themes of prayer, recitation and God's names. On the body of the minarets of one of the porches of this mosque (Maghsorah Porch) (Figure 4.27), there are 43 rows of small bergamots, about 180 of them were decorated differently in each minaret with God's names and Khataee and Eslimee motifs (Robab Faghfouree, 2015).



Figure 4.27: Maghsorah Porch of Goharshad Mosque

4.5 Summary

From the above discussion, chapter four discussed about abstract motifs included different motifs referring to geometric shapes and artistic ornamental motifs which have rhythmic linear forms of scrolling and interlacing leaves, curling stems, and plain lines. Persian painting has experienced varied changes over time, but its peak was in the Timurid Dynasty. Meanwhile, there are other schools of painting other than Herat that influenced each other. By studying and comparing the different schools and different characteristics between them, in the Timurid Dynasty, we know the painting in this era that is one of the steps for analysing samples and then interpret the motifs. Shiraz and Tabriz are two other schools which influenced the Herat School of Painting. Repetition of motifs in other arts of Timurid dynasty is also concluded from this chapter.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSING ISLAMIC MOTIFS IN THE HERAT SCHOOL OF PAINTING

5.1 Introduction

In the last chapter I explained different type of abstractive motifs in Herat school painting also different schools of Timurid dynasty and at the end showed other arts which used abstractive motifs. Having discussed in the previous chapter about Herat school painting and other schools also about abstractive motifs in other arts of Iran during Timurid dynasty, to answering the third question that is: “why are the Islamic motifs used in Persian painting?” we need to identify motifs by analysing them. In this chapter I will investigate the quiddity of Iranian art and will continue by talking about art supporters of Herat school and formation and achievements and then move to analysian five samples of Herat school from the Shahnameh of Baysonqor in the 15th century. At the end of this chapter the quiddity of abstract motifs will be investigated.

Exquisite Islamic patterns were created to ornate the artistic, technical, and industrial works by utilising the art of illumination. Some of them were harmonious so much so that one may think they were duplicated. An example of such harmony can be seen in the visualisation of flowers such as Lotus which grows in Iran, China, India, Egypt, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The flower has a unique form in each region in Iran. For instance, in the Kermanshah region (Western Iran) it has sphere-form petals, while in Bandar Anzali (northern Iran) its petals are lance-shaped. This has been well-depicted in the arts of such regions (Takestani, 2007).

The decorative designs have a long history which dates to the second millennium BC. Such art is mostly depicted on the brink of stone dishes, and on tools, and war implements. In Achaemenes, Parthian, and Sassanian periods, such decorative designs could be seen on the silver, gold and stone dishes with very simple connections.

Later, the collapse of the Sassanian court by Arabs (651 AD/30 AH) resulted in a period of inactivity in the political, commercial, and cultural conditions for some time until the regular norms were resumed. Iranian art progressed considerably in the Omaid period and artists were employed by the Abbasid and the feudal governments in Iran. This issue promised a grand artistic preface to the world of art. Also, the Abbasid Caliphs allowed the Iranian artists to thrive in all fields. Later on, due to recession in the Abbasid (750-1258 AD/133-656 AH) Caliphate, some small semi-independent dynasties emerged. Some of these dynasties were small and infertile and include the Taherids (821-873 AD/207-259 AH) the Barmakids (one of the powerful Iranian family), the Samanids (874-1004 AD/261-395 AH), the Al-e-Buyid (934-1055 AD/320-447 AH), and other feudal governments, supposing themselves as the descendants of the Sassanids (224-651 AD). They hosted artists, authors, poets, mystics, and other learned Iranian. They also attempted to promote the Iranian culture and civilisation.

The art of illumination reached its maturation and outperformed previous works of art during the above mentioned five centuries and had reached its peak before the Mongol invasion. By the advent of Mongol-Ilkhans to Iran (1256-1335 AD/654-750 AH), some of the Mongolians converted to Islam. This initiated another era of great restoration for Iranian art. Great powers and ministers of the time such as Rashid-Od-Din Fzlolllah Hamedani the author of Jame-Ol-Tavarikh and Ata-Malek Joveini, were concerned with art and its revival. The latter Mongols also endeavoured to amend the shortcomings of their forebears in civilisation and culture. This led to the golden era of Iran's art and culture. In this era, the royal libraries began their activities; illumination, painting, minting, cloth-weaving, carpet weaving, architecture, and business were promoted, and the most magnificent and beautiful illuminated Qurans were created. Oljaito (1304-16

AD) founded the city of Sultaniyeh including the great mausoleum. The traces of Sasanian designs can be found in that building.

After the Il-Khan Mongols, the Al-e-Jalayer government (1335-1432 AD/740-835 AH) attempted to polish the art of illumination. As a result, they reconstructed the substructure of illuminated designs in the golden time of Timur (Tamerlane) (1336-1405 AD/771-807 AH) and his successors. The period of Timur's successors was a splendid era for all arts and crafts. During this time, Shahrukh, Timur's son, created royal libraries in every district of Iran.

Such commitments by the ancestors of the Mongolians resulted in the advancement of the art of illumination. An example of such commitment is observed in the Timurid kings and princes order to illuminate the manuscripts from the Holy Quran, the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi, Khamseh-y-Nezami, and other excerpts and poems of the great poets' divans. During one century, they governed Iran, erected buildings, monasteries, carpet weaving factories, and other industrial centres, and brought up the economy and their relations with the adjacent countries to high levels of cooperation and prosperity. This formed the foundation for the art of illumination in the Safavid Dynasty and afterwards.

By the advent of the Safavids (1501-1722 AD/907-1135 AH), the art of illumination excelled in both quality and quantity due to the artist's experience in designing illuminated, mosaic, carpet patterns and decorating buildings. Undoubtedly, the illumination in the mosaics and carpet designs of this era are distinct. Such designs are an abstract manifestation of different plant designs which were applied to a certain model. As already mentioned, the stems and curves were designed most simply with no leaves or flowers attached to them. Sometimes the illuminated patterns were designed upon the customers' order. Designs of mosaic faience are very similar to those of illumination.

Carpet designs are more beautiful with applying flowers, leaves and other ornamentations according to the artist's taste. As for carpet designing, more delicacies have been taken into account with regard to flowers, leaves, and an ornate background. The process is not the same in the art of illumination.

The religious art and civilisation of a nation allegorically represent the predominant commandments and religious facts in that nation, and this cannot be accepted by merely historical analysis. Therefore, to get a comprehensive understanding of the concepts of Islamic motifs in Iranian painting, the need for introducing motifs is obvious. The classification of Islamic motifs helps to introduce better them, which have become patterns in the past due to their frequent use.

Knowledge of the motifs plays a role in key concepts and meanings that is effective in identifying and distinguishing semantic layers and is recognised as one of the pillars of semantic studies. The concept is particularly relevant to the study and interpretation of Iranian painting which is tremendously interwoven with literature.

5.2 The Quiddity of Iranian Art

Paintings and ornaments in the art of different nations, sometimes complex, lively and elegant, sometimes simple and low-level, are presented in various compositions that can be scrutinised in the form of human being, animal, plant, geometric shapes, abstract and decorative lines. In Islamic era, decorative motifs and their composition attracted special notice and conspicuously amplified in growth and diversity.

The illumination and decorative arts used in book designing have a long history in Iran. The art existed even before the advent of Islam in Iran, because Mani, the proficient Iranian painter, had been decorating his books with beautiful shapes and images to better communicate his messages to his people (Ahmadzadeh, 2001). Mani was born

in 216 AD in Ctesiphon, the ancient capital of Iran - present-day Iraqi territory. Historical books and poems by the great Iranian poets have proved that Mani was a sage and artist. In fact, Mani was the first person to exploit art in favours of religion, and he succeeded in doing so (Naqdi, 2017).

In fact, the use of metals such as gold and silver and decorative motifs in Iranian painting is the continuation of the Manichaean tradition. The use of these precious metals is to create a reflection of light and sparkle that spiritually communicates with the audience. This tradition had been maintained in Iranian painting. The works of Manichaeans were often decorated with paintings and ornaments (Naqdi, 2017). According to Pierre Lecoq, Mani's painting style was prevalent in the Sassanid era, from which it permeated Mongolia and Turkestan, and returned to Iran. The style created a revolution in ancient Iranian painting. After returning, due to the support of dilettante kings and rulers, was influenced by Western and Asian Jesuit painters (Naqdi, 2017). Undoubtedly, Manichaean art has played a major role in the survival of the Parthian-Sassanid artistic traditions in Islamic art (Widengren, 1965).

In sum, the predominant school and style of painting in Iran after the invasion of the Arabs until the invasion of the Mongols is the same as the style of the Manichaean School. There are many noticeable examples of paintings and books of the Daylamites, Ghaznavid (975-1187 AD/344-583 AH) and Seljuks (1037-1194 AD/429-552 AH) which substantiate this claim. What is certain today being that Mani's painting style affected the origination of subsequent schools since emigration of Manicheans to the East, Europe, and North Africa, and hence the spread of Manichaeism. Manichaean art propagated among other nations, especially the eastern Turkestan, where followers of this religion were supported by the royal family during the eighth and the ninth centuries (Naqdi, 2017).

The Uyghur followers of Manichaeism in Turfan, which were influenced by the Chinese, introduced the Manichaean religion to their rulers, acquainted them with Iranian-Manichean art and thus prompted its expansion in the region. As a result, one is safe to say that considering Mongol invasion and the appointment of the Uyghur scribes in government, once again, Manichean art had become prevalent in the Iranian court (Memarzadeh, 2008).

The cultural reflection of the Manichean creed is quite brilliant in the early centuries of the Islamic era. The rejection of mundane life, the negation of materiality, and concentration upon the Hereafter, which were the principal themes in Manichaeism, had influenced the mystical thoughts of the following centuries (Motlagh, 2002). The abstract and decorative designs in the Iranian art of book designing in the Islamic era are a continuation of the Manichaean style (Ahmadzadeh, 2001).

Due to the influence of Islam in Iran, the art of book designing prospered, and the illumination of the Holy Quran in the Islamic age contributed considerably to advancing the art. In the early centuries of the Islamic era, most of the decorative designs had more geometric forms, but during the 8th, 9th and 10th centuries AH (14, 15 & 16 Centuries AD), the shapes evolved, and use of geometric forms reduced significantly. The evolved forms of Islamic designs such as arabesque and flowers were prevalent in this period in the decoration of books, especially the Holy Quran (Takestani, 2007).

The decorative designs used in Iranian-Islamic painting include various geometric, arabesque, and Khataee designs. Most of the arabesque and Khataee designs in the Iranian painting had been displayed in the form of illumination. By examining the abstract drawings of Qurans decorated in the 5th and the 6th centuries AH (11 & 12 AD), it can be assumed that the arabesque design was fully developed in this period, and while

the root of the design is seen in the works of the Sassanids, it was systemised in the early Islamic era.

Whereas from the very beginning of the Islamic era when the arabesque motifs appeared in the Kufic Qurans, there was no trace of the Khataee motifs in earlier works. Probably the development of Khataee designs was accompanied by the Mongol invasion. However, most of the decorative designs in the school of Baghdad and Shiraz were arabesque. During the reign of Baysonqor, the decorative designs were used widely (Pashazanous, 2009).

In these paintings, the arabesque, as a scaffolding, specified the workspace. Besides, the variety of the paintings was broadly augmented. Considering the transference of abstract designs to Shiraz in Baghdad style, other artists who had come from Tabriz, Baghdad, and Shiraz to the Baysonqor court, paved the way for the development of the design. Along with Shahrukh, his son, Baysonqor Mirza also founded a library in Herat and employed the most skilled artists in his workshop.

Khataee designs which are inspired by nature possess much more abstractionism compared to arabesque designs. Various forms of Khataee designs that stylised nature are titled in the painting. Moreover, Khataee designs from stems, leaves and flowers are also found in Manichaean works.

Artworks in all periods of Iranian history have been a reflection of religious and ritual beliefs, and the outward quality of the designs have abounded with realistic, abstract, and symbolic aspects. In realism and abstractionism, there is the objectification of the subject, rather a simplification of the plan and manifestation of the symbolic forms derived from religious beliefs. The designs could be punctiliously analysed by means of interrelating associations with inductions and integrating logical deduction and solidarity comprehensiveness.

Arthur Upham Pope, describing the lack of a proper term for the abstract quality of Iranian art, writes: In Western languages, there is no proper word to show the abstract quality of Iranian art. The words decorative and ornamental refer to a kind of derivation and secondary importance, and the abstract word refers to an art that is considered to be curtailed; in other words, the abstract art is introduced as an ellipsis or contraction, not real experience. Other words, such as style or stylised, formalised or conventionalised, all signify a crystallisation process; the creation of a synthetic substitute, which seems to have taken its tangible and whole life from its own and has imposed weak and structural forms on the reality of the living world. The reason for the lack of a thoroughly conspicuous term for the oriental decorative art is that the meaning of the art itself has not existed in Western thought and practice. Failure in words is accompanied by a difference in perspective. That is, when the view is strange, there is not a proper word for it (Pope et al., 1964).

Iranian art culminated in its most desirable artistic expression in abstract layouts. The layouts that even pre-historically prioritised their time and were more ample in terms of quality. This emphasises the existence of principles that sustain the Iranian art in artistic style. The most important factors in the sustainability of the Iranian art are space, design, and form, which because of its symbolic nature is abstracted and emanated free from mundane restrictions. As Iranian layouts in the Islamic era have accentuated firm values, the symbolic form is the embodiment of culture, religion, and beliefs that have successfully sustained its principles and frameworks during the history.

The decorative motifs of Iranian arts are powerful, diverse and generally long-standing and have always been the expression of the essence of the fundamental concept of art and religion throughout history. Life has got a rational beauty and to emanate, embodies in shape and form, which are also visual criteria. This feature has been a

permanent achievement, the unifying element of Iranian art in all historical periods, the affinity of all the works of art and their ultimate unity with the ideal of absolute perfection; And that is why at the heart of every great aesthetic achievement, seated at the pulpit of art, there is a pure form and regular geometric congruence.

Iranian art in a pure form, and in association with the ideals of absolute perfection, expresses the geometric regularity in all the components of an artwork. The form is a valuable asset in the study of Iranian art. Likewise, the veracity of the universe manifested in the light of the form that is embodied in the essence of reality.

Architecture is the most flexible visual art that represents the profundity of the Iranian sense of imagery. The ultimate architecture is essentially a balance in weights and masses and harmony of the composition with the design of space, which is characteristically obvious in the works of architecture before and after the Islamic era. The spirit of Iranian art has a certain tenacity and never loses its original forms. A penchant for large dimensions, preference of decorative elements, and similarity in the construction of building floors are some of the common general features in architecture during the different periods of history.

The Achaemenids took on themes and techniques of different nations such as Mesopotamia and Egypt, but with a new spiritual insight, they brought them into new forms. This new insight has got an Iranian cultural identity, with new principles, forms, compositions and techniques that support the ideals. Thus, in spite of Mesopotamian and Egyptian sculpture in the ruins of the Persepolis, there is a very substantial difference between Iranian and Mesopotamian statues.

Darius adopted various architectural elements from different nations, such as the great columns of the Egyptian Chamber to build the Persepolis but compared to the Egyptian dark and sombre temples, there is a great difference of what Darius has created.

In general, the adopted technique, technology, and tools were utilised in favour of the Iranian artistic ideal.

In the Assyrian relief, the composition is not empirical, casual, and full of details. The art possesses a sharper appreciation of the individual reality, the ability to convey cruelty and violence to real life, and the acuity that comes from the subject itself.

However, the Achaemenid compositions are rational, regular, and systematic, and design and coordination surpass the details. A single monotony inspires all scenes, and their origin and purpose go beyond objective reality.

Alexander conquered Iran as Greek culture was at its peak, and the Seleucid government had ruled Iran for 100 years, yet the influence of Greek culture was superficial and temporary because it stood in sharp contrast to the Iranian soul. Greek art was realistic, with a taint of corporeality, and Iranian art - abstract, symbolic and decorative. In this manner, the predestined course of Iranian art was not blocked in the gradual Parthian-Mongol trials, and generally, every interaction eventually led to replenishment and the consolidation of its particular quality.

Art is a kind of expression, and the different forms of expression create certain cultures granting them a certain individuality. Cultural identity is not necessarily restricted to the unity of race, the unity of language, the stability of political institutions, and the firmness of geographical boundaries, rather it is dependent on the survival and sustenance of ideas which retain creativity, ideological values, and spiritual qualities.

Throughout the history of Iran, Iranian art has maintained the distinctive features of rationality, applicability, intrinsic beauty, clear and understandable forms, and symbolic aspects, and has enjoyed continuity and sustainability. For that reason, knowledge of Iranian art drastically hinges upon the comprehension of its continuity and sustainability.

Continuity is one of the hallmarks of Iranian art, and it is not limited to the mere recognition of the appearance or unity of the name. The principle of continuity has given real originality, sustenance, and renewability to Iranian art. Iranian art from the early times to the Islamic era (and throughout the Islamic era) has preserved its true continuity, whether in the major imageries or minor details of the work. Throughout this art, there has been a series of distinct values and assumptions about the nature and purpose of art. Of course, these factors have fluctuated and sometimes changed, but the art has always persevered kind of individuality that clearly distinguishes it from the art of China, Egypt, Greece and Rome.

Since art acquires its elements through experience, and the totality of environment and climate affect the art in a particular way, it is possible to accentuate the role of climate in the sustainability of artistic principles and the history of art. The climate, to some extent, has influenced experiences and values and is reflected in art. Even though the material environment may either impose restrictions on the artist, or cause a constructive reaction, or offer opportunities, or provide the artist with unlimited amounts of material, it cannot anticipate what the artist's specific reaction should be.

What determines the nature of the culture and, therefore, the quality of its art, is the nature of the response to the geographic factors. In a progressive culture, how people deal with problems depends on the traditions and strategies of the community they have grown in. Pope et al. (1964) believe that in the final analysis, the goal of civilisations is to reveal these hidden forms.

Mathematics and geometry make it possible to connect the sensible world through a combination of forms and transform both into pure forms. Logic is the manifestation of the forms that guide the human thought and guarantees its credibility. The various types of forms in mathematics, logic and natural sciences, which are precisely defined,

philosophically are the inner truth of the universe. These forms are not abstract; they are the identical facts, reveal the truth to us and teach us the secret of mastery. These faces can be called intrinsic reality. Reaching these forms is a redefinition of the thoughts of God.

Iranian arts have all the time been dealing with form, and henceforth they are called symbolic. The symbolic aspect of the artwork belongs to the world of soul, and the role of the artist's imagination is to reveal the domination of the man's inner truth over the world. Symbolic works record eternal values and thus represent the state of timelessness. They cover the past and express the future.

One of the most important points in the history of Iranian art has been the artists' aesthetic sense in the creation of artwork. Besides, the principles of geometry, including symmetry, equilibrium, and congruence have been considered in the portrayed layouts. Sometimes, elements of layout, especially in prehistoric works, have distinguishably appeared, without sacrificing overall solidarity for the entire plan. In these works, identical and different elements have got repetition and simple alternation respectively. In some works, belonging to the second millennium BC, the repetition occurred with an accurate order. The equilibrium, whether symmetrical or balanced, such as inverted and asymmetric contrast, is the key factor throughout the history of Iranian art.

The congruence, as the expression of mathematical relation, is regarded as the essential principle of life. The Pythagoreans made the relation with a certain number and regarded it as the inherent nature of everything in relation to the reality of life. The congruence between the design and body is not just a manifestation of a design on a receptacle, rather an inference to the truth of beauty in all aspects of existence.

The ancient artworks are the manifestation of the deepest levels of human consciousness and the enunciation of the most transcendental successes of human

thought. The images and motifs of these works reveal the different stages of the transformation of thought and culture. The interpretation of the symbolic language of these works hangs upon a punctilious analysis through the interconnection of different associations of a single sign, substantiation of the general theory based on the durability of inference in a certain period, induction, the integration of rational solidarity based on our knowledge about the myth-creating minds, and, finally, the comprehensiveness of deduction. The interpretation of the concepts of these works will help to understand better and evaluate the works of early cultures.

Symbolic designs are displayed in a variety of geometric, plant, animal, and human shapes, and the meanings given through these designs mainly include the celestial bodies, the sun, the moon, stars, trees, water, mountains, and human beings.

5.3 Art Supporters of Herat School

In the Timurid period (1370-1506 AD / 771-911 AH) in Iran, especially during the rule of Shahrukh (1405-1445 AD/ 807-850 AH) and his sons including Baysonqor (1918-1953 / 802-837 AH), artistic support was not amusement, but part of the affairs of the state. Artistic and scientific support could increase the credibility and prestige of any court and consequently could lead to its political excellence and reputation (Subtelny, 1988).

From the very beginning of his reign, Shahrukh introduced himself as the protector of Islamic law and established the religious policy of the Timurid government on that basis; this shows the prevailing Iranian-Islamic cultural trends during that period. Shahrukh's sons, namely Alagh Bayge, Ibrahim Sultan, Baysonqor Mirza and Muhammad Jooki, were not only well-known for their artistic activities but also for their interest and support of arts and sciences. Baysonqor was a skilled artist in calligraphy, and many artists and scholars went to his court due to his good support.

The cultural abilities of each prince were important in the development of the cultural atmosphere of the Turkish courts of the Timurid, and although the Persian language was not the official language of these courts, Persian literature was of great importance in the field of arts defended by the courtiers at that time, and Persian poetry was always discussed in the courts of Herat, Samarkand and Shiraz. This interest of the Timurid princes resulted in numerous collections of these works. Books became an integral part of the cultural activities of the Timurid, and the production of glorious versions of literary texts of Iran was at the top of their programmes. Books were the highest expression of their artistic interest.

During the Timurid period, the most beautiful elements of the style of painting of the Ilkhanids (Tabriz School) and Al-e-Mozaffar (Shiraz School) were absorbed and combined with the romantic and artistic elements of Iran. During this period of Herat School, Shahrukh and his wife Gohar Shad Khatun and his son, Baysonqor, supported the arts and artists more than other Timurid rulers.

According to Shahrukh's orders, several copies of Jame-Al-Tawarikh were written at his art workshop. Unlike Baysonqor, who was a fan of poems, epics and legends, he was careful about history. Due to his orders, several copies of Jame-Al-Tawarikh were written at his workshop (Rab-e-Rashidi). Shahrukh also ordered Hafiz Ebru, the court historian, to continue the events of al-Tawarikh from the left section until his own time. There is a copy of Al-Thawarikh (1314 AD / 714 AH) in Topkapi, Istanbul, to which the Hafiz Ebru section was added in 1425 AD / 829 AH and includes the images of the period of Shahrukh. There is another version of history written by Hafiz Ebru named "General History" in Topkapi Istanbul which contains twenty images with style similar to those of Baysonqor Naskh (calligraphy). Another copy of the archival

collection of Hafiz Ebru written in 1425 AD /829 AH with 142 drawings stored at the Topkapi Library in Istanbul.

Baysonqor invited artists and nominated Mirza Jafar Baysonqor as the head of the royal library. The Shahnameh of Baysonqor, which has the most precise stories and skilfully decorated drawings, was written in this library.

5.4 Formation and Achievements of Herat School of Painting

Persian painting as dignified art that succeeded in the Timurid palace, depicted subject matter derived from romantic and epic themes. This courtly art prospered and was nurtured under the Timurid kings in their great institutions of the royal libraries. The tradition of the royal libraries started very early in the Islamic world. As in the second and third AH century there were many libraries in the capital cities of Islam world. After the decline of the libraries for a while during the fourth and five AH century, a growth of royal libraries started again during Timurid dynasty in the 8th AH century because of the rulers supporting. By improving libraries during Timurid dynasty artists started to work for royal library by painting books. The colours in the books of royal Timurid libraries are bright with idealized settings, bold action and gestures, decorative patterns and strong rhythm which contrast with naturalistic paintings. Floral arabesques were a prominent feature in most Timurid design patterns. One of the most important Islamic symbols is flowers, denoting the divine realm. They are crucial in both the aesthetic as well as poetic vocabulary, and both poets and artists pay their greatest homage to flowers. Concerning the formation and achievements of Herat School, the following points should be noted that first of all, Timur was the founder of the Herat School. Gathering artists in Herat and Samarkand and providing financial support, he provided the base for the emergence of

Herat School. He brought together a group of artists from the schools of Tabriz and Shiraz and created a new combination that led to the formation of the Herat School of Painting.

Furthermore, the Herat School was formed in two stages, and the leaders of both stages were the artists of the Timurid family who supported the artists. Herat art workshops enjoyed great power and made a great boom during the time of Shahrukh and his son Baysonqor. The contribution of these art supporters who benefited from calligraphy and painting were very effective in these innovations. On the other hand, At the first stage of the Herat School, Chinese characters still had significant presence, but they gradually become weaker and replaced by elements with an Iranian identity due to the presence of Iranian painters.

Moreover, in the first stage of book designing of the Herat School (1368-1498 AD / 780-850 AH) and due to the prevailing conditions of the time, the historical themes (such as the comprehensive writing of “al-Tawarikh”), epics (such as the “Shahnameh-y-Ferdowsi”), romance (like “Khamseh” by Nizami) were emphasised. The Timurid rulers provided more credibility for their sovereignty in Iran. The use of arts in designing books for the expression of political and social thoughts even in the presence of their Turkmen followers (Kara Koyunlu, 1378-1469 AD, and later Aq Qoyunlu 1469-1508AD) was very effective. They also established a school in Western Iran, which was known as the Turkmen School due to some characteristics, which is, in fact, the immediate results of Herat School.

In addition, the Herat School in its last period (1470-1507 AD / 875-912 AH) achieved gorgeous and glorious success. At this stage, skilful painters were more influential in changing the themes and rules of the previous painting. The colour scheme reached the highest level of beauty where vivacious, clean and brilliant colours were used. In the painting of the buildings, the interior and exterior of the building were considered

and separated. Spacing and spectacular landscapes got especial invention. Decorative paintings developed and the artists of this period made remarkable progress in this regard. In terms of subjects, Iran's painting in this period experienced mystical, moral and cultural subjects. Also, the topics of everyday life and the scenes of ordinary life attracted the attention of the artists.

Also, in the Herat School, there is another dimension of painting which was created for the first time in this period. The sequence of samples of calligraphy and painting and providing a set of drawings, designs and patterns are among other achievements of the Herat School. Additionally, one of the most important results of the Herat School is the emergence of Bukhara, Tabriz and Isfahan painting schools in the Safavid period, as well as the Istanbul School of Painting and India Gourkani School.

Another important achievement of Herat School is the supremacy of painting calligraphy in its aftermath schools. Calligraphy during the Mongol period and before the School of Herat was considered to be the top art and preferred to painting; but at the end of Herat School, painting and calligraphy were ranked the same, and in subsequent schools such as Bukhara, Tabriz and Gourkani, painting was preferred to calligraphy.

5.5 Analysing Sample of Herat School of Painting

The rapid growth and development of painting helped Persian painting flourish once again in the 15th and 16th centuries AD. This led to the creation of the Timurid and Safavid royal workshops of the best manuscripts in Persian poetry in Iran. Despite the influence of Chinese painting at the beginning of this period, the process of excluding foreign elements in Iranian paintings was observed in some schools, including the Schools of Shiraz and Herat in the Timurid period. Moreover, due to the artists' tendency towards realism in the 15th century, the specific aesthetics in painting came into existence. Hence,

the system developed based on the specific aesthetic traditions of the ancient images helped form the Shahnameh of Baysonqor.

In the 15th century, Iranian painting indissolubly linked with the name of Herat was known as the Timurid School of painting. Baysonqor Mirza, son of Shahrukh and grandson of Timur, was a man of letters and great calligrapher. He founded a library in Herat where he gathered the most talented painters, illustrators, calligraphers and bookbinders of his time. Mirza Baysonqor invited the most prominent scholars and artists in his court to create their artworks. Jafar Tabrizi (a prominent calligrapher), Mowlana Qiam-O-Dinn (illuminator), Pir Ahmed Bagh, Khajeh Mir Khalil and Qias-Al-Din are among outstanding artists that started working in his court.

The history of book illustrations dates back to the Manichaeism and Sassanid periods in Iran. This tradition was continued by those who were interested in this field after Islam entered Iran. Although wall paintings were much older than book illustrations, such artworks were greatly reduced after the Mongolian domination over Iran. During the Islamic period, the flourishing period of the Persian painting coincided with the reigns of Mongolians, Timurid and Safavid. The Timurid court was a major centre for supporting artists, especially painters. It oversaw the rise of book illustrations and manuscripts at that time. Among the manuscripts, the Shahnameh was the most important and was illustrated over and over again. The Shahnameh's stories and poems have truly portrayed the identity, honour and national pride of Iranians very well.

Baysonqor Shahnameh is the most important version of the Shahnameh of Herat School at Baysonqor's time. The famous Baysonqor Shahnameh which dates to 1430 contains 22 paintings attributed to three artists: Mowlana Ali, Mowlana Qias-Al-Din and Amir Khalil. It must be noted that its format is folio, 38×26 cm in 700 pages. This version was registered as the spiritual heritage of Iran by United Nations Educational, Scientific

and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 2007. Baysonqor Shahnameh is kept in the Golestan Palace library in Tehran.

With their original composition, the rich palette of their natural elements, their indigo blue or golden skies, their interesting bushes, shining blossoms and luxurious trees, their narratives, at times intense and at others serene, the masterful design and execution of their characters and sponge-like rocks, their decorative architectural elements, and their attention to landscaping details, the paintings of this manuscript constitute masterpieces of their time (Hoseinirad, 2005).

Bringing together the most prominent calligraphers and painters and many other devout artists in his castle, Baysonqor made Persian painting be combined differently. Each of these artists came from different cities and separate schools; thus, following the mixture and contact of these schools, Herat School with the unique features began to emerge.

The paintings of Shahnameh-y-Baysonqor are elegant because of the emphasis on clothing, tile and carpet designs. The images of the buildings are painted so small that the fitting and proportion between them and humans seems to be irrational. The images are an excuse for the use of decorative motifs. In other words, to design the building, artists apply unreasonable proportions by decorating and displaying two-dimensional pictures in bright colours, reducing the heaviness of the buildings in these paintings. As to the two-dimensional images, the inside and outside of the buildings are shown at the same time. The exterior of the buildings was covered with colourful tiles and a dome with decorative motifs. There are inscriptions that are covered by Kufi, Reqa and Reyhan calligraphies. The entrance and arches are designed by arabesque motifs. The wooden lattice windows have been implemented with great precision.

Each page of the Baysonqory Shahnameh consists of a drawing of a great table. Each table has six horizontal and vertical lines. The first line is blue and longer than five other lines. The other lines are located between four other gold lines in bold type. The distance between lines is painted by the gold teeth known as the Dandan Mooshi, and the drawing of the table called Morassae is very complete. To paint abstract and geometric designs, gold is used in these paintings. Occasionally, a golden hue is also used to colour the sky. In most paintings, birds are painted in different colours in different modes of flying and nature is portrayed lovely and significant. Some of these paintings are being shown designs out of the text in margins that are attached to the original story. Also, the walls of the buildings and their entrance are decorated with abstract and geometric designs and lattice windows. The layout of the structure of the castle and the entrance to the congress building are extremely magnificent. Moreover, inscriptions decorated on the walls include the Sols calligraphy with a blue background.

Concerning the specifications of Persian painting at this time, one may say that these features involve livelier and less symmetrical scenes than their contemporary counterparts produced in Shiraz. The manufactured colours, the precise design of humans and animal characters, the attention to the multiplication of nature's idyllic landscapes and the relationship between architectural elements constitute important achievements of the Herat School in this period.

Though provincial places are certainly apt to preserve outworn fashions, it would be strange if the style of the manuscript that was executed for Baysonqor at Herat or Astarabad should differ widely from that done for his brother at Shiraz. These two styles have been too sharply distinguished. Perhaps Baysonqor had the better taste and realised that the small-scale figures are better suited to the miniature. The style of painting is not so different; the compositions are similar (Gray, 1930).

As the samples show, this Persian painter in the Herat School utilised humans, animals, nature and architecture to paint Baysonqory Shahnameh. Glorious buildings with much decoration, tall figures with sumptuous clothing and solemn men with whisker are common in these paintings. Subtle and small human forms, highly ornamental landscapes with mountains and long horizons, foam and bright and rich colours, sometimes trees with branches and birds on them in various shades of colour and high horizon of the marginal rocks and foam are elements in the composition of the Herat School in Baysonqory Shahnameh.

The arabesque is a form of artistic decoration consisting of surface decorations based on rhythmic linear patterns of scrolling and interlacing foliage, tendrils or plain lines. Arabesque motifs are referred to repetitive circular shapes and maze of rules whose designs are often symmetrical and to some extent similar to twisting stems of plants. In fact, they are a design of combination of plants and animals, or a combination of regular divisions that developed in modelling of Parthian period. Arabesque motifs are linked to each other with a line called sling. The sling connects motifs to each other, making them non-uniform. Abstraction means being free from the material. Worldly concerns had been seen in Iranian art before Islam. Use of abstract motifs and symbolism were normal in the past in Iran, and the related principles were formed and evolved on the subjective perception of the universe.

There existed arabesque motifs named Khataee. They were different decorative motifs used in the painting of Baysonqory Shahnameh. These motifs include a bunch of flowers, buds and leaves on twisty stems. They consist of beautiful combinations with repeated mono-pattern like arabesques. They come from natural patterns and are less abstract than arabesque. They are designs of plants and floral motifs which move amidst arabesque sling.

Geometric designs are abstract forms using a visual language of form, colour and line to create a composition which may exist with a degree of independence from visual references in the world. Abstraction existed along a continuum indicates a departure from reality to depict imagery in painting. This departure from accurate representation can be partial or complete. Even, art that aims the highest verisimilitude can be considered as abstract, at least theoretically, since perfect representation is likely to be exceedingly elusive. In this section, samples have been chosen from Baysonqory Shahnameh to be analysed. In comparison with other paintings in this version, these pictures possess a great number of arabesque and geometric motifs.

In (Figure 5.1) where Faramarz mourns the death of his father and his uncle, Zavareh, there have are a variety of arabesque, geometric and Khataee motifs for decorating clothes, buildings and coffins. At the top of this painting, with more geometric motifs, there is a dome covered by arabesque and Khataee motifs.

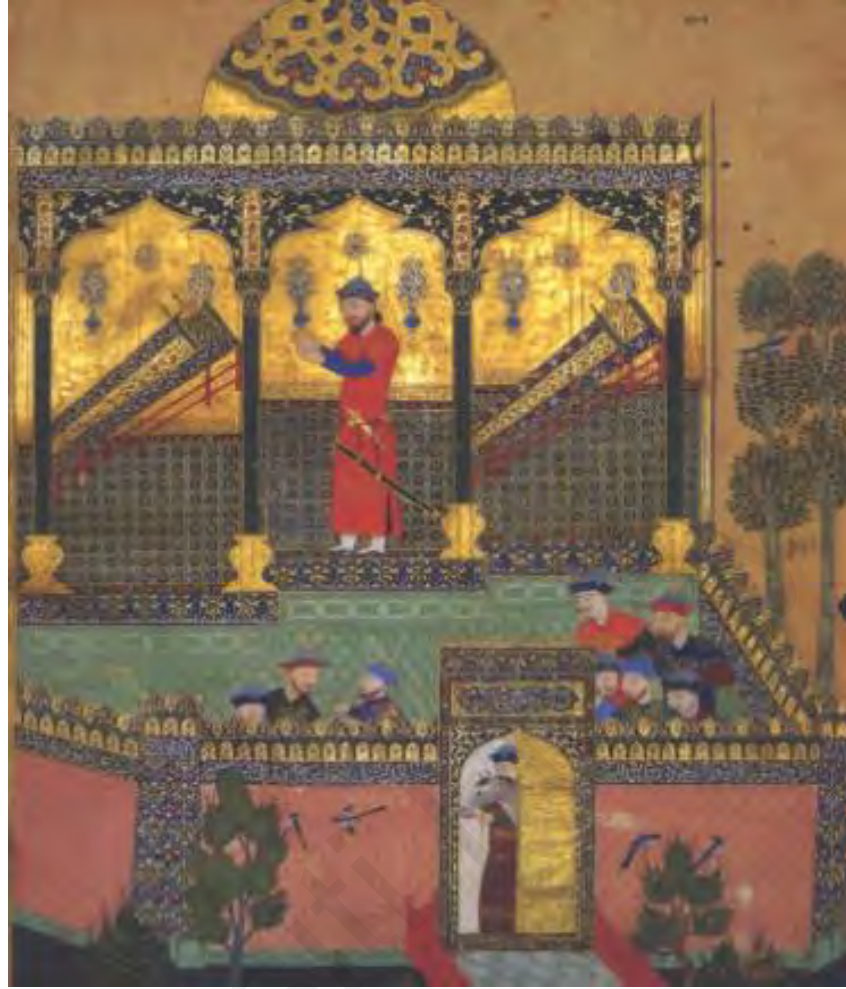


Figure 5.1: Faramarz Mourns Death of his Father and his Uncle, Zavareh.

Beneath the dome, there is a margin which is divided into three parts, and in the lower part, there is a design of the mixtures of arabesque and calligraphy. This design has been repeated around the walls of the building. Under the margin, there is a part which is divided into three sections with two columns designed as a sanctuary by arabesque motifs.

In the middle of the sanctuary (Figure 5-2), Faramarz is standing, and in both left image and the right one, there are Faramarz's father and uncle's coffins covered by arabesque and Khataee. On the ground where Faramarz is standing, and his right and left sides have been covered with geometric design. This section is covered by arabesque

motifs in a margin. The ground of the exterior of the building has been designed by a different colour and geometric motifs.

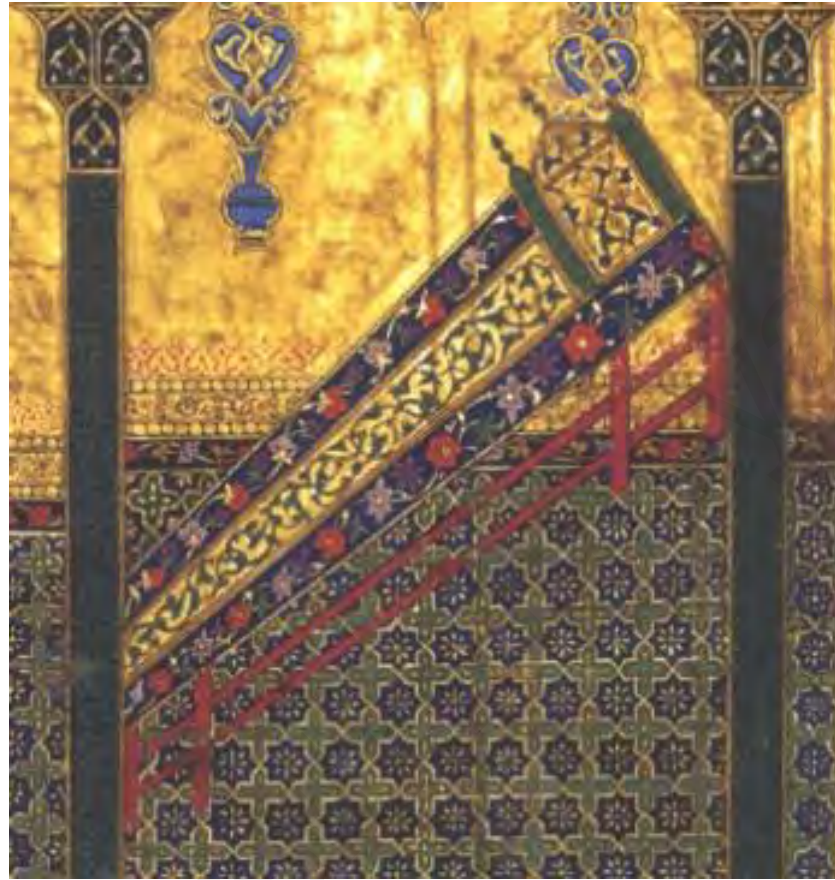


Figure 5.2: A Part of Faramarz Mourns Death of His Father and His Uncle, Zavareh.

The outer wall has two columns with arabesque motifs, and the entrance is decorated by arabesque and Khataee motifs and calligraphy. As can be seen in the painting, high arabesque motifs have been used in the picture. In the dome part (Figure 5-3), there are combinations of arabesque and Khataee motifs. Arabesque motifs are repeated as a Vagireh.

Khataee motifs fill the middle part of the dome. The background colour is gold and azure or very bright blue. On the gold, there are monochrome Khataees. Inside the arabesque motifs are covered by three-leaf and five-leaf flowers that are white, purple, red, blue and green. In the three parts repeated below the dome, arabesque and Khataee motifs have been painted.



Figure 5.3: A Part of Faramarz Mourns Death of His Father and His Uncle, Zavareh

In the middle of the image (Figure 5-4), there is a Khataee, arabesque and geometric design. This part is divided into three parts as three sanctuaries in which the artist has used more spiral stems due to more space. The variety of designs and sizes in green motifs is less than golden motifs, but green stems are more spiral than golden ones. The background of the corners is azure. On Faramarz's clothes, golden Khataees in the red background can be seen as well.



Figure 5.4: A part of Faramarz Mourns Death of His Father and His Uncle, Zavareh

There is a kind of arabesque form on the golden part which is like a chandelier. Arabesque forms in this design of chandeliers (Figure 5-4) show the autonomy of the arabesque motif by the artist. The base of this design is formed by arabesque painted outward. This design was repeated six times which has been coloured light blue. Around the pot and behind it is shaped with little brown from dark to light.

A small pot was designed between the distances of two pots which are also arabesque but smaller. This part indicates that the artist painted arabesque motifs to show objects. The symmetrical line can be seen in all the designs. To show the ground, the artist used star and cross images and green, gold and blue colours in geometric motifs. Geometric designs have been applied outside of this part with hexagonal images and green colour.

This image shows one of the three main themes of humans, nature, animals, and the most important imaginary world in Persian painting of the Herat School. Iranian luxurious court style designs, strong composition and Iranian identity, are observable.

The dome in Persian painting is a symbol of alliance between the sky and the ground, and the artist showed “death” as a departure from the earth to the sky. The Herat School was a renewal of Persian painting from China’s influence (Tashakori, 2011).

Pashazanous (2009) argues the arabesque form came from the Parthian period and Khataee motif was from motifs of the Sassanid period. The other painting (Figure 5-5) shows the image of Lohrasb Ascends to the Throne which is composed of two parts. The outer part is a quarter of the whole picture and shows the human environment and natural daylight with bright clear colours, while inside part is night and is covered by the blue sky with shiny stars. In this painting, Khataee has been used on clothing and in the upper part of the image.

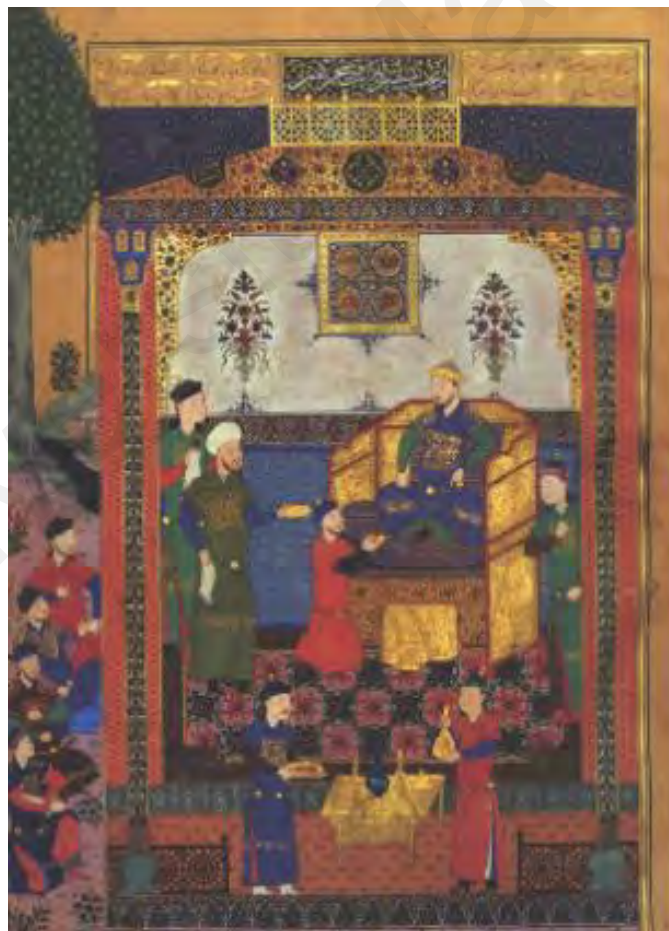


Figure 5.5: Ascends to the Throne. Baysonqory Shahnameh

A combination of calligraphy and arabesque is seen at the top of the image with the blend of white and gold in a blue background. Below this part, there are the geometrical designs that can be seen as a window. The next part is like a half dome which is filled with Khataee motifs inside and is covered by red and blue flowers in a golden background. Under this section, there is a margin of white and golden arabesque in the blue background. Red and black are also used in some parts for the background colour (Figure 5-6).



Figure 5.6: A Part of Lohrasb Ascends to Throne

In the middle of this image, both sides are decorated with gold background and covered by flowers of Khataee called Lachak. There are two pots of flowers of Khataee and arabesque motifs which are painted inside a square. Arabesque lines are moving between four circles. There are some monochrome motifs around this square called Sharafeh. Moreover, there is a margin covered by arabesque motifs which are separating the lower part of the lower part (Figures 5-7 and 5-8)



Figure 5.7: A Part of Lohrasb Ascends to the Throne



Figure 5.8: A Part of Lohrasb Ascends to the Throne

Geometric designs in the picture are the combination of triangular and hexagonal lines and shapes coloured by blue, green, white and gold, creating a star image. Lohrasb's sitting on the throne is covered by monochrome flowers of Khataee in a gold background. The ground is painted kinky by geometric motifs which are enjoyed white, red and blue in the black and pink background. This also involves combinations of geometric and arabesque patterns in the last two parts of this figure such as columns. In this image, geometric forms are combined with other elements such as walls and porch railings, a porch, two columns, a floor, rugs, desks, a throne and stairs.

The painting by the name of, "Golnaz, the Maid, and Ganjvar Ardavan Meet Ardeshir" (Figure 5-9) is one of the most beautiful paintings of Baysonqory Shahnameh that shows geometric motifs in different designs and parts. Just like other paintings that showed above, geometric and arabesque motifs have been used for showing the building. Furthermore, Khataee motifs have been applied to decorate clothes.



Figure 5.9: Golnaz, the Maid, and Ganjvar Ardavan Meet Ardeshir.

Monochrome designs are considered one of the Khataee styles. This style can be seen for decorating the walls of the courtyard. In this style, the background is coloured first, and after painting Khataee motifs with a lighter colour, the artist draws a thicker coloured line around them. This method is a result of the connection between painting and illumination (Figure 5-10 and 5-11).



Figure 5.10: A part of Golnaz, the Maid, and Ganjvar Ardavan Meet Ardeshir



Figure 5.11: A part of Golnaz, the Maid, and Ganjvar Ardavan Meet Ardeshir

This style is used not only for illuminating, but it is also employed for decorating paintings (Pashazanous, 2009). In a part of Golnaz, the maid, and Ganjvar Ardavan meet Ardeshir, the artist utilised a great number of geometric designs to show the building, Khataee motifs to decorate clothes and arabesque motifs to show different parts of the building. It must be noted that the colours used in this painting contain the warmer form.

In the painting named Esfandiyar Kills Arjasb (Figure 5-12), despite using less Khataee, the great number of arabesque and geometric motifs is employed for creating it. This picture is one of the most amazing paintings in Baysonqory Shahnameh. The painter had a high vision to portray inside the castle and outside and depicted three extra spaces – seraglio – linked to each other by using geometric motifs. The rotational form in this painting from the doorway to the threshold, attracts viewers' attention to the climax of the battle. This picture is a unique combination of lines, patterns, colours and other external elements that have created an epic masterly. The artist has made use of Khataee motifs for painting and decorating the throne, the clothes and the door of the building. The owner of this work has also utilised decorative motifs to show the walls of the castle and the full armour of soldiers.

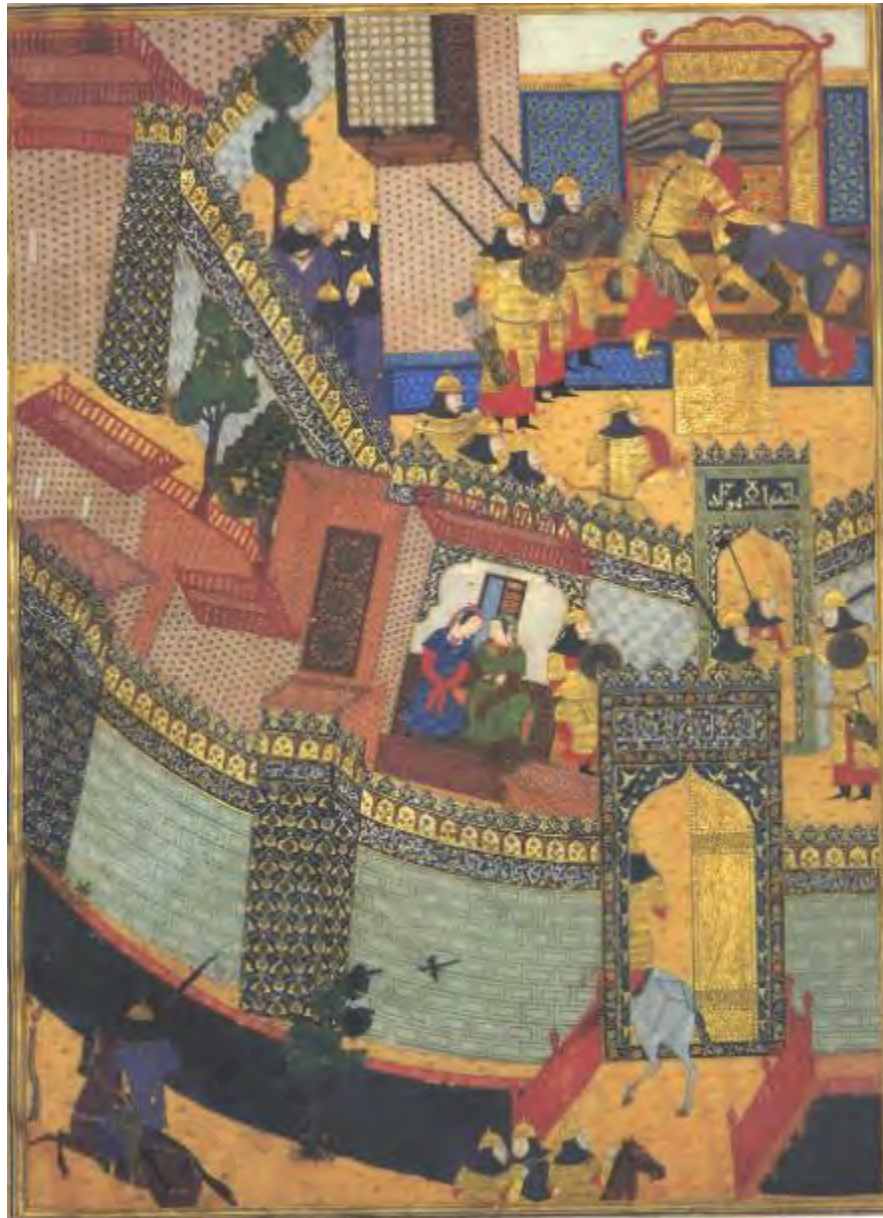


Figure 5.12: Esfandiyar Kills Arjasp. Baysonqory Shahnameh

Monzar Learns Chess Game in the presence of Anoushirvan (Figure 5-13) has a composition rather like Lohrasb Ascends to Throne. As is shown, at the top of the picture (Figure 5-14), there is a margin covered by arabesque motifs and calligraphy and an image akin to a sanctuary with flowers of Khataee in a golden background, also two beautiful pots and a square remarkably. Note that the pots are designed by arabesque. However, the

square is not covered by arabesque motifs. Khataee paints the throne that Anoushirvan is sitting on. However, the wall and the floor are covered by geometric motifs.



Figure 5.13: Monzar Learns Chess Game in the Presence of Anoushirvan.



Figure 5.14: A Part of Monzar Learns Chess Game in the Presence of Anoushirvan.

The philosophy of emergence of geometric designs originates from the Islamic thinking that reflects abstraction and representation of Allah's creations. Geometric motifs in Iranian traditional arts have a very deep and strong bond with the theoretical, philosophical and practical principles and teachings of Islam (Naghani, 2005).

As far as the artists are concerned, decorative elements or patterns, including Khataee motifs, geometrical designs and arabesques indicates unity in diversity. It means that the geometric coloured patterns and shapes mainly represent the existence of Allah the Omnipresent. In other words, the geometric motifs and arabesques are a display of spectacular divine beauty and grace which is present everywhere at all times. It must be noted that although these motifs have been painted and taken for mosques and people in the past; it seems that they are of practical use in our modern world.

To conclude, arabesque motifs painted in the Shahnameh are based on Vagireh designs and patterns. Although Khataee motifs are painted much less, methods of their performing look more diverse rather than arabesques. To be more precise, Arabesques and Khataee motifs are designed, painted or coloured completely different and quite distinctive.

Table 5.1: Classifying Islamic abstractive motifs have been used in the Herat School

Classifying of Islamic abstractive motifs have been used in Herat School of Painting	The value of Islamic motifs has been used in Herat School of Painting
Geometric motifs	<p>By analysing samples, we can see that geometric motifs have been used as a decorative element in the Baysonqory Shahnameh of the Herat School of Painting. Geometric motifs have been used to decorate buildings in paintings because they made the audience think about spiritual values whereas illustrating living things caused them to pay attention to the world desires.</p>
Floral motif (Khataee)	<p>Khataee or floral motifs have been used in the more diverse method of execution than geometrical shapes or arabesque. Due to the endless movement of the stems and the variety of flowers, buds, leaves and other related motifs, Khataee has infinite variety: from various dishes and rugs to dome surfaces, and to whatever Iranian artists create, it appears in. Round, butterfly, Shah Abbasi, and whirligig flowers, and types of leaves and buds are examples of countless paintings that Iranian artists have developed through Khataee stem and spread throughout the plan.</p>
Arabesque motifs	<p>Arabesque in these paintings are distinct and painted in an individual frame. As the spirit of Islam has a direct connection and spiritual propinquity with the broad flow of abstract forms and images, it absorbs these ancient elements and turns them into the most abstract and generic commonly used versions; it integrates them and grants them a new rational insight that can somewhat be said to have a spiritual elegance.</p>

Table 5.2: Classifying abstractive Islamic motifs in Faramarz Mourns Death of His Father and His Uncle, Zavareh.

Geometrical motifs	Arabesque motifs	Floral motifs
		
		
		
		
		
		

Table 5.3: Classifying Abstractive Islamic Motifs In: Lohrasb Ascends to Throne

Geometrical motifs	Arabesque motifs	Floral motifs
		
		
		
		
		

Table 5.4: Classifying Abstractive Islamic Motifs In: Golnaz, the Maid, and Ganjvar Ardavan Meet Ardeshir

Geometrical Motif	Arabesque Motifs	Floral Motifs (Khataee)
		
		
		
		
		
		

Table 5.5: Classifying Abstractive Islamic Motifs In: Esfandiyar Kills Arjasb

Geometrical Motifs	Arabesque Motifs	Floral Motifs (Khataee)
		
		
		
		
		
		

5.6 The Quiddity of Khataee Motifs in the Herat School of Painting

Khataee motifs inspired from nature are less abstract than Eslimee motifs. The flower of Shah Abbasi or Laleh Abbasi has remained in the gypsy tablets in Kish Island since the Sassanid era. The tendency to such designs is also clearly seen in the Manichaean painting. In the period of the Mongols and Timurid sin Iran, these designs became more useful. Probably the extension of Khataee designs was accompanied by the Mongol invasion of Iran. In the Shahnameh of Baysonqor, a legitimate mode is seen in the execution of Khataee motifs.

In the image of Faramarz mourning on his father's coffin (Figure 5.15), non-coloured Khataee decorations were executed on the door and the foot of the column. The large and small flowers at appropriate distances and the use of simple and congruent leaves among flowers and the uniform expansion of motifs in the whole field show the artist's knowledge in the balanced harmony of the motifs.

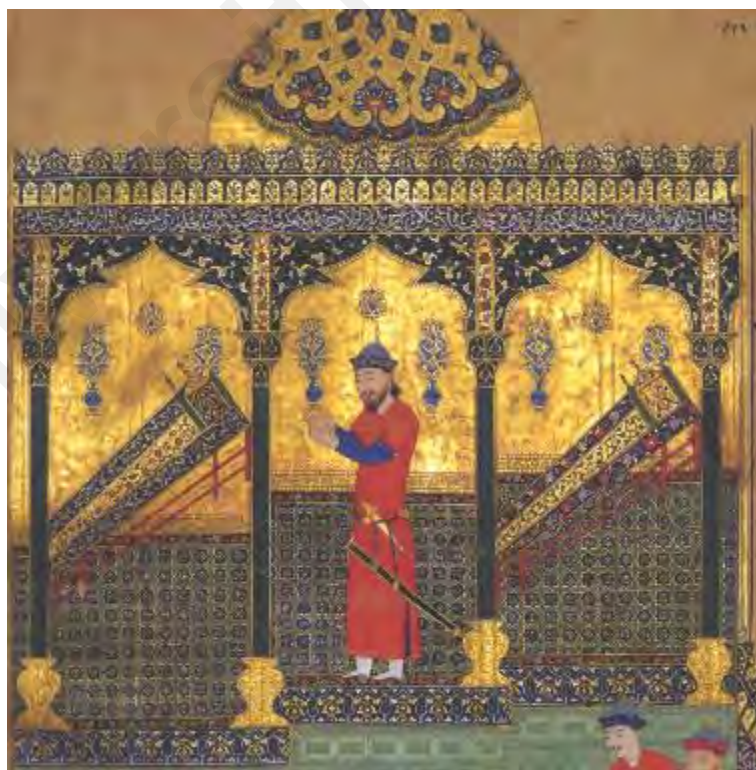


Figure 5.15: A Part of Faramarz mourning on his father's coffin

Another type of Khataee in this image (Figure 5.15) is the use of coloured designs on the coloured background (azure and black). An example of this can be seen in the dome section of this image. Because of the short distance between the motifs, one can see the artist's amazing power in simulating the motifs. The stem and the direction of the lower motifs are upward, and the upper motifs are directed downwards (Pashazanous, 2009).

In the image of Lohrasb's crowning (Figure 5.16), the colourful designs of the Khataee were executed on the golden background in the two corners above the central framework, the upper margin and the trapezoidal surface of the inscription. In this section, the stems and leaves were green, and flowers were painted in blue, red, pink and purple. The colours are somewhat dark. There is no accumulation of colours and motifs in the selection of flowers and colours, and they are distributed at appropriate distances throughout the entire surface. In areas where more space was present, the artist used more coarse flowers and, where there was less space, he used small flowers, buds and leaves.



Figure 5.16: Lohrasb's crowning

In the two drawings of Lohrasb's crowning and visiting Gulnar and Ardeshir in the Shahnameh of Baysonqor, there are some Khataee motifs. In other paintings, there are less Khataee flowers, and they are simply used in the frames.

5.7 The Quiddity of Arabesque Motifs in the Herat School of Painting

As described above, arabesque motifs are repeated as circular twists and turns, often in the form of symmetric and sometimes non-symmetrical, which indicate the plants' stem twist. Arabesque (Eslimee) motifs play the main role in Iranian decorative designs. These designs are inspired by the plants, as a reflection of the artist's mind. Arabesque motifs are basically connected to each other by knots, while connecting them to each other, make them various and delightful (Machiyani, 2015).

Arabesque motifs have been used as decorative drawings in the paintings conducted in the Baysonqor workshop, including Baysonqory Shahnameh. These motifs during the Timurid period were also used extensively in tile works, carpets, fabrics, wooden structures and various types of containers (Pashazanous, 2009).

In Iranian painting in the Islamic period, with the direct connection of images with religious texts and mythological manuscripts, the use of symbolic elements was commonplace, and artists used arabesque motifs in accordance with the image and content they intended. A similar sample of tiles of the minarets of the Goharshad Mosque (frames of the arabesque motifs among the divine names) (Figure 5.17) can be seen in the Shahnameh of Baysonqor.



Figure 5.17: Minarets of the Goharshad Mosque

Due to the inside and outside space and calculated geometric relationships, this image has become one of the most eye-catching versions of the Shahnameh. The decorations of the lower margins of the walls were decorated on three sides with arabesque frames and coloured in blue, yellowish brown, lazuli and white.

The visual similarities between the arabesque motifs used in the paintings and the tile works of the Timurid period can be traced to the painting named “women are dancing in the Harem of Sultan Hussein” (Figure 5.18). The decorative motifs of the tiles depicted in the exterior of the building in this painting matches with the design of the slab-framed tiles of the margin of the wall and the arabesque motifs used in the tile of the courtyard of the Mosque of Goharshad. These tiles are more commonly seen in the geometric rows of triangles, diamonds, squares, and hexagons.



Figure 5.18: women are dancing in the Harem of Sultan Hussein

Arabesques are a symbol of the belief in the principle of the unity of God. These botanical symbols remind the unity principle and the gardens of heaven. Arabesque motifs are indicated with the secret of unity in multiplicity and multiplicity in unity in the images, and this is, in fact, the same viewpoint that plays the main role in Iranian drawings. It depicts the smallest details in the whole, and the whole in a component originate from a mystical view that stems from the Iranian-Islamic views of the artist.

5.8 Summary

Chapter five largely consists of analysing samples. The researcher first talked about the Herat School of Painting and its quiddity, supporters and achievements, then explained samples of different kinds of Khataee, arabesque and geometric motifs. It described the artworks in terms of the generic elements of the images depicted in, on, or by them. Next, just like the second level of Panofsky's theory, the researcher made an important step and brought cultural and iconographic knowledge into the equation. The researcher investigated its content, reported it individually and applied the cultural history into the sympathetic artworks. The chapter concludes that Iranian painting in the Islamic period, using symbolic elements was commonplace and artists' abstract motifs include geometric shape, arabesque and floral shapes as symbolic motifs to represent the belief in the principle of the unity of God.

CHAPTER 6: FINDING AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

Having contented in the previous chapter that, abstract motif can be classified by analysing painting. Also, arabesque motifs have a quiddity that makes them meaningful. Furthermore, using abstract motifs in book designed in Iran is too much and one of the reasons that their art to much books with painting is rulers supporting of artists. In this chapter I will present the finding of the research. It is likewise conceivable to make a connection between this chapter and the whole study. I first of all explain the finding of this research about abstract motifs in general like the concept of motifs or impact of them then explain the particularity details like the meaning of shapes base on Islamic thought and interpret them.

Murals are rooted in the ancient history and civilisation of Iran. Wall paintings, either inside or outside of a building, are much older than book illustrations. However, this art form has received little attention since the arrival of Chingiz Khan. The recording of decoration and visualisation of manuscripts goes back to the Manichaeism and the Sassanid eras in Iran. The remarkable progress of Manichaeism in this field was a result of ancient Iranian beliefs and traditions preserved for several centuries after the advent of Islam.

Paintings and book illustrations flourished once again over three centuries from the 14th to the 17th centuries in Iran. This period was dominated by the Mongolians and coincided with the climax of the Timurid and Safavid powers that shaped after the Mongolian rule. This period involved the effects of foreign painting schools on Persian painting and then the reappearance of the original schools in the Iranian arts. Kings and princes in this period supported artists by making workshops in their courts to illustrate

the literature works of Persian poets. The kings and rulers of the Timurid and Safavid admired and enjoyed Persian arts and literature. Establishing the royal workshops, artists played a significant role in the progress and development of Persian painting. Seizing this golden opportunity, the artists advanced their craft.

The Timurid and Safavid Dynasties ruled Iran from the 15th to the end of the 17th centuries. It is a brilliant period in the history of art that shaped after the Mongol invasion and ends with the reign of the last Safavid king. Timur founded the Timurid Dynasty founded in the late 15th century. After the reign of the last king of the Timurid Sultan Husayn Bayqra, Shah Ismail who is the founder of the Safavid Dynasty, conquered Tabriz in 1501 to become the King of the Safavid Dynasty.

The highly appropriate position and development of the Persian painting during the Jalairid and Mozaffarian eras when a significant number of Iranians became acquainted with the essence of abstract arts in the Timurid Dynasty are the main factors that helped create a new collection of Iranian art and culture. In other words, political, social and cultural conditions during the Timurid rule of Persia, the formation of the royal workshops and the gathering of the best artists and painters from all over the country, caused changes in the process of paintings and books. The Timurid court supported artists appearing in formal and informal styles of Persian works of art in painting. To a large extent, they followed the king's taste and desire for illustrating manuscripts. The kings imposed some restrictions on the artists in the court.

The first era of the Timurid Dynasty in Shiraz remained was safe from the invasion of Temuchin and became a centre for the preservation of cultural and artistic traditions. The continuous evolution of modern paintings started with the migration of many artists from other important centres to the imperial workshops in Shiraz during the reign of Eskandar Sultan (1412) and the exchange of experiences between different painting

schools like Baghdad, Tabriz, Shiraz and the use of new ideas and tastes. In these paintings, there are visual traits such as symmetry, bright and rich colours, body with bright and colourful clothes, gorgeous ceramics, long horizons, blue and golden sky, twisting rivers with abundant grass and beautiful landscape with plants, flowers and blossoms and geometric relationships between the various levels and shapes.

In the first half of the 15th century and at the time of Baysonqor, Persian painting progressed, and the Herat School was born by gathering artists from schools in Shiraz, Baghdad and Tabriz. The most striking characteristic of the Herat and Shiraz Schools was the utilisation of Persian decorative motifs instead of Chinese motifs.

Rukh and his sons, Baysonqor Mirza and Alagh Beag, employed the best artists in their libraries. In addition to Timur's court artists, other painters who were invited by Shahrukh were from Shiraz and the court of the Sultan Ahmed Jalayer. Baysonqor brought together over 50 painters and calligraphers to write, paint, and illustrate literary books, including the Shahnameh. Some of these artists are Pir Ahmed Bagh, Mir Khalil, Ghias-ol-din, Khajeh Ahmad Ali Mosavar who were brought from Tabriz to Herat (Amouzadeh, 2009).

Regarding the artists who worked in Baysonqor's library, the names of three artists who painted Baysonqory Shahnameh are clear, but it is unclear which works are painted by whom. Considering the different methods used for painting these pictures, it can be concluded that there has been more than one person for creating them. It is said that Molana Ali is the designer of these pictures and Molana Ghiam-ol-din seems to be the painter of them because Molana Ali was a person who could hardly see and had problems with his eyes at that time. Amir Khalil is another painter of Baysonqory Shahnameh. Havzen, however, believes that the painter of Baysonqory Shahnameh Molana Amir Khalil (Hoseinirad, 2005).

The paintings of Baysonqory Shahnameh contain many decorative motifs such as plant, animal and geometrical motifs, decorations of inscriptions and other architectural elements with high precision in drawing and decorating these patterns. Various kinds of colours such as gold, silver and azure, grey are used at different levels and proportions.

By studying the history of Iran, particularly Persian painting, we notice its growth and a number of effective factors that changed over different periods. The Herat School is considered the most important school in Persian painting for its contributing role in using Persian elements as well as its attention to humans, animals and nature.

Persian painting in the Timurid period, with all its ups and downs, kept growing. The Herat School was established in the reign of Shahrukh in Herat. This trend and style continued until the time of his sons Baysonqor and Sultan Hussein Bayqara. Unfortunately, war retarded the artists' progress and prevented them from achieving their goals in art. The Uzbeks' attacks stopped developing the art of painting in 1507 AD. Baysonqor and his father sought to counter this obstacle by incentivising art.

One of the characteristics of the Herat School is that it has continually used various decorative motifs in painting. That is why the researcher has chosen some of these samples to explain and show the differences and superiority of the Herat School over other schools.

By examining the artworks of the early centuries of Islam until today, we observe that the ornament has a special position in Islamic art. In fact, one of the major forms of art in Muslim countries in different periods, especially in Iran, was decorative motifs that are rooted in the religious beliefs and traditions and the artists were eager to offer their works in the form of beautiful designs. These artists believed that although people might not understand the message and the value and the symbolic implications of their works

now, they will at least remain for decorating rooms and achieve their special value and status one day (Khazae, 2005).

Abstract motifs in the art of the Muslim world are a symbolic display and basic principles of art that refer to their culture and identity. This is not limited to one Muslim country but is prevalent among all Islamic countries from Iran to Algeria and from Pakistan to Beirut. It is recognised as an important element of the art of the Islamic world (Khazae, 2005).

Miniature painters in Iran in the last quarter of the 15th century AD were fascinated by dramatic subjects, the complicated spatial compositions and decorative motifs. The most important characteristic of the Herat School originates from the artists' great powers of observation, the authenticity of the details, and the enthusiasm for expressing their emotions in the form of gestures and poses using the surroundings or environment.

Pashazanous (2009) refers to the decorative motifs as a significant change in the paintings of the Herat School. Compositions of decorative motifs are selected as a margin. Khataee motifs were used less, but they have more diverse methods of execution than arabesque. Geometric precision and clarity of these pictures and illustrations are the only one of its kind. Arabesque and Khataee styles in these paintings are distinct since each is painted in an individual frame and coloured blue and/or gold.

Humans often decorated their handmade items such as clothes, rugs, carpets and dishes in the past. This has contributed to developing different industries throughout history. The decorative motifs of the Herat School follow the rules of the Manichean images that tried to portray the good and evil.

Persian painting frequently enjoyed these images. Different colours and decorative shapes have created a close relationship between different parts of a work. Decorative motifs and geometric patterns and arabesque designs provide a certain context

for painting, separate space and light from the dark and change two-dimensional parts into three-dimensional parts (Pakzad, 2005).

Abstract designs in Persian painting are repeated and moved upwards with the same size. To create movement, rhythm, emotion, space and relationship among them, Iranian painters used abstract shapes and patterns to show the glory of objects that served to remind them of the beauty of Allah.

Farid (2011) believes decorative elements in Persian painting are aligned with the overall effects and will lead the audience to the world of dream. These shapes and lines can be considered as a particular way to express ethnic features. These shapes will remain in the subconscious mind of people of all ages.

The colours used in Persian painting result from the following factors:

- i. Effects of the geographical environment and natural elements,
- ii. Artists' position and perspective that affected artworks,
- iii. Restrictions on using mineral colours, i.e., painting tools.

Colours were inspired by nature and used for painting to show pure metals and minerals because the artists believed that each object is an independent entity and what changes is not original. That is the reason why they used a particular colour for each object. Farid (2011) believes that there are no shadows and darkness because colours in Persian painting are always used bright for artists to show the glorious and majestic Kingdom of Allah in this way.

Gold and blue are the colours that were constantly applied for abstract shapes and patterns in the Herat School. The gold colour made Herat School of Paintings glorious. Such works that were decorated by gold were painted for the Timurid governor, the supporter of artists, to show the magnificence of its court. Another reason,

According to Farid (2011), blue symbolises the infinite sky and gold is the symbol of spirit and blue with a golden blessing means that there is a desire for visualisation and manifestation.

One of the most important properties of the Herat School of Painting is that Iranian painters began to use Persian elements instead of Chinese ones. It shows the important role of the artists of Herat School in changing and removing Chinese elements in the Timurid Dynasty.

Timur and his sons kept making ateliers, supporting artists and gathering them from all over Iran in Herat. During the reign of Amir Timur and his descendants, the art world experienced another brilliant and outstanding period of creative output. Although cruelty and widespread repression characterised his rule, Timur was enjoying art and literature, particularly poetry at all times.

Pakzad (2005) believes that Persian painting is extremely dependent on literary, poetry, fiction, religious themes, and beliefs; accordingly, it should be analysed in historical, social and cultural contexts. Effective factors, including the development of the urban life and culture of Feudal Herat, help create the necessary conditions for growing the art of miniature paintings.

6.2 The Impact of Islamic Culture in the Herat School of painting

Painting among other arts creates the closest link between the material and spiritual world, because like music it is neither completely deprived of material appearances, nor like sculpture, it is in the form of the material world.

It can be said that Iranian painting, especially in the 14th and 15th centuries, consists of collecting the world in a small and accessible place for human beings. The

spirit of poetry, combined with the mysticism of poets such as Hafiz, helped spread this kind of thinking at that time.

Unlike its decorative appearance, Iranian-Islamic painting has deep implications. In Iranian culture, there is always a close connection between art and artistic literature derived from religion. The close relation between Islam especially Islamic mysticism with Islamic art caused many artists to present their works in the form of decorative motifs (Pope et al., 1964).

Sassanid and Manichean art have influenced Iranian painting. After the introduction of Islam, the ancient Sassanid and Manichean culture in the vicinity of Islam created more powerful abstract motifs. Many believe that because Muslims had forbidden the use of any icons or iconography, Muslim artists had invented abstract patterns, and the Muslims' strong opposition to any kind of ornamentation, which is an aspect of idolatry, attracted attention to abstract decorations. But, it should be noted that Iranians, like the Christian world, never used painting as a means of describing religious beliefs, and abstract patterns derived from Iranian culture mingled with Islamic thought with the desire of the Iranian artists (Pope et al., 1964).

From 1405 AD/ 807AH, when Herat was named as the capital of the Timurid Dynasty, it was developed until the late 15th century AD. The Timurids were nomadic. Although they were governors in Herat, they still did not leave the nomadic character and culture. On the contrary, there were Iranian nobles, most of whom were educated and part of the court, and they were dependent on Iranian-Islamic culture in comparison with Turks who had a Turkish-Mongolian culture. The contrast between these two cultures over the time resulted in the impact of the Iranian-Islamic cultural approaches on the Timurids to the extent that this impact can be found even in the behavioural tactics and religious, cultural, and economic policies of the Timurid princes.

Sufism also had a great influence during the Timurid period. His relationship with the custodians of the Islamic religion, the jurists, the scholars, the mystics and the dervishes, and his desire to hold discussions and spend a lot on the fortified places, including the construction of the shrine of Sheikh Ahmad Yasavi in Turkestan (Figure 6.1) and the Masjid Jami in Samarqand (Figure 6.2), indicate his religious planning and how he used them to consolidate the power and legitimacy of his government.

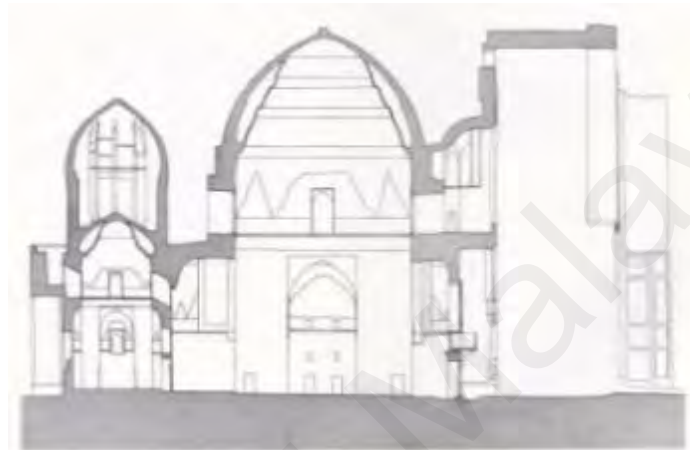


Figure 6.1: Turkestan. Shrine of Shaykh Ahmad Yasavi erected by Timur, 1397-99



Figure 6.2: Samarqand, Gur-I Amir, the tomb of Timur, 1404

His son, Shahrukh, had the same behaviour and went on with the scholars and the jurists. The Sufi traditions of this period, such as Nemat-Al-lahi, Nourbakhshi, Naqshbandi and Horoufi, etc., were the most successful in exploiting the existing conditions of the community, and even the members of the Horoufi Sect conducted political actions. Mulana, the famous calligrapher and scribe of Shahrukh's court, was one of the supporters of this sect who was involved in the assassination attempt on Shahrukh. In addition, the influence of mysticism in the literature of this period was impressive, and this effect later came to Iranian painting, and during the reign of Sultan Hussein Mirza (the last ruler of the Timurid emirs), there were significant results.

6.3 The Concept of Islamic Abstract Motifs in Herat School of Painting

The aesthetic structure of Iranian painting comes from two types of thinking, one that is technical and the other that is ideological. The technical foundations of aesthetics are as follows:

- a. The tradition of avoiding realism and the creation of a timeless and placeless work,
- b. The centrality of the work,
- c. The aversion to the free space,
- d. The tendency to particles,
- e. The induction of space and depth of space by showing the elements of the composition from the top, head-on and the sides at the same time,
- f. Relying on abstract shapes and brilliant lean colours, and
- g. The differentiation between the painted world with the real world and the link between the two worlds by text.

The effect of beliefs can be seen on the same size of the components of the image, whether human, plant, or animal, either in front of the image or at the end. Also, the light that is used uniformly throughout the entire screen (Ayatollahi, 2003).

The existence of abstract elements is not purely decorative, and they have a profound meaning in themselves. In fact, the symbolic meaning of the abstract elements originates from the metaphysical foundations and indicates the Muslims' conception of the single God as the only absolute truth. According to Ibn- E-Arabi, the universe is a fantasy and illusion (Tashakori, 2011).

6.4 The Importance of Geometric Shapes in Pre-Islamic Works

One of the important points in Iranian art history is mathematical thinking in the aesthetic sense of the artists in the creation of the artworks, and one can see the observance of the principles of geometry, namely, symmetry, balance, and proportionality in these designs.

The paintings seen on the potteries found in the Hesar Hill (located in Damghan, one of the northern cities of Iran, dating to the fourth millennium (BC) to the first millennium (BC)) (Figure 6.3) or in the Silak Hill (the first civilisation of central Iran in Kashan, one of the central cities of Iran, the earliest origin of human civilisation, the first place where the Aryans created the first urban civilisation, dating to more than 7,000 (BC) (Figure 6.4) indicate the proportionality and cohesion of the motif and body. In these works, the motif helps the body to be seen better, as well as the shape of the container helps to show the motif well.



Figure 6.3: Painting Found in the Hesar Hill from 4th Millennium (BC)

This coherence is seen among the motifs, sometimes motifs, especially in the prehistoric art, are different. In this category, similar motifs enjoy repetitions, and different motifs include simple alternations. Some works of the thirty-second millennium BC were replicated in real order. The equilibrium, whether symmetrical or balanced, including inverse contrast and asymmetric contrast, is the principle seen in the arrays of Iranian art history.



Figure 6.4: The Potteries Have Been Found on Silak Hill

In the image of the bowl of Susa (Figure 6.5), dating to the fourth millennium BC, the asymmetric group of wolfhounds around a deer establishes a balance, at least in part, by creating a contrast between the motion and stillness. The opposite direction is visible in the composition of the arrays, and in the picture of the pottery of the fourth millennium BC in the Louvre Museum, one can see the rotation in the centre and the plan.



Figure 6.5: Bowl of Susa, pottery of the fourth millennium BC

One of the decorative techniques seen in the Louvre Museum belongs to the pottery bowls of Susa found in the fourth millennium BC. Ratios and angles were set in these samples. These fundamental principles are repeated without interruption. The scope of the forms to which these principles apply is extensive. The application is also diverse. Occasionally, one way overcomes another one, but the rational underpinnings of the arrays are all the same. No country has used such concepts continuously over a long period (Pope et al., 1964).

The ancient artworks are the manifestation of the deepest levels of human consciousness and the most successful level of human thought. The images and designs of these works reveal the stages of the transformation of thought and culture, and the discovery of the concepts of the imprinted works helps to understand the works better. The motifs and designs are patterns in different geometric, vegetative, animal and human forms. Types of geometric shapes include a variety of flat, curved, right, horizontal,

vertical, or broken curves; and different types of surface are circles, triangles, squares, and combined ones like flowers.

The meanings that are represented through these motifs mainly include celestial bodies, the sun, the moon, stars, as well as valleys, waters, mountains, and humans. Pottery painters have presented a diverse range of geometric patterns, quadrangles, rhizomes, triangles, circles, and a variety of lines.

The oldest works of ceramics, seals, copper and bronze objects date back to the fourth millennium BC, especially in the region of Elam. The initial designs are the manifestation of the religious beliefs of the Iranian cultural scope abstractly.

As previously stated, abstraction is manifested in the dominant culture of each period. Perhaps one of the best methods of decoding is to examine how a belief is indicated in various designs. In the pre-Islamic era, the moon, the sun and the sky were manifested in different forms of codes and abstractions according to the type of beliefs and thoughts.

As in the Chalcolithic Age (the fourth and fifth millennium BC), the sky was under the reign of the moon and when the reign of the heaven was considered the same with that of the sun in its new interpretation, the same animal symbols of the moon were manifested in the sun (Pope et al., 1964). Swastika (Figure 6.6) in the fourth millennium BC was the symbol of the moon, and later becomes the symbol of the sun (Contenau, 1948).

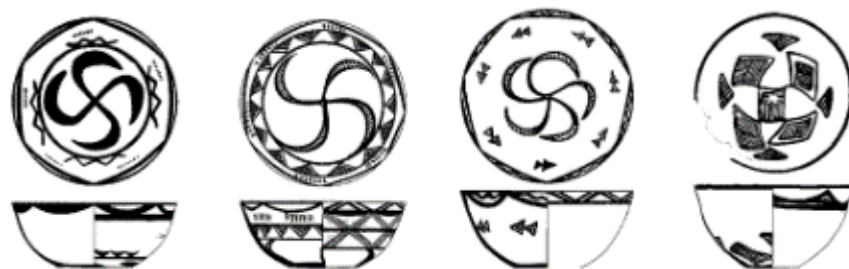


Figure 6.6: Swastika, Source: Ceramic during the fourth millennium BC

The quiddity of the moon (quad angularity or four weeks) was prioritised to the sun because its periodic changes were determining the time. The shape of the moon changes in the sky daily, and it was named daily (Pope et al., 1964).

Thus, the lunar concept of the quadrilateral of the moon was shown in the form of a four-leafed clover. The quadrangle in the noble Palace of Nesa (a Party era building) suggests that the temple belonged to the god of the sun and goddess of the moon (Reuther, 1938). The quadrangular like-heart flower or the four-leafed clover was a new form of the symbol of the moon because it associated the crescent of the moon (Pope et al., 1964).

The quadrilateral of the moon appears in the Maltese cross or the Swastika. The potters of Susa and Persepolis are generally focused on a four-member plan in the form of the Maltese cross. Triple divisions had been used since the ancient times in the representation of the sky and the sun. The triangulation of the sun, i.e., the rising, noon peak, and setting down was in the opposite of the quadrilateral nature of the moon. By moving the reign of the moon to the sun, many of the abstract elements were found in the sun, as the quadrangular flower and the Swastika became the symbol of the sun (Pope et al., 1964).

In the potteries of the first millennium BC found in the Sialk Hill, many designs of the sun are seen in the form of rays of light. The sunflower symbol (Figure 6.7) dates back to the fourth millennium BC. The twelve-leafed flower (second half of the 2nd millennium BC) refers to the solar year, an expression that was prevalent in Elam.



Figure 6.7: Flower Motifs in Zahhak Castle, Sassanid dynasty.

6.5 Symbolic Features of Geometric Shapes

Man is the successor of God on earth (Surah al-Fatir, verse 39) and he is superior to many creatures (Surah al-Asr, verse 70), and this world is a place for a man to strive (Surah al-Naml, verse 61). Also, since the purpose of man's life is the manifestation of the perfection in his being and to achieve the world of truth (Surah al-Mu'min, verse 61), and this earth is as a means of qualifying man to prepare him for the eternal life (Surah al-Baqarah, verse 36), it makes him associate his environment with religious and spiritual culture, as what Muslim artists have already shown in their art (Mehdinejhad, 2017).

The most important point in the subject of art is the recognition of the audience and the creator of the work which means man because Islamic art comes from two aspects of art and ethics with spirituality (Mehdinejhad, 2017).

Plato states that in art, man passes through his appearance and body and reaches the stage of receiving intuition and the true beauty that is beyond the body and appearance (Mehdinejhad, 2017).

Islamic art is an aesthetic experience of the unity and plurality of the world. In this experience, all pluralities change into unity in the field of a unique order (Rahnavard,

2014). Islamic thought connects wisdom and art; based on Islam's point of view, art is based on wisdom or science, and science is nothing but a form of gift expressed in wisdom (Burckhardt, 1967a). Geometric shapes are among the most mysterious motifs in the Islamic culture and art. The manifestation of the most mysterious forms can be seen in the geometric nodes and Eslimee and Khataee decorations. Also, complex geometric nodes create a certain sense of order and coordination by repeating the proportions associated with a motif. The truth of the geometric shapes is the basis of any mysterious meaning of the shapes. Although it is easy to understand that these mysteries can be used extensively, it is not difficult to understand that such geometry is not only a pure quantity, but rather a quality aspect (Guénon, 2001). The use of two-dimensional geometries such as square and circle (Shamseh) in Iranian-Islamic painting and three-dimensional shapes like cubes and domes (Figure 6.1) in Islamic architecture is the symbol of the earth and sky (Mehdinejhad, 2017).

6.5.1 Circle

The circle is one of the main motifs in Iranian painting. The smallest decorative motifs, such as the small circles that makeup Khataee flowers, Eslimee (arabesque) and decorative geometric designs, as well as the curved lines used in the designs of monuments, humans and animals, show the Iranian artist's attention to circles and curved lines (Figure 6.8, 6.9).

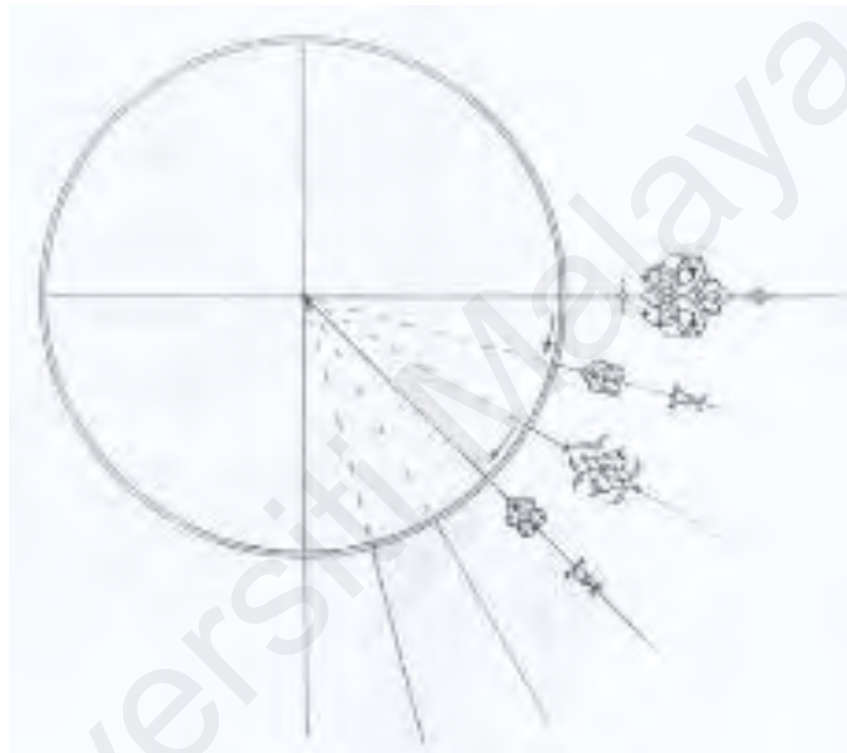


Figure 6.8: Shamsheh



Figure 6.9: Arabesque (Eslimee)

The circle is the complete geometric shape, and it is symmetrical to its centre in any direction. The circle is the most important mystery for the imagination of the unity and integrity of the universe, and the unity of the system of being is the manifestation of the divine essence in the universe. Unity in plurality means the transition from the simple unity, and the geometric form of the circle provides the complete form for expressing these concepts through the arbitrary geometric forms inscribed therein or the regular multifaceted forms in a sphere. Plurality refers to the rank, unity and the manifestation of God's multiple names (Akbari, 2010).

Plato calls the circle as the most complete and beautiful shape. It is an expanded point. The point is the code of an absolute issue or a superposition; the radii of the circle are the code of radiation; the circumference of the circle is the code of reflection, and the entire surface of the circle is the code of existence to its certain level (Nasr, 1988).

Regarding the role of the circle, Burckhart believes that everything that Allah the Almighty creates in the universe is in the form of a circle, as the sky is circular (Burckhardt, 1967a).

One of the mysterious implications of a circle is the passage from Allah to the creation and from the creation to Allah (Akbari, 2010). Divine passion has two aspects: a) God's passion for the creatures (in His essence, God is eager to manifest Himself in the creatures to be revealed to them and through them), b) the passion of the creatures for God (the essence of God is manifested in the creatures, and He is eager they return Him).

The eager creature is at the same time the same being that God is interested in, even though it is different from God regarding the objective determination. This inherent relationship in divine passion is analysed through the relationship of each human being with his Lord.

The circle is the perpetual presence of Allah (Surah al-Baqarah, verse 115) and the secret of returning everything to Him (Surah al-Baqarah, verse 156). The universe is like a sphere. Thus, at the end of his life, man thinks of his origin. Therefore, our passage from non-existence to existence was from God, and we will return to him, as He says in Surah al-Hud (verse 123), Surah al-Baqarah, (verse 281), Surah al-Maidah (verse 18) and Surah al-Luqman (verse 22). The circle is the mystery of unity in plurality and plurality in unity (Akbari, 2011).

6.5.2 Triangle

The triangle is a geometric shape with three sides and three angles. It is the first geometric shape in the geometry dissertation of Akhawan al-Safa. The dissertation states that triangle is the principle of all shapes with direct lines; as number one is the principle of

all numbers; the point is the principle of all lines; the line is the principle and origin of all surfaces, and the surface is the principle of all objects.

Number three consists of the three-basis symbols, and according to Plato, the triangle plays the role of the mother of all shapes (Akbari, 2010). When two triangles are added to each other, a square shape is created. When another triangle is added to this shape, a pentagon is created. Adding another triangle makes a hexagonal, and after adding another triangular, a heptagon is made. Adding each triangle to the previous triangles increases the lines and angles, and there is no end for this, as there are no finite numbers (Rizvi, 2012).

The triangle is the three-dimensional mystery of Nafs al-Ammara Bissu (the Nafs that urges evil), Nafs al-Lawwama (the Nafs that blames) and Nafs al-Mutma`inna (the Nafs at peace). Man must pass these three essential steps to reach the perfection. In the ontology of Ibn Arabi, man as the worldly creature has three spiritual, physical and symbolic worlds (Chittick, 2000).

The triangle represents the three Alawi, physical and infernal worlds, and conforms to the triple division of man; i.e., the soul, the Nafs and the body (Cirlot, 2006).

In Timaeus's dissertation, Plato introduces the number three as the creation code. From Ibn Arabi's point of view, the creation and triple spiritual, material and ethereal worlds are based on the foundations of the trinity, and the trinity is an axle around which the wheel rotates (Akbari, 2011).



Figure 6.10: Shamsah



Figure 6.11: Lachak

6.5.3 Square

The square is an important geometric shape. Through static, stable and equal sides and angles, square creates an emotion of stagnation, strength, fence, perfection and settling. It is the manifestation of number four, and this number is one of the complete figures. Square is the code of the Divine Throne, Imam Jafar Sadiq called the throne as square, and regarding the meaning of Kaaba, he said: “Kaaba was named so due to its square shape”.

The quaternary structure (with its sub-divisions, octet, dual, etc.) symbolically reflects the nature of God and describes the structure of the world that reflects the divinity. The reality of quaternary can be understood in four main directions of the world (north, south, east and west), four seasons (spring, summer, autumn and winter) and four elements (water, wind, soil and fire). The quaternary structure represents religious experience and depicts the image of the order of God’s creatures (Elder, 1996).



Figure 6.12: Hashieh

6.6 Abtractive Motifs: Mysterious “Tawhid” in Herat School Painting

Islamic Iranian arts, including architecture and painting, illumination, moaragh, design and carpet weaving, and many others have a geometric structure in the elements of decoration and motifs. This makes the Islamic arts to be the symbolic expression of the geometry of the ordered world, the grace aspect of God, the manifestation of God’s justice, the unity of God and the eternal presence of God and the principle of monotheism.

Different decorative abstract patterns in Islamic art and architecture are divided into two main groups of Eslimee (arabesque) and Khataee and geometric nodes. Eslimee and Khataee designs are abstract forms of flowers, leaves and branches formed on the basis of the geometric structure especially the circle and make the most important mysterious Islamic arts. Geometric nodes have numerous types that create very diverse motifs using geometric divisions. Titus Burckhardt refers to two types of decorative designs (motifs):

1. Made though weaving and interconnecting a large number of geometric stars, whose radii are interconnected and create a complex and endless motif. This is a marvellous code of thought and meditation in which man finds “unity in plurality” and “plurality in unity”. Geometric designs represent the eternal presence of God through the existence of order in the cycle of manifestation of creation and directing the most important principle of Islam, *Tawhid*.

2. The second group generally referred to as Eslimee, consists of plant motifs and follows only the rules of rhythm. These motifs have become so stylised that they have lost any resemblance to nature. Eslimee motifs are logical, rhythmic and based on math. These characteristics are very important for the spirit

of Islam which seeks to make a balance between the wisdom and passion (Burckhardt, 1967b).

Geometry in architecture is also manifested through taking into account the size in the design of the building and the main spaces and the determination of the proportions of the dimensions through the application of golden ratio (when the ratio of the larger part to the smaller part is equal to the total ratio to the larger part) in the components and the whole building. Components and elements in the works of Islamic architecture, from the courtyard to the vestibule and entrance, each component of the complex is a balanced, geometric and complete space.

6.7 The Difference of Ramz with Symbol and Sign

Ramz is an Arabic term. Despite its broad meaning, the symbol is the only equivalent for it in Latin dictionaries. Ramz refers to the divine world as a clear sign of the latent reality. Although the word symbol is not the proper equivalent for the rational word of Ramz because it does not have the necessary clarity to represent the various and different aspects of Ramz, but this term has been used in numerous sources (Akbari, 2011).

In religious thought, Ramz is the tangible manifestation of transcendental truth and archetypes, and in the systems of scientific and rational thinking, it is an abstract sign. From the mystical point of view, Ramz is a covert meaning that is manifested by the word (Akbari, 2011).

The multi-semantic nature of Ramz is its most important difference with a sign. Also, the “ambiguity” of Ramz is its most important feature and the best possible expression of an unknown item. The symbol has a rational function; it lacks any being or general existence, but Ramz reflects higher existential knowledge whose essence is connected with the symbolised thing.

Comparing the lexical meanings of Ramz and symbol, one can find a common attribute, and it is to be latent and uncertain; that is, what appears and implies a sign or an object with a word or form, is not intended, but the purpose is the meaning and a concept beyond its appearance. So, in this research, the word “symbol” is used to express the meaning of motifs.

6.8 Conclusion

By searching and analysing Islamic motifs in Persian painting, specifically the Herat School’s abstract motifs, as the most important school in Persian painting by removing Chinese elements and substituting Persian motifs, the researcher concludes that the abstract decorative designs of the Herat School can be classified into three which are: geometric, Eslimee and Khataee categories. Also, the Eslimee (arabesque motifs) and Khataee (floral motifs) are two Islamic motifs used in the Herat School of Painting that are based on geometric shapes, especially circles.

Analysing the abstractive motifs in the Herat School of Painting shows that the decorative abstract motifs were inspired from the abstract designs used in the art of the pre-Islamic period. Also, the other most important finding by analysing motifs is that Islamic thought had influenced Iranian painting.

Moreover, by classifying the conceptual framework of Islamic motifs, the researcher concludes that Iranian painting in pre-Islamic periods also followed the thinking of unity. Meanwhile, the abstract decorative designs of the Herat School of Painting have mysterious concepts and can be interpreted based on the opinions of Muslim and non-Muslim philosophers.

While, the mysterious interpretation of the abstract decorative designs in Iranian painting means the reception of their esoteric meanings, also in Islamic culture, Ramz refers to the visualisation of the facts of the objects.

The Herat School of Painting is one of the schools created during the Islamic government in Herat (that was a part of Iran during the 14th and 15th centuries AD). The artists of this school were supported by the rulers of that time. The construction of libraries for the creation of epic, historical and religious books in this period, also other Iranian painting schools such as Shiraz and Tabriz schools affected the creation of this school.

Studying Persian painting schools during the Timurid Dynasty shows that the religious freedom, followed by the emergence of mystical and Sufi thoughts in the Timurid era, affected the paintings of the Herat School. Studies of the Herat School of Painting found that it enjoys a special significance due to the removal of Chinese paintings that had already manifested in Iranian painting. It shows the impotence of analysing this school. The analysis of the works from the Herat School in this research shows that its paintings and the architecture of the Timurid period, abstract geometric, Eslimee and Khataee motifs were used as decorative motifs.

The interpretation of Islamic motifs in Persian painting can help to a better understanding of Islamic motifs in Persian painting. By interpreting samples, the researcher concludes that the quality of the motifs and shapes in the artworks of different periods in Iran has a coded aspect.

Likewise, by referring to the Islamic thought and philosophy references, the point is code number one, unity, centre, and source. The line is code number two and it refers to the determinations of the spirits in the degrees of existence. The triangle is code number three, and it refers to the creation of all shapes and the triple world of spiritual knowledge,

and the circle is a code of infinity of the infinite spirit of the universe and the integrity of perfect creation.

Therefore, the reason for mystery in Islamic culture and art is to point out the correspondence between the human being and the universe. Also, the principle of monotheism is the most significant codification of the abstract geometric, Eslimee and Khataee decorative designs.

6.9 Summary

Chapter six covered the findings from interpreting the Islamic motifs in the Herat School of Painting. In this chapter, the researcher attempted to answer that the abstract decorative motifs in the Herat School can be classified into geometric, Eslimee (arabesque motifs), and Khataee (floral motifs) categories. Meanwhile, the researcher also by studying the Islamic culture and explaining the meaning of some geometrical shapes in Islamic culture and thought showed that the arabesque and floral motifs had been designed based on a circle which has a deep symbolic meaning in Islamic thought.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

As a result of this study, that I appointed in the last chapter we can interpret Islamic abstractive motifs in Persian painting by analysing and classifying shapes base on Islamic thought. This is desicive in aim of thesis in order to have a conclusion of whole the study. In this chapter I also will talk about research implication and at the end will present suggestions and recommendation.

The review of the theoretical aspects of the artworks throughout history has always been one of the ways to identify their deep meanings and implications. Artists have explained the theoretical aspects of their works in the form of presenting different schools during the preceding periods, but sometimes they have only provided their artworks and asked their audience to leave their relevant comments. The existence of these two aspects is obvious in all periods.

The study of the art history of every nation reveals the history of the culture and environment of that nation including its social, political and intellectual factors at a specific time. To do so, considering the fields of creation, the context of movement, the factors and obstacles of the movement, phenomena and events, the causes of excellence or decadence, the causes and effects, the relationships and other manifestations of life, and the culture and destiny of that nation are necessary.

The study of Islamic motifs in Iranian painting provides researchers with a complete image of the direction of this art. As previously mentioned, the West began studying Islamic arts prior to Muslims. Western scholars of the 18th century were interested in the archaeology of the Muslim world, especially in art architecture. This field of research gradually motivated the interest of researchers in European countries.

The first books on Islamic art are based on the introduction of decorative designs and the study of their ethnological foundations; they have not attached much attention to other factors such as climate and ethnic. The subsequent works of the foundations of the genealogy of Islamic art were sought out in the classical art of Greece which was the result of an apparent and extraordinary encountering with this art.

The study of Islamic art and architecture in the last century concerned the historical, geographical, and ideological complexities of Muslim visual heritage, as well as the relations of these works with Islam. Some researchers considered Islamic art to be influenced by the Islamic spirit and worldview and attached meaning to the elements of this art. But this attention was in two totally different directions. The path of phenomenologists such as Henry Corbin and Annemarie Schimmel focused more on Islamic culture than the visual arts, and the path of historians focused on the external factors that influenced art.

At the end of the 20th century, along with the autonomous and anti-colonialist movements and the desire of Muslims to identify the nature of the Islamic Ummah, a movement towards a unified thought of Islamic art, including the works of Rene Guénon, was formed. Another trend in historiography appeared that studied Islamic art in its historical context. This trend did not negate the relation between Islamic art, Islam, and regional cultures; but it conditioned their confirmation of historical documentation. The trend began by researchers such as Richard Ettinghausen, Robert Hillenbrand, and especially Oleg Grabar.

As time went by, the complexity of the studies of Islamic art and architecture was increased, and the emergence of new findings and works led to richer investigations. Meanwhile, multifaceted researches including cultural and ideological studies, regarding the visual aesthetics of art and architecture based on historical documentation to interpret

the effects and achieve a better understanding of Islamic arts in the specified historical and geographical boundaries are necessary.

This research tries to attempt the projects carried out by Iranian and Western scholars, because the artwork and its meaning or content can be interpreted concerning the characteristics of a nation, period, place, and the included religious or philosophical beliefs. The Iranian-Islamic identity of the scholars can cover some of the gaps neglected in some research regarding Islamic designs and motifs based on the iconographic theory.

7.2 Concluding Remarks

The Qur'an commands human to travel around the world to see different nations which a sign of the importance of history is. Surahs such as Fatir (44) and Nahl (36) emphasised the study of history. It is important that the Qur'an invites human to study history and reminds him he to pass through a superficial view and got a deep understanding of the historical events.

As an introduction to the importance of reviewing the Islamic art, research questions, and objectives in this research to find out more about the history of research in this field from the past to the present. Research questions and objectives that clarify other aspects of this study are other areas discussed. Also, the theory used to analyse the selected works as examples is also explained.

By contains an answer to the first question of this research on Islamic motifs that can be interpreted in the Iranian painting of Herat School. To this end, the concepts of Islamic art, symbol and interpretation are discussed.

The researchers consider different definitions for Islamic art. In these definitions, Islamic art is described as a sacred art, the art of the Islamic world, the art of Muslims, the art with religious and Islamic contents, the Arabic art, the abstract and geometric art,

none of which can stand alone and comprehensively represent Islamic art; but each one provides a definition of Islamic art. However, the important issue is that Islamic art, despite the passage of time, has had the same identity throughout history.

Islamic Iranian painting, especially during the Timurid period, has certain characteristics, including moving from one concept to another, between two-dimensional and three-dimensional spaces; but this movement never leads to the creation of a three-dimensional space. Clothes and other objects are often depicted with Eslimee ornaments and geometric patterns, and thus the artist, with a particular interest in the independent world, wants to show the principle of non-realism because the artist of Islamic art does not seek to imitate the apparent reality.

During the Timurid period, Iranian painting had a dramatic transformation in colour and form, which resulted in the removal of foreign elements. The use of Iranian Islamic elements in architectural decorations and other spaces contributes to further development of this school. Another feature is the use of decorative motifs, in particular, geometric and abstract motifs, including Eslimee and Khataee flowers.

The interpretation of these motifs helps to further understand the Iranian-Islamic painting. Interpretation is a kind of approach that proceeds from the outer to the inner level (the backbone) of the meaning of the motif.

The symbol is another theoretical framework, which is described in this research. In Islamic culture, the symbol is as an internal meaning that appears under the influence of word and apparent motif. The code does not provide a definitive and ultimate meaning for anything; and for this reason, the symbolic aspects of everything can have various meanings.

Throughout time, Iranian painting has undergone various developments. But the peak of its flourishing, according to the scholars of the history of art, was formed in

Islamic periods. Studying Islamic abstract motifs, one finds that some of these motifs originated in pre-Islamic historical periods in Iran. Therefore, to know more about the features of Islamic motifs in painting in Iran, it is necessary to study the roots of motifs in different historical periods. For this purpose, in some part of the present study includes a brief history of Iranian art in various historical periods.

Examining the history of Iranian art, one finds the mathematical thinking in the aesthetic sense of the artists in the creation of artworks in various historical periods in Iran, and observe the principles of geometry, i.e., symmetry, balance, and proportionality in the historical studies of these motifs.

Moreover, the research method, analyses the works, and motifs are explained to achieve objectives. In addition, due to the importance of the interconnection and interaction of other arts and art schools with the Herat School during the Timurid period, another part of this study explains these schools and arts.

One of the most important sections of the research in the visual arts perspective, is analyses several examples to answer the next question in the present study. Analysing the paintings of the Herat School, one can understand the abstract nature of the Islamic motifs in this school and determine their status. In this chapter, following the analysis of the motifs and according to their applications, one can see why Iranian artists used abstract Islamic motifs in their works.

Apart from the thought that made the artist to create these motifs, the artistic expression used in these motifs is very contemplative. The abstract motifs discussed in this research include geometric, Eslimee and Khataee motifs. Geometric motifs used in Islamic art are based on the primary geometric motifs, i.e., circles, squares, and rectangles. Eslimee and Khataee motifs used in Iranian painting, although both have herbal origins, can be incorporated into geometric shapes, especially the circles.

The approaches to the interpretation of Islamic motifs in Iranian painting is also explained in the research and following the theoretical frameworks, as well as analysing the paintings of the Herat School and studying the abstract Islamic motifs, it is found out that these motifs have symbolic features and can be interpreted based on Islamic thought.

Geometric shapes are among the most mysterious motifs in Islamic culture and art. The manifestation of most coded forms can be seen in geometric knots and Eslimee and Khataee decorations. Also, complex geometric knots create a certain sense of order and coordination by repeating the proportions associated with a motif.

The findings of this research show that Islamic motifs in Iranian painting have implicit interpretable meanings. Islamic Iranian arts, including architecture and painting, illumination, moarraaq, design, carpet weaving, and many others have a geometric structure which makes Islamic arts a symbolic expression of the order in the world, the unity, the everlasting presence of God, and the principle of monotheism.

7.3 Research Implications

The purpose of this research was to study part of Iranian painting history which has played a major role in changing the next art styles. The recognition of Herat School of Painting during the Timurid period, due to its importance in removing the foreign elements and replacing Persian motifs with regard to cultural, political and social changes, can make the unknown aspects of the art history clear to the audience.

The study of art schools helps to understand the nature of different nations' culture and art in order to understand their identity. Historical studies of art not only help to better understand the works of the past but also to understand contemporary art and its roots. Indeed, the historical studies of today belong to the present and future.

The present research focuses on the Islamic abstract motifs in the period when Iranian painting approached its Iranian identity more than before. This research also emphasises the influence of Islamic thought on these motifs and represent the Iranian painting values in the Islamic period. This research initially helps art historians to have a better understanding of the history of Iranian art especially in the Islamic period, also better understanding of Muslim nations and Muslim world through the history of Islamic thought and art.

It also helps students of art, especially visual arts, to gain a better understanding of the values of Iranian painting. The interpretation of the Islamic motifs of the Herat School of Painting is also useful for researching abstract motifs in contemporary Iranian art. This research also helps experts in the field of Islamic arts in the museums to better understand Herat's school and its distinction with other art schools of its age.

Based on the interpretations mentioned in this study, future scholars and researchers can more easily access new studies on Islamic motifs and Iranian paintings.

7.4 Suggestion and Recommendations

Given the importance of research in various aspects of history and the probable shortcomings of the present research, for future researches it is proposed that:

A) The history of art and civilisation is one of the most important knowledge that influences the process of creating the artworks. When the historical texts, as the products of the historical documents' analysis by a historian and influenced by his worldview, are developed by a non-Muslim researcher and influenced by his worldview; in fact, they are not responsive to many of the Islamic notions and are not able to build an artistic attitude of a Muslim artist in accordance with Islamic religious teachings.

Therefore, the redefinition of the content of the art history texts based on Islamic teachings in future studies can lead to more accurate interpretations.

B) In recent years, there has been a debate in the Muslim world that seeks to investigate in the ancient Islamic art for the recognition and extraction of official principles or beliefs for contemporary Islamic art. This work requires a deep understanding of their true origins and get inspiration from them. The attitudes towards the West has transformed the Islamic world to the extent that the identities of other civilisations have been threatened. In such a situation, researchers can view the past to preserve their cultural integrity and find principles. Finding answers to questions raised through the environment and objects of the early Islam through the hadith, the interpretation, and the balance between revelation and sharia on the one hand and the necessities of life, on the other hand, can be the subject of future researches.

C) Since the course in the history of art helps to recognise contemporary art, the researcher suggests that using of Islamic studies in the history of Iranian art, the use of Islamic motifs in contemporary Persian art and its roots should be studied so that researches achieve more results about Iran's contemporary painting which is still in ambiguity.

Also, researcher to reach a better and clear understanding of Islamic art, proposes:

D) Given certain concepts in the history of art, such as iconographic, optisemic, abstract iconographic, decorative, ornament, and many others recognised by the researchers in the past, the recognition of these concepts such as conceptualising and achieving new theories for a better understanding of the motifs is necessary.

Furthermore, researcher believes that governments can help to Islamic art recognition by having new policy such as:

E) Supporting Islamic art research's topics in universities.

F) Supporting programs for TV show to introduction Islamic art.

In the end, the researcher believes that any research on Islamic art can answer some of the questions and ambiguities about the culture and art of people in the Muslim world. The present research is also in this group, and the researcher is humbly eager to receive modified and supplementary comments on this work from scholars and researchers. It is hoped that this research can be effective in promoting the level of knowledge about the Islamic world.

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