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The role of aesthetics in pictographs of Persian Carpets

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ABSTRACT

Persian rug with a variety of designs and inscriptions is a symbol of nature and culture of Iran's noble land . based on Islam beliefs, simulation in the beginning of Islam expansion was forgotten and was replaced with engraving and so on. Perhaps there are two basic reasons for inscription and lines expansion: 1-Because in religions, resorting to supplications believed to lead to blessing , Muslims used to engrave Saints and quranic verses and poems of mystical plays in almost all tools and accessories for sustained prosperity in the world and the hereafter. 2- Iranian were so eager to decorate tools and objects and because of that their artists cared for line beautification and took the advantage of angles and shapes and painted lines to decorate lines. The research in the article already taken on a number of Persian rugs and carpets show that Islamic lines like us, Mohaghegh, Kufi, Sols, Naskh, is very consistent in respect of spiritual and mystical atmosphere. these lines are considered as the official lines of Islam and Islamic arts specially in mosques and Islamic monuments. One the other hand, other Persian lines such as Nastaliq and Shekaste are common in Iranian rug with topics such as the mystical poems that are non-Arabic and none of these two lines, namely Arabic and Persian fonts can not replace one another And should be used in its actual position to multiply the effects of beauty. Research methods in this article is analytical descriptive and required information is gathered from library and museums.

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INTRODUCTION

This general definition of the "The carpet" refers back to its initial function. Basically the rug was produced to cover human residence. As it is said it was first made by tribes and peasants for personal aspects and gradually gains economic and commercial aspects and produced largely.

The word "carpet" refers to what covers the ground. For example, "carpet or carpet up the yard" or "tile up the yard".

If you look into Islamic hand-woven works like Sols, Naskh...you come to realize that each of these lines painted and drawn in the holy atmosphere of faith and health and wish longevity for the owners and users and states sweet story of thousands of past land morning.

"True and skillful artists take the advantage of the insignificant elements, and with the help of the taste and ingenuity and with all honesty to God and with the pure essence of Islam and Mohammed that woven into their being, and without any expectation, in the way of perfection have created innovative art that is incredible in today's materialistic and industrial world.

The role, variety and fresh movement of Islamic lines, gilding, painting, poetry and literature is remarkably illustrated in almost all tools and objects such as carpets and so on which links this world and the world beyond this world. Islamic and Iranian lines on the carpet (rug) and the word of God's Messenger represents a growing spirituality and poetry and literature in this land, which sometimes needs to be pondered deeply. "Without any doubt, apart from the boom and the authority of the Islamic and Persian lines on Iranian hand-woven carpet and rugs, meaning is the main factor which islam has granted, Commitment in the awareness and keeping away from the apparent beauty, a way to find some kind of spirituality and simplicity in art and a step towards the unity of Islamic concepts. Along with this objection, a special creativity is applied that an innovative art and beauty is born.

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Although the human conscience, cannot ignore every artists pure love to protect their traditions and deny the beauty and their romance to etch a life of purity, our conscience can not ignore the truth and the fantabulous legacy.

The present article is based on the carpet Museum of Iran and despite being insignificant and brief, but represents the breadth and greatness so that hopefully I can continue these articles and be some help in this case. Plus i have been trying to combine and investigate more the two invaluable Iranian art.

Line image on the Persian carpets:

Persian rug in various designs with different concepts is a symbol of the Iran s noble art, culture and nature. Create Visual Arts creation on tools and wall has been typical from the Achaemenian period. Moreover, the arrival of Islam in Iran also made prolong changes. Islam was initially opposed to human and animals picture therefore the artists got into the artistic motifs and lines and motifs drawn from nature, such as Arabesque, which lead to line expansion on carpet like works. Because in the new Iranian religion (Islam) is believed to reach good and blessed by a special prayers, so the name of the great religious and saints appeared on the tools to seek help for their world and the hereafter Bliss.

And Iranian eagerness for decoration also contributed to getting a new line so they used a great deal of Hadith and Quranic verses and poems of mystical in their decoration.

As a result they cared more to beauty line and always tried to offer that as a decorative factor and this created one the most remarkable decoration factor in the Islamic period and calligraphy on various objects especially on carpet. Carpet has not only have the aspect of covering but also by having scrolls and beautiful poems and sayings of the Quran it has been considered a decorative tool too. Where the role of color and design is not enough, the artist use the lines and the scrolls in order to express himself and create a lasting impact.

It is worth mentioning that there are various types of lines in different Islamic periods such as decorative Kufi to beautify flowers and the buildings such as Kufi to bring comfort and beautification. It can be said that Kufi is very much suitable for Islamic lines because of its flexibility and its rules and regulations which is easier in comparison to other lines and is very convenient on the texture and its design is too broad as in other objects and works of art. But other lines that has been adopted such as Sols or Nasq and specially Shekasteh and Nastaliq are much proper for this purpose and make it difficult to work. but plenty of application is illustrated on the carpets, however, it is not the original form. As they use a vast variety of beliefs, Quranic verses, Hadith, The Imams names, divine and mystical poems, the Most use of this type of carpet is wall decoration. Among all religious stories, Solomon story is the favorite one.

"The use of numbers and letters and abajd letters are also significant on the carpet. such as 11 (meaning Hu) and 21 (meaning Ya Ali) and 22 (meaning YaHo) and 39 (meaning Hussein)

In some carpets inscription includes information provider and Knitter's workshop, Kings and the great ones. The mystical poems of the inscription on the carpet is one of the most important topics of of the sixth century and reaches its peak in the 10th century. these poems were mostly from the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi, Hafez, Saadi, Attar of Nishabur and Khamseh of Nezami... Also, other religious topics including Iranian epic stories, Sheykh Sana, Tarsa girl are illustrated on carpets. Line image on the carpets match and fits the choice of images and are complementary.

The main part of the line graphics comes in 5 parts and is designed inside some frames or combined in the rug texture. These 5 major parts are as follows:

- 1- lold
- 2-internal slim margin
- 3-external slim margin
- 4-wide margin of the carpet (the narrow margin between the two internal and external)
- 5-the original text (the text on the calligraphy field or carpet may) cover all of it.

This kind is made for a special purpose. For example: in the (Ashura) rugs which is introduced in this article, the text fills all the rug and the lines dominate the design. The lines and scrolls are designed in accordance to the length and width of carpet and like other works of art is used as decorative as well as expressing other issues.

Most lines used in carpets are as follows: Mohaghegh, Kufi, Sols and the most common one is Nastaliq that is consist of horizontal and vertical movements and angles come and is used on carpet and other buildings the most and it doesn't have the rigid rules of other lines. Mohaghegh and Sols as the Islamic fundamental lines are the most common ones and have a spiritual aspect but it is difficult to read them. The most beautiful is Nastaliq that is far more difficult and is used for certain occasions that mentioned and is consistent with line graphics.

Lyrics (spring-love) taken from the great Persian poets and historical subjects are written more with Nastaliq but Naskh, Kufi and Sols are the best for religious topic. Nastaliq and Nashkh are the best for Epic, national, religious, mythical, letters of offer as like as Shahnameh, Ashura and so on.

To clear the contents of this article we investigate some of the carpet sample such as carpet-Safavid inscriptions called Sheikh Safi and a sample called Metropolitan which is kept in New York's Metropolitan Museum of art.

"One of the valuable and exquisite rugs belongs to Safavid era keeping in Victorian Albert Museum in London and is the East of the world's most famous rug that known as the Ardabil carpet rug (Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili).

The carpet was at the mosque of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili till 1843 /1264 (lunar calendar) and attracted a british tourist. His report of the rug follows:

"The remains of a lost color carpet which once was the best of rug industry is available in the Ardabil Mosque.

Soon this and 4 other carpets were bought and was shipped to England by merchants. In the year 1843 m/1264 (e. m) and at the end of the nineteenth century with the encouragement of William Morris and some other enthusiast, this carpet was purchased and donated to the London's Victoria Albert Museum.

In the same time one of the small rugs of the four was used for the repair and restoration of large Ardabili rug. Although a large part of the rug is repaired, but it was done with such skill that there is not any trace of awkward patches on it.

This rug has 1152 cm long and 534 cm width, and its texture is much finer. There are around a total of thirty million ties in Ardebili carpet which highlight its fantabulous work. The importance of the carpet is not only in terms of its size coloring but also as old as it is. Fortunately, the date and the name of weaver is mentioned. At first there is a beautiful poem of Hafez in Nastaliq and then the name and the date. Thus, this product is approximately made in the year 1540 A.D.

This date mentioning that is seen less on other carpets shows Iranian rug weaving style in the mid-16th century AD.

The Selected mystical poetry beautified with Nastaliq, clarify the strong opinion and faith of the creator to God, which is the main artist and all the arts is his and this poetry has the deepest meaning.

It is noteworthy that the beautiful Persian Nastaliq line selection for this carpets indicates the designer's artistry and taste and liking. Due to no other line would have the necessary coordination of associations with map and layout. the carpet is filled with curved lines is full of Arabesque, thus requires a line like Nastaliq with which beautiful designs have are consistent with to create a harmony and the selection of this line shows creativity and aesthetic awareness of the artist designer.

Nastaliq script is considered the bride of the Islamic and Iranian lines, has a special status in terms of beauty and dignity according to most experts and connoisseurs and stand first among other lines. This line has the most circle and has slight surface, so goes well with Arabesque which has lots of round and circle and their combination together creates the wonder and this has been manifested in Ardabil carpet. Although the line is very small, the more important issue is that the beautiful mystical poems are in complete coordination with beautiful Persian Nastaliq can not be used with the dry and low-round Arabic lines and this is a point that the artist designer has taken into consideration.

Prayer Mats (Janamazi) is another sample that corresponds to the Safavid (985 A.H) and is extremely valuable and beautiful and is kept in the Museum of New York metropolitan, Fletcher. It is 161 x 105 cm and woven around 35 years after the Ardabil carpet in North-Western Iran.

As its name suggests it was made exclusively for prayer and with Sols and Naskh, Quranic verses and saying are designed on it. As mentioned in the Ardabil carpet, Iranian mystical poems are incompatible with Arabic lines and should be written with Persian lines. But on this carpet that is designed exclusively for prayer and worship Nastaliq or Shekasteh Nastaleq should not be used and Arabic lines including Naskh, Sols, Mohaghegh, Kufi are more harmonious. Different Islamic lines can be seen on this carpet.

There are a specific verse (Ayat al Korsi) written with Kufi Banaei (Moalaghi) on four circles located on the four sides of the carpet the same way as it is inscribed on religious buildings. This kufi line can be designed in geometric frames. Because the line itself is geometric, dry and suitable for geometric templates, the designer is chosen the best option and lines fit the design. Plus this verse (Ayat Al Korsi) written with Sols has its own height and fit with the margins and is the best option here. A mosque alter (Mehrab) can be easily seen on this carpet and the same line is used in most altars. The heights and their parallel movements create such a beauty that no other lines can do. Naskh can be used in small areas the same as Sols so it is used in the carpet margins. Following we focus on the Quranic verses and holy names of the carpet.

As in the image view carpet, Quranic verses and a God who has been working on that we are below.

On the bigger margins of the carpet and in three directions part of a Quranic chapter (Baqarah) is written in Sols that start from the right side goes to the left and part of it is located on the north side of the carpet.

There are irregular parts around the top of the dome filled with attributes of God in Sols and in different colors that include: Alraoof- Alghafoor- Alghavi- Almatin- Albaghi- Alvares- Hayolphayoom- Alkarim-almajid- Alhaghovakil. On the dome above the altar that is the place of prostration, the great name of God, "Allah-u Akbar" is written in Sols.

Part of Al-a'raf verses can be seen in three sides on the sidelines of the carpet in green, written with Sols. However, some parts are damaged.

Also there are 285 and 286 verses of Baghare in white written with Naskh, in the external margin of the carpet. In addition, there are phrases in Naskh around the alter similar to dome such as:

La elaha alla Allah Mohammadan Rasoul Allah Alian Valiollah- Alim- ALshakoor- Alghafoor- Alhefz.

Line has always had an important part in the Islamic world and has always been one the most important decorative elements in the Islamic monuments, hanging objects and tools of everyday life.

Decorative lines have always had a religious and cultural value, and have been the target of Muslim artists and for this reason there are two roles playing by lines: first, getting the message across and being a decorative element.

There is another carpet from the collection of Iran s carpet Museum, woven in the thirteenth century, 425 x 356 cm, in Tabriz. There is an inscription in the upper part in Nastaliq script with the words: "by the order of Zavarán and Kahnamouyi workshop". Interestingly there is twenty-five rectangular frame in which there are poems related to its picture in Nastaliq which is written on the margin and in the frame, poems of Shahnameh. As mentioned in the previous cases, the design and the lines should coordinate that confirm the awareness and cleverness of the designer.

No other line except Nastaliq can be used for this saying of Ferdowsi to imply its prestige and dignity. The authenticity of the order, the line and the painting school of Tabriz (Safavid) all together is manifested on a carpet.

Carpet designer artist take advantage of a unique color scheme. The margins of the frame are dark and inscription is bright which makes this conflict to be better seen and read, like a frame surrounding the design. Here the traditional arts of Iran carpet types gathered in one place.

There are 100 bits of Ferdowsi's poems around the frames that makes this carpet one of masterpieces of the carpet Museum of Iran

'The Ziarat e Ashura' is another unique masterpiece that link Islamic lines with carpet design and context. It is woven in Esfaham in the dimension of 160 * 210. The carpet design dominates its line and covers the field.

As described before, lines should be connected with the subject. On the margins of this carpet the artist uses Naskh for Arabic phrases and Nastaliq for Persian poems.

As shown in figure (4) the distance between Persian poems is filled repeatedly with Naskh and altogether there are eleven cases that ten of them are on the major margin and one of them is on top of the main text area. If the artist wanted to do this on paper with pen and ink, this beauty wouldn't be created let alone be braided, and that's why this is considered a masterpiece work of art. A very elaborate and authentic versions of the line to (Iranian versions called Nayrizi) is woven without getting out of the rules. It has its own elegance Nastaliq lines for poems as well. However, it's a very elaborate work, as if the weaver is a calligraphist. He paid close attention to all angles, thickness and and the t the size of these lines, especially in Nastaliq. It is worth mentioning that not lines of all carpets follow geometric and calligraphy principles. (author s personal experiences).

Conclusion:

Islamic art is a tool to influence Islam to all types and forms of human activities and life and remind him of God s presence. The art is the most important and the most valuable Islamic ideals in life. The quality of authentic Islamic works is derived from spirituality and are manifested in traditional forms of calligraphy on carpets and so on throughout years.

Considering the investigation on these carpets, we need to know the link and the relationship of Islamic and Iranian lines and its application to be capable of creating such masterpieces. Otherwise the lack of harmony leads to improper combinations. Therefore, it is recommended to establish calligraphy training centers program for all the University workshops, art and artists of this field that want to link together the lines and designs. So that artist will create these works with higher related knowledge. The art is knowledge combination and art is an innovative combination consist of recognized elements and calligraphy is an art which combines the innovative combination with other element creatively.

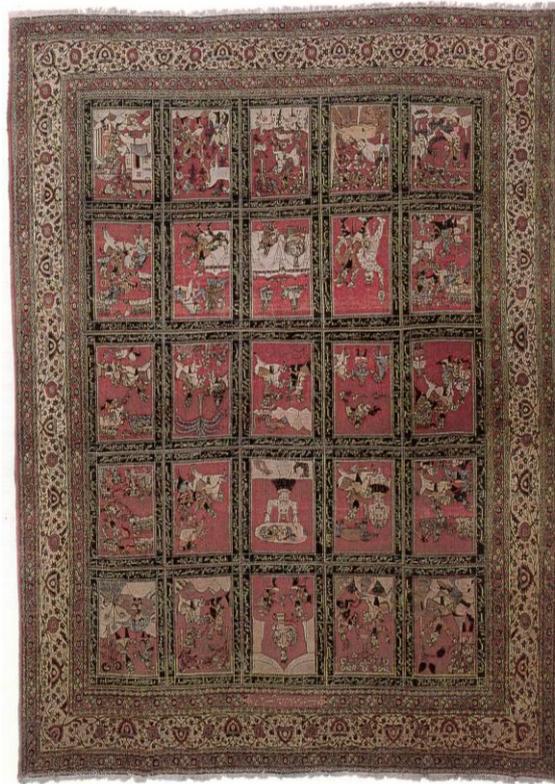
Bismillah", Astan Quds Razavi publications, 1990.



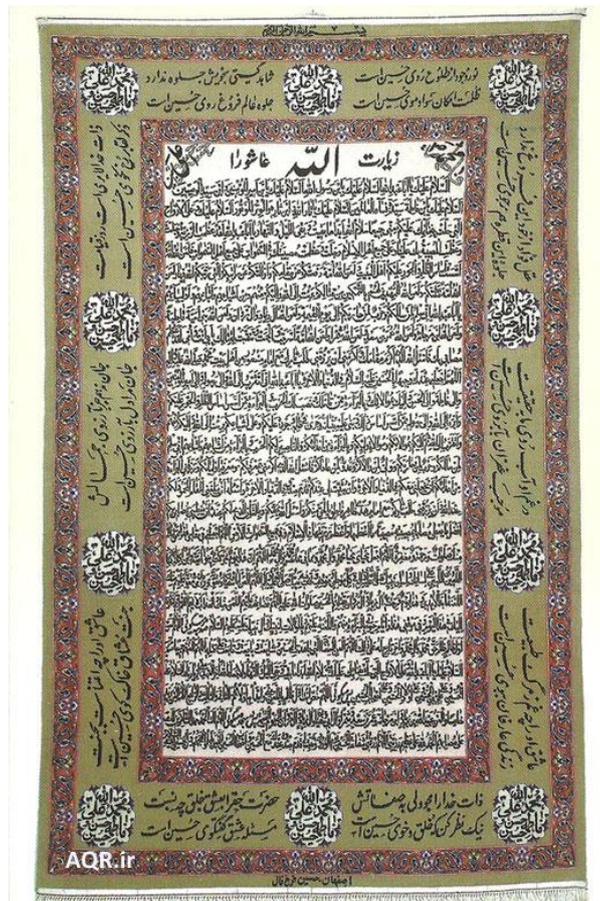
Carpet 1: Ardabil Carpet from the Victorian and London albert Meuseum-946 A.D.



Carpet 2: The Altar Carpet from the Fletcher collection of New York Metropolitan Muesume-Safavid Period



Carpet 3: The Inscribed Carpet in Iran Carpet Musume Woven in T abriz with Shahname Contentt 13th century AD.



Carpet 4: the inscribed carpet in Iran Carpet Musume woven in Tariz with Shahname Contentt, 13th century (A.D.)

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