An Investigation about Human Qajarid Era Tiling

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Abstract: Tiling and tile-making art, which has been mostly used for decorating Iran’s architecture—especially in the religious buildings—has special characteristics like Pottery. From the distant past, this art was manifested in the form of a synthetic object as a result of the craftsmanship, the taste and the sense of the tile-maker, thus the artist achieved different harmonic forms by using and blending various colors or by putting together the tiny particles of the colorful stones based on a predesigned plan. As the tiling art began in the Achaemenid period until the late Islamic era, this art has been through many ups and downs. Its climax of development was in the Ilkhani, Timurid and Safavid eras. Qajarid tiling evolves under the impact of previous eras and the Western countries’ tiling, which shows the importance of studying this art in the Qajarid era.

Key words: Qajarid • Achaemenid • Tilling @

INTRODUCTION

In the Islamic era architecture, tiling art and industry has a special place. This art like the decorative arts related to architecture such as plasterwork and brickwork has achieved a special function and since during the Islamic eras it has developed, evolved and expanded with its specific characteristics, it has been manifested in various forms. Certainly, the tiling art of the Qajarid era is the continuation of the artistic Renaissance of painting on the tiles, after the long periods and the known and unknown experiences of the Pottery, especially in the Seljuk and Mongolian Ilkhanate eras.

It must be noted that in the second half of the 12th century (Lunar Hijri), by the effort and taste of the Shirazi painters, painting on the tiles got popular and after a short abeyance, from the early thirteenth century until the second half the fourteenth century, a new school of painting came to being in Iran which was regarded as the retrogression of the tiling by some critics, while that period must be considered as one of the noblest and the most unforgettable popular artistic movement in the history of painting on the tiles.

From the second half of the 14th century (Lunar Hijri), a new attack began not in the military or political way, but in the form of covert and overt outrages to the sanctum of the noble art of tiling. Therefore, by the gradual prevalence of the foreign style of architecture, the signs of retrogression and degradation of many of the noble arts like tiling is seen in big cities, especially in Tehran.

Historical Background: In general, using decorations in architecture has a special importance. These decorations have been used as the beautiful carvings in the Achaemenid era, as delicate plasterworks in the Sassanid era and as the brick decorations in the first centuries of Islam.

But the tile decoration is a separate issue which may have not had many functions in the history, though the discovery of their samples in various excavations or their use in the pre-Islamic buildings shows its long history.

The oldest enameled bricks belong to the second millennium B.C., the Untash-Gal era, which were discovered in ChoghaZanbil. The way they were used and their function in the ChoghaZanbil building are unknown but anyway it must have had a decorative aspect.

The decorations remaining from the Achaemenid era include the enameled bricks which were discovered in Shush and it seems that the interior decorations of the Shush and Persepolis palaces are built by these enameled bricks [1-3].
These tiles include the archer hunters and lions. These decorations are of high importance because their clothes and colors illustrate the decoration of ornamental objects. The important samples of this era’s tiles adorned by the legendary and imaginary animals are currently on display at the Louvre Museum.

In the Ashkanid era, although the use of turquoise enamel in the crockery, especially in the clay coffins of that time, was frequent, the tile decorations is not achieved from this era and this era’s decorations are limited to the wall paintings, seen in the Ashur palace and in the Khajeh Mountain of Sistan.

Sassanid era is highly important in case of tile-making especially the mosaic-making. In this period, the enameled crockery with thick enamel got popular. A sample of these tiles which has enamel that is one centimeter thick, has been discovered in the Bishapur and Firuzabad excavations. In this era, in addition to tile-making, the use of faience mosaic or mosaic-making was widespread [4].

Mosaics in various colors depicting humans, plants, birds on the floors of Bishapur’s three porches, demonstrate the mosaic-making’s development in the Sassanid era [5].

**Tiling in Islamic Era:** In the first three centuries of Islam, architectural decorations were simplified and the human and animal pictures were deleted. Brick motifs and plasterwork decorations including palmettos got their places.

**Tiling in Seljukid Era:** In Seljukid era, especially in the fifth century, for the first time in the Islamic era, monochrome tiles in turquoise were used as the
“TokhmeGozari” or “Negingoziari” in every single place of the posterior view of many buildings such as KhajehAtabak, The Red Dome of Maragheh, The Blue Dome and Ghaffarieh Dome.

In the fifth and sixth centuries, this technique was remarkably used and the epigraphs were adorned with it. The instances of these decorations are the minaret of the Sin Mosque of Isfahan (526 Hijri) and the minaret of Damghan’s Jameh Mosque (450 Hijri) and the minaret of Bardsir’s Negar. These epigraphs were wholly consisted of turquoise enameled tiles on a brick background [6-8].

In the excavations of the Islamic City of Jorjan done by Dr.Kiani, thousands of molded cut brick bars were discovered, that some of them had turquoise enamel cover [9].

Tiling in the Khwarazmian, Ilkhanate and Timurid Eras:
In the Khwarazmian era, a wider area of historical buildings was tiled. Zozan Mosque, ForumadJameh Mosque, Gonabad and PasanganKhvaf Mosques were the examples.

In the Ilkhanate era, Ma’gheli decorations were prevalent and many epigraphs were adorned by Kufic Bannaee.

Some parts of the decorations were the hexagonal or octagonal tiles called Turquoise Kokabi and Chalipaee tiles (Cross-shaped) that were put among the other decorations. These tiles were generally outstanding. In this era, Kashan was known as the center of tile-making in the world and the AbiTaheer and AbiZaid clans were the most prominent artists of Kashan. However we should not ignore the gilded tiles that were initially produced in the Seljukid era and were glorified in the Khwarazmian era. These tiles had pictures of human, animals, plants and were adorned by Persian poems. (Ghouchani, 1992:72). Jorjan, Soltanieh, Saveh, Kashan and Takht-e-Soleyman were regarded as the centers of gilded tiles production [9].

In the late Ilkhanate era and the early Timurid, faience mosaic got popular and was used in the buildings of many cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara, Herat, Mashhad, Khvaf, Khargerd, Azerbaijan and Isfahan. These decorations had many climaxes and anticlimaxes in popularity.

Tiling in Safavid Era: The apex of tiling art and industry can be seen in the Safavid era’s buildings. faience mosaic were abundantly used in the early Islamic period especially in Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque. However, because of this era’s urgent need for public buildings such as mosques, schools, bathhouses, caravanserais and the holy shrines and also because of the Safavid kings’ haste in finishing the buildings, despite the good economic status, the painted tiles (Haft-Rang) were used instead of faience mosaic, though the faience mosaic were still used in smaller buildings [7, 8, 10].

One of the important points in Isfahan’s tiling is the painting on this era’s tiles which were made with a vast range of drawings and designs of pictorial tiles used for the plinth [11]. The most beautiful example can be observed in the Ganjali khan Bathhouse. Some of the tiles of Isfahan which had adorned these patterns are on display at the Metropolitan Museum.
Zand Era Tiling: There are no traces of faience mosaic in the Zand era; the painted tiles with arabesque patterns of Safavid era are replaced with the painted tiles with a white background and pink vases full of flowers. What is certain is that after the long periods and the known and unknown experiences of the Pottery, especially in the Mongolian Ilkhanate era, the artistic Renaissance of painting on the tiles came into being by the efforts and tastes of the Shirazi painters in the second half of the 12th century Hijri and after a short abeyance, from the early thirteenth century until the second half the fourteenth century, a new school of painting came to being in Iran.

In the conflicts of Vakil-o-Ro’aya (Karim khan Zand)’s successors and in the end of the tiling art’s abeyance until the Agha Mohammad Khan’s reign and the beginning of Fat'h-Ali Shah’s government, by the emigration of Shirazi painters from Shiraz and other cities of Iran to Tehran, the new capital, Iran’s painting gets popular. Although by the rearrangement of the peace and security, most of the painters and tile-makers had been immigrated to the new capital, the anonymous remaining tile-makers and tile-painters provided the preliminaries of the tile-making and tile-painting art’s revival.

The first sign of this revival is apparent in the restoration of Vakil era’s tiles in the modern pattern and design by using the plantation painting instead of the common traditional arabesque in the buildings like Vakil Mosque and Khan School. From this period onward, Shiraz City is flowered by the Shirazi tile-painters. However, in the palaces decorations, particularly in the tiling of this era, the literary paintings were used and the walls were decorated with the pictures of royal gatherings, polo-playing, parties, hunts, etc [7, 12].

Tiling in Qajarid Era: In fact, Iranian art in Qajarid era begins in the Fat’h-Ali Shah’s period, highly affected by Safavid era’s art. In this time, in addition to insignificant architecture and previous buildings’ restoration, large mosques were built under Fat’h-Ali Shah’s order, called Sultani Mosque or Shah Mosque in Tehran, Semnan, Borujerd, Ghazvin, Zanjan, or by the prominent people of the time like Hujjat al-Islam Shafti in Isfahan, Seyyed Mosque was built that all of them were had the adapted form of the Isfahani-style four-porch mosques.

Some of the researchers think that the Qajarid tiling was retrogressive and rejected but with a little research one realizes that Qajarid tiling was no futile and rejected. Instead, it created an evolution in tiling art by combining the artistic traditions and the icon-making and painting designs. Moreover, in Qajarid era, the tiling art was not limited to the buildings of mosques, cemeteries, shrines and Khanqahs and it involved the aristocratic palaces and mansions and gates and state institutes that can give a perfect picture of the decorative tiles’ function in the Qajarid era.

Most of the buildings such as mosques, schools, holy shrines, even the palaces and mansions were built during Fat’h-Ali Shah and Naser al-Din Shah’s kingdom. The building plans of Fat’h-Ali included a notable number of mosques and schools adorned with faience mosaic and painted tiles, both in the capital and in the provinces. Ghazvin Shah Mosque (Mosjed-o-Nabi) was the first mosque built in Fat’h-Ali Shah’s time in 1222 (Lunar Hijri) and Tehran and Semnan mosques were built in 1243 until 1245.

In these mosques, in contrast with the Safavid era’s architects, who tried to cover the whole surface and corners of the building with tiles, time decorations were constrained to the plinth and blind arcades surfaces which were adorned by painted tiles. The patterns of this tiling were the motifs of Rhododendron in Ghazvin and Arabesque plantation in Semnan with an emphasis on yellow and blue backgrounds. These decorations were concentrated in the porches.

In the coverings o this era’s mosque porches, there are Ma’gheli decorations including lozenge-shaped framings accompanying Kufic epigraphs mentioning the name of Allah, Muhammad (PBH) and Ali (PBH). In Ghazvin Mosque’s porch, using the lozenge-shaped decorations are done clumsily and inaccurately but in Semnan Mosque’, the accuracy is observed [13].

In the Nassered court buildings, the traditional and regular decorative organization done in the government of Fat’h-Ali Shah persists. Most of the sigmoid indentations are filled with bricks without enamel. The painted tiles adorn the plinth and blind arcades with various new-blossomed narcissusses with dense leaves and boughs. For covering the arched vault, the faience mosaic with ornate, or a rose finished in turquoise, yellow, black, white and red has been used. The south porch (Ivan-e- Maghsureh) as it was obvious, has the most designed and diverse tiling collections, particularly in the porch in front of Maghsureh having dome. Here also we see two kinds of tiling styles. Painted tile has had a chain of oval bergamots framed in the Vitruvian, to embody a pattern like a painting of flower and mixed fruits, watermelon, pomegranate, pear, grapes, roses and lilies which has the content of a new image. For the tiles surfaces, the enamel on the Qajarid tiles were thickened to...
various degrees and with expertise synthesis was given mineral materials and color-motifs in order to give them a glazing gloss and a complete natural effect. This is one the newly-emerged characteristics of Iranian tiling that should be compared with a similar style used in the European ceramic-making factories, not with any of Iranian local tiling styles and traditions.

The importance of tiling in the irreligious buildings erected under Nasir-Al Din Shah’s administration and encouragement is that apart from using abundant boughs and leaves, the plant and flowers regular in Islamic Iran, the “painting” imagery scenes are added to them. Although the imagery representation of the natural beings had been formerly used in tiles, during the 11th and 12th centuries, in the Nasserid era’s buildings, those elements were logically combined and they were presented as the visible and coherent scenes of everyday life, in a realistic way. The good examples of this type of tiling, can be seen in Golestan Palace (Tehran) and Saltanatabad Palace (at the foothills of North of Tehran).

Most of the excellent pieces of Qajarid tiles were produced in Tehran, that is, in the office of Ali Mohammad Esfahani, the great tile-maker. He was one of the famous experts, who wrote a technical paper on the tiling and tile-making industries, which is full of useful information and teachings. From the dated and signed tiles, it can be inferred that he left Isfahan for Tehran in 1302 (Solar Hijri) and he settled in the Kashi-sazan (Tile-makers) quarter, near the old gate of Abdol’azim, in the south of the capital.

**Types of Qajarid Tiles**

**Painted Tile:** In the late Timurid era and in the early Safavid, using another type of tiles called kheshti tile or seven-color got popular in decorating various buildings. As mentioned before, in the late Timurid and Safavid eras, faience mosaic-making was gradually replaced with painted (seven-color) tiles. The evolution in the popularity of seven-color tile may be the result of some economic and political reasons. Considering the importance of architecture and the increasing construction of religious or irreligious buildings in Safavid era, the architects decided to use seven-color tile to decorate various buildings. In this way, the artists were able to produce the tiles with a lower cost. In case of making, these tiles took less time and it was possible to draw the landscape on the baked clays to form the painted tile. For making the seven-color tiles, first the desired designs were prepared on the simple tile and then the drawings and images were painted, enameled and taken to the furnace. Each square-shaped tile was a part of the decorative design and this approach made coordination with the Islamic architecture possible. For example, the cover of domes adorned with arabesque pattern, coordinates with the size of the dome. The function of the seven-color tiling was common from the late Timurid era until the Qajarid era, but unfortunately in the recent era, this decoration style has had a decline in case of making, color and enamel except for some rare cases. Yellow and bright orange are the commonest colors of Qajarid era [9].

The seven common colors in this type of tile are as follows: black, white, azure, turquoise, crimson, fawn and yellow.

**The Patterns of Seven-Color Tiles:** As explained before, in the Qajarid era, the seven-color tiles were widely used. These decorations were not only used in mosques and schools and religious buildings, but also they were of use in private palaces and mansions and aristocratic houses. The motifs adorning the tiles were in fact, the old artistic patterns such as Giveh, Kohl-holder, Puppet, Sekrun, Wave, Pili, various Shamseh 9 and 12, bergamots and tond o kondshesh.

The plant motifs such as arabesque, flower and bush (Gol o Buteh), lily flower, rose, egglantine, various fruits and animal images like the lion and the sun, the national pattern of Iranians, were used in most of this era’s buildings.

The human drawings were the most important ornate which was the basis of Qajarid tiling decorations. These patterns included:

- Historical and epic events such as Shahnameh’s stories, Ashura’s events and religious gatherings.
The images and drawings that have religious beliefs like Ashura events in Kermanshah’s Moavenol Molk Tekyeh and Shiraz MoshirHusseinieh creating a beautiful museum of paintings.

The images of Rostam and Div-e-Sepid’s battle are of the most important paintings on the wall of palaces, bathhouses and gates such as SemnanArg Gate [14], Tehran Mohammadi Gate, Afifabad Garden, Shiraz KarimkhaniArg, Kerman Ibrahimkhan Bathhouse, Nahavand Haj-agha Torab Bathhouse.

- Hunters and hunt gatherings that mostly belonged to kings, princes and emirs, having a vast proportion of tiling decorations [15].
- Feasts including courtly pleasure party, dance and, music.
- Martials, commanders and soldiers of Qajar accompanying the military instruments and devices such as cannon, cart, sword, spear and dagger.
- The images of kings, princes, emirs, martial and religious men, whose instances can be seen on the MoavenolMolkTekyeh tiles.
- The images of women on the Qajarid tiling; for the first time the images of unveiled women were shown affected by the European arts. The pictures of women in red clothes, with fat bodies, round faces and joined eyebrows are the drawings used in the late Naser-Al Din Shah’s era in palaces and mansions and private houses such as Shiraz GhavamNarejestan, ZeinabolMoluk House, RajabaliHavae House, Saltanatabad Palace and Shiraz Owji Houses.
- Natural Landscapes; these landscapes included palaces, rivers, bridges, natural landscapes, lake with birds which even was used in holy shrines like Shahr Rey’s ImamzadehTaher. Unfortunately, Qajarid tiles were highly influenced by European arts and even the church and windmill designs were used in paintings on the tiles.

Two-Color Tile: These types of tiles were in fact patterns of wave, cloud, line or images in azure with a white background that are classified into two groups.

Khorshidkhanum Tiles: On these tiles, the image of sun or Qajarid women’s face is in azure, which is mainly used in the plinth of buildings, particularly in the basement of houses and bathes. For instance, these tiles were used in the plinth of Hazrat Bathhouse in Semnan.

Cloud & Wind (Abr O Baad) Tiles: These tiles which have patterns of cloudy, wavy, chaotic lines in azure, were used on the floor of aristocratic houses sitting rooms, palaces and sometimes in holy shrines.

Monochrome Tiles: These patterns-less turquoise or azure tiles, were sometimes used on floor of bathes or houses or adorned the plinth of buildings.
Nareh Tiles: This tiles are narrow enameled bricks which are visible and which play essential role in the gimps about the patterns, epigraphs, dome covers and also in embedding the “karbandi” and the under dome “pabarik”s and the arches of this era.

Faience Mosaic: Faience mosaic consists of cut pieces of tiles from various designs and colors, shaved and put together to form a bigger piece and to be put on the wall to decorate the building. These drawings are sometime the patterns of Gerehkeshi and sometimes of the Arabesque Gol o Buteh and sometime form the faience mosaic. However, these type of tiling are limited against the vast area of seven-color tiles and in contrast with the Timurid buildings in which faience mosaic adorned most sections of the buildings, in Qajarid era, only the important parts of the building such as Mehrab and Minaret were adorned with these type of tiling.

Ma’gheli Tiling: Ma’gheli art in Qajarid era can be regarded as the decorative component used in various view-making and exterior and interior covers.

Ma’gheli decorations are classified into two groups:

- Geometrical decorations which consist of yellow, black, white, turquoise and brown colors and are displayed by putting them together geometrically. These decorations include many types of knot, which are called Magheli Knots.
- Kufic Bannaee Script: Bannaee script is the very Ma’gheli script, called the architectural scrip as well. This style of writing like previous era were written in three types of simple, medium and complex and has been used in view-making of exterior, back-sides, minarets, inside the porches, under the arches in the form of Allah’s Glorious Names and the names of the 12 Imams. It was also applied in the bowl-making, rasmi-band s, in various designs and forms by using different materials of bricks, tiles and Nareh-tiles in various colors.

These decorations were used in mosques, schools particularly in the gates like Tehran Gate, Ghazvin Gate, SemnanArg Gate, Semnan Imam Mosque and The 12 Gates of Tehran for view-making. Still, one can see some of the examples of these decorations in Shabestan of Shiraz NasirolMolk Mosque, ShahidMotahhari Mosque (Sepahsalar), Tehran Timche Hajebod Doleh, Kashan Timche Aminod Doleh, The Transom of Mahan Shazde Garden.

Qajarid era’s Epigraphs: Almost all the Islamic eras, the epigraphy is one of the important principles of decorations in Islamic Architecture, which continued until the Qajarid era and afterwards. Epigraphs are written by inspiring from religious images and inclinations and also by using the literature and the culture of the era. The Koranic chapters and verses were written in Naskh and White Suls on an azure background. The Hadiths, tales and the Prayers upon “the 14 Infallibles”, were also written in those scripts. In many of this era’s buildings such as mosques, schools, tombs and holy shrines these epigraphs were written in different styles that many of them lack any author or calligrapher. The Persian poems describing the building, the date and the name of the founder were written in Nasta’liq style and at the end, the last hemstitch was devoted to the date of construction or the year of restoration.
CONCLUSION

The function of tiles for consolidating and decorating the Islamic era’s building from the Seljukid days began and has passed its developing course in Ilkhanate, Timurid, Safavid eras in many centuries. Tiles, used by the artist in various styles, have had a great role in decorating the Islamic buildings. Using the monochrome, seven-color, faience mosaic, brick and tile combination in the middle ages of Islam and Safavid, have decorated various parts of the buildings such as dome cover, minaret, the building’s interior area, under the dome and Mihrab in religious and irreligious buildings. The Qajarid tiling process was the continuation of Safavid era. The buildings’ expansion and development prevents the faience mosaic to cover the whole building, therefore the faience mosaic were limited to important parts of the building such as Mehrab, Trompe, Minaret and about the cadre and sometimes the epigraphs.

Seven-color tiles because of the work speed were also used to decorate the most parts of the buildings. Ma’gheli tiles had the second priority with having geometrical patterns and Bannaee script as their main subjects. Blue and White were replaced with yellow and orange and in most of the subjects, the background were adorned with yellow color to highlight the date and the founder. Religious subjects increase compared to other era, these issues are not only seen in religious buildings, but also in the state constructions. The increase in communications with western states and the tiling artists’ familiarity with color, subject and the styles of the European countries arts, leads to this art’s more dominance in Iran compared to previous eras.

REFERENCES