



Categories practices of used techniques in Nastaliq inscriptions on Safavid architectural decoration

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Abstract

One of the most attractive and most diverse decorations of the Safavid period architecture is Nastaliq inscriptions that have been implemented in different ways in buildings with different applications. The scrolls contain valuable information such as a description of the building, patrons and artists who identify and introduce them to clear the hidden aspects of architecture and calligraphy history. In addition, the aesthetic aspects of this work are also being investigated. From this perspective, one of the things that cannot be oblivious to it, the variety of practices those impacts on the quality of calligraphy in the inscriptions. The aim of this study is to identify common practices and introducing lesser-known practices in the implementation of Nastaliq inscriptions in the architectural decoration belonging Safavid dynasty.

This fundamental research is the descriptive study was conducted; the sampling method used is Post Stratification. Accordingly, the 204 available inscriptions have been studied. More than sixty percent of the documentary has been gathered by field researches. The results indicate that the first Nastaliq inscriptions were in 9th mid-century A.H. carving used in the series of gravestones in Herat. Results show that in the Safavid period, this way has continued. In this period, the techniques divided to 6 main ways which containing 17 separable distinct subsets. The abundance percentage of the most common methods in inscriptions shows that: Stoney (51%) and Tile working (24.9%) are the most two usage ways. After those, the ornaments made of plaster, wood, metal and painting in terms of the number of samples are the other techniques. According to the classification of different methods, there are 6 unique techniques in research samples: Koshte-bori and Tokhme-gozari (two branches of Stucco Decorations) at Pinia House in Naein and Nim-Avard School at Isfahan, Laye-Chini (Gilded Decoration on Plaster) at Aliqapou Palac in Isfahan, Hakkaki (Wood Engraving) at Jame mosque in Natanz, Moshabbak-felez (Metallic Reticular) at Darbe-Imam in Isfahan and Qalamzani Barjaste (Metallic Relief Scrimshaw) at Chaharbagh School in Isfahan.

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Also, when applying such methods was used in architectural decoration are investigated based on dated samples. On the basis of dated inscriptions can be proposed as follows: the first technique is Stone Carving at 922-923 A.H. in Maydan mosque in Kashan and tomb of Imamzade Abolfotooh in Vanshan. Mosaic Tile is the next method which used probably in 918 and certainly in 951 A.H. After these two styles, respectively: Woodcut (963 A.H), Stucco (979 A.H), Metallic Scrimshaw (1011 A.H), Wood Engraving (1012 A.H), Stone Engraving (1020 A.H), and Stone Mosaic (1031 A.H), Haft-Rang Tile (1034 A.H), Painting (1073 A.H), Metallic Reticular (mid-11th century A.H), Rooye-koobi (1091 A.H), Tokhme-gozari and Laye-Chini (early 12th century A.H) and finally Metallic Relief Scrimshaw (1120 A.H).

This study shows that the variety of technical method used in Nastaliq Inscription was limited on first half of Safavid era and the culmination of a variety of methods has been in the 11th century A.H.

Keywords: Nastaliq Inscriptions, Architectural Decoration, Safavid Monuments, Safavid Calligraphy.

