

A Comparative Study of Iranian's Mosques Decorations and Pre-Islamic Architecture

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ABSTRACT

The evolutionary trend of Iranian art reveals the presence of certain components as permanent patterns, yet made of different materials; which throughout the history and despite all the changes and upheavals have maintained their origins. The historical study of the pre-Islamic decorative patterns is necessary so that it indicates the premiere origins and basis of the decorative patterns in different styles such as tiling, molding, carving etc. given these facts, in the present study we have tried to make a comparison between the decorative patterns in Iranian mosques with the ancient decorative patterns through investigating the architectural designs during different periods of ancient Iran and Islamic. The purpose of the present study is to study and compare the decorations and indicating the pre-Islamic and Islamic stylistic similarities. The descriptive methodology and the data collected from documentary and field studies revealed the gradual historical evolution of decorative patterns, that is these patterns are relevant to their previous periods as interwoven strings and have not being occurred over in an instance. Studying the ancient Iranian art, specifically the Sassanid period, one realizes that despite the constant development of art, it is also bring the historical confirmation of the past periods and the flourished in the Islamic art.

KEYWORDS: Decoration, Iranian Mosques, Pre-Islamic Period, Islamic Period.

1. INTRODUCTION

Decoration is not hiding the fact under the beauties, it is harmonizing the materials with the main shape of the building and adds vibrant and glamour [1]. Some researchers such as Burkhart believe "Decorative patterns have unhistorical, spiritual and intellectual nature which reflect unity in diversity and diversity in unity". From this perspective, decorative patterns are not merely the surface coating, but they contain hidden meanings in different levels and with symbolic and transcendental concepts. However, according to Rahnavard[2] "Islamic decoration aims at expressing the sanctity of the atmosphere", as the Iranian artists have constantly attempted to lead the material toward the realm of the morality; and as Nasr suggests "based on Islamic vision, art donates dignity to the material". The decorative patterns, in all senses, are part of our architectural identity, as if we omit the guardian Lamassus (bulls with heads of bearded men) from the Gate of all nations in Persepolis, the magnificent motifs and muqarnas in Imam mosque or the inscriptions and patterns of the dome in Sheikh-Lotfollah mosque, then the combination of the nature and structure of the architecture is interrupted and defects [3].

Decorative motifs paly significant role in our architectural identity structure and the religious architecture has a special place amongst all of the Iranian architectural arts. This architectural style traces back to pre-Islamic period and specifically Sassanid period. Here the major question is about the origin of the decorative motifs and to know where the Iranian's mosques decorative motifs have come from.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Pre-Islamic period

2.1.1. The pre-Achaemenid period

Decoration was initially limited to small objects and containers, and they later applied in architecture as well. From the fifth millennium onward, the finds showed majorly stone, ceramic or metal vessels and tools with primitive and simple decorations which has consciously been used as decorative elements. The inlay decoration with semi-precious stones, has been first seen in Jiroft's discoveries, on the south east of Iran.

These vessels are mostly decorated by palm leaves, flowers, cow, scorpion, snake and geometric motifs etc. which some of them were also applying in Islamic art, especially architecture [3].

2.1.2. Achaemenid empire (550-334 B.C)

The glamorous feature of Achaemenid art is revealed in the architectural monuments and Persepolis palace in Fars. Stone and brick contain the major material, and due to the importance of animals and humans statue and motifs, the other kinds of decorations such as plant designs, were subsidiary in small amount like the lotus flowers. Yet the important point about this period is the usage of the glazed bricks in Susa, around fifth century B.C[3].



Fig.1.Lamassu, the legendary animal related to Achaemenid period



Fig.2.Tripylon with the Lamassu motif and blue lotus margins

Wood carving has been used in Iran since the ancient time, and the content of some of the discovered inscriptions from Darius treasury in Persepolis is about the payment of artists who have carved on the wooden doors [4].

2.1.3. Parthian (334 B.C – 226 A.D)

The Parthian art as a link between Achaemenid and Sassanid civilizations plays an important role in ancient Iranian art. Using plaster (Moldings) in decoration was one of the newly emerging phenomenon in this period, which due to its accessibility and flexibility was applying in the varieties of tasks [3]. The incredible master pieces of Islamic moldings, in terms of technique, the method for applying bricks, motifs and patterns root in Parthian rich plaster works. Iranian invented and develop the art of plaster work during 2000 years [5].



Fig. 3. The frequent molding motifs, late Parthian period

2.1.4. Sassanid Period (642 – 2247 A.D)

The Sassanid art as the reviver of Persian traditions, was coupled with the conscious rejection of Greek and Roman values and their success is particularly observable in the remained molding, mosaics, textiles and silver vessels; yet the true inherent of Sassanid art is Islam which could continue and develop their art with an Islamic theme (Fig. 4) [6]. The

circular figures of their art inspired the interlacing foliage and tendrils of arabesque art in Islamic period; the Jameh mosque of Nain is an outstanding instance of this artistic style. The decorative molding motifs in Sassanid period were representing the artists' spirits and presenting a combination of stories and patterns in some events. This mental and spiritual creativity has been effected the Islamic motifs and furthermore, the Islamic art adapt their work with Sassanid art and then extended it into magnificent monuments which indicates a geniuses imitation of Asian art. The molding and carved stucco impacts have been also reflected on ceramics, goldsmith and metal works which are inducing the influence of human, animals and plants motifs [4].



Fig.4. *a piece of molded decoration, Bishapour Fars, Sassanid Period*



Fig. 5. *Jameh mosque of Nain's decoration*

Through reflecting on the concepts and themes of the Sassanid artistic works, we realize the interest Islamic era artists, especially as far as it was possible for Muslim artist, they were consciously inspired by the Sassanid motifs in mosques, schools or even public buildings such as inns, markets, water reservoirs etc. leading to innovating new motifs such as arabesque [4].

Jameh Mosque of Nain with incredible molding designs is one of the well-known monuments of early Islamic period which except for its plan, form and materials, the Sassanid methods have been applied in its decoration. Three categories of motifs including geometric, plants and inscriptions are apparent among the artworks of this mosque. The molded altar with several frames is one of the outstanding features of this mosque's decoration. This altar has three arches with a lot of stucco decorations, mostly stylized versions of palms, pines shapes leave and acanthus. There is an inscription inside the altar elegantly designed by Sassanid shape flowers and circles. Moreover, the combinations of lotus flowers and clusters of grapes and grapes' leaves can be observed in this masterpiece [4].

The ceramics and silver vessels of Sassanid art had been also inspired by their molding and the positions and combinations of stuccos with the motifs of hunting birds, horseback riders, religious ceremony or feasts can frequently been observed alongside the decorative lotus flowers, grapes or dancers. Motifs of animals, hunting scenes specially Bahram V (BahramGur) hunts have been represented on Sassanid textiles as well; later the byzantine fabric weavers used the motif of two lions on a red background in their silk textiles.

The exact implementation, variety of trends, applying the positive and negative atmosphere and repeating motifs, all together with a mixture of plants, animals and geometric shapes in symmetrical and asymmetrical way are the main features of Sassanid designs (Fing. 6) [3].



Fig.6. piece of molding decoration with symmetric plants motifs, Sassanid period

The usage of circles and semicircles as the main motifs of molded decorations which are also applied in Sassanid and Parthian artworks, has been continued in the stuccos of places and halls during the Islamic period. These motifs were mostly in the shape of the tendrils of vine and in some parts similar to commas and generally some curved designs, different sizes of circles or ring shaped chains or lotus were used at the center of a cross or a swastika, or at the middle of the stucco [4].

Regarding the Islamic architectural decoration we face pre-Islamic art components which reveals the creation of the basis of the Islamic architectural phenomenon in pre-Islamic Iran which are later transferred and developed in Islamic architecture. The Seljuk architecture enjoys a specific strength and glory. Although about one thousand years has passed, but the remaining building and monuments of that era displays their artists' and architects' skill and mastering and their knowledge of different architectural methods [7].

The evolution of decorative arts can be seen from the simply decorated buildings in the early centuries to the complexity of the Seljuk buildings [8]. As it was mentioned, these decorations are not hiding a fact under the beauties, but in fact, they are harmonizing the materials with the main shape of the building and adds vibrant and glamour [1].

Plaster used to be very common in the structure of the building and also for the decoration and facades during Sassanid period and has been one of the inseparable materials from the ancient era up to the current time [9] and due to the researches the strong impact of Sassanid art is obvious in the early Islamic molding art [10]. The molding decoration did not remained restricted to the Sassanid royal building, yet it was transformed into the Islamic art and taken from one end to another end for almost a thousand years [11].

2.2. Islamic Period

Mosques were the first building which were immediately built after the Muslim conquest on the Sassanid territory and the Jameh mosque of Fahraj in Yazd is one of the first mosques which is attributed to first century of Islamic period. The identical structural features of this building with Sassanid architecture is to the extent that at the beginning some researchers considered it as a Sassanid place. This similarity of this building to Sassanid architecture is more than the Damqan Tarikhaneh Temple (the most well-known monument of early A.H centuries). Similar to the Sassanid place in Damqan, the mosque contains barrel vault with oval arcs and, round thick columns with three and half meters height and two meters diameter and a courtyard (Miansara) which together with porticos and Shabestans are built facing Mecca [12]. While being simple, the general structure of this mosque, its material, its brickwork, the dimensions of the red bricks and the columns are so similar to the Sassanid period buildings [12].

Islamic architecture begins with mosques; as mosques include all of the architectural functions. The major part of a mosque is its altar and Moqarnas is an outstanding decoration for an altar which a mélange of all beauty, glory and mystery. Arc is also an inseparable component of mosque's architecture; so it is used in the entrance, the hall (Shabestan) and other parts of the mosques depending on their spiritual function. Arcs have also been used in the Iranian religious architecture of pre-Islamic period and the structure of churches (specially the altar). The dome is also one of them main elements of Islamic architecture and regarding its color and shape is one of the most important mystical symbols of the Islamic world. Titus Burckhardt, the great connoisseur of Islamic art, believed that the mosques' walls covered by glazed tiles or delicate molding of arabesque motifs are reminiscent of the mystery of veil [13].

2.2.1. Early Islamic period until Seljuk period

Facing the Islamic world can be considered as the major cultural and political evolution during the Iranian history. The pre-Islamic art was a mystical (lyrical and marital) and religious art at the service of the privileged social class. However, after the Islam conquest and monotheism principles, everything, even the art, was influenced by the Word of God and Imams. Meanwhile, some artistic components such as iconography were neglected while other decorative methods, specifically geometric motifs, gained great importance [3].

Anyway, the prohibition of the iconography in Islam (Aniconism) resulted in the extended usage of the abstract plants and geometric motifs and Muslim artists created and invented a wide spectrum of new and complicated combinations. “The most complicated combinations of Islamic era are based on the most familiar and traditional concepts. The holy tree and the blue lotus in thousands of shapes, the wavy vine with various motifs of leaves and flowers composed with precise geometric networks and six and eight-pointed stars. The simplicity and naturalism of these motifs and decorations have been reduced, and based on a subjective and immaterial point of view they were being Barsav (which the act of being inspired from the natural figures and transforming them into abstract geometric shapes)”.

Clearly, the approach toward the motifs and concepts was not inspired from the past anymore and through the gradual depletion of the symbols from mythical icons and encryption notions, they transformed into an overall symbol of the divinity and the sacred world.

In this regard, a kind of patterning with a decorative appearance was formed that its purpose was not expressing the symbolic nature of the motif and identifying it or creating beauty, but to present God’s manifestation and the beauty of its divine reflection in plural images hidden in an integrated combination[3].

Inscriptions, as the first unifying component of nonvisual elements, introduced to artworks from the second century A.H and acquired a major importance in decoration in order to transfer the sublime concepts and spiritual messages of Islam from an aesthetic aspect in all sorts of art, specifically in architecture[3]. The molding art through different types of calligraphy like kufic combined with arabesque patterns traverse an evolutionary process in Seljuk period [12].

Plaster as a suitable material for artists, was commonly used in Islamic period. The moldings of Atigh’s Jameh mosque in Shiraz, Jameh mosque of Nain, the tomb of twelve Imams in Yazd, the house of SabzPoushan in Nishapur dates back to the third and fourth centuries AH, are all similar to the Sassanid molding art (Fig. 7) [12].

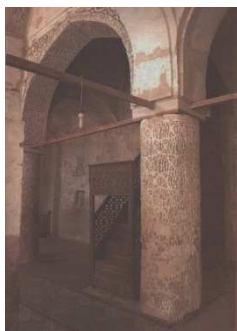


Fig.7.*Jameh mosque of Nain moldings. Motifs inspired by Sassanid art*

The patterns process based on the small and large circles with leaves, fruits and flowers and delicate molded patterns inside them.

Brick as the main Islamic architecture material with many functions and varieties is one of the features of Iranian Islamic architecture. The geometric and angled compositions of bricks provide a suitable opportunity for geometric decoration. At first, bricks were used for simplified Chinese vessels but later the vertical, horizontal and inclined movements with fovea or protrusion surfaces showed different kinds of its applications. The façade of Juirjir mosque in Isphahan and Damqan mosque’s minaret are fascinating samples of brickwork in early Islamic period.

Turquoise glazed bricks are used on the upper part of the Damqan mosque’s minaret and a beautiful combination of glazes and ordinary bricks is represented which is underlying the tile work in Islamic architecture.



Fig.8.*The old brick portal of Hakim mosque in Isphahan, known as Jurjir mosque, Buyid period, 3 century A.H*

2.2.2. Seljuk period (429 – 552 A.H)

Architecture and decoration witnesses a significant evolutionary trend during Seljuk period. Glazes bricks or monochrome cyan tiles, like tiles with the pattern of محمدؐ (the prophet Mohamad) in Gorgan, were tentatively used in order to enhance the glory and beauty of the building and lighten up the architectural elements or make the brick inscriptions more readable[3].

The common decorative Sassanid patterns, plus the different arabesque designs, variety of Kufic inscriptions and Iranian manuscripts with geometric patterns and some animal and plant motifs, parallel with the brickwork decoration which was the typical Seljuki architectural decoration, were being applied in all of the artistic aspects of that period and stepped toward development and extension.



Fig. 9. The brickwork decoration of the entrance porch of Imam Khomeini Mosque, Kerman. Seljuk Period

The Nishapur palace in Khorasan is one the well-known monuments of the ninth and tenth century A.H. Its molding stuccos is a unique representative of the methods of drawing animal figures within the Islamic techniques. Heads of a bird holding a palm leaf in its beak can be observed in some parts on the building façade which is identical with a pattern on Sassanid silver vessels. Other decorative elements of the Samereh palace such as decorative ribbons as a triangle, blue lotus, birds and palm trees are also used in this palace[4].

The Nishapur palace stuccos are comparable with the Samereh palace stuccos and Jameh Mosque of Nain, regarding their style and methods. Hameh mosque of Qazvin and Jameh mosque of Ardestan, as examples of Islamic period architecture, are also similar to the Jameh Mosque of Nain and Nishapur palace. Some Islamic period ceramic are also representative of this trend; the ceramics related to Seljuk period are the most famous ceramics in this regard which have been retreated to the Kufic decorative inscriptions on the buildings. Famous samples of ceramic vessels with stucco motifs are currently being preserved in National Museum of Iran and the most ancient of them of a ceramic discovered in Tepe Qobira excavations in Kerman by the survey team from the Oriental University of London in 1972.

The patterns on this vessel are made by stump and representing the Sassanid or even Achaemenidera motifs, including rosette and spoon grooves, like the grooves on Persepolis columns and chain motifs of Sassanid stuccos.

Discovering these ceramics in Tepe Qobira was a unique phenomenon which showed their manufacturing center in Qubira. Thus through surveys and studies, a number of these ceramics with acanthus and chain patterns, were also discovered in Jiroft, in a site known as the city of Daqyanus on the river side of Halil Rud. These patterns are similar to the discoveries in TepeHesar in Damqan and niches of Chal Tarkhan palace in Ray, as well as a sample from Tepe Hassanlu in Azarbayjan which is a ceramic dates back to the 9th century B.C with approximately similar decorations to the stucco patterns[4].

Not many wooden-trimming works are available from Seljuk period, yet probably some samples are still exist in non-famous mosques in remote areas. Fortunately, two pieces a wooden pulpit from 6th century are being preserved in Metropolitan Museum. One of them is a big piece with few lines of kufic inscriptions and plant and arabesque patterns. The other piece is part of the pulpit frame with hexagon shape parts and big sketches of palm trees which is still common on some of the Iranian tombstones. The inscription on this piece has mentioned the name of the donor and the name of the reigning ruler, Allaodolehabu Talib and Garhsasb Yazdi, which were serving the Seljuk monarchy during 546 A.H[4].

The decorations of the Alavian mosque in Hamadan which is a well-known monument from the 6th century A.H and contemporary with Seljuk period, are similar with the motifs of the mentioned ceramics. Specially the two arcades on both side of the façade with geometric patterns in the shape of small and large diamonds laying among the delicate brickworks.

A beautiful Kufic relief inscription on the front entrance of the mosque surrounded by stuccos of flowers and plants which are decorating the exterior wall and the side columns of the mosque. Animal and plant motifs have also been observed on a piece of stone, recently discovered around TaqBostan in Kermanshah. The tomb of Seye Shams Aldin in Yaz and Shamsie School are also outstanding instances of stucco decorations with plant and geometric motifs from the 5th century A.H[4].

Jameh Mosque of Isphahan as one of the largest mosques of the world, is the main representative of the glory and magnificent of Seljuk era architecture which was built due to the order of Malik-Shah. The structure of this mosque is based on Sassanid tradition which reminds the Sassanid four vaulted (ChaharTaq)with domes, with brick and stucco; the same materials used in Sassanid monuments such as TaqKasra, Sarvestan palace and Damqan palace [14].

Another Seljuk building inspired by Sassanid architecture is the Jameh mosque of Qazvin, which is based on the general shape of a four vaulted fire temple, including a large square room made of brick and decorated Shabestan with stuccos and Kufi inscriptions and Seljuk motifs [15]. The dome of this mosque has to layers which one of them is currently remained. Inside the dome is decorated by acanthus leaf motifs which was common in Sassanid art. The corners of this dome chamber are squinch type and the corbel archs are decorated with a type of Gassazi[16].

2.2.3. Ilkhanate (654 – 750 A.H)

Stucco and tile work were two primary factors for decorating buildings during the Ilkhanate period. The altar of Jemeh mosque of Isfahan known as Iljayto, Jameh mosque of Semnan' altar and also altars of Jameh mosques in Abarqu and Varamin are outstanding examples of Ikhanate art. "This period is also known as the most productive period of tile manufacturing in Iran" [3].



Fig.10. *geometric and plant decorations magnificent inscriptions; the altar of Jameh mosque of Semnan; Ilkhanate period.*

The art of wooden-trimming and decorations had been very rare in the 8th century A.H and early Mongol period. The wooden doors in Jameh mosque of Bayazid Bastami in Bastam date back to 707 – 709 A.H which are decorated with plants designs and Kufic inscriptions and the interior decorations of the mosque contains netted geometric shapes in the form of carving and molding styles of Iranian decoration; the altar of Jameh mosque of Nain from 711 A.H is also another sample. The Iranian wood-trimming industry during 14th century A.D, especially among the western Turkic Khaganates, reached to its highest technical and artistic point. The wooden Rehal (book rest for Qoran) being currently held in Metropolitan museum is one of the wooden trimming master pieces of Mongol period in Iran. The name of the manufacturer of this Quran Rehal is Hassan ibn Suleiman Isfahani, indicates that this Rahel was made in Iran. The producer and engraver have used all of decorative elements of Mongol school, and applied them in a delicate manner on the corners and different parts and sometimes put the netted and hollow forms with several different figures all together. There are few wooden doors of Timurid period are also attributed to Turkish industrialists[4].

2.2.4. Timurid

The increasing support and development of architecture during the Timurid period provided a great opportunity for decorating buildings. In fact, decoration was playing a decisive role in enhancing the value of a building. Through applying numerous colored tiles and their artistic usage, decorative art became the distinctive feature of Timurid architecture; in another word, the Timurid architectural experience is summarized in its decorations. Many important monuments such as Goharshad mosque, the blue mosque in Tabriz and the Jameh mosque in Yazd are manifestations of the different decorative styles of Timurid period which shining with delight[3].



Fig. 11. Mosaic tiling decorated by thuluth inscriptions on a cobalt blue background, the entrance porch of Tabriz Blue mosque, Timurid dynasty

2.2.5. Safavid (908 – 1149 A.H)

Safavid dynasty made a lot of comprehensive evolutions in cultural, artistic and religious aspects of the Iranian society for more than two centuries. During this period, the builders and architectures were considering creating concepts such as unity and integrity and being effective on the mind and behavior of the society. The Isfahan school urbanism as the main architectural style of this period, was based on simplicity of the design and geometry of the build in [17]. The companionship and consistency of all types of decorations with architectural spaces reaches to its highest point in this period. Most of the Safavid architectural monuments are located in Isfahan, such as Chaharbagh School, Sheikh Lotfallah mosque and Imam mosque which the most magnificent decorative art. It seems that in this period, the decorations were as valuable as the architectural feature of the building[3].

Our information regarding the wooden trimming in Safavid era is mostly restricted to the mosques' wooden doors in Iran and western Turkistan, which are preserved in different museums like Golestan museum in Tehran or the Islamic collection in Berlin museum. Their decorations mostly consist of arabesque patterns or plants motifs which are sometimes combined with animals' figures. One of the good examples of this Safavid industry is a pair of doors in Tehran made by Ali ibn Safavi in 915 A.H and another one in Berlin museum made by Habib Allah in 995 A.H[4].

The pomegranate flower in reliefs and objects' and vessels' designs is related to the ancient religions even before Zoroastrian. This motif has later continued to be used on carpets, textiles, vessels and other objects during the Safavid period. As in some cases, it is represented as a red pomegranate flower on stuccos and paintings (Fig. 12).



Fig.12. Meydan mosque; Saveh. Colored stucco with relief pomegranate flowers on a white background

The architecture and other applied arts with all of their decorative styles and aesthetic features from ancient times up to the Safavid period, were the distinctive characteristic of Iranian and Islamic art; and whenever an eastern or western element would enter, after refining it in a rhythmic and harmonic way, the Iranian artists could mix it with the original, traditional Iranian art. As in the Ganjali khan complex, a valuable artistic work of the mosaic and seven colored tiling, painting on stuccos and brickworks with Iranian motifs combined with Eastern Europe decorative elements, which are inspired by Timurid art as well. The geometric designs with tiles and bricks with geometric inscriptions and paintings in Ganjali khan complex can be mentioned as another example (Javadi, 2008) [6].

Jameh mosque of Isfahan as a religious monument from Sassanid period, and according to recent finding with some Parthian elements as well, is a holy land to worship God [14].

2.2.6. Afshar, Zand, Qajar

2.2.6.1. Afshar

Nader Shah Afshar spent most of his reign on military campaign and conquering other lands, thus there was no time for developing art and no significant work was built during Nader Shah or his grandson Shahrukh reign [3].

2.2.6.2. Zand

“Zand architecture is identical with Safavid architecture, yet in a simpler and more purified and concise manner” [8]. The Zand dynasty decorations were significantly noticed and regarding their style, they continued the Safavid style with slight changes. However, the impact of western painting which emerged from the late Safavid period, received more attention in this period and influenced tiling, stucco and other decorative styles as well. “Yet the most prominent architectural feature of this period is implementing large stones” [8]. 48 integrated stone columns made of marble and an integrated stone pulpit with fourteen stairs with 6.40*1.26*55cm dimensions represent the highest stone usage at that time [3].

2.2.6.3. Qajar

The Qajarian architecture experiences a kind of duality; on one hand, it wanted to abide the previous Iranian traditions and on the other hand it is under the western architecture. Decorations such as tiling, stucco, stonework, painting on stucco, mirror work and painting on wood were the major Qajarian decorative styles. The decorative motifs of that time were abstract shapes, arabesques, flower bowls (London Rose), landscapes and hunting grounds, birds and vases full of flowers, portraits of kings, nobilities and princes, the lion and sun motif and angels.



Fig. 13. Mosaic tiling, geometric knots, firecracker and the star are embossed; SepahSalar mosque in Tehran, west side entrance.

The art of typography of this period was outstanding, creative and unique as well (Fig. 14)[3].



Fig. 15. Part of the Nastaliq inscription; by Master MirzaQolamRezaIsphahani. The entrance of SepahSalar mosque in Tehran, west side entrance; Qajar period

3. Conclusion

Regarding the Islamic architectural decoration we face pre-Islamic elements; that is the majority of the basic Islamic architectural phenomenon had been created in Iran and developed through the history and have inherited to Islamic architectures. The decorations of mosques have been notices as their architecture as a mosque can be considered the first manifestation of Islamic art. Geometric shapes in a symbolic and philosophical concept is a main decorative factor in mosques; so that it can have the mental and physiological impact on the prayers mind and enhance the sense of unity in the atmosphere. The complicated geometric shapes with repeated proportions of a motif increase the sense of order and harmony. The precise studies on most of the Islamic buildings' and monuments' decorations indicate the influence of pre-Islamic periods, specifically Sassanid art. After the Arabs invasions and the collapse of Sassanid Empire, the religion and government changed, yet the Sassanid art continued to live for centuries. In the present study, we tried to investigate the pre-Islamic and Islamic architectural decoration and found we that the Islamic motifs and architectural decorations are strongly effected by their previous historical periods and with slight changes have been adopted.

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