

## **An Investigation of the Visual and Semantic Features of Art in the Abbasid Period (with Emphasis on the Arts of Architecture, Painting and Textiles)**

### **Abstract**

After the advent of Islam, this religion had a cultural, economic, social and political impact on societies. Under the influence of Islam, art underwent changes in societies and became famous under the term “Islamic art”. Therefore, Islamic art repeatedly focuses on generating beauty with the aid of abstract designs and the usage of letters. During this period, due to the relative limitations of other arts such as painting, music, sculpture, and sometimes even their prohibition, Muslims began to develop various methods in abstract fields. In the Abbasid period, as one of the most brilliant eras of Islamic civilization and culture, all categories of arts, including calligraphy, architecture and music received much attention; as so that the palaces of the caliphs were fortified with works of art and the gathering of artists. The Abbasid caliphs were influenced by the Iranian culture in all fields and supported artists of the former Sassanid court and rewarded them. In a way, art reached its perfection in this era. The components of Islamic art in the Abbasid period include: urban planning, painting, calligraphy, music, textile and Tiraz (inscribed fabrics). The present research has been accomplished via a descriptive and analytical methods by relying on the data of library resources. The findings of the research indicate that in this period, painting of the Baghdad school reached its greatest, furthermore, the interest of the Abbasid caliphs towards architectural values led to its growth, and in the field of textiles, the reflection of political and social changes initiated the development of Tiraz (inscribed fabrics).

### **Research aims:**

1. Examining the visual features of art in the Abbasid period.

٢. Studying the semantic features of art in the Abbasid period.

**Research questions:**

١. In the Abbasid period, what visual artistic features existed in the arts of painting, textiles and music?

٢. What were the semantic features of arts in the Abbasid period?

**Keywords:** Abbasid period, art, visual and semantic features.

**Introduction**

With the advent of Islam, this religion was culturally, economically, socially and politically influential in various societies. Art also underwent changes under its influence and became known as Islamic Art. Islamic art is not art that deals only with the religious issues of Islam as the term "Islamic" refers not only to religion, but also to the rich and diverse culture of the peoples of the lands in which Islam is practiced. Islamic art often includes non-religious elements that are not forbidden by some Islamic scholars. Although these arts may not be in accordance with the teachings and Sharia of Islam in some cases, the influence of Islamic culture and region in it is very obvious. Islamic art is one of the brightest eras in the history of art and one of the richest human achievements in the field of art and includes various types of art such as Islamic architecture, carpet weaving, painting, pottery, calligraphy, Islamic embroidery and similar topics. Islamic art was initially inspired by early Christian art (especially Byzantine art), Roman art, and Sassanid art. Over time, Central Asian nomadic art was also influenced. Chinese art has played an important role in Islamic painting, pottery and Islamic textiles. In the verses of the Qur'an or the teachings of the Prophet of Islam, a few cases regarding art is considered. Images of living beings are not explicitly forbidden in the Qur'an, yet many Muslims considered the depiction of figures and living beings to be a danger to idolatry and a sin. Islamic art has often focused on creating beauty with abstract designs and the use of letters. And because of this, the relative limitations of other arts, such as painting, music, sculpture, and sometimes even their prohibition, led Muslims to develop a variety of methods in abstract fields. One of the historical periods in which Islamic art underwent many changes occurred during the period of the Abbasid Caliphate (١٣٢-٦٥٦ AH).

Considering the special view of Islamic culture on art, the study of the historical developments of Islamic arts can reveal significant points about the evolution of Islamic art.

A review of the research background shows that no independent work has been authored on this subject so far. However, some works have studied art in the Abbasid period. Heidrantaj and Maghsoudi (۱۳۹۸) in an article entitled "Comparative comparison of common themes of sacred plants in the plant motif of pre-Islamic architecture in Iran and architectural arrays of the Islamic era with emphasis on the Umayyad and Abbasid periods" has dealt with the topic and the authors believe that some of the visual features in the architecture of the Abbasid period are derived from the architectural features of ancient Iran. Reza Gozari et al. (۲۰۱۶) in an article entitled "Architecture of Baghdad in the Abbasid period" have studied the characteristics of the art of architecture in this historical period. They believe that the porch of truncated arches, cylindrical minarets and the use of bricks are among the architectural features of the Abbasid period. Dehbashi Sharif and Ali Beiki (۲۰۲۰) in an article entitled "Study and recognition of palaces in the Abbasid era, a case study: the city of Baghdad and Samarra" have studied the architectural features of this historical period. With these interpretations, the present study intends to study the visual and semantic characteristics of art in the Abbasid period by descriptive and analytical methods and relying on the data of library sources.

## **Conclusion**

Islamic art is not art that deals only with the religious issues of Islam. Islamic art is one of the brightest eras in the history of art and one of the most valuable human achievements in the field of art. Although Islamic art was formed during the Umayyad period, the Abbasid caliphs made considerable progress in this era due to their luxurious temperament and closeness to Iran and making use of Iranian ministers who were interested in art and culture. The first Abbasid period, as one of the most brilliant eras of Islamic civilization and culture, all categories of arts, including calligraphy, architecture and music have received much attention, as the palaces of the caliphs were abundant with fabulous works of art and artists. In other words, art reached its perfection in this age. The components of Islamic art in the Abbasid period include urban planning, painting in the Abbasid period, calligraphy, music, textile and Tiraz. In the art of architecture of this period, most of the symbols and structures were taken from architecture in ancient Iran and the Byzantine Empire. On the other hand, some of the buildings of this period were semantically intertwined with

Islamic culture and religious meanings, among which we can mention the architecture of mosques. In textiles, in the Abbasid era, we see the emergence of inscriptions in fabrics and the use of style fabrics, which in its kind beholds religious and political messages.

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