

A Comparative Study of Neishabur and Andalucía Pottery Designs (Spain)

Abstract

Neishabur was one of the most important pottery centers of Khorasan in the early Islamic centuries. In previous researches, the efforts of Khorasan artists to preserve the heritage of the past and to influence the Islamic regions have been mentioned. On the other hand, Neishabur has been culturally connected with Spain for centuries due to its location on the commercial highway. The main question of the research is whether the motifs of Neishabur pottery were transferred to the art of Spain during the Islamic period. The research method of the present study is descriptive and analytical. The method of collecting library materials is through scanning and image reading; moreover, the method of data analysis is qualitative. Considering that Neishabur's terracotta works are one of the most important artifacts of the age and have influenced the formation of Spanish pottery art, research in this topic seems necessary. To achieve this goal, the similarities and differences between Neishabur and Andalusian (Spain) terracotta patterns have been investigated. The findings of the research show that the motifs and style of depiction of Neishabur pottery have influenced the works of art of Spain in the Islamic period, these influences can be seen in animal motifs, birds, figures and compositions.

Research aims:

1. Studying the effective fields in the transfer of Neishabur's artistic style to Spain.
2. Analysis of the similarities and differences of Neishabur and Spain pottery designs.

Research questions:

1. How were the patterns of Neishabur pottery transferred to the art of Andalusia (Spain) during the Islamic period?
2. What are the similarities and differences between Neishabur terracotta patterns and Andalusian terracotta works (Spain)?

Keywords: Neishabur, terracotta, Andalusia, patterns.

Introduction

Spain and Iran have the richest civilizations in the world. In truth, mutually they have served as a bridge between the civilizations and cultures of the East and the West, principally between Islam and Christianity. With the development of the Islamic territory, the conditions were created to use the experience of Iran's educated classes and this became the basis for the transfer of the influence of Iranian art and culture to Islamic centers. Spain, first called "Iberia", before becoming Andalusia, continuously had direct social and cultural trade relations with Iran. The Iranian Empire in 637 AD. was conquered by the Arabs and the invasion was completed with the fall of the Persian Empire and the death of the last Sassanid king in 653 AD, i.e. 16 years later. Several years later, history repeated itself, and the Arabs attacked Spain, another Indo-European nation. Hence, both Spain and Iran, two non-Semitic and non-African countries on either side of their territory became the possessions of the Arabs as they annexed one in the easternmost point and one in the westernmost point to their territory. Since the establishment of Andalusia, relations between Iran and Spain increased in all grounds. The long distance between these two points was in reality covered by the African Silk Road for many years. This road basically plays the same role as the Silk Road that connected Iran to China. This road connected Iran and Andalusia through Egypt, Libya, Algeria and Morocco. Egypt during the Fatimid period had a great influence on the transfer of Neishabur pottery motifs to Spanish nation. After the demise of the Abbasid caliphate and the establishment of the Fatimids, the Egyptians became masters in pottery and created new methods.

Regarding the topic of this research, there has been no independent work in the field of writing. However, some works have investigated the pottery of Neishabur and Spain. Mohammad Khazaei and Samaoui (2002) in their article entitled "Investigation of Bird Motifs on Iranian Pottery" have reviewed the bird motifs in Iran from pre-history to pre-Mongol period, also Mohammad Khazaei (2006) in two articles. with the titles "Reflection of Iranian components in the formation process of Iranian Islamic culture and art in the third to fifth centuries of Hijri" and "The role of Sassanid artistic traditions in the formation of Islamic art in the third to fifth centuries Hijri", has discussed the importance of using Sasanian art and the effects of this art on the formation of Islamic art in

the first centuries and the reflection of Iranian identity on these motifs. Sattar Khaledian (2008) in the article "The Influence of Sassanid Art on Islamic Period Pottery" has discussed the effects of Sassanid era culture and art on Islamic pottery. The main question of the research is, what are the similarities and differences between Neishabur terracotta patterns and Andalusian terracotta works? Furthermore, the research method is descriptive and analytical and the method of collecting library materials is through scanning and image reading. Samples of pottery from Neishabur and Spain have been examined part by part. In this research, the Spanish terracotta works will be discussed in regard to the presence of Neishabur motifs and the similarities and differences between the Neishabur terracotta motifs and the terracotta works of Andalusia (Spain) will be examined.

Conclusion

Andalusia (Spain) is one of the centers of Islamic art as it beholds a unique collection of works of art with exceptional stylistic features. With the formation of the centers of Islamic government in the areas of Damascus, Baghdad, Samarra, Egypt and Spain and under the influence of the migration of artists to the centers of the Islamic government, the field of art transfer and creation of original arts expanded in modern Islamic centers. The land of Andalusia or modern Spain was also protected by the presence of Iranian artists and artworks that expanded from east to west; as a result, Neishabur's style of pottery was transferred to Spain under the influence of this current. Meanwhile, Fatimid Egypt played a significant role in the influence of Neishabur pottery elements on Spanish earthenware. From the comparative evaluation of Neishabur and Spanish terracotta, this influence can be put forward with more emphasis. The results of this comparison show that the motifs of Spanish pottery were influenced from Neishabur pottery. These effects are visible in plant, animal motifs, figures and compositions. Moreover, the motifs can be related to the patterns applied in Sassanid artworks derived from ancient Iranian art and culture. The similarities of Spanish and Neishabur pottery can be seen in the drawing, composition and decoration of cow motifs, figures and objects seen in their hands, birds with similar details and inspiration from the ancient Iran. Among the differences between the pottery of both centers, in Spanish art, features such as lesser central role decorations, thinner lines and more realism can be observed. Also, regarding the pottery of the Paterna region, they have unique color characteristics as their predominant colors are green and brown.

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