Abstract

Since many centuries ago, the art of tiling in Iran has been one of the most remarkable and plausible arts. The tile art-work is related to the subject of architecture, and beside its decorative aspect, it maintains the building endurance against humidity. Qajar period tiling was mainly used on the works of palaces, mosques, sacred shrines, religious schools and houses. Even in this period, it can be said that vase designs emphasizing naturalistic elements were more used, such as fruits, flowers, animals and birds were the main composition. In fact, the quality of art-work in Qajar’s period is not comparable with such of Safavid dynasty, but still it is considered as one of the brilliant art of this land. According to the deserted researches in Qajar’s period, particularly in tile-designing of Shiraz, this article tries to evaluate and introduce the tiling art of this period. Among many instances of tile art-work in houses of Qajar and Pahlavi, we opted for “Khaneh Atroush” or old residence of Hajj Mohammad Ali Firozabadi because of its fascinating tile art-work. Although the date of tiling of house referred to 1894, but it is considerable in style of Qajar’s painting.

Keywords: Art of Tiling; Qajar art; Khaneh Atroush; Shiraz; Iran.
“Kashan” is one of the main centers of the production of tile in this period. The clan of Abu-Taher in Kashan has been produced variety of tiles for four generations. In this period, the usage of configurations is rife, such as six sided and octagonal stars, cross, and hexagonal shapes (Carbone et al. 2002: 7). Using monochrome glaze was the old tradition but in Seljuk era the technique of enamel painting on glaze which was known as enamel employed. This was very famous between early 6th century and 7th century. In enamel technique, many other colors along with its golden color are used on white or greenish blue glaze (Chardin 1723: 127-128). The Mogul invasions caused short downturn in tiling industry in Kashan. But it revived again after a short break. This era can be named as the most glorious period of tile production in Iran. The enamel technique obliterated and a type named as azure surrogated the former (J. Dowry 1984: 176).

The method of pasting together pieces of the shaved tile, “Moaraq” or “Mosaic tile” is first used in Il-khānid period, though its large usage is related to 8th and 9th century. Due to time consuming installation of the mosaic tile, in the end of 9th century another technique came into being as named seven dye tile. This technique used at large in Safavid era and installation of four sided tiles inside big frames gave a peerless prospective all together which often employed in decorating residential buildings. These tiles reflect on their style of painting. (Savory 1980: 69). In Qajar’s period, the technique of seven dye and, “Moaraq” was continued. Colors such as azure, light green, light purple, turquoise, and yellow along with black for margins was used. These tiles had square and rectangular shapes and its themes have always been painted with configurations. (Godard 1962: 168-169).

During Qajar’s rule, in 13th century, tiling was broadly used in designing both religious and non-religious buildings. In that period, various techniques were employed such as mosaic tile, seven-dye, and painting under glaze. The most common technique among them was seven-dye though the technique of painting under glaze had crucial role. The painters could feel more freedom in creating painting structures. The painted tiles were either in flat type or in cast embossed type (Hillenbrand 1998: 496).

The Art of Painting and Qajar’s Tiling

The painting in Zand dynasty, (Selseleye Zandiy) which was followed by its own European tradition, with a slight change shifted to Qajar’s period. It can be said that the school of Qajar begun from Mohammad Karim Khan Zand (Pakbaz 2007: 150). In Safavid dynasty, the technique of seven-dye, which reflected the style of painting of the current era, was in pinnacle of its prosperity that declined by the attack of Afghans. The period of Karim Khan can be called as a renaissance in Shiraz School though it was rooted in heretical nature of its artists. But this just owe to diligence and continuation of the creators such as Ali Ashraf and Agha Sadiq (Seif 1997: 15).

The Qajar painting style was much influenced in beginning of the period by Iranian materials, but as it continues to the middle of the period this proportion becomes equal between Iranian and European painting materials. Gradually, in the end of era, the influence of European style increases (Sharifzadeh 1996: 174). The Qajar’s art can be divided into two sections. Firstly, Qajar’s art style, in the time of Fathali’s kingdom the second of seventh Qajar’s kings, was consciously influenced by the art of Safavid dynasty (Scharchan 1997: 42). In the beginning of the era, the method of painting was quite similar to that of oil paint in in Zand dynasty and many dyers used to paint in royal palace of King Fathali. The major difference of the paintings between Zand and Qajar is in the used colors in portraits. The dominant color in oil paintings of in Zand dynasty is green which is substituted by red in Qajar’s portraits (Pope 1940: 174). In addition, some other colors also used such as white and yellow, and new themes created in paintings such as flower

1Since end of Timurid era and beginning of Safavid era, using another type of tile, which was known as “Kheshti” tile or seven-dye tile, was prevalent in decorating different buildings. Gradually, decorating seven-dye tile replaced by “Moaraq” tile. The economical and political reasons resulted in prosperity of seven-dye tile. According to importance of architecture and building of many religious and public sites in Safavid era, architects decided to use seven-dye technique to decorate variety of buildings. However, they could save time and cost, and, thus, artists could get free from the limitation of geometric shapes (Kiani et al. 1983: 12).
 pots and clusters. The usage of lighting shadow and prevalence of print industry caused upheaval in the aesthetic of painting art (Scharchian 1997: 45-46). In the genesis of painting art, some sort of conscious recurrence is beheld to the principle and the pattern of art’s movement in second half of 12th century which provided opportunity rife for painting on tile (Hillenbrand 1998: 150-151). Though this period witnesses the migration of many famous artists from Shiraz to the capital but the art of tiling revives with those few remained tasteful artists and painters. The manifestation of this revival reveals in amendment and reconstruction of tiles and buildings of Vakil’s period in new designs with the help of flower and hen bird in lieu of current traditional designs “Aslimi”, “khataii”, and “geometrical design” in buildings such as Vakil mosque and Khan school.

The second section is dealt with Qajar’s art style in the ruling time of King Mohammad and King Nasir-e-din. In the reign of King Mohammad who became the successor of king Fathali, the prospect of art was much focused on consolidation rather than evolution. In this period, buildings and mansions such as Bagh Eram, Delgosha, Afif Abad, Khanh Jahannama, of Qavam-al-molk and Zinat-al-molk were famous in Shiraz (Scharchian 1997: 47). From the second half of 13th century, particularly with the start of king Nasir-e-din reign, the art of painting on tile became more popular and widespread especially in decoration of interior and exterior views of palaces and administrative buildings and also in public buildings such as bathhouses, palaces for worship, as named in local language “Hossineyeh” and “takkieh”. However, sincere artists who are from the middle class people play a crucial role in the prosperity of the art (Saif 1997: 17).

From the second half of 14th century, the sign of collapse is seen and the evidences of prosperity faded away gradually by emerging of western architecture, particularly in the capital and metropolitans (Wilber 1934, 30-40). Iranian painters in Qajar’s period can be divided into three categories according to their styles and skills: first category is a group of artist who worked according traditional style of Iran’s tiling. Other category is a group of artist who used to execute western style and they were taking help from pictures and print photographs. And the third category which falls between first and second categories is known as folk paint that later renowned as (Qahve-khanaeh) teahouse painting (Ajhand 2006: 76-77). Three classes of painters in Qajar’s period can be distinguished. First, the superior groups of painters are those of royal palace painters which were engaged in oil paint, mural paint, enamel paint, decorating books, and depicting portrait for newspapers. Second, the painters who had chamber in market place and used to exposure their paintings for sale, and even they used to stamp pictures for folk tales books. Third, the painters whose works were mostly based on technique and craft work, they used to prepare patterns and samples for carpet weaver or tile bakers. The painters of teahouses (Qahve-khanaeh) were example of third group in which they used to make banners and screens for epic narrators (Flour 2002: 19). Three themes have been dominant than other themes in Qajar’s paintings: 1- epic-political theme 2- passionate theme 3-religious theme. In addition to conventional themes such as courtiers and aristocrats, scenes of war and hunting, and historical scenes, themes of flower, bellies, and “Eslimis” have also employed (Flour 2002: 29).

The Tiling of "Khaneh Atroush"

This building is situated in Haji bazaar and Zanjirkhaneh alley and marked as historical monuments of Qajar. The entrance gate of the house is situated in its western north and via a octagonal courtyard, which looks like square, heads into rectangular courtyard. In the center of this courtyard, a pool with decorative design situated in which some structures on two stages in both northern and western sides used. The main hall of the house is constructed in northern side of the courtyard with two rectangular rooms (Mollazadeh 2007: 222). The southern and eastern wall and northern view of building is tiled (Figures. 1&2) and 35 precious tiling frame portrait of Qajar’s period is hung on the southern and eastern wall which is considered as the best Qajar’s seven-dye tiling. Under the Northern building a pool is constructed in which two earrings

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1The tile painter can show his talent and delicacy on the canvas as it was practiced by artists after obsolescence of painting tile art. After death of his father, Ali Reza Kashinegar, Hossain Qoler Aghasi, the great advocate of teahouse painting (Qahve-khanaeh), made his best effort with other artists to prosper the school of teahouse painting. Or many of tile painters tend to wall painting or glass painting (Saif 1997: 18).
Figure 1: Northern façade in for "Khaneh Atroush" decorated with tile, (Photographed by Shirin Shafiee).

Figure 2: the general view of tiling in southern side of courtyard. (Photographed by Shirin Shafiee).

is seen in its both sides. The whole view of pool’s ceiling is tiled and the kind of the tile is that of “Khattam”.

Tiling tableaus start from southern side of courtyard after getting into entrance:
1 – In the first council, one of the Sassanid kings pictured in the center so beautifully. (Figure. 3)
2 – Second council probably shows king Nadir with his son. (Figure. 4)
3 – In the third council, the war between Roustam and Ashkabus is shown. On the upper side of Roustam’s head an inscription is seen in Nastaliq line with the content written that in Abd-ul-Razaq factory dated 1315 which it indicates that the tiling of the house has finished 77 years ago. (Figure. 5)
4 – In the fourth council, façade and the entry of water have installed which is smaller than porches’ plinth (Asper)1 of its left and right hand tableaus. This tableau has two parts. The upper part shows the scene of hunting ground that two lions attacked the hunters. The lower part of the tableau shows two persons in Qajar’s attire that one of the men has a pitcher in his hand (Figure. 6).
5 – In the fifth council, the war between Roustam and Khaqan of China is depicted. (Figure. 7).
6 – Jacob, the prophet, is shown by his sons (Figure. 8).
7 – Two Kings of the ancient Iran is shown (Figure. 9).
8 – Two persons in Qajar’s attire are seen with a hookah in between (Figure. 10).
9 – One of the kings in ancient Iran is shown which ascend on throne with a spear in hand as he is quite inspired by the influence of art of Sassanid’s era and embossed picture of the current period (Figure. 11).
10 – This tableau shows one of the priests seated, which has a hookah in hand, and a black slave is seen stood nearby him.
11 – Sons of Jacob prophet are seen as they are throwing Yusuf, the prophet, into water wells (Figure. 12).
12 – The prophet Yusuf is shown sitting on royal couch. In lower part of the tableau, the brothers of Yusuf are seen as they have come to Egypt to buy wheat. The remarkable point in this picture is the single spot prospective that has come from European art into Persian art.
13 – The scene of selling Yusuf is shown in this frame. In the upper part of this portrait, a slave has taken Yusuf’s cloth to hand over Jacob. Single spot prospective is also seen here. (Figure. 13)
14 – Solomon, the prophet, is shown sitting on couch as two demons nearby him. (Figure. 14)
15 – This tableau shows a scene of hunting ground. There are 11 inscriptions located in the top side of the aforementioned tableaus along with margining tile. Some of these margins have shown hunting ground.

The Northern View of House

The whole view of northern building is tiled and the view of piers have beautifully installed with margin. In the main entrance of house, a beautiful inscription of tile has installed. In this Tableau, one of the kings of the ancient Iran, who riding a horse, is shown (Figure. 7).

Two margins in the exterior view of the main hall have installed. The content of such margins

1 The view of thick plinth of porches is called Asper.
Figure 3: One of the Sassanid’s kings. (Photographed by Shirin Shafiee).

Figure 4: King Nadir Afshar and his son. (Photographed by Shirin Shafiee).

Figure 5: Rostam and Ashkabhus. (Photographed by Shirin Shafiee).

Figure 6: Two persons in Qajar’s attire. (Photographed by Shirin Shafiee).

Figure 7: The war between Rostam and Khaqan of China. (Photographed by Shirin Shafiee).

Figure 8: Prophet Jacob With his sons. (Photographed by Shirin Shafiee).
Figure. 9: two old Kings of Iran. (Photographed by Shirin Shafiee).

Figure. 10: two persons in Qajar’s attire. (Photographed by Shirin Shafiee).

Figure. 11: one of the old Kings. (Photographed by Shirin Shafiee).

Figure. 12: Prophet Yusuf Thrown into well. (Photographed by Shirin Shafiee).

Figure. 13: Prophet Yusuf and his brothers. (Photographed by Shirin Shafiee).

Figure. 14: Prophet Solomon. (Photographed by Shirin Shafiee).
were seen as branches full of flower. In the right hand margin with Nastaliq line on an inscription is written: “Nasro menallah va fathom qarib”, and in the bottom of margin is written Abd-al-Razaq factory. Both margins are symmetrized, and on the top side of inscription the phrase “In the name of God, the most Gracious, and the most Merciful” and in the bottom side of margin the phrase “Kindly ordered by Mr. Hajj Mirza Mohammad Ali” can be read.

Generally, the tableaus located in courtyard are more focused on themes such as epic, religious, and political. There are 8 tableaus related to epic-politic themes, 6 tableaus with religious themes, and a tableau of hunting ground. In the courtyard’s tableaus, no image is seen with passionate theme. The frame of courtyard’s tableaus is located in harmony with brick arc which is designed in southern and eastern sides of wall and it has rectangular frame with arch shape on top of its frame. Due to the long shape of the tiling frames, the artists have often designed the configuration of frame in such a way to make a harmony between long shape frame and the tile’s images. Generally, two classifications of tableaus have done. First, geometrical frames with content of bird and flower have designed. This category divided into three parts. In lower part a pot is drawn, the middle part with the main design, and the upper part has the image of lion and sun or a scene (Figures. 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, and 14).

Second category is those in which the characters shown in three different smaller sections. The group of people situated in the bottom of image, the other group in middle, and a small group in upper side situated nearby frame’s arc (Figures. 5, 7, 8, and 12). The important point in all tableaus is that of shadow processing. Though it is not much but due to hardship of creating such technique in seven-dye tile, it can indicate the advanced technique of the artists in the tiling industry.

Springhouse

The springhouse is situated under main hall of the northern building as via a door heading towards courtyard and via two doors directed to both sides of springhouse’s earrings. The wall of springhouse is tiled and 15 tableaus of tiling installed on its wall. In corner sides of plinth of springhouse, the seven-dye tiles is used and installed. The ceiling of springhouse is beautifully tiled and its tiling known as Khatam tiling (Figure. 15).

Figure 15: the renowned tile named “Khattam” has shown in a portion of ceiling of pool in for “Khaneh Atroush” in Shiraz. (Photographed by Shirin Shafee).

The Tiles of Springhouse from Right Hand Side Entrance

1 – It shows a soldier with a gun in hand and a pistol on his waist. The soldier’s uniform is quite similar to the uniform of Qajar’s soldier’s (Figure. 16 from left hand side).
2 – The second tableau shows a Mirza at his desk on duty (Figure. 17).
3 – A house owner and a priest are shown standing together (Figure. 18).
4 – Saint Marry and Jesus, the prophet, are shown as two angles flying on their heads (Figure. 19).
5 - The house owner is seen flirting with the fair sex (Figure. 20).
6 – The prophet Yusuf is seen in detention in Aziz’s house and in the corner of tableau Zolykha is seen.
7 – Sana’an’s Sheik and the Christian girl are shown.
8 – It shows Yusuf, Zolykha, and the women of Egypt as they are shocked and cut their fingers of seeing Yusuf (Figure. 21).
9 – It shows the story of “Shirin and Farhad” and Farhad’s trials and tribulations in “Bisotun” is embodied (Figure. 22).
10 – It shows Yusuf and Zolykha (Figure. 23).
11 – It shows a feast. Its title has come on this tableau.
12 – It shows “Bahram and Golandam”. The image

*A verse from Holy Quran, 61:13*
Figure. 16: Qajar soldiers. (Photographed by Shirin Shafiee).

Figure. 17: Mirza in his office. (Photographed by Shirin Shafiee).

Figure. 18: the house owner and the priest. (Photographed by Shirin Shafiee).
Figure 19: Prophet Jesus and the Saint Marry. (Photographed by Shirin Shafiee).

Figure 20: The landlord and his beloved making love. (Photographed by Shirin Shafiee).

Figure 21: The prophet Yusef and Egyptian women. (Photographed by Shirin Shafiee).

Figure 22: Shirin and Farhad. (Photographed by Shirin Shafiee).
of a man and a woman is seen in lower part of tableau that they are busy serving tea with samovar.
13 – It shows “Laili and Majnun” (Figure. 24).
14 – It shows that Shirin is swimming and Khosro tries to reach the place (Figure. 25).
15 – It shows the Qajar’s soldier and there are two small inscriptions in bottom as written on them “Kindly ordered by Mr. Hajj Mirza Mohammad Ali” (Figure. 16 in right hand side).

The plinth of springhouse is consisted of beautiful seven-dye tiles. In the center of plinth’s tiles a beautiful red rose is pictured that four buds are seen around it (Figure. 26).

Among springhouse’s tableaus, four tableaus have epic-political themes and six tableaus have passionate themes which representing the love stories of Persian literature. Using and referring to Persian literary texts in the art of this land has long record. The influence of literature in national stories was used and employed in beginning on earthenware’s art in 4th and 5th by writing verses of “Shah Nameh” on earthenware. The enamel painting of earthenware in dynasty of Seljuk, Khwarazmian and Il-khānide is comparable with the contemporary
manuscript of miniatures which its influence led to shift of earthenware art into tiling art (Karimi & Kiani 1985: 25).

The story of Yusuf and Zolykhah has been pictured three times in four tableaus based on stories of Holy Quran. This shows the special interest of artist in portraying this story. Except two tableaus of Qajar’s soldiers, which included by order of its client with the date of production (Figure. 17 and 18), all other tableaus are about passionate themes. This point can be raised that, as compare to tableaus in courtyard, the springhouse has been the private building for house owner’s privacy as no one is permitted to enter without permission. However, in springhouse the private and intimate life of the house owner is pictured.

The frame of tiling in springhouse is of square rectangular as the artist has consciously divided it into parts. In Figures 21, 22, 24, and 25 the pictures in tableaus are scattered throughout the tableaus, and in Figures 17, 18, 19, 20, and 23 the pictures are located in center. There is a slight difference between framing of tableaus in "Khaneh Atroush" in Shiraz and tiling of Golestan Palace in Tehran or Tabriz. For instance, in Shiraz’s style, the composition of pictures are mostly seen in square round, and geometrical shapes such as tableau of scenes or narrating which such pictures and forms are seen in Tehran and Tabriz (Figures. 27 & 28). The difference between style of Shiraz and other styles is that picture of flower, hen bird, and pot has not arabesque (Eslimi) design with bulky and rounded shapes. In Shirazi style, the pictures mostly designed with flowers (Damask and Zanbaq flowers) and birds which in first look seem simple. But such simplicity gives excellent beauty to the pictures. The colors used in tiling of "Khaneh Atroush" is like those in Qajar’s tiling with pink, purple, and yellow colors. These are the best colors used in this period. Other colors that can be named are blue, black, and turquoise which used in Khattam tiles.
Above all, in this building three times referred to the history of tiling, in chart of Roustam and Ashkaboos, in tableau of northern side, and the other in tableau of Qajar’s soldier in springhouse. In inscriptions written in the bottom of tiles, the order of client, hajj Mirza Mohammad Ali, is highlighted once in northern side and other in picture of Qajar soldier. In chart of Roustam and Ahkabus and tiles of northern side, the name of “Abd-ul-Razaq” and his factory is written on inscriptions (Figure. 29). Mirza Abd-ul-Razaq was from a middle class. He used to work as apprentice in tile-making workshop since childhood. After getting experience and adeptness, he established his own workshop which after some time he forced to hire other artists for the ample of received orders. Later, his beautiful paintings coined by his name and used widely in buildings, public sites, and palaces. His favorite painter was Forsat-al-doleh and he was devoted to him. Mirza used to take ideas and plans for his tiling from his paintings which were drawn from Fars historical sites and ancient pictures. Portraying the face of ancient Iranian Kings and Fars historical sites, entered into tiling with creativity and effort of Mirza Abd-al-Razaq and it was imitated by other cities. Mirza passed away in 1316 (Seif 1997: 19). His son continued the business for several years after his father’s death and their name used to coin on tiles such as “Saqakhaneh Falake Qasr-al-Dasht in Shiraz in1959 (Figure. 30).

Conclusions

Tiling in Qajar’s period has been one of the most remarkable arts in which it is used in many sites. The art of tiling of this period has highly influenced by paintings and painting styles. The themes of tiling are also more similar to painting of this period. It can also consider that tiles of this period are a part of Qajar’s painting. In tiling of Qajar’s period as well as in its painting and other art of this era, the influence of European’s styles is quite obvious especially in tableau of St.Marry and Jesus and in single spot prospective in "Khaneh Atroush".

The representation and imitation of the ancient art of Iran and especially Sassanid art is much available in tiling of this era which revealed in some tableaus in this House. The element which distinguishes the Qajar tiling from those of previous
era is the usage of sharp colors such as yellow and pink. Despite the general characteristics of Qajar art and its art of tiling throughout Iran, there is a slight change in Shiraz tiling such as differences in arabesques and composition of art-works as it indicates the differences in regions and styles of tiling in this period. Therefore, the characteristics of Qajar tiling can be summarized as follows: The usage of sharp colors such as yellow and pink; The similarities between Qajar tiling and painting styles of this period; The influence of western art; Attention and imitation from the ancient art of Iran; and The presence of regional styles in Qajar tiling.

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