

## **A Comparative Comparison of the Harsin Kilim Motifs with the Embossed Motifs of the Ilam Kilim**

### **Abstract**

Throughout history, humans have always resorted to using textiles, including Kilims, to protect themselves against climate change. Over thousands of years, textile production has started from the interweaving of plant fibers and ended up with today's delicate Kilims and fabrics. The method of weaving without lint and the so-called "Kilim-weave or flat-weave" is one of the types of textile weaving, especially of the expanding type. This method of weaving and the resulting product, which has become famous with the general title "Kilim", is often common among nomads and villagers and the oldest example obtained is related to the Parthian period. Considering the lack of specialized research done in order to distinguish this valuable art, the problem of acknowledging the motifs of these Kilims will encourage and increase their use in order to preserve the heritage and handicrafts of Iran. This research aims to investigate Kilim motifs in the two regions of Harsin (located in the Kermanshah province) and Ilam, which are the oldest and most important areas of Kilim-weaving in Iran. The research method of this article is descriptive-analytical and the materials have been collected in a library and field method. The results of the research show that the patterns formed in the Kilims of these regions are influenced by weaving techniques and their natural environment, and this sameness is the source of inspiration as a similarity in the patterns of the Kilims of these regions. The difference between the Kilim patterns of these regions is that the patterns formed in the Harsin Kilim include various abstract geometric designs taken from their surrounding living environment, whereas the Kilim patterns in Ilam reflect the subjective beliefs of the weavers in the form of tangible patterns including geometric, vase, bergamot, pictorial and mosaic.

### **Research aims:**

١. Examination of Kilim patterns in two regions of Harsin and Ilam.
٢. The influence of beliefs or the source of inspiration of motifs applied in the Kilims of Harsin and Ilam.

## **Research questions:**

١. What is the source of inspiration for Kilim patterns in these two regions?
٢. What are the similarities and differences between the Kilim motifs of the two regions of Harsin and Ilam?

**Keywords:** Kilim, patterns, Harsin, Ilam, motif

## **Introduction**

It is not possible to make a clear statement regarding the history of Kilim weaving in Iran, since the use of natural and animal fibers and the influence of weather conditions have caused many old examples of Kilims to disappear in Iran, nevertheless, the history of Kilim-weaving is considered to be much older than carpet weaving. Kilim weaving was not much considered until a few decades ago due to its simplicity in materials, texture and design. Until the ١٩٥٠s and ١٩٦٠s, only intellectual travelers and experts interested in Islamic arts were interested in collecting nomadic rugs. Nonetheless, tourism and the possibility of fast travel introduced countless Kilims to Westerners (Hall et al., ٢٠١٧: ٢٢). Finally, the practical and aesthetic characteristics of rugs prompted many researchers to investigate these weaves. The first research in this regard was conducted in ١٩٧٠ and published in General Electric under the title "undiscovered Kilims" (Tanavoli, ١٩٨٨: ٤٠). Furthermore, more scientific and art conferences were held in order to introduce Iranian rugs including rugs from Kurdish, Lor, Qashqai, Fars, and other regions of Iran. (Khaleqi, ٢٠١٢: ٩٧). Among the conducted researches, we can refer to the book "Knowledge of Iran's Rugs and Rugs", in which Dr. Yavari has studied and introduced the rugs of various regions of Iran, including Harsin, and at the end, the characteristics of this type of rug can be summarized. Also, a more extensive research on the Kilims of different countries, including Iran, has been conducted by Alastair Hall and Jose Luchik, in which the introduction of the Kilims of Iran, including Harsin, were introduced.

A research has also been done in the field of Ilam's embossed Kilims, among which, we can mention the article by Ferasat (٢٠٠٩) who describes the design and pattern of the Kilim of this region based on motifs, design, color, type of texture, application and characteristic features. Yousuf-Nejad & Valizadeh (٢٠١٢) have studied the anthropological study of the embossed Ilam Kilim texture and the relationship of this art with people's opinions and beliefs, and at the end, they have made conclusions regarding the background and people's tendency towards this

art, and the relationship between motifs and people's mentalities. Due to the lack of specialized research in this direction, the scientific and specialized introduction of such handwoven arts to the audience can fill the gap created in order to acknowledge about Iranian rugs through extensive regional research. Also, due to the fact that rug weavers, like other handicraft producers, reflect their feelings, emotions and moods in rug production; perceiving their origin, beliefs and convictions will also be conceivable in this manner.

## **Conclusion**

What introduces the Kilim as an original art is the variety and beauty of its designs and colors. Among the hundreds of woven Kilims, similar designs are constantly visible and this is due to the fact that their texture is not based on a pre-prepared design, but rather depends on the creative mind, taste and the special culture of the weaver. In fact, the hands of artists continually depict the beauties of nature in the form of designs and patterns as they create a reflective Kilim of nature and their surroundings. Among other artistic features of Kilims are folk motifs that originated from the taste, art, feelings and beliefs of the weaver and these motifs are related to man and his thoughts. In addition to having an objective and naturalistic appearance, paintings and drawings are full of the secrets of the spiritual world and are a reflection of the lofty aspirations of human beings in such a way that it can be considered as a medium for recording their beliefs, faiths, and opinions and transferring them from one generation to the other. After examining the different rug motifs in two regions of western Iran, what can be seen as similarities in the Kilims of such regions are the same beliefs hidden in the minds of its weavers during different eras as well as the natural environment of their living area that appears in the majority of this visual art. The gentleness of the nature of these areas has resulted in the use of blissful colors; in such a way that these types of Kilims are used as decorative and beautiful elements of homes. Nonetheless, the difference between Harsin and Ilam Kilims is that the weavers of Harsin use their beliefs in the form of abstract geometric motifs such as plants, animals, objects and human motifs that are related to the vastness of the weaver's mind, vision and his/her preferred objects; also, the patterns are full and finely woven. In this type of Kilim, the motifs are completely geometric due to its texture are symmetrical in general, nevertheless, details disturb this symmetry. In the embossed Kilims of Ilam, the designs, unlike the Harsin Kilim, avoid the use of abstract motifs and the designs are mostly shown with more reality such as the depiction of flowers, vases, birds and animals; moreover, due to the fact that Kilims of this area are not ostentatious, they are more openly indicative of the mind of the weaver.

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