

## Investigating the Traditional Markets of Tabriz Handwoven Carpets

### Abstract

From a scientific point of view, the word "bazaar" refers to various concepts, however, in the custom of the people of our country, the meaning of "bazaar" is a sheltered place where different guilds engage in commercial activities. In addition to its economic role, specifically commercial, bazaars in Iran have constantly played an effective role in the history of the country's political and social developments. The traditional market of Tabriz, as the largest covered market in the Middle East, is registered as a historical and artistic work. One of the guilds active in this market are the association of carpet sellers, which can perhaps be called the most important guild, in this sense, the Tabriz bazaar is mostly known as the Tabriz Carpet Market - including many Timchehs and Sarays. Employment and the high share of carpets in Iran's non-oil export portfolio are extremely important. For this reason, the traditional market of Tabriz - especially the carpet market - can be studied from different dimensions, such as the economic, social, artistic and architectural scopes. In the present research, the Timchehs of the traditional Tabriz carpet market - which at the same time had the most carpet shops - and the condition of their carpets, such as Mozaffarieh Timcheh, Amir Saray, Jafarieh Saray, Ahmadiyeh Saray and other places have been scientifically studied. The findings of the research indicate that almost every Saray is mainly dedicated to a specific type of carpet. Second, from an economic-commercial point of view, Tabriz carpet market also operates in Tehran and European countries with active representatives. Likewise, the Tabriz traditional and carpet market plays a major role in preserving the art of carpet weaving. In addition, the architectural and social-cultural context of the Tabriz traditional carpet market, is of particular importance as an artistic-social capital.

### Research aims:

١. Investigating the role of the traditional Tabriz handwoven carpet market in the state of the art of carpet weaving.
٢. Recognizing the different parts of the traditional Tabriz handwoven carpet market.

## **Research questions:**

۱. What is the role of traditional handwoven carpet markets in Tabriz in the prosperity of Iran's carpet weaving art?
۲. What sections does the traditional market of Tabriz handwoven rugs consist of?

**Keywords:** bazaar, carpet, Tabriz, Timcheh, Saray

## **Introduction**

Art is a divine value and one of the inner and natural tendencies of man, placed within mankind by God. This innate human urge appears in various forms among every people and nation. For prolonged ages, carpets and architecture have been the manifestation of Iranian art as the design of the carpet represents the lost heavenly hopes and dreams of man. The art of architecture is also a combination of grandeur, fine work and a plan that people love and the physical foundation of life is based on. It is as if a single music is played in all kinds of artistic formats, which calls people to peace and coexistence in society and with nature. The city of Tabriz in Iran is one of the oldest carpet weaving centers. This art has a prominent presence in the economic atmosphere of Tabriz until today. The existence of a long background in the carpet industry in this city has instigated a part of the architecture of Tabriz city to be dedicated to this art. The position of bazaars in the prosperity of carpet art was the main motive for studying the traditional markets of Tabriz carpets. In this research, the Tabriz carpet market was chosen as the manifestation of both artistic forms since the carpet trade is carried out through the Tabriz carpet market - as a subset of the Tabriz Grand Bazaar with its artistic Iranian architecture as this art has become and has become permanent with the livelihood of a large group of people and the country's economy. Searching for factors affecting the durability and growth of these two art forms are reasons for conducting this research, which at the same time displays its importance and necessity.

Since the culture and art of every people and nation is the most significant aspect of identity and personality of that nation, therefore, any research that helps in its revival and growth is always necessary and important. For this reason, the carpet market of Tabriz, which contains two original arts of carpet and architecture, has become the most significant feature of Iranian carpet trade, and its activity has led to the permanence of these two arts. The main issue of this research is highlighting the role of Tabriz market and examining the role of this bazaar in the

continuity of life of this authentic Iranian-Islamic art and understanding the factors affecting its preservation and growth. In this regard, in the first chapter of the current research, the general design was studied, in the second chapter, the history of Iranian carpets and its definitions are given, and in the third chapter, the carpets of East Azerbaijan and the city of Tabriz were described. In the fourth chapter, the artistic and economic features of Tabriz carpet market are discussed. This research has been done in a descriptive and analytical way, relying on field observations and library sources.

## **Conclusion**

Bazaars have always played an essential role in the economy, trade and culture of any society. They have always been a place for people to gather and trade and in this exchange, not only goods are exchanged, but cultures and customs of each nation with other nations and markets are also bartered. One of these important and fundamental markets is the carpet market, which has continuously existed since the distant past due to the age of this important commodity and has played a fundamental role in the economy of countries, especially in Iran. Also, carpet trade and market has led to the supply of authentic Iranian-Islamic art to other countries. In Iran, the carpet market has been important in cities such as Tabriz, Kashan, Isfahan, Mashhad, etc. since the distant past. Tabriz carpet market is a significant part of Tabriz traditional market and is considered the largest covered market in the Middle East.

In the course of this research, it was found that about ٦٣٠ carpet sales units are engaged in carpet trading in the market of Tabriz. which mainly operate in the form of Sarays and Timchehs in which each section has more than ٢٠ carpet trade units. Each of these centers and Timchehs are engaged in selling a certain type of carpet, for example, a group buys and sells new carpets and a group sells old carpets. Also, an assembly trades Tabriz carpets or rural carpets.

From the artistic point of view, the carpets of the Tabriz carpet market have different names; such as "fish carpet" which is the most famous of them. Each of these names also includes smaller titles, such as "Kamal-ul-Molk" and "Taghizadeh" among others. Moreover, a number of carpets are named after the cities in which they were woven including Haris, Marand or Khoy. These carpets are known as rural carpets and the colors and designs of each one are different from the other. The color of the traditional carpet of Tabriz and its surroundings are mostly from natural dyes which were valued for their stability and beauty. Nevertheless, in the

past few decades, chemical dyes have also been applied in the Tabriz carpet and its quality has been questioned. Another point is that among the carpets of the Tabriz handwoven carpet market, Harris carpet is important from another aspect, and that is that old Harris carpets are valuable and have an export market in particular. Also, the result of the field work in the economic part of the research indicates a relatively long stagnation of the foreign carpet market of Tabriz and Iran.

Some of the interviewees considered the government's support for the export of carpets insufficient and believed that despite the domestic support for the exporters, the government has not taken any major action in the international arena to prevent the production and supply of Iranian carpets by some countries such as China, Pakistan, and Turkey. Or the actions of the government have not been effective so far. Their specific suggestion was that the government should provide more support to protect the intellectual property and preserve the authenticity of the fine art of Iranian carpets.

Based on the research findings, the following are suggested:

Since the continuation of the art of hand-woven carpet is tied to its export and unfortunately, due to the lack of timely action to register the intellectual property of Iranian carpets, countries such as China and Pakistan have attempted to copy and weave the carpets of Iran, so it is suggested that it is possible for the government to take necessary measures to defend this original art as a defense of the nation's rights in the world arena. Otherwise, with the stagnation of carpet exports, it is feared that this rich art, which is the interpretation of the beauty of nature in the human mind, will face the danger of decay. Also, in order to preserve the unique art of Islamic architecture of the Tabriz carpet market, it is suggested that the government take action to register the Tabriz market as a unique work, which, in addition to helping the continuation of trade and economic prosperity and culturally; and thus considering the cultural role of Tabriz market is imperative. Thirdly, it is suggested that further research should be done regarding the knowledge of other dimensions of art and economy and the carpet market of Tabriz.

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