

## **A Comparative Study of Human Motifs on Ilkhanid and Timurid Pottery**

### **Abstract**

The art of pottery was one of the common and practical arts during the Ilkhanid and Timurid periods. In this art, the space governing the patterns of pottery, the type of pattern and the use of special colors in pottery are of significance. In the mentioned historical periods, human motifs were one of the motifs applied in the art of pottery; thus, the question can be raised that what are the characteristics of human motifs in the pottery of the Ilkhanid and Timurid period? Also, what effect did Chinese works have on the works of these periods and what colors were used in the figures and clothes of the mentioned period. In this regard, descriptive and analytical methods have been used in this research and the collection of data and related information is carried out by library, field and Internet research. The findings of the research indicate that the Timurids had a better and more complete outlook towards drawing, painting and a more appropriate understanding of color and composition of other artistic factors. The forms of the Timurid period have larger dimensions, nonetheless, in the later periods, the dimensions become smaller. The motifs applied have both narrative and decorative aspects. At the same time, Iranian potters imitated Chinese artefacts and also added unique innovations to their artworks, so that the pottery of the mentioned era beholds an Iranian-Islamic spirit.

### **Research aims:**

١. Investigating the coordinates of human motifs in the pottery of the Ilkhanid and Timurid periods.
٢. Corresponding the human motifs in the pottery of the Ilkhanid and Timurid periods.

### **Research questions:**

١. What is the form of human motifs in the pottery of the Ilkhanid and Timurid periods?
٢. What are the similarities or differences between human motifs in Ilkhanid and Timurid pottery?

**Keywords:** human motifs, Ilkhanid, Timurid, pottery.

## Introduction

Pottery with eloquent motifs have been prominent symbol of the enduring art of man in various historical periods. Patterns as the main decorative elements in pottery represent concepts such as beliefs, principles, thoughts, desires and aspirations and present artistic techniques and skills, particularly in the field of design. This topic expresses a part of the visual culture and traditions of the Iranian people in this particular period. Considering the motifs of these two periods or the effects that the Ilkhanid period had on the Timurids, a comparative study of the pottery motifs of the two mentioned eras seems necessary. In this paper, the type of research is theoretical and descriptive methods are used; moreover, the conclusion method is comparative. The questions raised in this research include the following: what are the characteristics of human motifs in the Ilkhanid and Timurid periods? What colors are used in the clothing of the figures? and how has Chinese pottery impacted the art of the mentioned periods? Are human motifs in pottery decorative or fictional? It is possible that the Timurid pottery is a continuation of the Ilkhani method? It is possible that in terms of volumetric form and anatomy, better works were made in Timurid pottery than the Ilkhanid era. Achieving the desired result of the status of the two periods and the artistic historical evolution of these works are the other goals of this research. Also, reaching the point that both objective and mental variables are used together in the subjects is also discussed. Mental awareness and familiarity with the principles, characteristics and descriptive effects related to each period are one of the results of comparing Ilkhanid and Timurid motifs that determines the new motifs. It should be noted that the two periods have studies worthy of attention in terms of human motifs and each one has its own unique characteristics. On the other hand, this discussion has received less attention from pottery enthusiasts of this period.

Karimi et al. (۱۹۸۵) in the book “Art of Pottery in the Islamic Period”, by examining and analyzing the Ilkhanid period, have expressed valuable information about the characteristics of the pottery of this era. Or in Alan's Islamic Pottery book (۲۰۰۸), the pottery of both periods have been studied in detail. Ajand (۲۰۰۱) in his paper, has studied the influence of Chinese elements and motifs in Iranian art and effects of Chinese art on Timurid and Safavid pottery. However, no current published material has studied the adaptation of Ilkhani and Timurid human motifs. The current research is based on descriptive and analytical nature. The method of collecting information is library and field research; also, the statistical data include the images available in the specialized sources of Vetimuri Ilkhanid pottery.

## Conclusion

By considering the characteristics of the two periods, it is understood that the Timurid period had a more comprehensive outlook towards the art of drawing and painting and a more appropriate understanding of color and composition and other artistic factors that attract the audience and cause further progress. Therefore, attention to subtleties and motifs can be seen in the designs. The use of Chinese master potters in workshops improves the art of this period and later the Safavid era. It is likely that in the Timurid period, the production of dishes had an aspect for domestic consumption. Occasionally, during Timurid period, the glazes have cracks and the backgrounds tend to have a cream color. The main centers of pottery production in the Timurid period were in the eastern areas such as Samarkand, Neishabur and other neighboring cities. In the pottery of two periods, the edge decoration is seen using lines and inscriptions. The human motifs of the Timurid period have more romantic aspects. The forms of the Timurid period have larger dimensions, nonetheless, in the later periods, the measurements become smaller during the Ilkhanid and Timurid periods. Although the influence of Chinese art on the expansion of pottery in Iran is undeniable, the Iranian potter is by no means a Chinese counterpart. He himself was not inferior and despite the limitations of his facilities and technical knowledge, the Iranian artist was a high-ranking person and the creator of decorative styles on pottery that can rarely be found in other regions. The technique applied on potteries was Zarinfam which over the years made its way to Europe, thus traces of this art is seen in a time span of over seven hundred years. Finally, it should be mentioned that although Iranian potters imitated Chinese artefacts, they also added unique innovations to their artwork in such a manner that the spirit of Iranian Islamic is preserved and reinvigorated.

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