

EXPLORING SYMBOLIC ANIMAL MOTIFS OF EGYPTIAN FATIMID LUSTERWARE POTTERY AND POTTERY PRODUCTS OF THE MIDDLE AGES IN IRAN

MISIR FATİMİLER DÖNEMİ'NDE HAYVAN MOTİFLİ LÜSTER KAPLARI VE İRAN ORTA ÇAĞI ÇÖMLEKÇİLİK ÜRÜNLERİ ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA

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ABSTRACT

Animal sketches are one of the oldest paintings man that man used in his works. These elements and drawings in Egyptian and Iranian pottery art in the Middle Ages were not merely decorative, but also sometimes expressed hope, fear, or resort to a force to fight the dangers of nature and life and sometimes expresses religious beliefs and ancient myths. These values and expressions sometimes make motifs somewhat symbolic and contractual used as message transmissions over the course of history. Muslim artists have reshaped many of the symbolic roles of ancient art and kept them alive by coordinating the elements and motifs of the Islamic period through the Islamic ideology. Many of the remains of the Islamic period are based on symbolic concepts, which reflect and the issues of beliefs. As stated, the most notable animal symbols in the Middle Ages, specifically on the Egyptian Fatimid lusterware pottery, the pottery products of Iran, the rooting of motifs are the theme of this topic. This research has a qualitative and strategic system and its findings have been documented using the adaptation of mythological concepts and observation symbols. The main objective of this research is the recognition and rooting of symbolic animal motifs used in Egyptian Fatimid lusterware pottery and pottery of the Middle Islamic period of Iran. The result of this paper shows that the motifs depicted, have included: real and supernatural animals, each of which represents

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a specific concept in human life, and include a mythical and astronomical concept. In these containers, the role of Sphinx, Griffon, Harpy has been affected by the mythological concepts of ancient civilizations which became commonplace on pottery as a decorative element in the Islamic era from the 11th and 12th centuries AD gradually. The sketch of eagle, lion (asad), rabbit (erneb), and fish (hut) are also signs of constellation. Its origin on pottery is rooted in pre-Islamic designs and it was one of the favorite paintings by potter artists during this period who used their designs to decorate these artwork.

ÖZET

Hayvan motifleri insanoğlunun eserlerinde kullandığı en eski motiflerdendir. Bu motifler Mısır ve İran'da İslami Orta Çağ'da yalnızca süs amaçlı değil belki zaman zaman umut, korku veya doğa ve hayattaki tehlikelerde savaşlarda da yardım göstergesi ve bazan de dini inançlar ve eskiye dayalı efsaneler göstergesidir. Bu kıymetli ve özel göstergeler bazen motifleri tüm tarih boyunca bir mesaj verme sembolü haline getirmiştir. Müslüman sanatçılar bu Eskiçağ sembolik motifleri uyarlamış ve İslam Çağı'nın motiflerini İslam'ın bakış açısına uyarlayarak onu hep diri tutmaya çalışmışlar. İslam Çağı'ndan kalan bir çok motif inançlar göstergesi olan sembolik anlamlara dayalıdır. O zaman İslam'ın Orta Çağ'daki çömlek sanatçılarının en sevdiği önemli ve özel hayvan motifleri özellikle Mısır'daki Fatımiler'in kızıl çömlek üzerinde yaptıkları resimler ve İran'ın çömlek ürünleri burada bahis konusudur. Bu araştırma kaliteli ve pratik bir araştırma olup, bütün veriler var olan dokümanlardan toplanmış ve görünen semboller ile efsanelerin anlamlarının birbirine uyarlamasıyla oluşturulmuştur. Mısır Fatımiler döneminde Lüster çömleklerde kullanılan hayvan motifleri ve İslam'ın Orta Çağı İran'da yapılan çömleklerin tanınması bu araştırmanın asıl hedefidir. Bu projenin sonucu yapılan resimlerde bazen gerçek ve bazen gerçek dışı hayvanların olduğunu gösteriyor ki her biri insan hayatında özel anlamların göstergesidir ve efsanevi ve astronomik anlamlar içerir. Bu kaplarda İslami dönemde 11 ve 12. yüzyılda çömleklerde bir süs unsuru olan eski uygarlıklardan alınmış efsanevi anlamlar taşıyan sfenks grifon ve harpi gibi resimler giderek yaygınlaşıyor. Çömlekler üstüne yapılan şahin (aslan) tavşan ve balık gibi burçların resimleri de İslam'dan önceki döneme aittir ve bu dönemin çömlek sanatçılarının kendi sanat eserlerinde süs olarak kullandıkları en sevdiği motifler arasındadır.

INTRODUCTION

In the Islamic Middle Ages, the Fatimid government began a period of peace and prosperity in the land of Egypt which provided a good opportunity to combine ancient Egyptian art with Islamic art. During this period, Egypt had favorable conditions for economic prosperity due to the flow of the Nile and the expansion of imports and exports that, some of these abundances are the result of the presence of Ismaili Shiites (Fatimids)¹. In Iran, the Seljuk government, which the kings of Turkmen reigned for, has established the first unified and powerful Iranian government after the arrival of Islam which created a powerful government, relative calm and security, economic prosperity, and the revival of the Persian language by ending civil wars and local riots². These factors have been the appropriate platform for the cultural and artistic growth of Egypt and Iran at this time. Therefore, both governments had many common points in their territories, some of which are: 1. Both territories have been living in years of civil war due to the arrival of Islam and the need for a coherent government. 2. Both governments were powerful and integrated. 3. Both dominated the lands which are the most ancient origins of civilization in the world. 4. In both lands, political and economic relations, financial well-being and good economic growth were created. 5. In both lands, the spread of Islam to the origins of the ancient civilization has caused eclectic birth³. During these days, Egypt was a Passage that, moved Western values to Iran through relations with the West, and Iran, as a Passage from the east, carried the eastern legacy and led it to Egypt. Iran started as the fortress of the Silk Road from China and led to the passing of Iran to Egypt. Caravans and traders have played a significant role in artistic eclecticism by importing Chinese and Egyptian goods to Iran⁴. From the 12th century AD, with the fall of the Fatimid dynasty, and perhaps shortly before, with the migrating of potters from the West to the East, potter artists introduced pottery products to Iran and this kind of pottery was recognized in Iran with higher quality than before⁵. The animal designs on Egyptian lusterware pottery during the Fatimid era and the lusterware pottery during the Middle Islamic period in Iran show a tangible connection, decorative motifs on the clay works in these two lands have common concepts which indicates that these two lands had interconnected relations at that time and even earlier. The main questions that authors are seeking to answer is as follows: 1. What were the most symbolic motifs that potters artists interested in, the potter's artists

in the Middle Ages, and especially on the Egyptian Fatimid lusterware pottery and the pottery products of Iran during this period? 2. What backgrounds did the depiction of such a motif have on the pottery in the Middle Ages of Islam? In response to the above questions, it can be said that Sphinx, Griffon, Harpy are the most important mythical symbols and eagles, lions, rabbits, fishes are of the most important astronomical symbols on the clay samples of the Middle Ages in Egypt and Iran. These symbols on the pottery have been in connection with the mythological and constellation concepts and rooted in ancient thoughts. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to recognize the meaning of the designs and motifs, to understand the meanings of the designs performed by the potters during the Islamic era.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The studies carried out on the preceding article illustrate that, so far, there has been no research on Egyptian Fatimid lusterware pottery patterns and the animal motifs of Iranian clay art in the Middle Ages and this is unnoticed by the researchers. Therefore, it was essential to do a research to recognize and study these motifs. The results of this study are in a way that show inter-cultural relations in the Middle Ages in Egypt and Iran

RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the selection and evaluation is by observing lusterware sample in the site of foreign and domestic museums. The research method used is descriptive-comparative and the information is collected by using library resources. Statistical surveys have helped authors to achieve the desired goals.

1. Mythological Motifs

In human myths and early civilizations, combined beings are often seen, this suggests that man is a combination or an input of the world. Many myths have a significant relationship with the elements that make up human beings and the elements of the cosmos. Combined images of humans and animals express the beliefs of some ancient people about God. In their imagination, God is a being that looks like a human being, but at the same time different from him and has higher power. That, for the embodiment of their beliefs, they have shown God or the supernatural creatures with human-animal images⁶. Two-stream creatures are common in thematic arts. Many of these hybrid creatures have a human element such as, the head with the animal body, and sometimes the reverse, are reflections of the prehistoric world; that is, there is a close

¹ Hasan 2013: 17.

² Lambton 1984: 10.

³ Khanpour/Anzabi 2015: 106.

⁴ Khanpour/Anzabi 2015: 107.

⁵ Grube 1965: 15.

⁶ Sarfi 2004: 70.

Table 1: Volumetric Samples from Sphinx Status in Egypt / *Mısır'daki Sfenks Heykellerinden Hacimsel Örnekler*The Oldest Egyptian Sphinx, National Museum of Cairo / *En eski Mısır Sfenksi, Kahire Ulusal Müzesi*Egyptian Sphinx, Brooklyn Museum / *Mısır Sfenksi, Brooklyn Müzesi*Egyptian Sphinx, Brooklyn Museum / *Mısır Sfenksi, Brooklyn Müzesi*Figure 1: The Lusterware Pottery, Egypt (Festus), Late 10th and Early 11th Centuries AD; Metropolitan Museum / *Lusterware Keramiği, Mısır (Festus), MS 10. Yüzyıl Sonu, 11. Yüzyıl Başı. Metropolitan Müzesi*Figure 2: Pottery Dish with Intaglio Motif, 11th Century AD, Suckler Gallery / *İntaglio Motifli Pişmiş Toprak Tabak, MS 11. Yüzyıl. Suckler Galerisi*

unity between man and animal in a time⁷. In the Egyptian Fatimid lusterware pottery, mythological motifs (Sphinx, Griffin, Harpy) are depicted. At the same time, these designs are depicted in the lusterware and Minai pottery of Seljuk of Iran, and later in the Khwarazmshahi period and lusterware in Ilkhani era at the higher quality. Drawing combined animals indicates creative artist's imagination, imagination that creates the images that can be considered as the result of the influence of the intellectual beliefs of people in the ancient era which has been depicted in the Middle Ages as a decorative element on clay.

1-1. Sphinx (Guppet)

Sphinx is a combination of human being's head with the body of the lion. These creatures have existed in ancient Iranian art and other ancient civilizations and also in the Islamic period from the 11th and 12th centuries it is gradually becoming more common on pottery⁸. These images have an ancient root in ancient civilization and remind ancient Iran's thought⁹. In Iran, in Ziwi Gur, a crimson with a design of

winged Sphinx of the First Millennium BC was found in¹⁰, some consider Sphinx as the symbol of the sun¹¹. Egyptians also made the oldest statues of lion-man or guppet (Sphinx) in the Middle of the Third Millennium BC. These bodies depicted Pharaoh with a man's head and beard and a curved lion body, symbolizing his transcendental power¹². And in some cases, they have wings stick to the body¹³. The oldest Egyptian guppet is related to the Queen of Heshpsut II, the fourth Egyptian hierarch (Table 1). The construction of these guppets was prevalent after the Achaemenid domination on Egypt in the 5th century BC.

This post-Islam motif has still been depicted in artworks. The design of sphinx (gupt) in the Egyptian Fatimids era has been used as a decorative element for lusterware (Fig. 1).

And in the eastern parts of the Islamic realm, simultaneously the most popular designs of pottery with intaglio motif of the 4th and 5th centuries AD in Iran, from the famous types

⁷ Hall 2001: 107.

⁸ Abed Doost/Kazempour 2009: 82.

⁹ Khalili 2005: 46.

¹⁰ Grishman 1992: 312.

¹¹ Guratola 2006: 118.

¹² Hall 20:80.

¹³ Taheri 2012: 14.



Figure 3: Lusterware Dish, Egypt, 11th century AD, Metropolitan Museum / *Lusterware Tabak, Mısır, MS 11. Yüzyıl, Metropolitan Müzesi*

of Gros or Shimla, are often in the bottom of the container (Fig. 2). Among other pottery techniques in Iran, which had used this decorative design, the painting under the glaze is known as silhouette (shadow) and enamel during the Seljuk and early Ilkhani era¹⁴.

1-2. Griffin

Griffin is a myth that is a combination of the body of the lion, the eagle's head and wing, the horse's ear, and the crown of the fish¹⁵. This is a weird altar of ancient origin, examples of which have been observed in the legends and art of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, India and Iran¹⁶. This motif has continued among the holy creatures of the Middle East until the Achaemenid period. The griffin species in the Middle East may have appeared during a massive migration from the northeast in the first half of the Second Millennium¹⁷.

The oldest Sphinx is From Egypt, and its date back to the middle of the third millennium BC.¹⁸. The motif of griffin is observed in the pottery of the Western Islamic lands in the Fatimid era of Egypt on the lusterware pottery (Fig. 3). Figure 4 has preserved the only sample of lusterware Seljuk's pottery, as well as a strong example from the first phase of the production of the Fatimid lusterware. As mentioned, the Iranian luster painting is inspired by the Fatimid lusterware. Significant elements of long forehead, large eyes, sharp nose, downward mouth with strong lower lip, strong line of chin, half-circle marker indicate legendary creatures¹⁹. Such an imagination was undoubtedly rooted in ancient times which in this period had used as a decorative element on the dishes.

¹⁴ Hosseini 2012: 50.

¹⁵ Dehkhoda 1994.

¹⁶ Hawkins 1986: 308.

¹⁷ Hall 2001: 64.

¹⁸ Hall 2001: 20.

¹⁹ Morgan 2005.



Figure 4: A Piece of Lusterware Plate, Iran, Late 12th Century AD, Morgan, 2005 / *Lusterware Tabak Parçası, İran, MS 12. Yüzyıl, Morgan, 2005*

In Iran, this motif is observed on pottery with intaglio and enamel techniques during the Seljuk period and the early Ilkhani. During the Seljuk period, several examples of metal censers were made in the form of Griffin lattice statues²⁰.

1-3. Harpy

This creature has the face of woman, and the body of vulture and nails. He portrays death and intense conflict²¹. Many ancient tribes saw the birds with the sun-gods and the sky²². The “woman-bird” combination is a container or a handle of Iran-Orato Art. This combined creature takes the spirit of the dead to another world²³. In addition to the woman-bird, the man-bird is also on the category of Orato teapots²⁴.

In the thought of the ancient Egyptians, part of the so-called “Baa” after death, continued to live next to Ka as a bird with the separated human head. “Baa” was an aspect of the soul that had personal and individual characteristics of mankind. “Baa” is physical and after death continues eating, drinking and proximity. Some scholars regard “Baa” as a person himself, not a spiritual and immortal spirit, as accepted in modern thought²⁵. “Baa” could be embodied in immortal objects, as each of the pyramids represents “Baa” for the pharaoh who constructed it²⁶. “Baa” symbolizes the power of the gods and the pharaohs. During the Fatimids Period in Egypt, the motif of Baa (Harpy) on lusterware pottery pairs, of course, with a different image of Iranian examples, which shows the woman-bird, this image is depicted in the form of a male-

²⁰ Hosseini 2012: 51.

²¹ Dehkhoda 1994.

²² Hall 2001: 20.

²³ Abed Doost 2009: 84.

²⁴ Grishman 1992: 338.

²⁵ Zabkar 1968, 162.

²⁶ Allen 2003: 28.



Figure 5: Egypt, the 11th Century AD, Islamic Art Museum of Cairo / *Mısır, MS 11. Yüzyıl, Kahire İslam Sanatları Müzesi*



Figure 6: Late 12th Century AD, Kashan, Abgineh (Glassware) Museum / *MS 12. Yüzyıl Sonu, Kashan, Abgineh (Cam Eserler) Müzesi*

Table 2: Seljuk Enamel Dishes with the Motif of Harpy / *Harpiya Motifli Selçuklu Mîneli Tabakları*



Iran, the 11th and 12th Centuries, Arthur M. Sackler Museum / *İran, MS 11 ve 12. Yüzyıllar. Arthur M. Sackler Müzesi*

Iran, the 11th and 12th Centuries, Cincinnati Art Museum / *İran, MS 11 ve 12. Yüzyıllar. Cincinnati Sanat Müzesi*

Kashan, Seljuk Period Malter Auction, California / *Kashan, Selçuklu Dönemi, Malter Müzayedesi, California*

bird (Fig. 5). Most popular examples of Iranian lusterware products in the Middle Ages with the motif of decorative Harpy, one can refer to the pair Harpy which is portrayed symmetrically and they are back to back. It is commonly found in lusterware plates of Seljuk, Khwarazmshahi and early Ilkhani era²⁷ (Fig. 6).

Contrary to the historical period of Iran when many samples of this motif have not remained in the works, in the Islamic period, several examples of combined creatures with the head and body of birds in various Islamic arts of Iran, including pottery, which has been survived (Table 2).

In the process of emigration of symbols between nations, it is not necessary to transpose and accept mythic concepts related to the symbol²⁸. The designs studied in Iran and Egypt are inter-connected and sometimes convergent. Many of the symbols in the new homeland have been solved in ancient people's thoughts and used as a decorative element.

²⁷ Hosseini 2012: 48.

²⁸ Goblet 1894: 140.

2. Motifs With Astronomical Concepts

The constellation is a set of stars that, predecessors have assigned a name to each star for recognition of stellar stars and determining their location which is more or less similar to that set. The Arabs called this collection "Sovar". They called each constellation in the name of something that they looked like. Some considered some of them as human and some others as various instruments and shapes and they gave them the names of mythological beings and mythological creatures or illuminated objects in the universe²⁹. Astronomy is one of the oldest natural sciences dating back to the third millennium BC. One of the ways that can tell the significance of astronomical concepts is the pottery designs of different periods of Islamic art. Of course, one cannot say emphatically that the motifs were astronomical symbols, as even considering such concepts for these motifs is far from the mind³⁰. However, it seems that Islamic pottery artists repeat and complete the old motifs in the representation of visual arts and use it as a decorative element.

²⁹ Shin Dashtgul 2000: 100.

³⁰ Zarei 2012: 44.

Table 3: The Motif of the Eagle in Pottery from the 10th and 11th Centuries / 10. ve 11. Yüzyıllarda Çanak Çömlekte Kartal Figürü



Golabah Clay Pottery, Iran or Transoxiana, 10th Century AD/Morgan2005: 83 / *Golabah Kil Çömleği, İran ya da Transoxania, MS 10. Yüzyıl, Morgan 2005:83*

Glazed Pottery, Akand, Multicolored, 11th Century AD, Victoria Albert / *Sırlı Keramik, Akand, Çokrenkli, MS 11. Yüzyıl, Victoria Albert*

Multicolored Glazed Pottery, 11th Century AD, Berlin Museum / *Çokrenkli Sırlı Keramik, MS 11. Yüzyıl, Berlin Müzesi*



Figure 7: Egypt, the 11th Century AD, Metropolitan / *Mısır, MS 11. Yüzyıl, Metropolitan*



Figure 8: Golabah Pottery, Iran, 11th and 12th Centuries AD, Watson 2004: 259 / *Golabah Keramiği, İran, MS 11 ve 12. Yüzyıl, Watson 2004: 259*



Figure 9: The Eagle's Face in the Book of Fixed Stars (Sufi 1981: 108) / *Sabit Yıldızlar Kitabı'nda bir Kartalın Yüzü (Sufi 1981: 108)*

2-1. Eagle

The motif of the eagle means knowledge, freedom, hope, belief, authority, divinity, tolerance, recklessness, purity, fertility, lightning, heavenly power, flight force and movement³¹. Eagle is the symbol of the goddess of heaven, victory, reign, righteousness and with the

gods of the sun³². The image of eagle flying with open wings is visible on the body of pottery pots obtained from Borujerd, related to the late Shosh period. It is also compatible with eagle of Iran's and Ilam's Derafsh, with the famous signs of the early dynasties of Sumer and Susa. Each of these signs consisted of an open-wings eagle that grasped a pair of animals under its grip³³.

The motif of the eagle with open wings in the Islamic era and in the eastern Islamic lands in Iran and Mesopotamia on the pottery of the 10th and 11th centuries and on the bowls has been illustrated with the techniques of lusterware, Aqkand, Golabah, intaglio (Table 3).

In the 10th and 11th centuries AD, the Fatimid court in Egypt and the neighbor lands are in prosperity. It seems that the motif of the surviving Eagle is a design of Sassanian metal containers that have been launched with open wings that after a while, it found another character in Islamic culture, thus, the symbol of life has become a manifestation of death and nonsense³⁴.

³² Noah Aghaee 2008: 197.

³³ Hertzfeld 2002: 83.

³⁴ Dadvar/Mansouri 2011: 111.

³¹ Habibi 2002: 119.

Table 4: The Motif of Artwork with Lion Related to the Egyptian Fatimid / *Sanatta Mısır, Fatimi Dönemi ile İlişkili Aslan Motifi*

Engraved Dentine Coffins, 11th and 12th Centuries AD, Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin / *İşlemeli Fildişi Tabutlar, MS 11. Ve 12. Yüzyıllar, İslam Sanatları Müzesi, Berlin*

Bronze Fountain, 11th Century AD, Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin / *Tunç Çeşme, MS 11. Yüzyıl, İslam Sanatları Müzesi, Berlin*

Engraved Bronze Kobe, 11th Century AD, The David Collection, Denmark / *İşlemeli Tunç Kobe, MS 11. Yüzyıl, David Koleksiyonu, Danimarka*



Figure 10: Leo Constellation in the Book of Fixed Stars (Sufi, 1981: 173) / *Sabit Yıldızlar Kitabı'ndan Aslan Takım Yıldızı (Sufi 1981: 173)*

In an example of the Egyptian Fatimid lusterware pottery, the open-wing eagle has covering the entire surface has been depicted with strong legs and open eyes with authority which seems to have a horn and thus, the potter has given it a mythic form (Fig. 7). A sample comparable with this motif can be seen in a Golabah pottery made during the 11th and 12th centuries AD (Fig. 8). The eagle is one of the astronomical symbols on the dishes that holds its wings open like the constellation eagle in the Safa treatise (Fig. 9).

The eagle is one of the northern constellation and its stars number is nine in the face and six form outside. The public called it Constellation Scales³⁵.

“This symbol is known as the three dwarfs called Nasir Tayyar and Arabs called these three in-row stars Nasr Tayyar, because Nasr is behind him, and has actually down and open wings. This Nasr with open wings are called Tayyar, that is, it has thought, and the fourth and sixth priests who are out of these six are called Zelimin.”³⁶

³⁵ Masafi 1978: 494.

³⁶ Sufi 1981: 3-102.

2-2. Lion

Lion has a special place in the mythology of nations³⁷ and has been related to the worship of the sun-God³⁸. The lion in Iran has always been with the kings, and has become a symbol of the kingdom and is a sign of courage and power³⁹. At the entrance to the sanctuaries of Elamite, statues of the guard's lion were placed⁴⁰. Among the seven classes of Mehr religion, the fourth place is for lion⁴¹. The Ishtar combined lion is the love god Lady and the symbol of warfare⁴². The Babylonian names of the lion constellations Oregula (the Great Lion)⁴³. The Babylonian sunset was sometimes shown in lion⁴⁴.

In Egyptian mythology, the motif of the lion is known as a defender, which has been emphasized through the ancient cultural tradition, architecture and visual arts. In ancient Egypt, on the two sides of the road leading to the palaces of the pharaohs, there were statues of lion⁴⁵. From ancient times, lion was the symbol of Egypt's power and reign and the pharaohs sometimes held lion as a pet or they hunted them to show and prove their power. In Egypt, lion was associated with the goddess of the Sun (RA) and lion with heads on both sides of the body represents the goddess of sunrise and sunset (ancientegypt.co.uk).

In ancient Egypt, lion also protected the sun, and in the astrology, leo is the sign of lion. Sayyid, Shu, Sa'atn, Aker, Neptune and Manheit were the Liony Gods. The lions were honored and revered for their connection with the

³⁷ Yahaghi 2007: 530.

³⁸ Noahagahi 2008: 196.

³⁹ Ettinghausen 2537: 14.

⁴⁰ Hinets 1997: 64.

⁴¹ Clauss 2000: 132.

⁴² Hall 2001: 62.

⁴³ White 2008: 140.

⁴⁴ Krappe 1945: 150.

⁴⁵ Sulava 2003: 66-68.



Figure 11: Egypt, the 11th Century AD, Watson 2004: 274 / *Mısır, MS 11. Yüzyıl. Watson 2004: 274*



Figure 12: Lusterware Pottery Plate, Gorgan, 12th and 13th Centuries AD, Bahrami 1949: Pl.LXVIII / *Pişmiş Toprak Lusterware Tabak, Gorgan, MS 12.-13. Yüzyıl, Bahrami 1949-PLLXVIII*

Table 5: The Lusterware Pottery and Volumes with the Motif of the Lion Associated with Ilkhani Period / *Lusterware Pişmiş Toprak Eserleri ve İlhanlı Dönemi ile İlişkili Aslan Motifli Eserler*



The 13th century AD, Kashan, Glassware Museum / *MS 13. Yüzyıl, Kashan, Cam Eserler Müzesi*

The 12th and 13th Centuries AD, Kashan, the Victoria Albert Museum / *MS 12.-13. Yüzyıl, Kashan, Victoria Albert Museum*

Early 13th century AD, Kashan, Metropolitan / *Erken MS 13. Yüzyıl, Kashan, Metropolitan*

holy sun⁴⁶. Ahi, the great Pharaoh of Egypt, the lion was called the sun god's sun⁴⁷. Egyptians prayed for the stars of the constellation of the lion, because the flood of Nile that, agriculture was dependent on it, occurred when the sun entered this sign⁴⁸. The importance of the lion was as large as in the Egyptian Fatimid period, many of the works of art were illustrated in the form of lion (Table 4).

Lion represents the majesty and power of the governing apparatus, the fifth astrological sign and heart of the zodiac is Leo. There is the sun's house among the astronomers of Leo sign, because each of the twelve signs had one or two special houses. The lion has twenty-seven stars of constellation and eight stars outside his constellation⁴⁹. The northern constellation of the zodiac region is rotating lion, Anand Lion, Lionfish, Lion of the Sky, Lion Sepehr, and so on in Persian poetry, all are a shadow of the Leo sign⁵⁰ (Fig. 10).

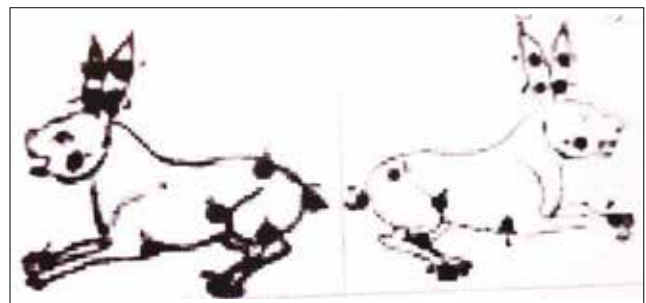


Figure 13: The Constellation of Lepus in the Book of Fixed Stars (Sufi 1981: 164) / *Sabit Yıldızlar Kitabı'ndan Lepus Takım Yıldızı, (Sufi 1981: 164)*

The motif of lion plays an important role in Iranian art, especially in Islamic period. This motif has been depicted during various periods of Egyptian culture during the Fatimid period and in Iran during the Ilkhani period on the lusterware pottery (Figs. 11-12). It is believed that, lion is the oldest symbol, which has been used in astronomy. In the Islamic period, the motif of lion can be seen alone or in combination with the sun, especially in the Seljuk period⁵¹.

⁴⁶ Ruiz 2001: 134.

⁴⁷ Krappe 1945: 150.

⁴⁸ Hinckley 1899: 253.

⁴⁹ Sufi 1981: 163; Dadvar/Mansuri 2011: 76.

⁵⁰ Mosafi 1977: 38.

⁵¹ Khazaghi 2009: 37.

Table 6: Artworks Related to the Motif of Rabbit for the Fatimid Period in Egypt / *Mısır Fatimi Döneminden Tavşan Motifi ile İlişkilendirilen Sanat Eserleri*



Chiffon and Linen, 11th Century AD Metropolitan Museum / *Şifon ve Keten, MS 11. Yüzyıl, Metropolitan Müzesi*

The Engraved Marble Stone Object The British Museum London / *İşlemeli Mermer Obje, British Museum, Londra*

The Glass Jar, the 10th Century AD: Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo, Egypt / *Cam Kavanoz, MS 10. Yüzyıl, İslam Sanatları Müzesi, Kahire, Mısır*

Engraved Pottery, 11th Century AD: Museum Stockholm, Sweden / *İşlemeli Pişmiş Toprak Kap, MS 11. Yüzyıl, Stockholm Müzesi, İsveç*



Figure 14: Egypt, Early 11th Century AD, Metropolitan Museum / *Mısır, MS 11. Yüzyıl Başları, Metropolitan Müzesi*

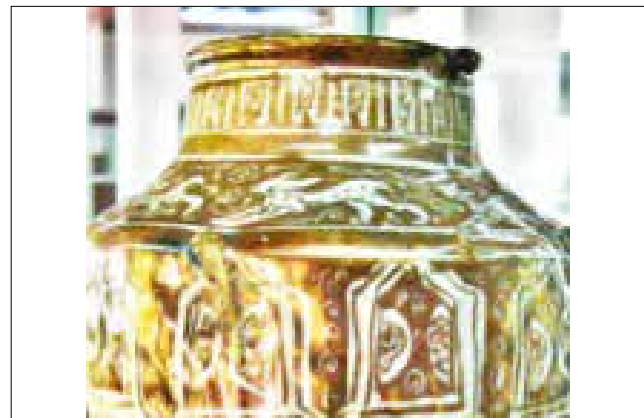


Figure 15: Lusterware Pottery, Gorgan, Seljuk, Gorgan Museum / *Pişmiş Toprak Lusterware Kap, Gorgan, Selçuklu, Gorgan Müzesi*

The finding of lion in Egyptian art, Mesopotamia and Iran shows that this animal once lived in these areas⁵². This motif has been depicted in Iran during the Islamic era as a form of central motif on lusterware pottery (Table 5).

2-3. Rabbit

Rabbit in the global culture is a symbol of passion veganism goodness, guard good fortune and a sign of power; in some myths, it is counted as “the holy animal of the moon”⁵³. Rabbit in ancient Egypt was a symbol of fertility and was sanctified in most of the Old Testament countries. In Egypt and Assyria it was considered as a sacred animal, and some of the attributes of the Egyptian gods were gathered in this creature and Goddess of moon has embodied in it. In the old days, artists also carved bones and painted gazelles and rabbits. This represents hunting, because animals like gazelle and rabbits are not pet. Rabbit is one of the motifs used to express astronomical concepts in pottery and has been depicted

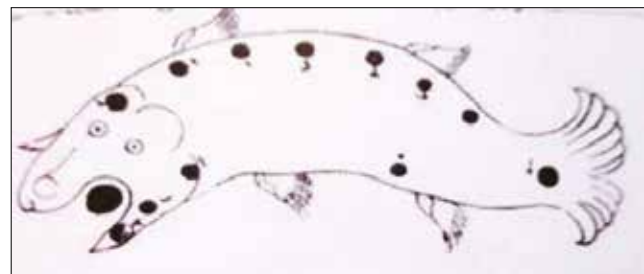


Figure 13: The Constellation of Lepus in the Book of Fixed Stars (Sufi 1981: 164) / *Sabit Yıldızlar Kitabı'ndan Lepus Takım Yıldızı, (Sufi 1981: 164)*

according to the constellations in the books of Islamic astronomy.

Lepus is a small constellation in the southern hemisphere of the sky. It is in the east of Canis Minor, and also near the constellation Eridanus⁵⁴. “Lepus includes twelve stars to the old observation and is under the two feet of the Orion. It is eastward and its back is toward the east. It is like a rabbit running to the west”⁵⁵ (Fig. 13).

⁵² Hall 2001: 61.

⁵³ Jobs 1991: 50-49.

⁵⁴ Mosafi 1978: 34; Ghahari 2009: 130.

⁵⁵ Sufi 1971: 254.



Figure 14: Egypt, Early 11th Century AD, Metropolitan Museum / *Mısır, MS II. Yüzyıl Başları, Metropolitan Müzesi*



Figure 15: Lusterware Pottery, Gorgan, Seljuk, Gorgan Museum / *Pişmiş Toprak Lusterware Kap, Gorgan, Selçuklu, Gorgan Müzesi*

In Egypt, during the Fatimid period, rabbit has been one of the favorite motifs of artists and they have drawn this motif on their artwork, the rabbit is a popular design among Egyptian Fatimid artists, probably with the concept of wealth (Table 6).

Rabbit motif is used to express astronomical concepts on pottery, in Figures 14 and 15, the motif of rabbit, such as constellations, has been the narrative of the subject of hunting and is depicted among the palmatian decoration moving.

2-4. Fish

“Fish: conjecture, fertility, development, renewal and preservation of life; the power of waters that is the source of life; water element; the conjunction of all lunar goddesses. Fish is the symbol of the righteous and the disciples who swim in the water of life. Fishes along birds are linked with the goddesses of the underworld and the ritual funeral and represent the hope of resurrection”⁵⁶. Fish is one of the symbols of Anahita, an angel of water and fertility, which is responsible for the main task of Nowruz which is fertility. And its presence in New Year’s Eve brings blessings and fertility to the New Year. In some places, they put fish in a bowl of water, that the fishes are a sign halal garments and a symbol of happiness at the time of delivery of the year⁵⁷.

In Egypt, the oldest fish were Oxyhinchus - Phagrus - Lepidotus, however, it seems that it has not been worshiped throughout the country and examples of several fish statues have been represented⁵⁸ Pisces (fish): The last sign of the zodiac is in the form of two fishes. “The South Pisces constellation includes eleven stars. Its head his face is to the east and his pursuit towards the west and the beginning of its head includes great light

star with the end in the water⁵⁹. Pisces constellation with Hutin and Samctin is the 12th sign of the zodiac, just before the March equinox (Fig. 16).

The sign is the second home of Jupiter. Pisces with its name Farsi, fish and sky fish along with other stars and signs, as well as alone and more is given for the exhortation and expression of the delivery of the year and the changing of the season or announcing information in astronomical matters and in order for ornate in Persian poetry⁶⁰. The fish is surely the symbol of the water element, where it lives. In Islam, it is also referred to as a symbol of fertility and abundance⁶¹. Fish is one of the ritual decorations, including paintings that have been depicted in Islamic astrological books according to constellations. This motif has been depicted in Egyptian Fatimid lusterware pottery in an abstract and in the context of an elegant pattern (Fig. 17). The decorative motif of this pottery is a reminiscent of Coptic art, the motif of fish has been known as a traditional motif in Christian art, and painting is repeated as a fish in the Coptic artwork⁶². But this motif has been implemented realistically in the next centuries in Iran in the lusterware pottery (Fig. 18).

Discussion and Conclusion

Iran and Egypt have experienced their most magnificent artistic times in the 11th and 12th centuries. During these centuries, the Fatimid rule in Egypt and the Seljuqs in Iran were powerful. There was a great similarity between these two lands and the government in this period that, these similarities have undoubtedly influenced the creation of works of art. In these days, the spread of Islam over the civilized lands and the intersection of ancient civilizations with divine beliefs led to artistic productions

⁵⁶ Cooper 2000: 342.

⁵⁷ Rooholamini 2008: 56.

⁵⁸ Wilkinson 1847: 248.


















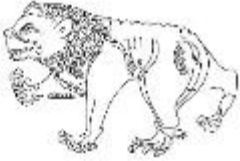






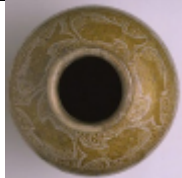



⁵⁹ Sufi, 1981: 311.

⁶⁰ Mosafi 1978: 213.

⁶¹ Knights/Grabs 2009: 139.

⁶² Contadini 1998: 7-86; Soustiel 1985: 133.

A Comparative Study Table of Animal Motifs of Pottery in Egypt and Iran in the 11th and 12th Centuries / 11. ve 12. Yüzyıllarda Mısır ve İran'da Hayvan Motifli Kapların Karşılaştırmalı İnelemesini Gösteren Tablo

	Egypt		Iran	
	Picture	Design	Picture	Design
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

in the history of world art. In Iran and Egypt, which were considered to be the most original and magnificent ancient civilizations, with the advent of Islam, a new era began transforming the two lands into major centers of Islamic art. As Iran became the eastern center of Islamic

art and Egypt became the western center. The Silk Road, which started from China and led to Egypt after passing Iran was the place of travel of the tradesmen and merchants who played a significant role in artistic eclecticism by importing Chinese and Egyptian goods to

Iran. During these days, Egypt, through its relationship with the West, guided Western values toward Iran, and Iran from the East, led the Eastern heritage to Egypt. The study of pottery motifs confirms the claim that Iran and Egypt at that time had a tangible connection. The use of animal motifs in the pottery in middle age of Egypt and Iran is seen with many mythological and astronomical concepts. The potter artist discovered the ability in these motifs to display the animals on the pottery in algebraic motion and movement. In these days, in the clay works, in both lands, despite the arrival of Islam, we see the combination of ancient art with Islamic art as a decorative element in the artwork, in Egypt, during the Fatimid era, on the lusterware pottery and in Iran, during the Middle Ages of Islam on the lusterware pottery and enamel works, the motifs which are reminiscent of ancient art and include astronomical concepts were also shown. The main pictures on the pottery that was studied in this paper can be divided into two categories: 1. Combined beings (Sphinx, Griffin, Harpy) 2. Motifs with astronomical concepts (eagle, lion, rabbit, fish). For ages, combined animals have been considered in ancient civilizations and have had mythological and allegorical features. These beliefs also appear in Islamic times, but at the same time, their concepts do not create the symbolic and allegorical notions and they find the decorative aspect. The presence of such a combined animal in the art of each land depends on the cultural and mythical characteristics of that land. These designs represent a kind of creative imagination, the imagination that creates the images that can be considered reflective of the mythological thinking of the creators which was used in this period as a decorative element. Sphinx, Griffin and Harpy are also considered important ideas in ancient Iranian thought and art. These creatures are a combination of the most fantastic animals in the ancient mythology of the world which has been used to decorate pottery of the middle Ages in Egypt and Iran on pottery, especially lusterware pottery. Potter artists in the samples of the clay studied with the motifs of eagle, lion, rabbit and fish attempts to express astronomical concepts. Considering the frequency of clay samples with decorative elements in this era, it seems that, these motifs have gained popularity in Egypt and Iran. The motifs of eagle, lion (Leo), rabbit (Lepus), fish (Pisces) are among the constellation signs. Its origin on pottery is rooted in pre-Islamic designs. Paintings like: Eagle and Lion, in addition to the constellation, reveal the mysterious aspect of authority and monarchy in relation to the atmosphere of their rulers. The place for these constellation signs are more in the center of the container and to emphasize astronomy, which have been used as a decorative element in this era.

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Museum Berlin

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Museum of Islamic Art Cairo

Metropolitan Museum of Art

Ashmolean Museum

Arthur M. Sackler Museum

Cincinnati Art Museum

Malter Auction, California

The David Collection, Denmark

Museum Stockholm, Sweden

The British Museum London

Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo, Egypt

Tehran Museum of Glassware

Gorgan Museum