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DECORATION

DECORATION, the use of consciously designed patterns to embellish building surfaces and objects for aesthetic effect, one of the most characteristic features of art and architecture in Islamic Persia. Both the quantity and quality of surface patterns attest the esteem they enjoyed among artists and patrons alike.

Despite the obvious importance of decorative or ornamental schemes in Persian Islamic art, few attempts have been made to deal with this phenomenon in a comprehensive way. During the 19th century such authors as Alois Riegl, Owen Jones, and Oscar Wilde used examples from Persian and other Islamic art in their attempts to explain the appeal of decorative or ornamental patterns in aesthetic, psychological, and even physiological terms (Gombrich, pp. 51-59). Riegl sought, through studying the internal formal evolution of decorative forms, to integrate patterns from Persian carpets with their ancient, and particularly classical, antecedents; his work provided a model for later studies by Ernst Kühnel and Maurice Dimand (Gombrich, pp. 180-90; Grabar, p. 39). Despite progress in identifying or classifying the features of Persian decorative patterns, however, few scholars have attempted to explain why particular designs were used in specific periods, regions, or circumstances, even though it can be observed that in a given area or epoch the form and character of ornament are often consistent within a particular craft and sometimes even among different media, despite the varied techniques in which they are executed. Such consistency raises the questions how these clearly differentiated vocabularies of ornament arose, why they

were consciously perpetuated, and whether or not certain types of ornament conveyed specific meanings or general moods to an observer.

The introduction of new decorative modes or techniques often followed such major historical shifts as the Islamic conquest in the mid-7th century, the Mongol invasion in the first half of the 13th century, and the establishment of European trading companies in the 17th century. Nevertheless, in a broad sense the ornamental tradition of Islamic Persia was pluralistic and cumulative. A newly introduced feature might acquire its own distinctive niche within the existing repertoire and be used in conjunction with previously established types of decoration, each of which retained its visual identity, thus contributing to a distinctive historical rhythm of episodic innovation against a stable background. Individual decorative elements can often be traced over several centuries during which time their appearance shows only minor variations. In such a tradition ornament became both a vehicle of continuity and the source of subtle variations on familiar themes. The persistence of distinct visual categories over long periods may have been related to a broader cultural appreciation of normative structures also apparent in Persian literature, in which poetic forms or vocabularies of imagery were repeated, with minor variations, sometimes for centuries (Yarshater, pp. 18-20).

Despite this conservatism, patterns and designs may be classified not only typologically but also geographically and chronologically. Consequently, specific designs can be diagnostic of historical epochs and regional divisions, as well as indicating transfer of decorative themes from one medium or region to another. A systematic investigation of the history and use of decoration in Persia should thus provide insight into a variety of economic and social factors for which written documentation is often scanty, including the training, organization, and migration of craftsmen and the relative economic importance or social status of various crafts.

In this article, the historical development of the Persian ornamental repertoire will be surveyed, with the purpose of providing a foundation for addressing these more general questions. Treatment of this development will be divided into two basic epochs, from the Islamic conquest to the Mongol invasion and from the latter to the mid-19th century. Although there was considerable continuity between these two epochs, Mongol rule brought to a close a period of gradual internal artistic evolution and opened an era in which change was increasingly stimulated by the importation of foreign decorative themes and

techniques, often at the instigation of the ruling dynasty.

From the advent of Islam to the Mongol conquest, ca. 750-1250.

This period can be subdivided into two phases. In the first, approximately from 750 to 1050, a distinctive artistic culture, in which pre-Islamic and Islamic elements were fused, developed in Persia. This process was centered in the east, especially Khorasan and Transoxania. In the second phase, from 1050 to about 1250, the cultural center of gravity shifted westward, first to central and then to northwestern Persia, even though the east retained considerable artistic vigor until the Mongol invasion.

Phase 1. The political fusion of former Sasanian territories with those of the city-states of Khorasan and Transoxania under Islamic rule created a new cultural region with a mixed legacy of artistic traditions from both areas, as well as from more distant Asian regions like India and China. Moreover, as this region was tied administratively to Iraq, it was also affected by trends that developed there, particularly in Baṣra and Baghdad.

For the first Islamic centuries the organization and content of decoration can be established through examination of metalwork, ceramics, and architecture. The Sasanian practice of putting royal portraiture on coinage and metalwork almost ceased, but such other royal emblems as the mythical bird Sīmorḡ and birds and animals bearing ribbons or garlands became major decorative themes, appearing, often in roundels, on metalwork, ceramics, textiles, and even architecture of Islamic date (Harper, pp. 16-19). A small gold ewer bearing the titles of the Buyid Abū Manṣūr (ʿEzz-al-Dawla) Amīr Baḵtīār (356-67/967-78) and decorated with roundels suggests that the synthesis of Sasanian themes, Sogdian techniques, and Arabic inscriptions characteristic of eastern Persian metalwork was also popular in western Persia and Iraq (Lowry; Plate XI). An amalgamation of pre-Islamic and Islamic decorative features is also evident in a group of slip-painted ceramics from 10th- and 11th-century Khorasan, especially those painted in black with touches of red on a pure white ground. On the most impressive examples designs echoing the vegetal ornament of Sogdian metalwork are combined with Arabic inscriptions (Raby, pp. 187-99, figs. 12, 18, 20; Plate XII). Those inscriptions range from wishes of good fortune or good health for an anonymous owner to edifying aphorisms and proverbs and even Hadith (Shishkina and Pavchinskaya, pp. 53-56). The practice of using inscriptions as the principal embellishment on ceramics appears to have originated at Baṣra in Iraq during

the 9th century, possibly with the support of the ʿAbbasid caliphs; one potter signed as the caliph's craftsman: *ṣāneʿ amīr-al-moʾmenīn*). It was, however, more fully refined in the wares of Khorasan and Transoxania (Qūčānī, pp. 94-95; Keall and Mason).

Architectural decoration in early Islamic Persia also exhibited features drawn from both Sasanian and Sogdian practice. Two types characteristic of the Islamic period had pre-Islamic antecedents: creation of decorative patterns through the use of specially cut or molded bricks, documented in pre-Islamic wall paintings at the Sogdian city of Panjīkant, and the use of carved or molded stucco to highlight certain parts of a building, a well-established tradition in Persia and Iraq under the Sasanians (Belenizki, pp. 101, 116-18; Kröger, pp. 63-65, 144-60). In the mid-10th-century Samanid mausoleum at Bukhara the earlier approach of accenting parts of the building through use of patterned brickwork was expanded to enhance both interior and exterior walls, and other decorative forms derived from the local wood-carving tradition were applied to the transition zone (Voronina, pp. 6-7, 25, pls. 1-2; Ainy, pls. 33, 50, 51). In later Islamic buildings brick or terracotta decoration was used to highlight key areas of exterior facades, but the flexibility of carved or painted stucco was preferred for interior decoration. The earliest carved-stucco wall decoration in Khorasan and Transoxania, for example, in the nine-bay mosque near Balḵ, where all interior surfaces once had stucco revetments, reflected the taste of ʿAbbasid Iraq. On the arch spandrels, intrados, and impost blocks at Balḵ the stucco decoration included patterns based on the grape leaf and grapevine, whereas the pier capitals were ornamented with abstract vegetal ornament (Melikian Chirvani, 1969, pp. 3-9). Analogous ornament is known from 9th-century residential structures at Sāmarrā, north of Baghdad. Those discovered in "House III" are particularly close in the details of their patterns to the decorations at Balḵ (Creswell, pl. 78/a, d-f.)

Phase 2. Persian art and architecture from the mid-11th to the mid-13th century are notable for the intricacy and elaboration of geometric, calligraphic, and vegetal ornament. Although the same categories of decoration were used throughout Persia, there were regional differences in their application, particularly on buildings. In Khorasan, Transoxania, and Sīstān attention was focused on the exteriors of buildings. Portals, minarets, and entire facades were framed or articulated with contrasting areas of geometric and calligraphic ornament (Hutt and Harrow, pls. 10, 14, 64-66, 76-78, 80-82; Pope, pp. 96-98). In northeastern Persia the outer walls of tombs

were articulated with niches and often covered with a decorative veneer of intricate geometric patterning executed in brickwork or unglazed and glazed terracotta strips (Hutt and Harrow, pls. 12, 60-61, 126-27; Seherr-Thoss, pp. 74-85).

In central Persia mosques were often left virturally unadorned, except for inscription bands around the bases of domes or carved stucco ornament, often of great intricacy, on prayer niches (*meḥrāb*; Pope, pp. 106-29, 146-62). This tradition of stucco ornament was probably ultimately derived from the undulating grapevines used in ʿAbbasid Iraq, but in 12th-century examples the organic unity of the individual leaf was nearly lost in the lacy network of geometric units that covered the surface, creating patterns within patterns (Plate XIII). Paradoxically, as individual elements of vegetation became more abstract, the vines to which they were attached were endowed with ever greater energy, being woven together to create a dense network on several levels (Shani, pp. 67-74). This interweaving of two or more distinct strands of vegetation in a composition on multiple levels, in which individual forms and structures are complementary, was widely used in later centuries, especially on carpets and polychrome ceramic revetments.

A taste for intricate decoration is also evident in 12th- and 13th-century metalwork from Khorasan, where bronze or brass was inlaid with silver and copper in figural, vegetal, calligraphic, and geometric patterns. The inclusion of symbols for heavenly bodies, the sun, moon, planets, and constellations of the zodiac, underscores the link between metal vessels and cosmological themes (Melikian Chirvani, 1982, pp. 55-135). Some of the finest pieces bear inscriptions stating that they were made in Herat, and some are signed by more than one craftsman. The most important craftsman was probably the *naqqāš*, or designer, who evidently planned and executed the inlaid decoration (Ettinghausen, 1943, pp. 193-99).

The city of Kāšān achieved preeminence in ceramic production during the 12th and 13th centuries; both tableware and architectural revetments were produced there in several decorative techniques, including molding and underglaze and overglaze painting (Etting-hausen, 1936). Luster-painted tiles and tablewares from Kāšān exhibit a wide decorative repertoire and were highly prized and widely exported. Some are ornamented with intertwined arabesques, vine patterns in which stems and leaves grow one from the other, resembling those in stucco carving; others resemble inlaid metalwork in prominence of inscription bands and geometric schemes. Most striking,

however, are the depictions of courtly life: enthroned figures with attendants, retinues of horsemen, or couples conversing (Watson, pp. 45-109 and passim). The inscriptions that are such a prominent feature of both tiles and vessels are also varied. Although koranic quotations occur only on architectural revetments, poetry, some of it composed by the potters themselves, appears on both tiles and tableware. Modern commentators have often pointed out the lack of correspondence between the themes of the poetry and the scenes depicted (e.g., a tile with wrestlers inscribed with verses about a hunt from the *Šāh-nāma*;Watson, pp. 122-31, 146-56; Bahrami, pp. 75-81, 90-95, 114-22, 126-30). Several of the craftsmen responsible for the decoration of these objects signed with the epithet *naqqāš* (Watson, pp. 180-81). The most elaborate compositions on polychrome wares, for example, the scene of the siege of a fortification on a platter or a continuous narrative drawn from the Persian national epic on a beaker, both in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., suggest a link between the designers of ceramic vessels and the artists who executed wall paintings or manuscript illustrations (Simpson, pp. 15-24).

From the Mongol invasion to ca. 1850.

This period can also be divided into two phases. The first, approximately from 1250 to 1650, was characterized by successive links to the artistic traditions of China. The second, approximately from 1650 to 1850, was marked by a fascination with things European, known initially via India, then directly through European contacts. An intrinsic conservatism in the artistic process slowed the pace of change, and the degree of change varied from medium to medium. Nevertheless, after ca. 1250 innovation was primarily stimulated by foreign taste and imported techniques. Furthermore, one addition to the decorative repertoire was often followed by others from the same source, so that both the sinicization and europeanization of Persian taste were incremental processes. At the same time, however, the new elements were as much assimilated as imitated, creating hybrid Sino-Persian and Euro-Persian decorative idioms.

Phase 1. In the 13th and early 14th centuries the formulation of a new decorative vocabulary was accompanied by a change in the structure of patronage fostered by the Mongol conquest. During the first Islamic centuries Persian art appears to have rested largely in the hands of individual urban craftsmen who learned and transmitted their skills within an established artisan tradition. Beginning in the Il-khanid period (654-754/1256-1353), the

initiative seems to have shifted gradually to various courts. Members of these courts began to participate in the design and production of art and architecture, though the degree and character of court-sponsored artistic production appears to have varied from one dynasty or ruler to another and certain crafts were more affected than others. In general, however, the transfer of design or production of crafts to a court appears to have fostered a harmonization of designs among various media, a development probably dependent on the primary role of the *naqqāš*, or painter-decorator, in creating patterns to be executed in various media. Over time a court atelier could build up an archive of patterns and designs, thus providing for continuity between generations of artists or even, in periods of political turmoil, from one court or dynasty to another. These court repositories may also have included objects of foreign origin. When court-based design and the importation of foreign taste and techniques coincided, the impact of a given innovation was thereby multiplied.

The initial Mongol invasion brought a virtual cessation of artistic production and architectural patronage from the 1220s to the 1260s, but after the consolidation of Il-khanid control the less devastated areas in central and western Persia began to revive. Structures were repaired and new building projects begun, particularly after the conversion of Ḡāzān Khan (694-703/1295-1304) to Islam in 694/1295. Extensive use of glazed-ceramic revetments was an innovation of the period, and carved or molded plaster ornament reached a new level of elaboration, though in both media the patterns continued pre-Mongol traditions (Wilber, pp. 79-87; Plate XIV). The Kāšān ceramic workshops also resumed production, initially returning to their familiar decorative repertoire; in the 1270s new themes of Chinese origin were introduced on luster-painted tiles manufactured for the palace of Abaqa Khan (663-80/1265-82) at Taḵt-e Solaymān in Azarbaijan: the dragon, the phoenix, the crane, the deer, the lotus, and distinctive cloud forms and floral motifs (Naumann, pp. 80-98; Watson, pp. 131-49, 190-91; cf. *EIr*. V, p. 320 pl. XXIX).

The absorption of these themes into the Persian decorative repertoire was selective and gradual. Most immediately popular was the lotus, which appears in several distinct configurations: as an isolated blossom, a floral spray set within a polylobed frame, or alternating with a six-petaled flower or trilobed buds attached to a vine. Typically the lotus appears in a distinct and often inconspicuous zone within an ensemble that otherwise continues local pre-Mongol traditions (Baer, pp. 15-16 figs. 9, 11a-11b, 13). The longevity of pre-

Mongol decorative schemes is well illustrated by a silk textile, now in the Erzbischöflichen Dom- und Diozesanmuseum, Vienna, bearing the name and titles of Abū Saʿīd (717-36/1317-35) on which the field decoration bears a strong resemblance to pre-Mongol metalwork of Khorasan (Wardwell, pp. 108-11 figs. 45-46).

The advent of the Timurids (771-912/1370-1506) marked a new stage both in the development of court-based artistic production and in the assimilation of Chinese decorative themes to Persian taste. Many 15th-century designs were also widely used in the Safavid period (907-1145/1501-1732). Although initially Tīmūr had hoped to add China to his empire, his successors were content to cultivate commercial links and diplomatic exchanges, in order to procure coveted goods from China. Fortunately, the formative stages of Timurid taste coincided with the reign of the second Ming emperor, Yung-lo (1398-1424), who actively promoted contacts with the Near East, a policy blocked by his immediate successor but revived on a limited scale by the fourth emperor, Hsuan-te (1425-35), before it was definitively abandoned by his successors (Hok-Lam, pp. 232-36, 301-03). By 840/1435, however, a sufficient quantity of Chinese goods had already reached Persia to permit the unimpeded progress of a second, broader phase of sinicization. Chinese silks, porcelain, paper, and other goods had a profound impact on the decorative traditions of Persia, but once again the adoption of new designs was gradual and highly selective (Crowe, pp. 168-78).

In 15th-century manuscripts Chinese blue-and-white ceramics are often depicted in use, and imitations were made in 15th-century Mašhad and during the Safavid era in several regions of the country. From the 15th to the 17th century Persian blue-and-white ceramic vessels emulated the forms and decoration of late 14th- and early 15th-century Ming wares (Bailey, pp. 179-90; Mason and Golombek, pp. 465-74; Rogers, pp. 122-23, 127-29).

Adaptation and absorption of Chinese designs continued on several fronts. The lotus scroll became a vine, thus emulating the arabesque, with which it was often contrasted or intertwined; the two elements in such combinations were called by 15th-century authors *ḵatāʾī* and *eslīmī* respectively (O'Kane, 1992, pp. 76-78, pl. 14) and emerged as major features of tile revetments in the Timurid and Safavid periods. In the 15th century they were often executed in cut-tile mosaic as focal points in larger ensembles, in which large areas of wall surface were covered with revetments simulating ornamental brickwork, known as *bannāʾī* decoration. Simple geometric designs and pious phrases in square

Kufic script (cf. *EIr*. IV, pp. 686-88 figs. 43-46) were widely used on Timurid *bannāʾī* panels (O'Kane, 1987, pp. 59-78; Golombek and Wilber, I, pp. 117-36). In Safavid architecture, however, Sino-Persian vegetal ornament is clearly dominant. Large areas on the surfaces of major religious monuments, including the exteriors of domes, were covered with painted tiles decorated with intricate networks of vegetation on several levels (Scarce, pp. 282-86; Hutt and Harrow, pls. 40, 51, 64-65, 69, 91). Decorative schemes incorporating three or even four systems of interwoven *eslīmī* and *ḵatāʾī* fill the main fields in some 16th- or 17th-century carpets (Ettinghausen, 1979, pp. 18-19 figs. 19-24).

In another decorative scheme of Chinese inspiration elaborate versions of lotus or peony blossoms were combined with plume-like leaves with serrated edges, in order to create a clump or scroll often inhabited by birds, dragons, or other creatures of Chinese derivation. This decorative theme was widely used in Ottoman court design, where it was known as *sāzqalamī* (reed-pen style), beginning in the 1520s; it was associated there with a painter from Tabrīz known as Šāhqolī (Denny, pp. 103-06; Necipoglu, pp. 148-54). In Safavid Persia this decorative vocabulary was most often used in *ḥall-kārī* (lit., "pulverized work"), a type of manuscript illumination in which finely ground gold or silver particles suspended in a solution of glue and water were used as a painting medium (Ṣādeqī Beg, pp. 40, 74 ll. 95-96; Dickson and Welch, I, p. 264; Rogers, pp. 31-32, 123-24; Plate XV, central panel). Patterns in this style were probably also used in other contexts at the Safavid court; in a manuscript of the *Šāh-nāma* copied for Shah Ṭahmāsb (930-84/1524-76) they are depicted in both wall paintings and throne decoration, and they can be found on a ruby-and-turquoise-encrusted gold vessel, apparently of Persian manufacture, now in the Art Museum of Georgia at Tiflis (Dickson and Welch, II, pls. 14, 16, 52; Javakhishvili and Abramishvili, pl. 216). During the 17th century the elaborate blossoms and feathery leaves of the *ḥall-kārī* repertoire were transformed into a continuous vine and used for panels of wall decoration, as well as field designs for carpets (Scarce, pp. 286-90; Beattie, pp. 27, 50-56).

Yet another decorative repertoire with a Chinese pedigree that became prominent in the 15th century was an idealized landscape, in which features of the garden and the royal hunting preserve were combined; it is inhabited by both mythological creatures like the dragon and phoenix and more familiar birds and animals (Plate XV, margin). Frequently they are locked in combat with each other or with human figures (Aslanapa, pp. 59-91). In these settings creatures of Chinese origin are integrated into an indigenous scheme centered

on the clash of predator and prey, a combination that in the late 16th century Ṣādeqī Beg Afšār (pp. 45, 76 ll. 120-21; Dickson and Welch, I, p. 265) identified as *gereft o gīr* (lit., "caught and catch"). Despite the theme of conflict, this Chinese hunting preserve was very popular on various media from the 15th to the 17th century and sometimes appears to have acquired paradisiac connotations (Soucek, pp. 7-13). It appears frequently in wall paintings depicted in 15th-century manuscripts, as well as in decorative ensembles of the Safavid period (Lentz and Lowry, pp. 182-83, 191-99; Luschey-Schmeisser).

Just as the Sino-Persian repertoire reached a peak of popularity during the early 17th century a new design vocabulary connected with plants and gardens appeared. It, too, consisted of several distinct yet interdependent modes: the individual flowering plant, the flower-filled trellis, a flowering plant with a bird or butterfly or both, and a miniature garden with flowers and birds. The European source of all these motifs is apparent in the use of modeling and shading to suggest a third dimension, but each was also adapted to Persian taste in a hybrid decorative idiom.

Phase 2. The historical coincidence of the reign of Shah ʿAbbās I (996-1038/1588-1629) with a period of European economic expansion was catalytic for the development of Euro-Persian decoration. Eager to expand the markets for Persian silk, over which he had a monopoly, the shah sought the cooperation of Armenian merchants, traditionally active in the silk trade, and concluded agreements with various European groups. In order to finance their purchases of silk, both Armenians and Europeans sold imported goods in Persia, particularly European and Indian textiles. This trade was particularly intense during the middle decades of the 17th century, when the effective demise of the Persian state monopoly allowed Armenian and European merchants greater freedom in procuring and selling goods. In time this large-scale importation of foreign goods would undermine the position of traditional Persian artisans, who found it increasingly difficult to compete against them. Initially, however, the new goods stimulated Persian craftsmen to new accomplishments.

The new decorative vocabulary appeared in different contexts. Luxury textiles and lacquer-painted bookbindings and objects can be connected with the taste of Persian rulers and their close associates, but the inclusion of these new floral designs on carpets and ceramics probably reflects a broader popularity, stimulated by familiarity with both European and Indian goods. European modes of drawing clumps of plants entered the repertoire of artists at the

Mughal court and appear in many different materials. The flower-filled lattice was also widely used in Mughal art and architecture (Skelton, pp. 42-45, 67-69, 75-76, 78-81, 83-90).

In Persia some ceramic and carpet decoration blends elements from both the Sino-Persian and Euro-Persian modes. For example, luster-painted vessels with miniature landscapes, often attributed to mid-17th-century Isfahan, incorporate not only the traditional repertoire of animals, birds, trees, rocks, and pools from the Chinese landscape but also oversized clumps of iris from the new vocabulary of Euro-Persian ornament (Lane, pp. 102-04; Watson, pp. 163-69). A similar insertion of oversized europeanizing flowers into the traditional theme of a Sino-Persian garden is found on some blue-and-white ceramic vessels and in wall paintings at the Čehel Sotūn at Isfahan, where a traditional Chinese hunting park was painted over with large bird-and-flower paintings in a modeled style (Allen, pp. 58-59; Gray, pp. 324-26 fig. 220).

A full gamut of designs ranging from purely Sino-Persian to completely Euro-Persian appears on carpets attributed to Kermān in the 16th to 18th centuries (see CARPETS ix–x). In the most conservative schemes only two Sino-Persian designs, *ḵatāʾī* and *sāz* scrolls and a stylized garden with animal combats, appear (Housego, pp. 118-23; Beattie, pp. 33-39). In others horizontal rows of flowering plants are set within a network of intertwined *ḵatāʾī* on several levels (Beattie, p. 73 no. 47). More common, however, are carpets with designs characteristic of 17th-century Mughal taste, with staggered horizontal rows of plants or a plant-filled lattice (Beattie, pp. 48-49, 80-81 nos. 12-14, 55-57).

Despite this wide diffusion of Euro-Persian decoration, specific types were linked to court circles. For example, even though the practice of arranging flowers in a lattice frame was probably known in 17th-century Persia, its subsequent popularity is often linked to Nāder Shah Afšār (1148-60/1736-47), not only because he brought back considerable booty from his Indian campaign but also because the scheme was used in the decoration of his palace. In Shiraz under the Zand dynasty (1163-1209/1750-94) the theme remained popular for carved stone revetments, tilework, and textiles (Housego, pp. 130-34).

Similarly, an enthusiasm for “bird and flower” decoration is often associated with the court painter Šafīʿ ʿAbbāsī, who was active during the middle decades of the 17th century and who designed both textiles and album paintings. Works attributed to him often show a single plant around which a bird or

butterfly hovers (Welch, pp. 90-91, 99-100 nos. 58, 64; Bier, pp. 174-75 nos. 18-20). The most influential variant of this theme, used in lacquer painting, was one in which flowers of different species, often with one or more birds, are grouped in a dense cluster. By the 1670s painters at the Safavid court were decorating objects with such designs, which continued to be common during the 18th and 19th centuries (Plate XVI). Sometimes there is only a single clump of flowers, but in other examples blossoming plants are linked in a vine spray or grouped in a miniature garden, the latter often with a singing nightingale silhouetted against a full-blown rose, hence the appelation *gol o bolbol* (rose and nightingale; Diba, pp. 244-45, 252 figs. 2, 11; Robinson, pp. 177-79 figs. 157, 160, 167-69).

Even as the new hybrid forms of Euro-Persian design grew more prominent in court circles, the older traditions of vegetal, geometric, and calligraphic ornament remained in use. The latter two types predominated in the decoration of Qajar religious architecture, and the arabesque was frequently engraved on metalwork during the 17th-19th centuries (Melikian Chirvani,1982, pp. 260-355; idem, 1983, pp. 311-32; Scarce, pp. 290-94). As late as the 19th century the Persian decorative repertoire retained its characteristic diversity, with new elements added and many earlier ones continuing. This accumulated heritage furnished inspiration for various revivals of Persian artistic and handicraft traditions in the later 19th and 20th centuries.

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