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Archaeological Investigation of Precious and Semi-precious Stones in Safavid Jewelry with Emphasis on the Type of Decorative Motifs (Northwest of Iran)

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ABSTRACT

The role of jewelry in the Safavid Era has been prominent in the northwest of Iran. In this era, jewelry has been used as decorative elements in architecture, jewelry-making, and enameling. The motifs of these jewelry are inspired by the Islamic-Iranian art. The present study, which is conducted using the library method, has archaeologically investigated the jewelry inlaid with precious and semi-precious stones in the Safavid Era in Ardabil City. The results indicated that the stones most used in the Safavid Era included ruby, turquoise, and agate. Turquoise and agate were mined in Iran, and ruby was imported from foreign countries by traders and merchants. The evaluations indicate that the jewelry was decorated by motifs such as floral, geometric, plant, and vegetal motifs. These decorations were mostly carved on silver in the form of toreutics and tapestry. Also, in some cases, the body parts motifs such as hands and eyes have been used. The samples of the present study include necklaces composed of precious metals, silver, and precious and semi-precious stones such as ruby. Ruby was more of a divine symbol and has been used as a stone of bravery and love. The agate has been used as a protecting stone, and turquoise has been a symbol of peace, purity, and transparency, which were often inlaid in the center of jewelry. It was believed that these stones had transcendental powers that protected the owner from threats and kept him safe from dangers. The Safavid art jewelry enjoyed exquisite and beautiful details inspired by religious symbols. They were not only used as ornaments and decorations but also as symbols of the prominent Safavid art and design which were rooted in Sufism. They were also known as elements of the cultural and religious identity of the Safavid.

Keywords: Jewelry, Safavid, inlaying, agate, turquoise, ruby.

INTRODUCTION

The Safavid were a political sect in Iran who attributed themselves to the Prophet of Islam and Shia imams. The name “Safavid” was derived from the birthplace of the founder of this dynasty, “Sheikh Safi-al-Din Ardabili”. They ruled Iran from 1497 to 1736 A.D. The Safavid art of jewelry in the northwest of Iran in this era is among the subjects that greatly affected Iranian culture and history. The art of combining metal and stone in jewelry such as necklaces, earrings, armbands, belts, bracelets, and hairbands, which is known as the art of inlaying on stone with Islamic themes, is rooted in northwestern cities of Iran such as Ardabil, Urmia, and Tabriz. These cities are known to be the centers of the art of inlaying. Tabriz was selected by Shah Ismail Safavi as the capital city of Iran. It led many artists and craftsmen to choose this city for their activities.



The artists in Tabriz, Urmia, and Ardabil used mineral stones such as ruby, agate, turquoise, emerald, and pearl, and engraved beautiful and artistic designs on the decorative and architectural objects inspired by Shiite thoughts, divine names, names of Shia Imams, Quranic verses, as well as natural elements such as plant, geometrical, animal, and human motifs. In the 10th to 18th centuries A.D., this art reached its zenith. The jewelry in this period not only showed the social position and class of the person but also represented the artistic and aesthetic taste of that age. This art is focused on making decorative objects and jewelry and includes inlaying, enameling, engraving, toreutics, tapestry, stonework, and stone setting. In terms of the type of jewelry and how it is made, regardless of the materials used in making it, such as silver, gold, bronze, or gemstone, its symbolic meaning such as its historical and religious identity, can be noted through the analysis of the symbols in the motifs and jewelry. Any image represents a symbol that is rooted in the beliefs of the ruling class and the public and introduces precious and semi-precious stones with transcendental powers that protect their owners.

Methodology:

The present study is a descriptive-analytical survey based on historical-qualitative evaluation, using the library method. Eight images were obtained by referring to local museums in Ardabil as well as the collections in the region. The data collected from these images was measured and evaluated in terms of the usage, type of stone, material, motifs, decorations, and calligraphy. All measurements were done per the unit of centimeters.

Review of Related Literature and Research Questions:

Books known as “Gowhar Nameh” and “Jawahir Nameh” are among the most important references for recognition of the gemstones and minerals in the Islamic civilization (Azhanad, 2020). The book “Al-Jamahir-fi-Jawaher” was written by al-Biruni (1995) in the western parts of the Islamic world, mainly based on “Azhar al Afkar fi Jawahir al-Ahjar” by Ahmad Naqashi (1977). Also, in the eastern parts, the collection of “Gowhar Nameh” which was written in Persian from the 6th to 10th Hijri decades can be cited. Among the main books in this collection, “Nizami Jawaher Nameh” (Neishaburi, 2004), “Tansukh Nameh Ilkhani” (Toosi, 1969), and “Arayis al-Jawaher” (Kashani, 1966) can be named.

In this regard, the works such as “the semiotical study of Safavid and Qajar period ornament motifs” (Master's thesis (Visual Communication), Art and Architecture, Sourah University), “Stone Therapy” (Shufflebarger-Landher, translated by Sanaei Movahed) which was first published in 2000 Ahura Publishers, “Gemstones” by Zoka (1968, Ibn Sina Library), “35000 thousands of Iranian tribes' jewelry” by Gheibi (5th Ed., 2021, Hirmand Publishers), “Gemology of precious stones” by Bayani & Amanollahi (2010, SAMT), “Knowledge of gems (minerals) and their healing properties” by Amanollahi (2006, Sawrooban Consultant Engineers Publishers”, “The art of Iranian jewelry” by Hoseini Ashloghi (2018, Arshadan Publishers), “Gems of Iran” by Tavakkoli Bazzaz (2011, Anousheh Publication), “Comprehensive encyclopedia of gemology”, “Mineral, crystal, and gem” by Dolatkhah (2011), the article by Shateri et al., entitled “Comparative study of different types of men's jewelry in the Safavid era and Mongols in India” (2021), article by Amiri, Noori Shademani, and Jawaheri entitled “Women's jewelry



in the Safavid era with emphasis on the type of decorative motifs” (2018), and some evaluations and research related to this field can be helpful.

- 1- Were precious and semi-precious stones in the Safavid era used as special symbols and signs?
- 2- What was the usage of precious and semi-precious stones in the Safavid era’s jewelry?
- 3- Have foreign precious and semi-precious stones been used in the jewelry of the Safavid era?
- 4- What was the type of precious and semi-precious stones used in the jewelry in the Safavid era?



Figure 1: Safavid era ruby-inlaid hairband (Ardabil’s Museum of Handcraftsmanship) (Image obtained from Noor Afkan et al., 2023)

A silver hairband from the Safavid era inlaid with a lily-shaped ruby that was used by women mostly to tie their hair. Ruby stone is of a corundum type with a hardness of 9.00 and specific weight of 4.00, and a trigonal crystal structure. Corundum is pure and colorless. Therefore, the color is created by chemical impurities and a tiny amount of chromium makes the ruby red (Dolatkhah, 2011, 67). In the ancient texts of Indians, the red ruby has been named ‘Pidram’ or ‘Rog’, which means red lily. The Iranians named it ‘Sabaj’ (obsidian) or the repellent of plague (Biruni, 1995: 107). The ruby is the symbol of happiness, good luck, love, and the power of life (Bagheri, 2020: 101). It is a good protection against negative energy and strengthens the divine energy that gives us power, strength, bravery, and courage. In the Zodiac signs, it is under the Scorpio, Aries, and Leo.

Effects of this Stone on the Body:

In the past, this stone has been used against epidemic and viral diseases, fever, and the pains derived from joint inflammation. Nowadays, it is used for cardiovascular diseases. Ruby belongs to the heart chakra in the chakra categorization (Shafflebarger, 2000: 146-7). The ruby can be found in Burma, Thailand, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Australia, Brazil, Cambodia, India, China, and Russia (Dolatkhah, 2011: 67). In the ancient literary texts such as the book “Koliat” by

Nizami Ganjavi, the ruby has been considered to strengthen the heart, remove poison, and improve the eyesight.



Figure 2: Safavid era ruby-inlaid kashkul-design necklace (Ardabil's Museum of Handcraftsmanship) (Image obtained from Noor Afkan et al., 2023)

The blue ruby is also called sapphire, which is not red. However, the public thinks that the blue color stone is sapphire. This stone can be found in purple, dark blue, green, yellow, black, and orange. Its blue color can be due to the existence of titanium in this stone (Dolatkhah, 2021: 67).

The Safavid era's silver necklace is inlaid with a wing-shaped kashkul motif which has a teardrop-shaped blue ruby stone in the center and it has a cabochon cut. On the two sides, two symmetrical purple rubies are used and palm leaf-shaped etchings can be also seen here. On the bottom part, 18 silver leaves with circle-shaped decorations can be seen which hang from the necklace by the use of some hooks and single-knot chains. A hand-made silver chain is hung from the two sides of the necklace.

Kashkul is among the most important objects of Iran's Islamic era which was common in the Safavid era. The oldest kashkul has been made of coco de mer tree which grows in the Seychelles archipelago in the northeast of the African continent. This archipelago, on the northeast of Madagascar, consists of 1500 islands. In the early Safavid era, kashkul was used as both mystical ship-shaped wine bowls and beggars' bowls. In this era, Khaksariyeh Sufis, who promoted the Shia sect, were connected to the Indian Sufis and kashkul was one of the accessories Indians

wore. Later, it became common among Iranian Sufis through the Indian ascetics and found divine and spiritual dimensions, to be then made in Iran in the form of bowl-shaped metals (Monajjemi, 2000: 178). In the Safavid era, kashkul was used as the symbol of Sufism (Sheikhi et al., 2018: 19). It is used among Sufism and Qalandariyyah accessories (Qadyani, 1999: 289). Safavids, who were themselves dervish, tried to develop their symbol on the jewelry after taking the reins and becoming so-called “palace-dwellers” due to their abundant interest in art and jewelry. And by making different types of kashkul-shaped necklaces and inlaying them with gemstones, they doubled the art and beauty of this symbol. Also, by drawing plant, human, and animal motifs on it, it was used as royal jewelry by the courtiers. Most kashkul-shaped necklaces in the northeast of Iran are hand-made. In Persian literature, kashkul is known as a ship that saves and liberates from sorrow and sadness, and also as the symbol of poorness, Sufism, and asceticism (Qazvini & Hesami Kermani, 2018: 58). The ship symbol depicts Noah’s ark, whoever steps his foot in it would be saved and whoever does not find refuge in it would be drowned (Majlesi, 1403 A.H.: 105).

The leaf is the symbol of fertility, growth, and revival. The green leaves depict hope and revival. Dead leaves mean sadness, fall, and decay. Crowns of leaves symbolize divinity or victory (Cooper, 2001: 55). In the Far East also, the leaf is one of the symbols of prosperity and happiness (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 2018: 77).



Figure 3: Safavid era’s turquoise-inlaid necklace (from the collection of Mostafa Musavi) (image obtained from Noor Afkan et al., 2023)

The triangle-shaped accessories with a turquoise eye in the center are one of the most common symbols in the jewelry-making of the Safavid era. This sign is known as a symbol of protection and transparency. Regarding the beliefs of people in the Safavid era, turquoise was known as a sacred and divine stone and is especially famous for its protective and relaxing properties. This symbol was considered to be a symbol of wealth, glory, and inspiration to protect its users. The coefficient of hardness of turquoise is 5-6, and its specific weight is 2.60-2.80. Also, it has a trigonal crystal structure. The finest turquoise in the world is mined in Neyshabur, Iran and its finest color is sky blue. However, it can be found in light teal and teal. It has a wax shining. Its powder color ranges from white to light green, and it is mostly opaque. Its blue color is due to the existence of copper or copper combined with iron. Some types of turquoise turn green when



exposed to sunlight for a long time. American turquoise is more calcareous and porous than Iranian turquoise. Under long-wave UV radiations, it will glow from green-yellow to shining blue. However, short-wave UV radiations do not affect it (Dolatkhah, 2011: 126). Turquoise is known as an ancient mineral specific to Iran. The most famous and oldest turquoise mine in Iran is located in Neyshabur. Turquoise mining has been done in Neyshabur, Iran, since seven thousand years ago (Oweysi et al., 2016: 87). In the Clavijo's travelogue, which was written in 1412 A.H. and at the time of the Safavid Dynasty, it is stated that: "There are famous turquoise mines near Neyshabur. These gemstones can be also found in other areas of Iran, but the turquoise from Neyshabur mines is the finest. It is mined in special areas of the land as well as the riverbed of the rivers that spring from a mountain behind the city" (Oweysi et al., 2016: 90). In Mexico, turquoise is the symbol of fire and sun. The Tibetans know it as the sacred gemstone and a talisman against evil. It was also a symbol of bravery, success, and satisfaction (Mitford, 2015: 43). "As Arabs consider agate to be auspicious, Iranians think the same for turquoise".



Figure 4: Safavid era's turquoise-inlaid kashkul-design necklace (Ardabil's Museum of Handcraftsmanship) (Source: The authors, 2023)

Asia has been one of the richest continents in using animal decorations since the most ancient periods, and even the Byzantine art of using the image of animals in its motifs and decorations was taken from Assyria and Iran. This period is followed by the Islamic era which was one of the richest in using such motifs. In different historical periods, the animal and plant motifs were influenced by Chinese art, however, Chinese art does not actually imitate nature (Zaki, 1998: 243). The amazing similarity between the common stories in ancient cultures around the world that mention the story of Jonah and the Whale, which is even mentioned in the holy books including in the Holy Qur'an in Surah Safat verses 142 to 144 about Jonah staying in the belly of the fish. And this myth is an expression of a religious symbol of the confrontation of death and darkness with life and light (Mokhtarian & Sarami, 2014: 76).

Two years before his rule began and the Safavid dynasty was founded, Shah Ismail was residing in Gilan, and he was fascinated with fishing. Also, the occupation of most people in Gilan as well as those who lived on the southern bank of the Caspian Sea at that time was fishing. After

founding the Safavid dynasty, Shah Ismail established the tradition of fishing in the Safavid court, and most fishing was done in the Caspian Sea and the rivers in the northeast of Iran such as the Kura and Aras rivers. The position of fish was very high in the Safavid era as both the government income and people's food (Ahangaran, 2019: 18). Generally, the fish was the symbol of productivity and fertility that was associated with the mother goddess in the beginning (Hall, 2001: 100). Due to its strange way of reproduction and the countless eggs it lays, fish is the symbol of life and fertility, and a symbol that can be truly transmitted to the spiritual and inner context.

Islam also relates fish to the subject of fertility (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 2018: 141). The fish is the symbol of productivity and fertility that was associated with the mother goddess in the beginning (Hall, 2001: 100). The motif of fish on the bottom of some metal kashkuls is a kind of idea code that is considered a "demand from the Sultan" ritual in which the Persian dervishes sat before the Shah and asked for his favor in the "Ancient Nowruz" so that they could benefit from the grace of the day. This ritual was named "Demand from the Sultan". (Sepanta, 2010: 1). In the ancient rituals of Iranians, they cooked 'fish and rice' every last Wednesday night of the year and put live fish on their 'Haft Sin' table, so that the new year would be a year full of good and blessings for them.

Investigating the wing-shaped kashkul with a turquoise stone from the Safavid era, which is the symbol of a fishing vessel, it is revealed that four downward hands are hanged from it with fingers being together, and on the palm of the hands, the four-petal motif is carved. The hands are hung from the kashkul through handmade rings. On the center of the hands, a caught fish is hanging from the mouth. Also, on the body of the kashkul, some triangular toretics can be seen.

The symbol of the hand or "Hamsa" dates back to 1800 years ago and is rooted in ancient East Asia. In Islam and the Shia sect, it depicts the hand of Fatima al-Zahra, daughter of Prophet Mohammad. It is the symbol of bravery, defense, power, and protection. In Judaism, the word "Hamsah" means 'five' which depicts the hand of Miriam, the sister of Aaron and Moses. In Christianity, it depicts the hand of Mary's mother. This naming for "Hamsah" originated from Christian traditions. The downward "Hamsa" is indicative of goodness and abundance. In the turquoise-inlaid necklace also, this hand is downward. And if the fingers are together, it means that all the energy is positive and it is used as a talisman that brings goodness to your life and repels the negative thoughts (Toranjstore.net).





Figure 5: Safavid era's Babghuri agate-inlaid rhombus-shaped necklace (from the collection of Mostafa Musavi) (image obtained from Noor Afkan et al., 2023)

Rhombus-shaped necklace, made of silver with tapestry on it, with four Khatai floral patterns that stand out in the four corners of it. There is a Jaza agate in the center which has been inlaid on the necklace by the Safavid artists. "The Jaza agate is a stone originating from Yemen and Abyssinia. It is long and similar to the eye and its layers are round and yellow, red and black in color. In Persian, it is called "Babaghuri", and it is from the Soleimani type" (Momen Tonekaboni, 2007: 126). Agates usually consist of successive bands of chalcedony and quartz. Due to being located on the Alpide Belt, Most of the semi-precious stones in Ardabil Province, in the northwest of Iran, are agates in red, white, milky, orange, yellow, dark grey, and grey colors. These stones can be found in the area between Ardabil and Khalkhal (Arseh Dogah-Marasht, Dandel, Majdar, Inanlou, Andabil, Koor Abbaslou, Hashgin). The agates with bands can be found in different colors in the Anbaran region (Pirjavar village) (Sohrabi & Rezaei Aghdam, 2015: 4).

Anwari, a 6th millennium poet, has composed about the Jaza agate as follows:

My soul is full of pain and healing because of your Jaza agate and ruby,
And my mood is full of light and darkness because of your face and hair (Ghazliat: 2/871)

Anwari believes that this stone is associated with sorrow and sadness, which is still accepted among the public, especially in the northwest of Iran. On the other hand, a few people believe that Babaghuri agate is the stone of luck.



Figure 6: Safavid era's agate-inlaid necklace (Ardabil's Museum of Handcraftsmanship) (Source: The authors, 2023)

The agate has been known in Iran since ancient times. The oldest agate was found in the Sughd region, Central Asia. The name of agate is also mentioned in the inscription of the Achaemenid Darius palace (Tavakkoli, 2001: 65-67).

Agate belongs to silicate minerals with a coefficient of hardness of 6-7, a specific weight of 2.1-2.6, and a triangular crystal structure. It can be found in almost all colors (Dolatkah, 2011: 122). It is created by the accumulation of quartz (Shuffle, 2018: 86). Chromogenic metal agents such as copper, iron, chromium, manganese, titanium, nickel, and cobalt can affect agate's color (Haj Alilou, 2011: 427-428).

The silver necklace inlaid with agate and decorated with the name of God as in Surah al-qalam, verses 51 and 52: “ وَإِنْ يَكَادُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَيُزْلِقُونَكَ بِأَبْصَرِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا الذِّكْرَ وَيَقُولُونَ إِنَّهُ لَمَجْنُونٌ. وَمَا هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ” inside a square frame, written in Arabic in four rows. There is a red agate inlaid on the center of the necklace. The meaning of the verse is as follows: “When the unbelievers hear the Reminder, they nearly strike you down with their glances, and say: 'Surely, he is mad. But it is nothing other than a Reminder for all the worlds’”. On the two sides of the necklace, there are two circles with the name “Hannan” carved on them, which is another name of the Almighty God, meaning the ‘garden’ and ‘paradise’. The calligraphic motifs have a high position in Islamic art and decorations. And only Iranians changed their script with Arabic characters. They used the writings in the decorations just like other Islamic countries and the Arabic script became public alongside the growth and development of Islam, and in a short time, it achieved such beauty that no other script in the entire history of mankind has achieved. In the Safavid era, this script flourished and can be seen in the architecture of mosques, tombs, decorative objects, gemstones, pottery, and metal (Zaki, 1998: 245).



The pattern and design of the agate-inlaid necklace are similar to a vase. And this design can be seen abundantly in the architectural motifs and Safavid tomb, especially in the Sheikh Safi shrine. In the cosmology of many cultures, the square is indicative of the planet Earth and the main four points of the compass. In Islamic thought, the square is indicative of the heart which is open to four effective factors: divinity, angel, human, and the devil (Mitford, 2015: 278).

In the Safavid era, the Shahs played a very important role in the promotion of their thoughts and beliefs, especially in art. The art of craftsmanship had a dual duty. First, its usage and application, and second, blowing the spirit of religion into society. In this era, the signs and symbols found more of a religious form, and most of the signs and symbols from the civilizations before the Safavid era either lost their concepts or distanced themselves from their concepts (Jafari & Akbari, 2022: 71).



Figure 7: Safavid era's talisman armband with the Star of David inlaid on it (Ardabil's Museum of Handcraftsmanship) (Source: The authors, 2023)

The circular armband with a ruby inlaid ruby, made of silver, with a six-pointed star and motifs of a flower similar to a sunflower with embossed decoration, small circles, sides, and margins. A red ruby is inlaid in the center in the form of a rotating wheel. The stone is kept in the open space using tereutics.

The lack of a beginning and an end has made the circle the global symbol of integrity, aeviternity, and perfection. It is indicative of the feminine and masculine principles, and can also refer to God, or waters that round the earth, or it can depict the cycles of life (Mitford, 2015: 284). The circle is the sign of the original unity and a symbol of the sky. Accordingly, it indicates that rotational activities and movements (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 2000: 167). It is the symbol of time, that rotates. Since ancient times, it has been the sign of integrity and perfection, and time is put inside it so that it can be better measured (Ibid, 169).

In the book "Shams al-Ma'aref al-Akbari", there is a talisman one of the components of which is the Star of David. This talisman, which has been developed in some Islamic books, is probably attributed to the Jews (Zakeri, 2009: 135).




Figure 8: Safavid era's agate-inlaid belt (Ardabil's Museum of Handcraftsmanship) (Noor Afkan et al., 2023)

The belts are straps or bands that are often made of fabric, leather, or metal. The belts were usually made of silver or gold, inlaid with gemstones and films of silver and gold. There were usually toretics on their surface and precious stones are inlaid on them. This type of belt was used by men in the early Safavid era. The most common belts were those made of leather, with a gemstone-inlaid metal buckle (Hakimian & Badri, 2006: 91). Safavid era's silver buckle inlaid with ruby with Arabesque motifs on both sides of which two parallel six-petal flower motifs can be seen inside a circle like a sun. on the center of the buckle, a ruby eye is inlaid. Besides 'the eye', the term "عين" in Islam also means a specific integrity, the spring, or the essence. And it is used as the symbol of supernatural cognition and vision (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 2005: 514). Fakhr Razi states about ruby: "and among its properties is that it is enlivening and whoever owns it will be exalted, since this stone belongs to the sun" (Fakhr Razi, 2003: 320). In "Tansukh Nameh Ilkhani", Toosi stated that whoever owns red ruby will be safe from cholera and plague. "And cholera will not infect the one who owns it" (Toosi, 48).



The general pattern of the belt, which is Khatai, and the Arabesque motifs on the margins that go around the arabesque give it a delicate and complex state. This type of arabesque resembles ivy and twisted lilies (Hayat Nosaeid & Iskandarpoor Khorrami, 2018: 8). In fact, the ruby is the symbol of red lilies.

Table 1: Evaluation of the motifs in the inlaid jewelry from the Safavid era (Source: The author, 2023)

Number	Image	Size (cm)	Material	Motif	Theme	Type of stone
1- Safavid era hairband		3×3	Silver	Eight-petal flower Lily	Flower in a heavenly garden	Red ruby

Number	Image	Size (cm)	Material	Motif	Theme	Type of stone
2- Safavid era necklace		3×8	Silver	Wing-shaped kashkul Angel Inlaid with plant motifs	Savior angel	Blue and purple ruby
3- Safavid era necklace		-	Silver	Rhombus	Blue sky and eye	Turquoise
4- Safavid era necklace		2.5×7	Silver	Kahskul with wings inlaid Inlaid angel	Savior angel	Turquoise
5- Safavid era necklace		4.5×4.5	Silver	Tapestry rhombus	Good luck and repellent of negative energy	Agate known as Babaghuri
6- Safavid era necklace		4 × 5.5	Silver	Combination of square and ellipse	Repellent of negative thoughts Guardian and protector	Red ruby
7- Safavid era armband		11 × 11	Silver	Circle Star of David	Armband Talisman	Red ruby
Safavid era belt		4 × 7	Silver	Eye motif	Guardian	Red ruby

Conclusion:

Based on the data gathered, the gemstone-inlaid jewelry of the Safavid era included hairbands, necklaces, armbands, and belts. Three types of precious and semi-precious stones have been common in the northwest of Iran in the Safavid era, including ruby, turquoise, and agate. The most commonly used precious stone was the red ruby, based on the data gathered. Among the reasons behind the use of red ruby were its rarity, as well as people's beliefs about ruby. They considered it a symbol of happiness and good luck and a protective stone. In ancient literary and medical texts, ruby is introduced as a healing stone against viral diseases (epidemics). Also, the fact that its color does not change and its hardness are advantages of this stone compared to other stones, and it has been one of the reasons the people of that time such as the rich, and the Safavid kings and princes used the stone.

The red ruby is not mined in today's Iran. However, in the past, countries such as Afghanistan were included in the territory of Iran. In the old documents, Iran has been introduced as one of the countries with ruby mines. Based on further documents and evidence, the ruby has been imported through Indian, Chinese, and European merchants and traders. In the Indian culture, red ruby is called 'Pidram' or 'Rog', which means red lily. In the Safavid era's inlaid hairband also the red ruby is placed in the center of the lily. In this regard, there are cultural commonalities between the Indian Gourkani and Safavid dynasties in terms of the use of lily motifs in jewelry and architecture. Also, among the evaluated samples, the ruby has been mostly used as a symbol and talisman in necklaces, armbands, and belts.

Turquoise is among the semi-precious stones. The oldest and most famous turquoise mine in Iran is located in Neyshabur. Its mining dates back to 7000 years ago, and in several travelogues, the turquoise mining in Neyshabur in the Safavid era has been noted. The single-eyed turquoise has been common in the Safavid era. There are different interpretations for the use of this stone. For example, it has been noted as the eye of God, the guardian of humanity, and also, a talisman against the devil, and the symbol of bravery and success. Moreover, in the ancient texts, it has been said to have a healing effect on eye diseases. In most architectural monuments of the Safavid era in the northwest of Iran, the dominant color is turquoise, which is a heavenly symbol.

Agate is among the semi-precious stones with the highest color variety in the northwest of Iran. In the Safavid era, it has been mined in several mines in Iran. In this era, it has been mostly used in jewelry with a divine and religious aspect. It was considered that the use of this stone had a religious reward and men used it mostly on their rings. The motifs carved on these stones were mostly the Quranic verses, names of God, and Shia imams. Generally, agate was a gemstone used by the lower class in the Safavid era due to its abundance of the mines that produced the stone in the northwest of Iran. It was used by the public. Overall, the role of Safavid kings in promoting their beliefs is evident, especially in the art of craftsmanship. Besides the instrumental use of the accessories, they also pursued another goal and it was blowing the spirit of religion in the society.

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