

A STUDY OF WALL PAINTING IN SAFAVID ERA IN THREE EMAMZADEH SHRINES OF ISFAHAN CITY (AHMAD, ESMAEIL, AND HARUN VELAYAT SHRINES)

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ABSTRACT

Among the monuments of Islamic architecture of Isfahan City, holy shrines enjoy the particular importance and in the course of various historical eras drew the attention of the people and even the kings. Given the sacred nature of this type of buildings by people, they are always constructed using the newest achievements of the past architecture and in many cases, the best arts like brick decorations, tiling, wall painting, stonemasonry, stucco, and mirror art are used for decorations. After the establishment of Safavid dynasty and recognition of Shia Islam as the official religion of Iran, religious wall paintings in Safavid era, particularly in their capital Isfahan, were revived. Currently, among the mass of Emamzadeh shrines in Isfahan city, three Emamzadeh including Ahmad, Esmail and Harun Velayat are decorated with wall paintings of Safavid era. The studies show that wall paintings of Safavid era are used in these three Emamzadeh shrines particularly in the corridor, porch and mausoleum of Dervish in Emamzadeh Esmail. The current essay seeks to provide a classification, evaluation and analysis of the wall paintings remained from Safavid era in three Emamzadeh shrines (Ahmad, Harun Velayat and Esmail) in Isfahan City. Descriptive and analytic method for data collection were applied via library and field studies. The results show that the theme of wall paintings in Safavid era in Emamzadeh shrines of Ahmad, Harun Velayat and Esmail is decorative.

Keywords: Wall Paintings, Safavid Era, Porch Decorations, Emamzadeh Shrine, Isfahan City

INTRODUCTION

After the establishment of Safavid dynasty and recognition of Shia Islam as the official religion and due to the specific attention paid by Safavid monarchs to Imams and their progeny, the construction of shrines for Imams and their progeny or their restoration and decoration began to flourish and these plans continued during Qajar era (Mullazadeh and Muhammadi, 2008: 85). Many of the works of wall paintings of early Islamic era were destroyed due to such reasons as war and climate factors and unfortunately the present information is limited and defected in this field. Perhaps, the first paintings discovered which date back to post-Islamic era in Iran, are the wall paintings of Neyshabur in Taherian era (Azhand, 2010: 80).

In 996 of Hijra, Shah Abbas sat on the throne. From the first day of his reign, Shah Abbas thought of transferring the capital to one of the central cities of Iran. He wanted the new capital to be in farthest distance from the western neighbor, Ottomans. To this end, Shah Abbas I transferred the capital to Isfahan in 1000 of Hijra. This decision was made after several

surveys and studies. Isfahan not only is the heart of Iran rather it has all the conditions required for a great capital (Shafaqi, 2002: 233).

Painting of Safavid era in the early days of formation of this regime was pursued in the style used in Teimurid era. But after a while, following the expansion of relations with western world and numerous tourists who were interested in buying the artworks and also due to other reasons, the interest in European styles started to grow. Thus, painting in Iran is pursued in two Iranian and European styles. This style of painting was developed due to the support and interest of the court, and gradually, European elements and factors dominated Iranian style (Goodarzi, 2005: 48). At the beginning of the reign of Shah Abbas I in 996 of Hijra and after the movement of capital to Isfahan, an opportunity was provided for construction and decoration of palaces, castles, public and private buildings. Prevalence of wall painting in palaces and public and private buildings is one of the other aspects of flourishing of painting in eleventh century of Hijra and the reports of European tourists and globetrotters as well as the remained paintings prove the point that the work of the painters of eleveneth century had developed beyond paper works (Pakbaz, 2007: 60).

One of the policies of Safavid Monarchs was supporting arts in various fields. Here wall paintings are not an exception. In this era, not only wall paintings were used for decoration of non-religious places like palaces and houses but also they were widely used in decoration of religious buildings particularly Emamzadeh shrine. Some studies have been conducted on the wall paintings of the Safavid era. Holster (1976) in "Iran in One Hundred and Thirteen Years Ago" has shown the pictures of three paintings in Emamzadeh Esmail shrine. Mirzaei Mehr (2007) in "Paintings of Holy Shrines in Iran" has provided a short introduction of the paintings of Shah Zeyd, two paintings in Harun Velayat and one painting in Emamzadeh Esmail. Azhand (2006) in an article entitled "Wall Painting in Qajar Era" published in Journal of Visual Arts, has provided a description of the wall paintings of Shah Mir Hamzeh and one painting in Emamzadeh Harun Velayat.

As it was mentioned earlier, in the existing sources, only some religious paintings have been discussed and other religious paintings and decorative themes were not paid the required attention. To this end and for recognition of all decorative themes of Safavid era the current essay intends to study the wall paintings of Safavid era in three Emamzadeh shrines of Isfahan city.

LITERATURE AND BACKGROUND

Wall Painting

Wall painting is a term used in the domain of art and refers to the picture drawn on a wall or words inscribed on a wall (Alavinezhad, 1999: 19). In the encyclopedia of art Seyed Abulqasen Seyed Sadr has described wall painting as a work which contrary to fresco, can be executed on an already dried lime plaster and it can be drawn using tempera color or chromic colors diluted in a combination of water and lime. In this latter case, the surface is made wet before starting to use color. It is needless to say that the resulted work is less enduring as compared to the real fresco.



It needs to be mentioned that wall painting is a concept that is sometimes referred to as wall portrait or wall drawing in the domain of art studies. These terms generally refer to the works which are executed on wall.

Shrines in Islamic Era

Shrines after mosques are the most popular buildings remained from Islamic architecture and they can be divided into two religious and non-religious groups. There are few shrines from early Islamic centuries but since Al-e Buyeh era, numerous shrines remain which have been constructed over the tombs of Emamzadeh, scholars, administrative and military figures.

Shrines in Safavid era and the years after it have declined and non-religious tombs were replaced with religious tombs. Since then the age of Emamzadeh Shrines started and many of the existing Emamzadeh shrines in Iran retained their forgotten identity. Such burial grounds were mostly constructed with magnificent mansions and side buildings and great gardens like Shah Abdulazim Shrine in Rey. In this era, great religious shrines reached their final form and they have remained the same even up today. Development, restoration and revival of shrines have played an indispensable role in architecture of Safavid era and the eras to come. The shrines in Mahan and Torbat Jam are just two examples of this type of buildings. It needs to be mentioned that none of the Safavid monarchs has been buried in any of the magnificent mausoleums built for them. Among all Safavid monarchs only Shah Esmail I was buried beside his grand father Sheikh Safi and the rest of them preferred to be buried along with Imams and Emamzadeh. Nader Shah Afshar was one of the later monarchs whose mausoleum has been constructed in semi-Mongol and semi-Iranian styles (Kiani, 2008: 77-78).

Wall Paintings of Safavid Era in Three Emamzadeh Shrines of Isfahan City

1. Emamzadeh Ahmad

In Isfahan city, in southeastern part of Naqsh-e Jahan square at Neshat Avenue and Hassanabad neighborhood near Maqsood Charsoo, there is a shrine called Emamzadeh Ahmad. Emamzadeh Ahmad's genealogical origin has been mentioned in the book entitled *Mizan Al Ansab* as follows: "Ahmad Ibn Ali Ibn Al Imam Mohammad Baqer (peace be upon him)". He is known to be one of the authentic Emamzadeh in Isfahan. The oldest work existing in Emamzadeh Ahmad is a three meters long piece of stone which is placed on the threshold of Emamzadeh and under its squared wooden window. This piece of stone is considered to be a piece of Somnat Idol which was brought to Isfahan by Sultan Mahmoud Ghaznavi and its inscription dates back to 563 of Hijra. The second ancient work in Emamzadeh is a stone slate dates back to 537 of Hijra which is located at western porch and was stolen in 1928 (Rafiei Mehrabadi, 1973: 742-745).

• *Architecture:*

Emamzadeh Ahmad Complex includes a mausoleum and two porches one of which is located at the north side and the other one at the western side of the mausoleum. The mausoleum has its own road and massive court in which many of great figures like Humay Shirazi are buried (Honarfar, 1971: 668). The entrance of Emamzadeh Ahmad is located in western side of the mausoleum. The complex of Emamzadeh Ahmad is 1000 square meters wide and the court is 625 square meters. At the right corner of southern wing of the court, the mausoleum of Emamzadeh Ahmad is located which is 60 meters wide (Shayesteh and Qasemi, 2004: 169). Northern porch is for men and the western porch is for the women. Mausoleum of Emamzadeh Ahmad is in a square form with a dome and is four steps higher than the ground



(Mullazadeh and Muhammadi, 1999: 138). The space under the dome is 6.2 * 6.2 meters. The dome is decorated with bricks, tiles and stucco. At the corners of the dome, the space has been changed from square to circle with a pentagon muqarnas in a very creative form (Shayesteh and Qasemi, 2004: 169).

- **Decorations:**

- 1) **Carvings:**

The oldest existing historical work in Emamzadeh Ahmad is known as Sumnat Idol which is located on the threshold of Emamzadeh and under the wooden squared window. Magnificent slate of western porch is related to the restoration of Emamzadeh that unfortunately does not exist today. The inscription of the western porch is about the donation of a camel for providing the needs of Emamzadeh. The inscription on the eastern wall of northern porch is related to the payment of costs of restoration of Emamzadeh by Lady Eftekhar Azam Masud (Honarfar, 1971: 667-668).

- 2) **Tiling:**

The inscription on the entrance of court presents a calligraphic note on a blue and white tile of the development of Emamzadeh Ahmad in Sultan Hossein Safavid era. The inscription of drinking fountain of Emamzadeh presents calligraphic lines of poem on white and blue tile by renowned poet (Mohtasham) (Rafei Mehrabadi, 1973: 747-749).


- 3) **Carvings on Wood:**





Around the wooden shrine, some poems have been carved in calligraphic form and in gold which implies to the actions taken by Zil al-Sultan the son of Nasir al-Din Shah and the Governor of Isfahan for restoration of Emamzadeh Ahmad (Honarfar, 1971: 671).

- 4) **Wall Painting:**

Wall painting has been used for decoration of the northern porch and inside the mausoleum of Emamzadeh Ahmad. The theme of wall paintings in Emamzadeh Ahmad is decorative and includes Arabesque figures like Turange and calligraphies. The theme of wall painting in northern porch of Imamzadeh Ahmad is only in the form of calligraphy but inside the mausoleum the dome is decorated with Arabesque figures and various Torange and calligraphic figures (table 1).

Table 1: Wall Paintings of Porch and Mausoleum of Emamzadeh Ahmad (pics. Author)

Row	Figure Type	Place of Figure	Color	Descriptions	Pictures
1	Calligraphic epigraph written by Ahmad Al Hosseini	Northern porch of the mausoleum	Golden and blue	Note of the restoration of the mausoleum building in the era of Shah Sultan Hossein	

2	Arabesque figures	First row of mausoleum	Golden, blue and red	A great frame which is encircled by two small frames. This figure has been repeated eight times	
3	Calligraphic epigraph written by Ali Naqi Emami	Second row of mausoleum	Golden and blue	This epigraph contains the whole Surah of Al Dahr and two verses of Surah al-Safat	
4	Various types of Arabesque figures	Third row of mausoleum	Golden, blue and red	Various types of Arabesque figures decorated by red frames and these figures have been repeated for eight times	
5	Arabesque figure in spiral and filled form	Third row of mausoleum located in western side	Golden and blue	This figure has been used just once	



2. Emamzadeh Esmaeil

In Isfahan city, in the central part of eastern side of Hafez Avenue between Shekarshekan square and Ali Square (Old Sabzemeydan) there is a magnificent complex that includes Charsuq dome, mausoleum and mosque of Isaiah, Emamzadeh Esmaeil and seminary of religious sciences (Shayesteh and Qasemi, 2004: 158). In fact, formation of Emamzadeh Esmaeil can be attributed to the mausoleum of Isaiah, one of the prophets of Judaism who is buried in this place (Godar et al, 2005, vol. 4: 308).

• Architecture

Emamzadeh Esmaeil complex includes mosque, mausoleum of Isaiah, Emamzadeh and its environs including corridor, vestibule, porch, mausoleum, dome and court each one of which has been built in a specific time (Mullazadeh and Muhammadi, 1999: 145). The total area of court is 2000 square meters and the mausoleum is 300 square meters. The entrance of the court is located in its western side. From an architectural point of view, Emamzadeh Esmaeil has three periods of construction. First era is related to Saljuk's era when the minarets of Emamzadeh were built; second period is the Timurid era when the dome of Charsuq was constructed; and third period is related to the Safavid era when the complex of entrances of shrine and mausoleum of Emamzadeh Esmaeil were constructed (Honarfar, 1971: 524).

- **Decorations**

- ✓ **Tiling:**

The epigraph on the entrance of porch is in white thuluth script with mosaic tile on azure background which contains a note on the completion of this historical building in the era of Shah Safi (Honarfar, 1971: 527-524). Tiling of the external façade of Emamzadeh's dome has been probably conducted in the era of Shah Abbas I and its epigraph includes the Surah Al Ahad and the verse of 127th of Surah Al Baqara. The walls around the court are decorated with seven colored mosaic tiles during Shah Sultan Hossein era. The plinths of inside the mausoleum are decorated with hexagon golden tiles (Mullazadeh and Muhammadi, 1999: 147).

- ✓ **Brick Decorations**

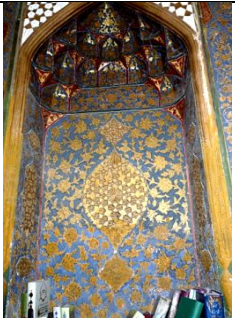

The neck side of the dome is decorated with calligraphic figures in three azure streams of masonry's handwriting on a brick background presenting the repetition of Ya Sultan and Ya Sha'ban for four times, which is depicted on the dome in a decussate form (Honarfar, 1971: 538).







- ✓ **Wall Paintings**

- 1) **Wall Paintings of Mausoleum**

The inside of mausoleum of Emamzadeh Esmaeil is in square form with two small halls and two niches on sides (Seyed Javadi et al. 1988, vol. 2: 412). Wall paintings of mausoleum are divided into five horizontal part from the upper side of the niches up to the dome (table 2).

Table 2: Wall Paintings of Emamzadeh Esmaeil Mausoleum (pics. Author)

Row	Figure Type	Figure Place	Color	Descriptions	Pictures
1	Arabesque Figures	First row decorations of niche	Blue and Golden; red and white	There are eight niches around the mausoleum and the number of muqarnases is equal. The niche of northern and southern gates has three muqarnas figures while the niche of eastern and western gates has two rows of muqarnas figures	
2	Arabesque Figure	First row of decorations in the corners of mausoleum	Blue, golden and red	In the corners of mausoleum and inbetween of the muqarnas niches this figure has been repeated four times	

3	Arabesque figures and flowers	First row of decorations around the gates and windows of the mausoleum	Blue, golden and red	There are eight frames around the gates and windows of the mausoleum. The northern and southern gates are decorated with figures of tree and flowers while the gates in eastern and western sides are decorated with Arabesque figures	
4	Arabesque Figures	First row of decorations around the gates and windows	Gold and red	This frame has been repeated for eight times	
5	An inscription in Thuluth script	Second row of the decorations around the mausoleum	Blue and gold	This epigraph is started from northwestern side and ends there and includes the Surah al-Mulk and the name of the doner	
6	Arabesque spiral figures	Third row of decorations	Gold, white and blue	This frame has been repeated for eight times	
7	Arabesque figures	Fourth row of decorations	Red and gold	Like a belt has encircled around the mausoleum	
8	Arabesque Figures	Fifth row of decorations	Blue, red, gold and white	The most beautiful part of the decorations of the dome belongs to this part that includes a star with 12 wings.	



2) Wall Paintings of Corridor

In the corridor of Emamzadeh Esmaeil, there are two religious wall paintings one of which is related to the event of noon of Ashura and the other is the portrait of Imam Ali with Imam Hassan and Imam Hossein.

First Painting: Taking Water-skin by His Majesty Abulfazl Al- Abbas (PBUH)

First painting presents the event of the noon of Ashura which is located in the northern side of the mausoleum and before the entrance gate. In this painting, Abulfazl Al- Abbas is riding a horse with a halo around his head and the feather of peacock on his helmet while he is carrying a green flag and taking water-skin from a young girl who seems to be Sakinah Khatoon. There are palm trees above the painting and the women of the Ahl al-Bayt (picture 1).



Picture 1: Taking water-skin, corridor of Emamzadeh Esmaeil (photo credit: Author)
Second Painting: Portrait of Imam Ali (PBUH) with Imam Hassan (PBUH) and Imam Hossein (PBUH)

The second painting is a portrait of Imam Ali and Imam Hassan and Imam Hossein and is located on the northern side of the corridor and in front of the entrance from the porch. In this painting, Imam Ali has halo around his head and wears a khaki cloak and holds his sword in his hands. Imam Hassan (PBUH) wears a green shirt and Imam Hossein (PBUH) wears a red shirt with halo around their heads. Behind Imam Ali (PBUH), there is a figure whose picture has faded away over time and is probably Qanbar, the servant of Imam Ali (PBUH) (picture 2).








Picture 2: Portrait of Imam Ali, Corridor of Emamzadeh Esmaeil (pic. Author)

3) Wall Paintings of Porch

The porch of Emamzadeh Esmail has been decorated with Arabesque and Hotai figures including toranje, angels, flowers and shrubs and various types of birds as well as an inscription. It should be mentioned that all figures except the epigraph that belongs to Safavid era, date back to Qajar era (table 3).

Table 3: Wall Paintings of Porch of Emamzadeh Esmail (pic. Author)

Row	Figure type	Figure place	Color	Pictures
1	Arabesque figures including toranjes, flowers, shrubs, and various types of birds	On the ceiling and walls around	Azure, red, orange, green, and ochre	
2	Various types of flowers, shrubs, birds and a giant white lilly	Frame around the tomb of dervishes	Red, green, blue, yellow, orange	
3	Various types of flowers and shrubs, one bird and one angel	Right side of the entrance gate	Red, green, blue, white	
4	Various types of flower, shrub, and such birds as peacock	Left side of the entrance gate	Red, green, blue, orange, brown and white	
5	An epigraph in Nastaliq Caligraphic	Four walls around the porch	Golden poems on blue background date back to the construction of the building in the era of Shah Sultan Hossein Safavid	

3. Emamzadeh Harun Al- Velayat (PBUH)

In the square of Imam Ali (Old Sabzemeydan), inside Harunyeh alley and in front of Imam Ali Mosque, the Emamzadeh Harun Velayat is located which is one of the authentic shrines of



Isfahan. This Emamzadeh belongs to Seyed Harun Ibn Imam Musa Ibn Jafar (PBUH). The date of the construction of this building is 918 of Hijra according to the epigraph which is the era of reign of Shah Esmaeil I and it has been constructed under the supervision of one of the well-known ministers of Safavid called Dormesh Khan (Cambridge, 2008, vol. 6: 253).

- **Architecture**

The building of Harun Velayat has a mausoleum, shrine, gate, porch, turquoise corbel dome and two courts in north and west of the mausoleum (Mullazadeh and Muhammadi, 1999: 353). Emamzadeh Harun Velayat has been constructed inside a great site of 1100 square meters area (Shayesteh and Qasemi, 2004: 165). The present gate is located in the southeast corner of the great court. Around this court, there are other four gates plus the gate of mausoleum. One of these gates is located in the middle of northern side that opens into the old square; the other gate lies in the middle of the eastern side which opens into a small bazar near the Haji Hassan School; the third gate is located in the far end of the southern corner near the southwest part which opens into the covered bazaar which is connected to the grandbazar; the fourth gate is located in the southern side which opens into the small court (Humai Shirazi, 2011: 168). The dimensions of the internal space of the Emamzadeh is almost 80 square meters and there are paintings and tiles in it (Shayesteh and Qasemi, 2004: 165).

- **Decorations**

- ✓ **Tiling**

Emamzadeh Harun Velayat has beautiful turquoise dome with simple Arabesque and Hotai decorations (Mullazadeh and Muhammadi, 1999: 353). On the epigraph above the entrance gate which is in white mosaic Nastaliq calligraphy on azure tiling background the name of the founder is written. There is also another epigraphs above this latter epigraph on which the Twelve Imams have been saluted in fawn thuluth calligraphy on azure tiling background. The ceiling of the eastern gate of Harunye shrine in this porch has been decorated with mosaic muqarnas tiling a part of which has been restored after destruction. In this porch, there is a beautiful epigraph of tiles in mosaic fawn thuluth calligraphy on azure tiling background which contains glorification of Twelve Imams (Honarfar, 1971: 360-368). The decorations of the plinths (Ezareh) of Emamzadeh are made of small squared tiles with motifs of flower and shrub in blue on white background (Mullazadeh and Muhammadi, 1999: 354).

- ✓ **Carving**

Stone carving has been used mostly in the decorations of the façade of Emamzadeh the most important of which as follows: there are two benches on both sides of the stairs in two sides of the magnificent gate of Emamzadeh Harun Velayat that the internal façade of which has been carved by Arabesque figures and toranj. A giant stone lion is located on the eastern porch; Arabesque motifs has been carved on its head and mane and on the left side of the lion's body, a small sword has been carved. (Honarfar, 1971: 362-365).





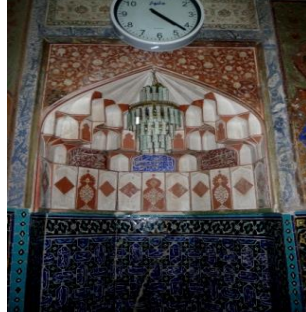
- ✓ **Wall painting**

- 1) **Wall Painting of Mausoleum**



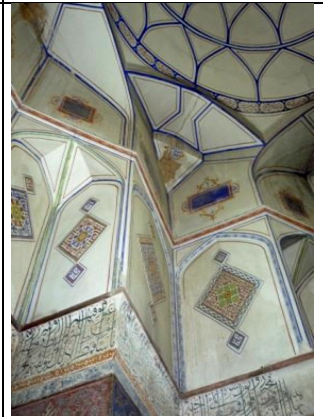


The plinths around the mausoleum have been decorated by mosaic tiles with flower and shrubs motifs. Decorations of the Wall Paintings above the plinths in the shrine are divided into six sub-decorations and some of them were conducted in Safavid era (table 4).




Table 4: Decorative Wall Paintings of Emamzadeh Harun Velayat Shrine (Photo credit: Author)

Row	Figure type	Figure place	color	Description	Pictures
1	Arabesque figures and geometrical knots	First row of decorations in northern side of the mausoleum and above the entrance gate from porch side	Azure, red, yellow, blue, green and white	in the middle of the square, the name of Allah has been written in Kufi	
2	Arabesque Figures	First row of decorations in the western side of mausoleum and above the entrance gate from Hosseinieh side	azure, white, red, blue	The lower parts have been faded away	
3	Arabesque figures of trees and animals	First row of decorations in the eastern side of the mausoleum and above the window before Imam Ali Mosque	Azure, gold, white, red	Inside the central square, there is golden lion and silver horse	
4	24 altar like frames associated with Arabesque figures and epigraphs	First row of decorations around the mausoleum	Green, ochre red, white, gold, navy blue, azure	Above all of them the name of Imam Ali is written in Kufi. Some poems have been written on inscription which note the restoration of the building in the era of Shah Abbas II	
5	Altar with Arabesque figures, geometrical figures and epigraphs	First row of decorations in north sides of mausoleum	ochre, white, azure	There are three mini-epigraphs inside it which contain some writings with stucco	



6	Arabesque figures And Hotai	Second row of decorations around the shrine	Black, white and red	Religious sentences from Quran Surahs and Divine Names are Cali graphed by Aqa Miri which is new.	
7	Arabesque figures and abstract forms	Third row of decorations above the gate from porch side	Azure, red and white	The center of this frame has been decorated with Arabesque figures of toranj and red tulips	
8	Geometrical figures; rhombus; toranj and calligraphy	Third row of the decorations around the mausoleum	Red, blue, green and white	Decorated by phrases like Alhamdulillah, Ali, Mohammad in Kufi; these are within square like small frames which are decorated themselves with holy names of Allah, Mohammad and Ali	
9	20 rectangular frames with epigraphs	Fourth row of decorations; three ones of which are in four main directions and two of them are in contrary directions	Azure, dark yellow and gold	Decorated by divine names of Allah, Bismillah, Mohammad, Ali, Fatimah	
10	Epigraph	Fifth row of decorations in northeast, west and southeast and west	azure, dark yellow	The phrases on squinches have faded away on north side but in the southern side the following phrases are seen: Bismillah, Ana Madinah al-Elm va Ali Baboha	








12	Epigraph and geometrical drawings	Sixth row of decorations inside the dome	Sky-blue, red	In the neck of dome there are epigraphs with azure margins inside of which some poems are written	
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2) Porch

The theme of wall paintings is religious and decorative and includes five religious portraits and beautiful decorative wall paintings which are introduced as follows (table 5).

Table 5: Decorative Wall Paintings of Porch of Emamzadeh Harun Velayat (pic. Author)

Row	Figure type	Figure place	Color	Description	Picture
1	Two angels with trumpet	Above triangular figures of the entrance arc	Yellow, red and green	The types of the angels' horns are different from each other.	
2	Calligraphed poems on white background which have been framed inside 46 toranj	Around the pedestal of dome	Golden, red, black and white	These poems describe the restoration done in the time of Fathalishah Qajar	
3	Abstract arabesque legged toranj	Four sides of the foundations of dome of porch	Blue, golden,	These figures exist all over the four sides of the foundations of the dome	
4	Various types of Arabesque figures of flower, shrub, birds	Columns of arcs	Azure, red, golden, green, purple, pink and orange	These figures have been repeated in the columns of arc	
5	Arabesque figures of flower, shrub	Arc and fountain	azure, red, golden, green, purple, pink and orange		



6	Tuba Flower pot (various flowers, birds and flower pot)	Columns of arc the entrance of porch from left side	Blue, pink, green, golden, orange	This figure has been used once	
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DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In Safavid era and following the recognition of Shia sect as the official religion, this dynasty offered an unprecedented support for building and expansion of Shia religious sites and mausoleums. Given the sacred nature of these places by people, the latest architecture achievements from the past were used in their construction as well as the best arts in their decoration. Wall painting is one of the types of decorations which has been frequently used in Safavid era in religious places particularly Emamzadeh shrines.

Decorations of wall paintings of Safavid era can be found in the mausoleums of Emamzadeh Ahmad, Harun Velayat and Ismael. Generally speaking, the theme of figures in this era is decorative and includes various types of Arabesque figures, geometrical figures, toranges, flower and shrub, geometrical knot and epigraphy. Frequent use of bright colors like azure, red and golden is another feature of the wall paintings of Safavid era.

In general, decorative wall paintings of Safavid era have specific common elements that are presented in the following tables (tables 6 and 7).

Table 6: Common Elements in Religious Wall Paintings of Emamzadeh Harun Velayat

Row	Common elements	Location
1	Angels	Portrait of Imam Ali with Imam Hassan and Imam Hossein- portrait of Prophet Mohammad with Imam Ali- the triangular figures above the entrance arc
2	Horse	Battle of Ali Akbar-Battle and Abbas (PBUH)
3	Lion	Portrait of Imam Ali with Imam Hassan and Imam Hossein
4	Deer	Portrait of Imam Ali with Imam Hassan and Imam Hossein – Portrait of Prophet with Imam Ali
5	Palm tree	Portrait of Imam Ali with Imam Hassan and Imam Hossein – Portrait of Prophet Mohammad with Imam Ali – Battle of Hazrat Abbas
6	Qanbar	Portrait of Imam Ali with Imam Hassan and Imam Hossein

Table 7: Common Elements of Religious Portraits of Emamzadeh Esmail

Row	Common elements	Location
1	Household women	Taking water-skin by Abbas
2	Horse	Taking water-skin by Abbas
3	Palm tree	Taking water-skin by Abbas
4	Qanbar	Portrait of Imam Ali with Imam Hassan and Imam Hossein

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