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An examination of the decorations of the wooden door of the tomb of four kings in Lahijan is available in the National Museum of Iran

Abstract

Problem Definition: The wooden door of the tomb of four kings in Lahijan is one of the woodcarvings works available in the National Museum of Iran, which has a special value in terms of antiquity and beauty, as well as the inscriptions used in it. This door belongs to the Kiya dynasty that ruled in the northern regions of Iran at the same time as the Safavid period. Several prestigious artworks have been left from the Kiya period, including the woodcarving technique, one of which is the tomb of four kings of Lahijan and its ancient door. The present research seeks to answer the question of what are the motifs of the mentioned door and also the themes used in it and also identify the themes and contents of this historical work.

Objective: The aim of this research is to get acquainted with the Kiya's art in the northern region of Iran and also to get acquainted with the visual and architectural elements of the region.

Research Method: The present study has been conducted based on the library resources and historical perspective in a descriptive-analytical manner.

Results: The plant motifs including arabesque and khatai have been used with remarkable elegance and variety in the decorations of the door of the tomb of four kings, all of which are the common motifs of the Safavid period. The most used line in inscriptions is the thuluth. Moreover, the themes of the inscriptions also include historical prayers and poetry. In general, by examining the characteristics of this work, it can be stated that the Kiaya government, like the Safavid rulers of their time, have perfectly considered the visual principles of the motifs.

Keywords: Kiya, the tomb of four kings, wooden door, Shiite art, inscription.

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Introduction

Wooden relics are significant due to the occurrence of inscriptions and decorative motifs at every phase of history. There are relatively many works of Safavid era woodcarving compared to other periods that are unique in terms of beauty. This art has made significant progress in the Safavid period paralleling local governments, including the Kayanids, thus, that the peak of the diversity of Arabesque and Khatai motifs can be observed in such works. The inscriptions applied in the mentioned artworks mostly behold Shiite concepts and Quranic content, prayers, names and imperative information about the date of construction and the constructors and sovereigns of the time. Reading and recognizing these inscriptions can aid the extraction of the correct information from the works. The wooden door of the tomb of Four Kings of Lahijan in the National Museum of Iran (No. 3312), belonging to the Kayanid period of Gilan, with its delicate inlay and variety of motifs and inscriptions applied is one of the most valuable works of this period. The purpose of this study is to become acquainted with the art of the Kayanid era in the northern region of Iran and the visual elements and architectural features of the region. As a result, questions regarding the designs of mentioned door and applied themes will be responded to.

Research Method

The research method of the present research is interpretive-historical and the necessary information is provided using library and field resources. In the first step, the historical features of Al-Kia's government were briefly examined in terms of geography, religion and politics; and in the second step, the collection of inlaid works in the tomb of the Four Kings were identified, in addition, the intended wooden door has been entirely studied and read.

Research Background

To date, research and studies have been conducted in the field of Kayanids art, including the tomb of the Four Kings of Lahijan, three of which are the closest sources to this research from various aspects. "Yusef Jamali and Panahi" in an article in 2007 with the title of "The Religious Situation of Gilan in the Age of Al-Kia", studied the situation of Gilan in the Al-Kia period from a political and religious points of view. A dissertation written by "Kianmehr" in 2004 entitled "Aesthetic Values of Safavid Woodcarving" studied woodcarving in Iran and the wooden door of the tomb of the Four Kings mostly in terms of technique and execution of the work, moreover, a brief identification made in relation to the decorative plant motifs and their similarity with the tile and carpet motifs in the period of Shah Abbas of the Safavid reign was mentioned. The second volume of the book "From Astara to Astarabad" written by "Sotoudeh" in 1995 read the inscriptions of the wooden door of Four Kings and studied the date of construction of the tomb. The

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present study deals specifically with the themes and content of the designs and a complete re-reading of the artifact.

Historical Features of the Kayanid Rule (Eighth to Eleventh Centuries AH)

The anonymous author of the book "The Limits of Science from the East to the West" living in Gilan, divided this land into two parts of west and east entitled beyond the Radians and this side of the Radians, due to the existence of Sefidrood ([Hudood al-Alam, 1983, 199](#)). In various resources, particularly the provinces of Dar al-Marz of Iran ([Rabino, 1995, 4](#)), the terms Bieh pish or Bieh pas were used for the two eastern and western regions of Sefidrood. "Each of these two sections had a separate governmental and religious organization and structure and was also considered a fiercely political rival. The chief cities and regions of "Bieh Pish¹ comprised the eastern sections of Sefidrood to Chalous including Tonekabon, Rankuh, Rudsar, Lahijan, Eshkur, Deilaman, Samam, and other large and small areas "[\(Samarqandi, 2003, 235\)](#). The mentioned two areas of Sefidrood were diverse in terms of religion, and this was the reason why in most cases they did not have approachable relations. "The land of Bieh pish reached its peak of power after Al-e Kia came to power and Lahijan became the political and economic center of Gilan as the legislative focus of the Al-Kia dynasty" ([Yusef Jamali & Panahi, 2007, 156](#)). The author of the book "Dictionary of Genealogy and Principles of Governor in Islamic History for the East" has introduced the rulers of Al-Kia. The prominent religion of the Al-e Kia is of significance. At the end of the first half of the tenth century AH, they transformed their religion from the Zeydi Shiite to the Twelver Shiite Imams. Before Al-e Kia's rise in power in East Gilan (Bieh Pish), the land of Gilan was divided into two parts of Shiite Zeydi and Sunni regarding religion, as well as its geographical divisions. The author of the "History of Al-Jaito" in the eighth century mentions Lahijan and its environs as Zeydi and the supporters of Naser [Kabir] and the western part of it as Sunni who "have the religion of Imam Zahid Abid Ahmad Hanbal" ([Kashani, 1969, 57](#)). Although Al-Kia influenced the religious movement of Ismail Mirza and ultimately to a great extent the formation of the Safavid reign, the rise of Shiism from the ninth century began with the actions of Teymur. Hence, the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate and the rise of the Mongols in Iran was a great advantage for the existence of the Twelver Imam Shiites in Iran and the Islamic world as such movements instigated an increase of power in Shiism during the ninth century. "Although during the ninth century the Hanafi Timurids held political power, due to the support given to the family of the Prophet by Teymur and Shah Rukh in the early Timurid era, Shiism led by Sadat, achieved a good position." ([Safa, 1990, 56-58](#)). This government at the time of its power, faced greater powers in Iran such as the Timurids, Aghqyunlus and, Safavids. "Al-e Kia ruled in this part of Gilan (Bieh pish) from about 763 AH, and finally the Safavid

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government during the reign of Shah Abbas (1000 AH) overthrew their government due to economic, political and religious motives (Naeimi, 2010, 163).

The Tomb of the Four Kings

The tomb of Four Kings is situated in Lahijan city in the east of Gilan province (See Figure 1). This city was conquered by Al-Jaito in 705 AH, and after Amir Teymur, Seyyed Amirkia - from Sadat Kyai - conquered the city, and after the fall of the Kyai dynasty, the Safavid rulers of Bieh Pish settled there (Sotoudeh, 1995, 69-78). This structure is the tomb of "Seyyed Khorram Kia" or "Seyyed Khorkia", murdered in 647 AH, which later several members of the Kiai family (Seyyed Ali Hosseini died in 791 AH, Seyyed Reza Hosseini and Seyyed Razi Hosseini died in 829 AH.) were buried next to him. The Sadat Kyai dynasty ruled in Gilan from 763 to 1000 AH and Seyyed Khorkia was from this dynasty. It is clear from the titles mentioned in the inscription of the coffin that "Seyyed Khorkia" was one of the religious leaders and those related to this dynasty were the spiritual leaders of the Shiites of Gilan and Mazandaran before impending power. The tomb has two rooms and the shrine of "Seyyed Khorkia" is located in the first room. There is a square rectangular box of brown wood on the shrine. Inscriptions have been engraved on the box, which according to Sotoudeh's posts they are Quranic verses of 1 to 15 of the Surah Yasin. In addition, the following phrases are also inscribed: "This case is the blessed scene, the imam, the hermit, the late martyr Sayed Khorkiya, may God enlighten his shrine and the illumination of his deathbed and the construction of this coffin was by the order of Haji Ali Ibn Shahab al-Din Al-Lahiji". According to the text of the inscription, the coffin box was built in 647 AH by the order of Haji Ali ibn Shahab al-Din Lahji for the shrine of Sayyid Khorkia. This wooden box is not currently visible due to the cover for protection (See Figure 2).



Figure 1

Four Kings Mosque of Lahijan.

Source: www.seeing.ir



Figure 2

Wooden box of the shrine of Seyyed Khorkia in the tomb of the Four Kings of Lahijan. Source: [Author](#)

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As mentioned, there are three tombs in the second room. The first tomb belongs to Seyyed Razi Kia from the Kayanid dynasty of Gilan, who reigned in Lahijan. There is a wooden box measuring 232 by 119 by 91 cm, inlaid with plant motifs and inscriptions in the Naskh script. The inscription begins with the 88th verse of the Surah Qasas" and its context includes "This illuminated shrine belongs to the late Seyed, transferred to the mercy of his forgiving Lord, Sayyid Radhi, as the son of the Sayyid Imam Al-Sayyid Ali Kiya Al-Husseini, may God enlighten his tomb, buried on the first of Jumada Al-Awal in the year eight and twenty-nine years from the Hijrah of Khair Al-Bariah". In the last section of the coffin, a part of verses 12 to 19 of the Surah Yasin has been applied. (Sotoudeh, 1995, 105). Seyyed Zahir al-Din Marashi in "History of Deylamestan and Gilan" wrote the date of the death of Seyyed Razi Kia, ruler of Lahijan, on Monday, the first of Jamadi al-Awal, 829 AH, which corresponds to the date of the inscription of the coffin box. On the southern body of the second shrine, on the upper margin of it, "verses 1 to 9 of Surah Yasin" and in the continuation, the name of Abu Turab Reza the son of Seyyed Ali with his genealogy is seen and reads: "This is the shrine of the enlightened and the perfumed martyr, transferred to the mercy of the Lord of Forgiveness, Abi Turab Rezain Ali Ibn Amir Ibn Hussein Ibn Hassan Ibn Ali Ibn Ahmad Ibn Ali Al-Ghaznavi Ibn Muhammad Ibn Abi Zayd Ibn Hussein Ibn Ahmad Ibn Isa Ibn Ali Ibn Hussein Al-Asghar Ibn Ali Ibn Rasul Allah May God bless him and grant him peace on the first of Jamadi al-Awal on Monday, the year nineteen hundred and eighty-eighth of the Hijrah of Khair al-Bariah. I am sorry and you are the Lord of forgiveness, and this is the inscription of Hassan bin Ali Al-Salehi Al-Jilani". another side of the coffin is either stolen or discarded. As an alternative, they have installed another inscription on it which reads: "This is the illuminated and the fragrant shrine for Seyed al-Sa'id and the Imam of the martyred, the oppressed Ali ibn Amir al-Husseini, May God Enlighten his tomb (Sotoudeh 1995, 106)". It is clear from the text of the inscription that Abu Turab Reza the son of Seyyed Ali (deceased in 829 AH) was one of the elders of Sadat and his lineage goes back to Imam Ali (PBUH) and his sixth ancestor was Ali Ghaznavi. The inscriptions of this coffin box were written by Hassan Ibn Ali Al-Salehi Al-Jilani (See Figures 3 & 4). The third shrine of this room belongs to Seyed Ali ibn Ali al-Husein. "This person is the father of Seyyed Abi Torab Reza, who died in 829 in the early ninth century, and the date of death of his father in the late eighth century probably coincides with the years 789 to 799" (Nafisi, 1927, 278). There is a coffin box 180 cm in length, 120 cm in wide,th and 100 cm in height on this tomb, which only its northern part has remained from ancient times.

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Figure 3

Wooden box of the shrine of Abu Trab Reza ibn Seyyed Ali (second room) in the tomb of the FourKings of Lahijan. Source: [Author](#)



Figure 4

Part of the inscription of the wooden box of the shrine of Abu Turab Reza ibnn Seyyed Ali in the tomb of the Four Kings of Lahijan. Source: [Author](#)

This northern section is divided into three main parts and has inscriptions in the Thuluth script and reads: "In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, peace be upon Muhammad Al-Mustafa, Ali, Al-Batool Fatima, Al-Sabtin Al-Hassan, Al-Hussein, and peace be upon Zayn Al-Ibad Ali, Al-Baqir Muhammad, Al-Jaafar Al-Sadiq, Musa Al-Kadhim, Al-Reza, Ali Muhammad Al-Taqi, Ali Al-Naqi Al-Zaki Caliph Al-Qaim Al-Muntazir Al-Muzaffar Al-Hadi Sahib Al-Asr and Al-Zaman Khalifa Al-Rahman Seyed Al-ens and Al-Jan Salawat Allah be upon them all Harra Al-Abd Al-Ahqar Mohammad Ja'far bin Mohammad Al-Ahjani, the action of Rasool Najjar Ibn Akbar Qazvini. Also, in the middle of the northern part of the box, there is an inscription including "verses 1 to 8 of Surah An-Naba" ([Sotoudeh, 1995, 101](#)). As it is mentioned in the text of the inscription, the box was made by the master Rasool Najjar Ibn Akbar Qazvini and the inscriptions have been written by Mohammad Jafar Ibn Mohammad Lahjani ([Sotoudeh, 1995, 110](#)). (See [Figure 5](#)) The entrance door of the first room, which belongs to Seyed Khor Kia, is positioned as a substitute for the door that is currently kept in the museum. It was famous that this door was brought here from Imamzadeh Hashem. Phrases such as Salawat, a part of the 73rd verse of Surah Hood", "Hadith of the Ship" by the Prophet (PBUH,) and the name of the builder of the wooden door are engraved on it with the phrase: Master Bayazid's action, Ali Najjar Al-Tabrizi's action ([Sotoudeh, 1995, 109-110](#)). (See [Figures 6 & 7](#))

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Figure 5

Wooden box of the Seyyed Ali ibn Ali Al-Hussein in the tomb of the Four Kings of Lahijan.

Source: [Author](#)



Figure 6

The wooden door of the shrine of Seyed Khorkia in the tomb of the Four Kings of Lahijan. Source: [Author](#)



Figure 7

Part of the wooden door inscription of the shrine of Seyed Khorkia in the tomb of the Four Kings of Lahijan.

Source: [Author](#)

There is a pair of old doors in the second room that have been replaced with newer wood apparently. On the old door, an inscription with the words: "The order of the construction of this noble tomb of Hajj Khajeh Zangishah Al-Nazir in the year seven hundred and ninety-one" done by "Shahabuddin bin Ustad Nizamuddin Droudgar Qazvini". According to the inscription, the door was built in 791 AH by Master Shahab al-Din bin Master Nizamuddin Droudgar Qazvini ([See Figures 8](#)).

The Inlaid Wooden Door of the Tomb of the Four Kings of Lahijan in the National Museum of Iran

The main location of the door is the old entrance of the shrine of Seyed Khorkia and currently, it is preserved in the Islamic section of the National Museum of Iran by the number 3312. The door is made of free wood, with dimensions of 198 by 110 cm ([See Figures 9 & 10](#)). It is carved in two layers and symmetrically each door contains three rectangular frames. Several verses are engraved in the *asta'liq* script positioned above and below the door. The upper rectangles have a frame with plant motifs. Inside the frames are phrases written in the *Thuluth* script. The middle rectangular frames, which occupy the most space, behold a border with inscriptions in *Thuluth* script, and inside of these frames are filled with beautiful plant motifs. The bottom two rectangles also have plant motifs; furthermore, this door has a general frame surrounded by plant motifs.

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Figure 8

Decorative designs of a part of the wooden door of the second room of the tomb of the Four Kings of Lahijan.

Source: [Author](#)



Figure 9

Inlaid wooden door belonging to the tomb of Four Kings, in the National Museum of Iran

Source: [Author](#)



Figure 10

Refurbished in wood of the tomb of the Four Kings of Lahijan in the National Museum of Iran Source: [Author](#)

Decorations of the Wooden Door of the Tomb of the Four Kings of Lahijan in the National Museum of Iran

Most of the door surface is filled with plant motifs and the door frame has an inlaid border (See [Figure 11](#)). The composition of this margin consists of two khatai stems that are transiently created by repeating the transverse axis. The constituent elements of this fringe are: Shah Abbasi, pomegranate bud, five-leaf clove, and khatai leaves (See [Figure 12](#)).



Figure 11

Inlaid Khatai motifs on the wooden door frame of the tomb of the Four Kings of Lahijan in the National Museum of Iran Source: [Author](#)

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Figure 12

Khatai and Arabesque motifs inlaid wooden door frames of the tomb of the Four Kings of Lahijan in the National Museum of Iran and its refurbished Source: [Author](#)

The next border, which can be seen around the frames, consists of rich Khatai and Eslimi motifs. The composition of this part is in the form of two consecutive stems that have an arm-like state, and the five-leaf crenate flowers, tops, and all-red star flowers are used to branch off the stalk. The flowers of Akhtar are two-layered and are located on the five-leaf clover. Crenate decorations similar to the Sassanid era have been used Inside the Eslimi harp ([Kianmehr, 2004, 178](#)). But in the margin between the upper frames and the middle rectangular frame, the porcelain cloud is replaced by the bush and the starflower is replaced by the Shah Abbasi. In general, these motifs are carved in a harmonious and integrated manner around the frames and between them, Thuluth inscriptions have been worked with a certain distance, which is visually the same weight and density as the motifs, and the viewer of this frame Sees it uniformly ([See Figures 12 & 13](#)).



Figure 13

Khatai and Arabesque motifs inlaid between the upper and middle frames of the wooden door of the tomb of the Four Kings of Lahijan in the National Museum of Iran and its refurbished Source: [Author](#)

The top and bottom frames of the door have also an inner margin ([See Figure 14](#)). The composition used in this transition margin is with repetition of the transverse axis. Poplar heads and stalk stems can be seen in this margin. The elements of this border are coniferous five-leaf clover, round five-leaf flower, butterfly pomegranate flower, Shah Abbasi flower, pomegranate bud, and Khatai leaves. Inside the lower frames of this door are decorated with plant motifs, unlike the upper frames which have inscriptions. The composition of these motifs is bergamot with cross stems. The central bergamot is made up of Eslimi stems and the inner bergamot is made up of khatai stems. This frame is filled with the Eslimi harps of the torpedo's mouth and Khatai elements such as four-leaf pomegranate flower,

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coniferous five-leaf flower, Shah Abbasi flower, Khatai flower, and Khatai leaves (See Figure 15).



Figure 14

Khatai and Arabesque motifs inlaid inside the upper and lower frames of the wooden door of the tomb of the Four Kings of Lahijan in the National Museum of Iran and its refurbished Source: [Author](#)



Figure 15

Khatai and Arabesque motifs of inlaid lower frames on the wooden door of the tomb of the Four Kings of Lahijan in the National Museum of Iran and it's refurbished Source: [Author](#)

Finally, inside the middle rectangle of the door, which actually occupies the most space, is the busiest inlaid part (See Figure 16). The inlay design of this part is similar to the designs of Persian carpets of the Safavid period. Its composition is bergamot with a cross stem, and of course, the extension of the Eslimi and Khatai stems has taken on a spiral and decorative shape. This part is carved with Eslimi and Khatai elements with great delicacy. The Eslimi elements used in it include: snail-shaped torpedo mouth and wind-blown Eslimi harp, and its Khatai elements are: Shah Abbasi flowers, butterfly pomegranate flower, five-leaf dalberdar flower, pomegranate buds, Artichoke leaf, khatai leaf, and star profile flower.



Figure 16

Khatai and Arabesque motifs of inlaid middle frames on the wooden door of the tomb of the Four Kings of Lahijan in the National Museum of Iran and its refurbished Source: [Author](#)

Inscriptions on the Tomb of the Four Kings of Lahijan in the National Museum of Iran

One of the features of the wooden door of the tomb of the Four Kings is the existence of variety in its inscriptions. The content and text of the inscriptions include religious prayers, poems, the name of the artist and the founder. The type of their script is varied depending on the theme. All the Arabic inscriptions on the door are executed in the Thuluth script. By studying the Thuluth inscriptions throughout history, it can be stated that the use of this script for inscription started from the end of the Seljuk period reached its peak during the Safavid period. "Due to the prevalence of Thuluth script in an inscription from the eighth century onwards, Kufic calligraphy was mostly used in decorative inscriptions and small frames. In the inscription of the Timurid period, particularly in the tile inscription of the buildings of this period and instances from the tenth century AH, the Kufic script has been applied as a sub-line with the Thuluth script" (Sahragard, & Shirazi, 2010, 45). In this research, the inscriptions have been classified and examined based on their content and the text of the inscriptions is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The text of wooden inscriptions on the wooden door of the tomb of the Four Kings of Lahijan, in the National Museum of Iran - Source: Author

Type of the script	Type of inscription based on content	The text of the inscription	Image
Thuluth	Historical	Baaneh Al-Muftah Al-Bawab Waqq Najr This Al-Bab Awan Dolat Al-Sultan Al-Azam Fatah Al-Aqlim Al-Alam Sahib Al-Nasab Al-Nabawi Al-Hasb Al-Alawi Abi Al-Futuh Shah Abbas Al-Husseini Al-Musawi Al-Safawi Yamat Saadatha according to the reference of the supreme guardian of the da'i to the second state of the forerunner and the son of Abd al-Wahid al-Wa'iz, did you always fulfill the book of the slave Mohammad ibn Davood Kia in the year 1015 AH. ?	Branch
Thuluth	Prayer	May God bless Ali Qudwa Al-Anbiya and the qibla of the saints Abi Al-Qasim Muhammad Al-Mustafa, and may God bless Ali Sayyid Al-Awsiya, and may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Al-Amin Al-Hammamin Al-Madfunin Basar Man Rai Kashfi Al-Dar and Al-Muhn Ali Al-Naqi Al-Zaki and Hassan Al-Askari And continue on the left side: the lineage of Sayyid Al-Azam Al-Arshad Al-Sayyid Al-Sayyid and Al-Sind Al-Ikram Al-Amjadzdi Al-Haseb Al-Tahir Al-Munif Hassan Ibn Muhammad Al-Tabataba Ibrahim Ibn Ismail and Yabaj Ibn Ibrahim ibn Hassan Muthanna ibn Al-Imam Al-Hassan Ibn Ali Ibn Abi Talib Salawat Allah and peace be upon them Abdul Abdul Fattah Najjar Lahiji	20 & 21

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Type of the script	Type of inscription based on content	The text of the inscription	Image
Nasta'liq	Poetry	Because the new shrine and door is like the garden of Khalad in Heaven / The mute preacher who speaks / The ear of time is full of the gem and jewel of Heaven / Look at their date that is so appropriate / This shrine has become like Heaven / For building this shrine and in the words of this piece / From the favorable scene of Kosar of Heaven comes	22

Historical Inscriptions

On the right side of the door, there is a square rectangular frame with an engraved inscription in the Thuluth script. Likewise, on the left side of the door, symmetrically, there is a rectangular square frame in which the continuation of the previous inscription with an engraved date towards the end. (See Figures 17 & 18). According to the text of the inscription, this door was built by Mohammad Ibn Davood Kia in the reign of Shah Abbas Safavid (996-1038) in the year 1015 AH.

According to the book "History of Gilan" written by "Abdolfattah Foumani", Judge Mohammad Khan with the title of "Sadr al-Sodur" was probably the same person as Darwish Mohammad Khan, who was the ruler of Gilan during the reign of Shah Abbas I. Abdul Wahid Waez, who was given the title of "Governor" in the inscription, was probably the same poet and founder of the tomb and dedicator of the door; furthermore, these inscriptions are in the group of historical inscriptions. As it can be seen from their content, "most of these doors were built with the support of the Safavid government and royal family as well as courtiers and often follow the governor policies and within the framework of the good tradition of" endowment" (Ali Mohammadi, 2013, 103).

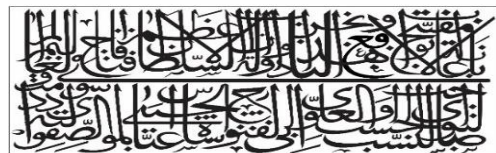


Figure 17

Photo and refurbished of the inscription on the door of the tomb of the Four Kings in the Thuluth script, on the right-side

Source: Author

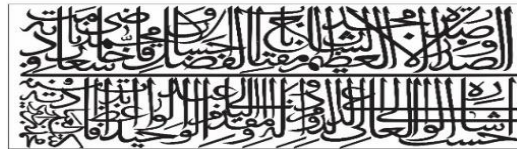


Figure 18

Photo and refurbished of the inscription on the door of the tomb of the Four Kings in the Thuluth script, on the left side Source: Author

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Prayer Inscriptions

This inscription is inscribed in the middle of the right side, around the margin of the largest rectangle of the door also in the Thuluth script; moreover, its continuation is engraved in a perfectly symmetrical manner on the left side and the context of the inscription rotates around the rectangle counterclockwise (See Figures 19 & 20).

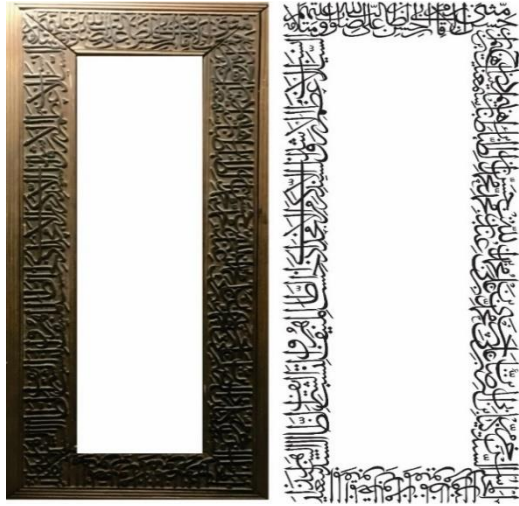


Figure 19

Photo and refurbished of the inscription number Four of the wooden door of the tomb of the Four Kings in the Thuluth script. Source: [Author](#)



Figure 20

Photo and refurbished of the inscription number five of the wooden door of the tomb of the Four Kings in the Thuluth script, Source: [Author](#)

The context of the inscription comprises the great Salawat and the name of the constructor is mentioned in the last part of the text. The theme of these inscriptions is prayer and praise of the twelve holy Imams. Salawat Kabira as one of the most famous Shiite religious mentions has been widely used in the decorations of the Safavid period. For example, the inscription on the tomb of Shah Ismail I in the collection of Sheikh Safi al-Din, which indicates that "Shah Ismail Safavid was the first person who officially implemented the rule of the Shiite religion throughout Iran at that time and his attention to Fourteen Infallibles in the decorative inscription around its dome is remarkable" ([Shayestehfar & Golmaghanizadeh Asl, 2002, 93](#)). Correspondingly, in other places related to the Safavid period such as the altar of the Shagerd porch in the Isfahan Grand Mosque, in the wooden door of Imamzadeh Ismail in Isfahan ([Saghaei & Behrouzipour, 2017, 204](#)), etc., the prayer of the Salavat Kabir can be perceived. Placing the names of rulers such as Seyed Khoramkia next to the names of the Infallible Imams, which was common in that period and can be seen in various places undoubtedly indicates the intentions of the constructors of the inscription in legitimizing the

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ascendency of that time. The installation of these inscriptions in public and religious buildings that were built with the support of Safavid rulers, on one hand, indicated the relationship between the Safavid government and the divine rule of the infallible Imams and the love of the Imams, and on the other hand, indirectly related the lineage of Safavid rulers to the Imams and made their government a legitimate rule in the path of the regulation of the Infallible Imams (Saghaei, S & Behrouzipour, 2017, 204).

Poetic Inscriptions

The wooden door beholds verses of Persian poetry in Nasta'liq script on the up and below sections. "The Nasta'liq script was used to a limited extent in inscriptions in the late ninth century AH. as most of this writing of this script has been in the form of Persian verses and memorial stones of celebrities in the inscriptions of various buildings" (Danandeh & Sahragard, 2014, 65). As it appears from the poem, a poet named (or called) the "preacher," wrote verses for Seyed Khorkia (See Figure 21).

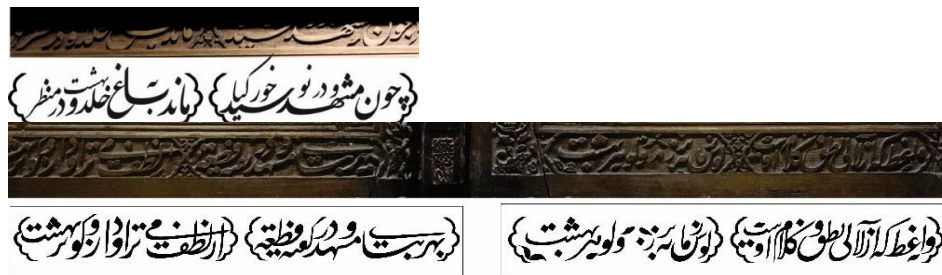


Figure 21

Nastaliq inscription, above the door of the tomb of the Four Kings and its Furbished.

Source: Author.

Conclusion

In the decorations in the tomb of the Four Kings of Lahijan, Arabesque and Khatai motifs have been used with great variety. The Arabesque motifs applied include headers, stems, and frames, also Khatai motifs that are more varied including Shah Abbasi forms, Panjpar flower, and Akhtar Anari that are all common motifs of the Safavid period. These motifs are positioned symmetrically on the two sides of the mentioned door. In general, by examining the characteristics of the door under study, it can be concluded that rulers of the Al-e Kia, alike the contemporary rulers of their time, the Safavids, considered the visual principles of the designs to the fullest and regarded great importance to art. In this paper, the prayer inscriptions of the Salawat Kabira, which are specific to Shiites, have been used. The name of the builder and ruler are also mentioned. The most used line in this work is the Thuluth script executed with elegance and beauty. Nastaliq script is also observed in a smaller section of the door bearing a poem with a theological theme. In the

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Safavid period, many poetic inscriptions with mystical or theological concepts in the Nastaliq script can be perceived.

Appendix

1. In Gilaki term, it means river, and the regions east of Sefidrood in Gilan, have been known by this name.

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