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Visual structure of Tall-e Bakun painted potteries

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Abstract

The current study will review the visual language of the designs on pottery from the Iranian plateau in the third millennium B.C. with a formalist approach. The procedure of analysis was established based on findings in numerous sites located in southwest and south Zagros. Analyzing image elements and design principles revealed a pattern of density of motifs, compositional structure of design and its elements, and type and repetition of motifs. In conclusion, understanding the history of visual arts of a part of Iran and awareness of motifs can pave the way for creating artworks by artists in our country.

Keywords: Visual Structure, Pottery, Bakun, Iran

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Estructura visual de los talleres de cerámica Tall-e Bakun pintados

Resumen

El estudio actual revisará el lenguaje visual de los diseños en cerámica de la meseta iraní en el tercer milenio A.C. con un enfoque formalista. El procedimiento de análisis se estableció en base a los hallazgos en numerosos sitios ubicados en el suroeste y sur de Zagros. El análisis de los elementos de imagen y los principios de diseño revelaron un patrón de densidad de motivos, la estructura compositiva del diseño y sus elementos, y el tipo y la repetición de motivos. En conclusión, comprender la historia de las artes visuales de una parte de Irán y conocer los motivos puede allanar el camino para crear obras de arte de artistas en nuestro país.

Palabras clave: Estructura Visual, Cerámica, Bakun, Irán

1. INTRODUCTION

Analysis of Iranian visual art has in the past insisted on the longevity and conservatism of its forms and images. However, the truth is that the concepts represented in earlier art historical analyses are obsolete in our opinion. I suggested that formalism presents a way to reconsider these artistic efforts Kuhnel (1997) Formalist analysis emphasizes their form rather than their meaning. The Formalist analysis of artwork emphasizes style and form which is defined independently from content. It emphasizes the relationship between visual elements, composition, color levels and essence of artwork (Gharebaghi, 2004). Studying artworks formalistically talks about the

aesthetic effects of compositional elements above all. These parts, which are called elements of the image, are the bases of artist's visual language. Line, shape, space, color, light and shadow are among these elements, so the artist organizes these elements differently to achieve different effects. Visual principles, composition, volume, texture and perspective are also important (Adams, 2011).

The small sample size of highland pottery in the third millennium BC was considered the reason for not studying those image works by researchers in the field of historiography and visual art analysis (Pakbaz, 2000). But nowadays through the development of archaeology, the sample size is enough for qualitative analysis. Potteries found in ancient, especially pre-historic, ruins of Iran form the most abundant and important archaeological data in Iran (Talai, 2011). Such visual pieces of evidence have been frequently case studied through semantic analyses in order to have a better understanding of social, economic and cultural formation in that era. As mentioned above, such images not only indicate ideas, culture and beliefs of people at that time, but also they are assumed to be the origin of visual arts with no necessary interpretation or indirect analysis of concepts which belong to a far past history and share distinct ideas. Hence, unstructured visual analysis based on assumptions may not lead to any findings with regard to visual characteristics of that time, if we study them as the roots of imaging. While the artist utilizes media as a tool to give realization to artistic elements potteries, as a visual media, can per se be the subject of visual analysis in accordance with principles and rules of visual arts. Thus, we may find their visual

structure, composition, dominant elements and qualities and other visual characteristics (Ibragimova et al., 2018).

This paper is a qualitative study adopting a formalist approach which seeks formal analysis of potteries and their possible relation with images, visual structure of images and finally categorization of historical findings with regard to painted potteries according to the designed approach. Tal-e Bakun, the selected geographical location for the study, in Fars province is one of the areas rich with painted potteries in pre-historic Iran plateau. Alizadeh (2006) introduces Tal-e Bakun of Fars as the pinnacle of painted potteries art in pre-Iranian history. He explains that no other BC culture in near East has ever created such a huge number of native styles along with rich decorative motifs (ibid). Tal-e Bakun is one of the seven zones of South Zagros (Fars) pottery and one of the nine prehistoric cultural zones of the plateau of Iran in another zoning (Malek, 2012). The geographical location of this region is illustrated in Figure 1. Tall-e Bakun consists of two hills known as Bakun "a" and B (Alizadeh 2006). Bakun "b" belongs to the Early Bakun "a" and Bakun "a" belongs to the New Bakun era. Therefore, the Bakun "b" is older than Bakun "a" with a cultural period (Fars Mianeh or literally 'Median Fars') in between.

In Pollock et al. (2010) and McCall (2009), Fars chronological phases are Shamsabad, early, middle and late Bakun "a" nd Lapui. As depicted in table 1, approximate dates of these eras are estimated between 4000 and 5000 B.C. Tall-e Jeri A has been recognized in Shams Abad era about 5200 B.C., before early Bakun. Early Bakun is

about 4800 B.C. which consists of Bakun "b" site. Middle Bakun era is about 4500 B.C. and Tall Gap site is assumed to belong to this era. Late Bakun is about 4200 B.C and Tall Nokhodi and Bakun "a" are assumed to belong to this era. But, in the chronological table proposed by Alizadeh (2006) compiled from other tables proposed by the same author Delougaz et al. (1996), Alizadeh (2008) represents the 'Aceramic, Formative, Archaic Fars 1 and 2, Early Fars, Middle Fars 1 and 2, Late Fars and pre-Banesh are introduced as the eras for Fars region. Diversity of dates in this table is more than the previous table. Tall-e Mushki existed in Archaic Fars about 6400 B.C., Jeri 'b' is in archaic Fars 2 about 5900 B.C. Bakun 'b' and Jeri 'a' are in Early Fars about 5400 B.C., Tall-e Bakun 'b' is in Middle Fars 1 about 5200 B.C., Tall-e Gap is in Middle Fars 2 about 4800 B.C., Bakun 'a' is in Late Fars about 4500 B.C., and Lapui is in pre-Banesh era, about 4000 B.C.

However, in the second group of chronological tables, the mentioned periods predate the ones in the first group of tables. In both of these groups, Tall-e Bakun 'b' is in Fars era or early Bakun, and then Tall-e Gap is in Fars era or middle Bakun "a" nd finally Tall-e Bakun "a" is in Fars era or late Bakun. Therefore Tall-e Bakun "b" predates Tall-e Bakun 'a' and a cultural period and an excavation zone separates these two from each other. Hertzfeld was the first to make an estimation of Tall-e Bakun 'a'. Longsdorff and Donald McCown continued the exploration in this area in 1932. Further studies were postponed until 1937. In 1937, McCown restarted exploration and extended them into Bakun 'b' area which is earlier and closer to Bakun "a" (Alizadeh, 2004). In 1956, a Japanese committee performed limited

explorations in both hills. Classic potteries of Bakun ‘a’ which have stylistic links to potteries related to Susa and South and West Zagros regions paved their way to the top. These potteries have the most extended geographical dispersion among B.C. cultures of final phases in west, south and southwest of Iran (Alizadeh, 2006), hence they were selected as raw data. Compared to those of Bakun ‘a’, findings in Bakun ‘b’ are perceived to be rarer and smaller pieces of pottery. Their number is not enough to be studied according to the adopted method in this paper, therefore, they will be studied as much as possible.

a b

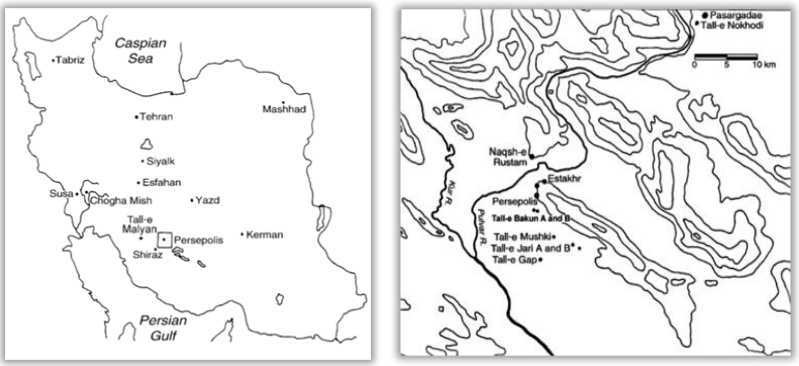

Figure 1. Geographical location of Tall-e Bakun “a” and B in Marvdasht area (Alizadeh, 2006)

2. BACKGROUND

Published reports of Bakun constitute the raw data for this research. Explorations of Bakun in 1932 were first published in

Langdroff & Mccown. Reports on the second phase of explorations are not completely published and most archeological material and data introduced by Alizadeh (2006) were actually obtained in 1937. Although understanding the paradigms of ruling the country was introduced as the purpose of study in this book, for which geographical and environmental investigations were performed, distribution of potteries and images was the second finding. In the same book, it is stated that the ship which was carrying the unearthed objects and documents of excavations in Tall-e Bakun "b" sank on its journey from Khoramshar to Chicago and the diversity of such objects was limited too, according to scattered available resources (Alizadeh, 2004). Alizadeh (2006) have both pointed out aesthetic principles in Bakun potteries. Reports with regard to findings of Japanese in 1956 were published in a book titled Marvdasht 1 Egami and Masuda (1962) and the largest portion of information about potteries of Bakun "b" can be found in this book. Such findings have been used as raw data in this paper. In cases where pictures are not included, it is referred to an example in those resources instead.

A study conducted by Firoozi (2014) titled 'a comparative study of Fars motifs by taking a personality psychology approach: a case study of painted potteries of Fars - Tal-e Bakun in 4000-5000 B.C. and handicrafts of nomads is an example of interdisciplinary studies on motifs of Tal-e Bakun. 'Human and animal symbols on potteries excavated in three areas of Tall-e Bakun in Fars, Tappe Sialk in Kashan and Tappe Giyan in Nahavand Dadvar et al. (2014) is another example of symbolic comparative studies in this regard. Despite the affluence of images in this region, studies on visual assessment of painted potteries of Bakun "a" re seldom conducted. Designs and motifs of Tall-e Bakun Riyazi (2007) are

one of the earliest papers in this regard which has only introduced the existing motifs. A visual study of motifs on Tall-e Bakun potteries Babakhan (2015) is an applied study trying to make a visual analysis of motifs in order to visualize poetry of Molana and no image categorization or stylistic analysis has been performed. That paper and the present study share a common formalist approach and visual analysis of motifs on potteries. However, the present study tries to investigate the motifs only and does not include the general structure of images as the main concern. Furthermore, six variables selected among visual elements and qualities were studied on a limited number potteries of Bakun "a". Although the applied aspect of the study justifies the limitations of method and findings, such researches motivated by the quantity and richness of the images in this region emphasize the necessity of formalist studies and structured categorization of such images and provide a ground for further fundamental and applied studies by giving more information on the characteristics of such images and their application in various visual arts.

3. METHODOLOGY

The procedure of analysis was established based on findings in numerous sites located in southwest and south Zagros and it is perceived as a specific template for determining visual characters and categorization of images on painted potteries in all sites of Iran Plateau B.C. Analysis of historical findings and painted potteries of Bakun collected through studying excavation reports and observation of

museum collections divided according to the relevant time periods will be performed in several steps (Fig.2).

Figure 2. Procedure of analysis

In the first step, the formal structure of potteries is studied. Since the form of the vessel distinguishes the image from the periphery space which is regarded as the background frame of the image, it is sometimes related to the motif on the vessel and some images are only seen on vessels with special forms. In this step, a general categorization of vessels is made with regard to their forms, the influence of form on the pattern, if there is any, is analyzed and the possible specific relation between the form and pattern is established. In the second step, the images on each painted vessel are studied as an artwork and the visual structure is analyzed based on several variables which will be introduced in the following according to their priority. Vessels can be categorized into low-motif and high-motif groups with regard to the density of motifs i.e. the portion of vessel surface allocated to the motif. High-motif category includes two sub-categories: vessels with full inner/outer surface painting and vessels with paintings on ¾ of the surface. All visual elements and qualities present in an image will be investigated, however, not all visual

qualities and elements might have been used to create a single image. Visual qualities and elements include dots, lines, surface, visual texture, density, dispersion, contrast, movement, repetition, rhythm, rotation, concentration and harmony. The method of illustration which is generally divided into striped and non-striped illustration includes the general structure image configurations within the image frame. In many vessels, the image consists of one or several horizontal or vertical stripes in which the motifs are repeated. Number and repetition of motifs in one row and how the rows are repeated in relation to each other are also investigated as the components of the whole structure.

In very few vessels where the inner surface is painted, the image illustration is non-striped in a circular frame. Comb motifs which are partially stuck to the vessel's border are the majority of these fully painted vessels. Some simpler and less crowded examples of these vessels were seen in Tall-e Gap. Margin (border embellishments) is another variable studied in all vessels. The margin is a part of an image which separates the painted and plane surfaces and considered as the inner frame of the image. Types, numbers and repetitions of motifs in the images are also studied. Geometric motifs consist of simple geometric lines or plains and complex geometric motifs consist of complex geometric or simple non-geometric shapes. Floral and animal motifs, such as birds, reptiles and other creatures, are seen in Bakun. Abstract and concrete human motifs are also seen in all samples. These variables are respectively studied in each sample. Making a conclusion of visual analyses of all painted vessels and determining general and specific characteristics of the findings is perhaps one of the hardest steps in visual analysis, where each visual characteristic in all samples and all visual analyses of a finding must be

comprehensively concluded. Determining the general visual characteristics of the samples of the region could be made possible through colligating the results which in turn helps to determine the requirements for prioritizing visual criteria of the vessels. The density of motifs, the method of illustration and type, number and repetition of motifs are the visual criteria obtained based on their priority with regard to the vessels of this region. These visual characteristics are the basis of categorizations in the next step. Thus, stylistic analysis of the images is made possible which will be explained in detail in the following.

4. FORMAL ANALYSIS OF POTTERIES

Based on the findings by the Japanese committee Egami and Masuda (1962), forms of a vessel found in Bakun "b" include deep bowl, shallow bowl, plate and jar. The inner and outer surface of some shallow bowls and plates are painted, but an illustration of both surfaces at the same time was not observed. There seems to be no specific correlation between image pattern and form because the number of pottery pieces is limited and it is hard to restore their images. For instance, a broken cross was observed on a jar but non repetition of this pattern and form makes it difficult to reach a definite conclusion (Egami and Masuda, 1962). In most cases, upper and lower margins show the striped structure of the image pattern. Most examples seem to have single rows but there are a few examples which have multi row patterns with simple images created by the repetition of lines (Egami and Masuda, 1962).

a b

Figure 3. a) Fully painted funnel-shaped bowl, Bakun "a". (Alizadeh 2006). b) A completely painted beaker, Bakun "a". (Langsdorff and McCown, 1942)

In addition to uncommon forms, McCown has classified Bakun 'a' vessels in 14 categories (Langsdorff and McCown, 1942). In another classification by Alizadeh (2006) three main types, namely wide intake, narrow intake and special form, have been considered for such potteries. It is possible to count four general groups of potteries with regard to their shape according to the number of findings in each category: bowls, beakers, jars and urns. Bowls with different shapes are the most numerous ones. Illustration of the inner surface is only seen in this group probably made possible by their form. Except for conical bowls, no recognizable relation between form and image was observed. Most conical bowls are fully painted and have a single row (Fig. 3a). In some vessels, the inner

and outer surface are both illustrated and in others, only one surface is illustrated. In cases where both surfaces are illustrated, the inner illustration has simpler pattern and motifs.

According to the findings in 1937, most beakers are less painted, except the cylindrical ones, and according to the findings in 1932, all beakers are fully painted (Fig.3b). Less painted examples usually have a single row (Alizadeh, 2006). In a single row and fully painted examples, motifs are vertically stretched (Fig.3b). Jar types are long-necked and short-necked. A wide painted stripe is located beneath the unpainted neck (Fig. 4). Single circular motifs with intermediate lines located in a single row and single motif detached pattern with vertical lines constitutes the special form of jars (Fig.4a). Animal motifs were seen on bowls and on some other jars (Fig. 4b). In several examples of jars, which have more than one separate horizontal painted row, motifs are very simple like undulated or straight lines (Alizadeh, 2006).

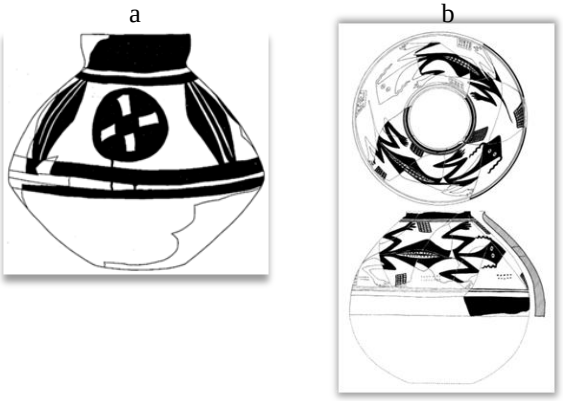

Figure 4. a) Less painted jar with a circular motif, Bakun 'a' (Langsdorff and McCown, 1942) b) Less painted jar, Bakun "a" (Alizadeh, 2006)

Special vessels include two or three examples of clay stands, conical vessels and five funnel-shaped vessels in three different shapes and two types of unique illustrations (Langsdorff and McCown, 1942). Their illustrations were also repeated in a few numbers of bowls (Langsdorff and McCown, 1942).

4.1. Visual analysis

Visual qualities and elements used in each of the studies potteries were analyzed and the results were colligated as follows: In Bakun 'b' fully painted and less painted vessels are not distinguishable because pieces are not restorable. But in Bakun 'a' most vessels are fully painted such that even less painted vessels have high density images within the row frame (fig. 3-4). Upper and lower (border embellishments) margins was seen in all examples of Bakun 'a' as the top and bottom image border where horizontal parallel lines (fig. 7), a simple horizontal stripe (fig. 3), an illustrated horizontal stripe (fig. 8) and combination of parallel lines with each (fig. 5) constituted the highest number of margins. The aforementioned order is proportional to their quantity. Using parallel horizontal lines as upper and lower margins can also be seen in Bakun "b" potteries (Perrot and Genevieve, 1979).

In some cases, dotted patterns complement the main motif in order to gain more attention. Aside from this purpose, dotted patterns In Bakun "b" form a texture and fill up a horizontal row (Egami and Masuda, 1962). As their most common usage in Bakun "a", dots creates concentrated

motifs which act as focal points and attract the viewer's attention. Parallel lines are used for marginalia (embellishment of borders), creating hatch and also as the components of the main motif (fig. 3b). Simple and systematic lines are less seen as raw in Bakun "a" but in Bakun "b" many images are created by repetition of undulated, angled, vertical and slant (Egami and Masuda, 1962).

Shapes are usually complex. Their density and rhythmic repetitions create a pattern. In some cases, continuity and connectivity of shapes make it difficult to distinguish the main motif and repetition paradigm and in many cases the negative space does not support the positive one rather it has an equal visual value (fig. 5). But, basic shapes such as joint diamonds or triangles, semicircles, and plane, colorful or textured squares or rectangles form geometric motifs Alizadeh (2006) and no complicated geometric motif is seen.

Figure 5. Shallow bowl, Bakun "a". (Langsdorff and McCown, 1942)

The visual texture in Bakun 'a' covers some spaces between motifs or, in some cases, the inner surface by utilizing parallel or perpendicular lines (Langsdorff and McCown, 1942). In addition to this pattern, hatch

patterns are created by the repetition of parallel, transverse, vertical and horizontal lines and, in some cases, undulated or angled lines are often seen (fig. 7). In two or three examples, repetition of dots has created a texture which usually completely covers the surface of a single horizontal row (Egami and Masuda, 1962). Diversity and profusion of motifs could be seen in painted vessels of Bakun "a". However, there are still few vessels which are created by using lines without any motifs. Some motifs, which are not usually simple, are repeated in different vessels (fig. 4a), but motifs in Bakun "b" are limited and very simple and their repetition is the only recognizable visual pattern in such vessels. Since images in Bakun "a" are mainly geometric, frequent repetition and complex patterns have led to a monotonous view, therefore, in most combinations the viewer's eye passes by without noticing any focal point in such a way that even negative spaces do not stimulate concentration, rather, in some combinations, the artist has disrupted the monotonous view by creating a focal point (langsdorff and McCown, 1942). In this era, circles had the minimum application among shapes. They were usually used as the main motif with the painted inner surface (quad part division) in jars (which are few and found very close to each other) (Fig.4a) and in some bowls.

Figure 6. Conic bowl inner surface, Bakun "a". (Langsdorff and McCown, 1942)

In some bowls, for example conical ones, images can be viewed from two perspectives (Fig.3a). Quad divisions and triple repetitions are often seen in these images (Fig. 6). Rotation is more seen on patterns of the inner surface of bowls in a circular frame (Fig. 6) and some striped combinations with animal motifs could also be seen (Fig. 4b). Images are balanced and symmetric combinations with different and rhythmic repetition of motifs, including 180 degree rotations (Fig.5). Some repetition patterns are complicated. Shapes which together form a motif are not always connected rather they are repeated with the same principles and intervals (Langsdorff and McCown, 1942). Diversity and density are the prominent qualities of this era. It is not known how rows are repeated and what the number of motifs is in Bakun "b", but repetition of motifs in a row could be observed in some cases. Various rhythmic repetitions are among the few visual qualities which differentiates images in Bakun "b" from each other. Repetition of chess pattern (Alizadeh, 2006), consecutive joint or detached repetitions with an intermediate motif could be identified in these samples. Motifs are usually geometric, but some floral and animal motifs (animals, reptiles and birds) Alizadeh (2006) and an unidentifiable motif (whether human or animal) were also found.

4.2. The motifs

Designs of motifs are various and innovative in Bakun 'a'. This is a determining factor in differentiating images compared to each other. Therefore, we study different types of motifs and their

positioning in the combinations as the most important visual element in this chapter. Animal motifs have a unique diversity and seen in different types of animals, birds, reptiles and aquatic animals in both concrete and abstract forms. Animals and birds are usually seen in single row joint combinations and if they are joint, geometric or floral motifs are regularly repeated on top, bottom or beside them (Fig. 3a and 4b) and if they are detached, in addition to the aforementioned, geometric lines or floral motifs separate them vertically and geometric and floral motifs are repeated between them (Fig.7). Some examples have been seen in triple row combinations where there are identical rows of geometric motifs on top and bottom and a row of abstract motifs is located in between or vice versa (langsdorff and McCown, 1942). Illustration structure in animal motifs is limited to joint single rows especially in real samples. Using repeated geometric motifs formed as a template is very common in animal vessels (Fig.3a and 4b). There are also some exceptional combinations, for example, an animal motif together with other geometric motifs forms a collection or several animal motifs are seen together in one image. Bird motifs have more diverse structures (Langsdorff and McCown, 1942).

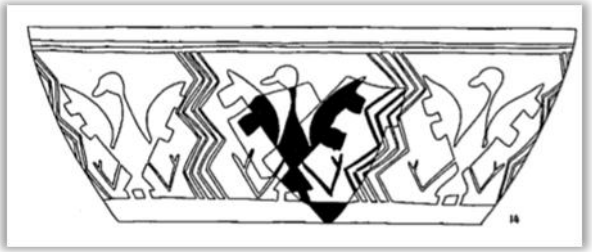

Figure 7. Completely painted shallow bowl with animal motifs, Bakun "a" (Langsdorff and McCown, 1942)

Disarranging proportions and exaggerating in drawing parts of body organs in animals and birds, stretching and bending in animal movements (Fig. 3a and 4b) and bird wings (Fig. 7) are some of the unique characteristics of Bakun potteries which, in some examples, create movement in combinations. Simplification of motifs is skillfully performed and it has converted some floral and animal motifs to separate geometric motifs which are frequently seen in different images (Fig.17). Floral motifs may be concrete or abstract, too. They may be used as the main (Fig.15) or secondary motifs or part of the main motif (Fig.10) and separators of the main motif (Fig.12). Some motifs repeated in rows on beakers are sometimes vertically stretched for being positioned along the vertical axis of the vessel (Fig.15). Real human motifs are seen together (Alizadeh, 2006), alone or with animal motifs Alizadeh (2006) and also in abstract forms (Langsdorff and McCown, 1942).

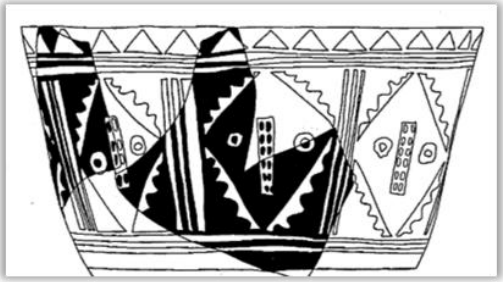

Figure 8. Completely painted shallow bowl with abstract motifs, Bakun "a" (Langsdorff and McCown, 1942)

4.3. Classification criteria

The visual structure of images is the basis of classification. The density of motifs is the most important factor in differentiating images in

Bakun “a”. Based on this ground, vessels are either less painted or fully painted. Less than half of the vessel surface is painted in less painted ones. And fully painted ones are either completely painted or three quarters of the vessel surface is painted. Another variable is the general illustration method and its components which are either striped or non-striped. Number of vertical or horizontal rows in the striped method is another determining factor in differentiating images which will be classified. A number of motifs and patterns of repetition are among the other important and determining variables in images. Therefore, images are differentiated based on the number of types of motifs and the order in which they are used in a row. The pattern of repetition of motifs in one row and also the pattern of repetition of rows in a combination are the final variables in this classification. Type of motifs, visual elements and visual qualities defined by related variables are in the next priority level for differentiating images and could be used for sub-classification of images in this era. The criteria for the classification of the visual structure of Bakun “a” are depicted briefly in FIG. 9 based on the order explained earlier.

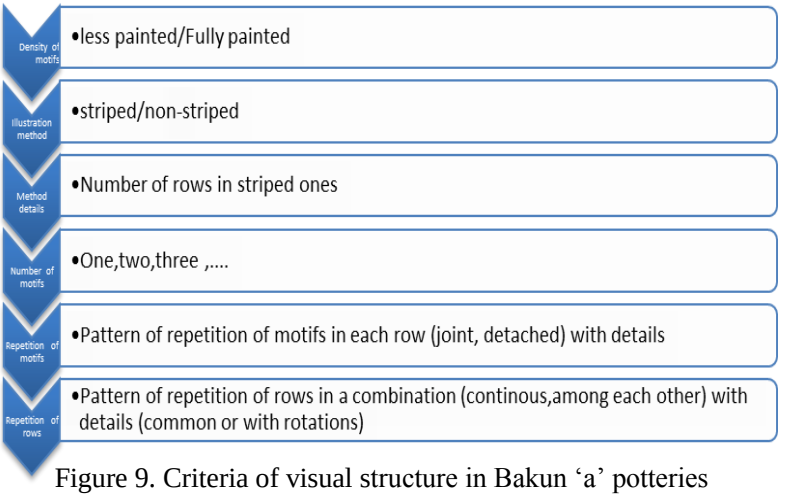

Figure 9. Criteria of visual structure in Bakun ‘a’ potteries

4.4. Classification

Painted potteries of Bakun ‘a’ can be categorized based on the visual priorities which differentiate images (fig. 10). This classification is based on available findings from the vessels whose general form could be restored with acquired pieces of pottery. This classification is performed by considering all the examples, however, some exceptions may exist.

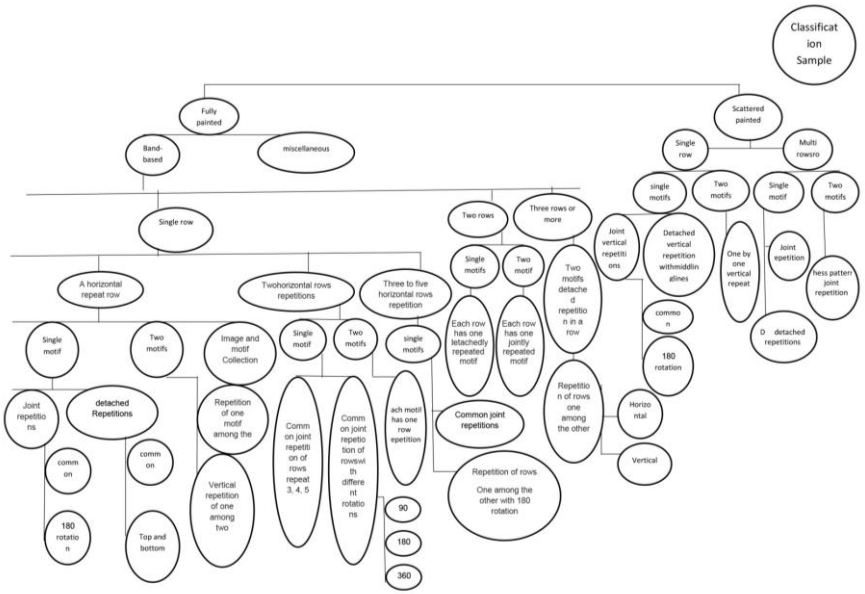

Figure 10. Classification of images in Bakun ‘a’ potteries

The number of fully painted vessels in available findings (fig. 5-8) is a lot more than less painted (fig. 4) ones. All less painted vessels are illustrated in a striped method. They are divided into single rows

and multi rows. In each category one or two motifs are used which are seen in various repetitions. There is usually a main motif in images and other motifs are added to form a combination. Joint repetition of motifs is used when they are successive (fig. 5) but in detached repetition there is either some space or there are other motifs between the motifs (fig. 7-8). With regard to the pattern of repetition of motifs, when motifs are joint and are repeated in a similar rhythm they are called common. With regard to the pattern of repetition of rows, they are common when the horizontal rows are repeated identically. The position of motifs in relation to each other is one of the differentiating visual elements in images. Repetition of rows and motifs in a row by rotating the angle is one of the prominent factors which creates diversity in images (fig.5) and single row images with two motifs repeated between each other is the most common available images and somehow indicators of this era (fig. 3b, 4a, 7 and 8). In some cases, a motif is divided into two halves and repeated with a 180 degree rotation in top and bottom (fig.3a).

Fully painted vessels are illustrated by two striped and miscellaneous methods. The number of non-striped combinations is less than 3 percent of the striped ones. It is not possible to study the structural components of these examples because of their small number for which they are not mentioned in this classification. Most of these images are located on the inner surface of vessels and achieved through findings in late 1937. Parallel undulated lines and comb motifs are the major elements of these dense circular combinations (fig.6). The different rotary structures with triple repetition of one or two

motifs (perpendicular combs) have formed most of such images. Fully painted striped combinations are divided into three categories: single rows, double rows, and triple or more rows. Diversity of repetition of rows in single row vessels has created three different groups. Vessels in the three to five row category are similar examples of Archaic Susiana. In these vessels many horizontal rows are repeated in a single stripe without any border, the motifs are usually simple (primary geometric shapes) and the original image frame surrounds them (Langsdorff and Mc Cown, 1942). Motif collection is a new term for Bakun.

5. CONCLUSION

Images of painted potteries create a combination in a frame which is based on visual qualities. Since Tal-e Bakun is an area rich in prehistoric painted potteries in Iran plateau, it was chosen as the geographical case for this study. Visual examples were gathered through the study of archaeological reports and museum observations. It is important to point out that the data of the study consist of published archaeological discoveries; more recent findings should be added to the present analysis to verify its conclusions. Bakun “a” potteries which are contemporaneous with late Fars in Fars or late Susiana in Iran's southwest chronology are quantitatively remarkable and many vessels are formally restorable. These vessels are studied with a formalist approach and as visual works in the part (shape of potteries, visual analysis and motifs)

In findings of Bakun “b”, vessel forms are limited and line as the visual element and repetition of the quality are dominant. Many images are formed by repetition of visual elements like lines and primary geometric shapes without any specific motif. A visual texture which resulted from the repetition of various lines is seen in most examples. Image frame consists of upper and lower margins with repetition of parallel horizontal lines. There is a huge difference between images of Bakun “a” and b in terms of combination skills, the creation of motifs and diversity of images. No evolutionary relevance can be suggested between these two periods even if we assume a time period as long as the middle Fars era between them. Findings of Bakun “a” have dense motifs in image frames and margins. The diversity of motifs is more than the diversity of structures and combinations. The diversity can be seen in motifs, combinations, and marginalia, application of texture and repetition of motifs. But different types of motifs are the main criterion in the creation of diversity in images of Bakun “a”. Primary visual elements such as dots, lines and simple geometric shapes are complementary elements in most cases but a few vessels are illustrated merely by such elements. Different visual textures were seen in different applications. Visual equivalence between positive and negative spaces is the unique characteristic of many images in this era. Movement and rotation usually exist in non-striped structures or examples with expressive animal motifs. Conical forms are special forms of this area. Sophisticated geometric floral, animal and human motifs have been seen in different real and abstract types. Their simplification process was done skillfully in the south and southwest of Iran's Plateau. A motif is simplified through many steps

and used as a different motif in each step. Vessels are mainly divided into less painted and fully painted based on visual analysis and determination of image priority. Images in each category are classified into sub-categories based on visual structure, structural parts and quantity, type and how motifs are repeated. The Illustrative structure is striped in more than 90 percent of available less painted vessels. Most vessels are fully painted with a striped single row combination and two motifs.

Classification of the results of visual analysis of findings of Bakun is the first step in order to identify these visual examples. This classification proposes many questions and forms many assumptions and it is a basis for further studies. The analysis method uses findings in other areas and matches results from different areas. It helps researchers obtain important achievements in relation to the visual structure of painted potteries in prehistoric Iran Plateau. Therefore, understanding the history of visual arts of a part of Iran and awareness of motifs can pave the way for creating artworks by artists in our country.

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