

The Functional and Morphological Symbolic Significance of Some Tombstones Models from the Kirklar Cemetery in Eastern Caucasus during the 14th century AH/20TH AD.

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ABSTRACT

The Functional and Morphological Symbolic Significance of Some Tombstones Models from the Kirklar Cemetery in Eastern Caucasus during the 14th century AH/20TH AD.

This paper explores and documents the aspects of public life accompanying the Islamic community during the mid-twentieth century by studying some tombstones models and how they relate to the accounts of contemporary historical records, biographies and historical geography books.

The research deals with study and publication of some tombstones models from Kirklar Cemetery in the Eastern Caucasus and how to identify their written content and decorative elements. Then the paper turns to indicate some symbolic, functional and formal Significances of the slogans on tombstones.

This paper also accompanies the clarification of the religion's opinion regarding the construction of graves and their general specifications, the reuse of tombstones located in Islamic cemeteries and their exploitation in re-history, followed by the study of the epigraphic inscriptions and decorative elements and their identification of their importance, symbolic connotations, religious purpose, political significance, administrative purpose and social role on the tombstones through contemporary historical sources during the twentieth century and keeping pace with the period of Russian annexation in the East Caucasus to the Federation.

This study is divided into two parts: the first; the descriptive study of (٤) tombstones models from the Kirklar cemetery. The second, Analytical study of the general style and distinctive characteristics in the contemporary period compared to the early Islamic era and in the middle Ages, with an exploration of artistic treatments by the Muslim maker, and the formation of artistic analysis of written elements and decorative contents, in addition to identifying the symbolic significance of the use of decorations, slogans and colors in revealing the aspects surrounding the Islamic society in the East Caucasus at the time.

Then followed by a study of Arabic calligraphy development, shapes of letters, virtuous ratio, then create a historical record of the names, titles and nicknames and using them in classifying the general features of the tombstone models during that period with some examples of illustrations and manual shape dumps.

Simplicity and scarcity of decoration were characteristic of contemporary tombstone inscriptions, which followed the path of early Islamic inscriptions, whose features were determined by the sober calligraphy and the quality of their carving by using the Arabic al-Tuluṭ and the Persian Nasta'liq script. The only feature of Arabic calligraphy at the beginning of the twentieth century on tombstones was not the only feature that determined the features of the inscriptions in the graves in the Dāgestān region, the indicators of which determined that they were free of Arabic writings

represented in (basmalah, Qur'anic verses, and supplications that the engraver replaced by the implementation of some recording phrases and figurative logos instead.

Specific models for tombstones were among the tombstones that indicated the continuity of the use of Islamic expressions in the modern era. Although its use is simple than usual, the Arabic writing style was very poor compared to the models dating back to the medieval period and the previous models. It is more correct to say that the continued circulation of Qur'anic phrases is due to the adherence of the shrine family owner's to the Islamic religious traditions, which included the basmalah and began with seeking refuge from the devil and praying for the deceased without mentioning the date and year of death.

The field indicators also identified their isolation from the total tombstones in the contemporary period by several advantages over the gravestone inscriptions. They were determined by their shortness of the natural size and their height reaching approximately 150 cm. Due to the shortness of the tombstone body, the excavator planted the root in the ground, which caused the disappearance of a large number of the Arabic script and the introductions to the surah.

The scarcity of Arabic writing had its actual causes that led to its replacement by the Persian or Turkish Dagestan language, which is the result of the Russification policy that the Russians followed to erase the Arab culture and Islamic civilization, which was encountered by the sterilization of the population and thus the erasure of Arabic writing and thus resulted in a sect of craftsmen unfamiliar with the rules of the Arabic language, this phenomenon was the reason for the presence of some extra letters in the inscription no. (4) and it may be due to the calligrapher's lack of knowledge of the Arabic language, as the letter Alif was repeated more than four times within verse 255 - Surat Al-Baqarah.

The unparalleled ingenuity shown by the sculptor in integrating Arabic, Persian, and Dagestan Turkish languages on the tombstones produced a wonderful mixture that made it distinct from the rest of the genres throughout the Islamic world. This indicator is clearly evident in the models of the tombstones understudy, which indicated the merging of Turkish and Persian letters with Arabic letters in the formation of a new language called Dagestan Turkish, which was invented by the people of Dagestan during the period of war conflict with the Russians.

They tried hard to erase the Russian language and prevent its use and try to preserve their inherited traditions by creating a language that combines the Arab, Turkish and Persian heritage, so they created the Dagestan Turkish language. The extension of the Arab lineage in Dāğestān from ancient times until the modern era was among the advantages of the analytical study on the tombstones, which revealed to us one of the oldest Arab families, which claims (Muhtadī), but the proportions of the Arab families did not prevent the presence of some Turkish and Persian names that spread in Dāğestān, such as (Ḥašnah, Karbalai, Ḥašnah, Aqā, Muhtadī, Būr-Şadaf, Qizkḫilar, Jessin).

Through extrapolation of some tombstone models, the extension of the Muhtadī family lineage was revealed in most of Kreklar cemetery gravestones, which indicates that it is the oldest Arab family of Turkish descent in the city. In addition to the above, the gravestones in Dagestan revealed to us a new feature that is distinguished from the rest of the other cemeteries, which is the extension of lineage to holy cities such as the city of Karbala, the city of Marand, the city of Ardabil, on tombstone (No. 3) to the city of Marand on the border separating Dagestan and Azerbaijan.

The ingenuity of the Muslim debate in Dagestan led him to the circulation of a special language written in Arabic letters, but its pronunciation is carried out according to the context of the word in the inscription between the letters (qaf- [ق]with three dots, kaf- [ك]topped by shad, Persian zai (ژ),

Persian jaa (چ). The advantage was that these letters also express the values and phonetic connotations on the tombstones in the Dagestan Turkish language, such as (Karbalai - pronounced Jahi Karbalai).

The ingenuity of the Muslim artist in Dagestan did not reach this point. Rather, the combination of Arabic letters and arithmetic numbers in one inscription was the product of the artistic prowess that the Muslim calligrapher reached. As it appeared on a tombstone of (Jessin Qūlī; Romanized as چسين قلبي (pl.3.) which showed the mixing of the Arabic letter (S-س) mixed with the Persian number (3). Preserving the formal signs of the inscriptions was one of the strengths urged by the artist and the calligrapher alike, which proved to us the presence of signs of ambiguity in the contents of the inscriptions on the tombstone panels.

Concerning the names, it reveals the presence of compound names that were characteristic of the Arabic writings that distinguished the tombstones in the region, which varied between; Ni'mat-Allāh, and Aqā Ğa'far; Romanized as (أقا جعفر، نعمت الله). Regarding surnames, it turns out that they follow the same custom followed in the ancient Persian and Turkish surnames, which spread since the fourth century AH and have been used until the modern era.

The decorative elements and the prominent inscriptions were the alternatives to the bas-relief sculpture due to the multiplicity of its features that were limited to resistance to the factors of time, the aesthetic aspect, being easier in engraving and decoration, and finally taking into account the shadow, light and the visual aspect to attract the eyes towards the inscriptions.

The Muslim Dagestan sculptor was very keen to stand out from his peers in creating multiple designs for letters and inscriptions and employed it to fit the writing crosses space on the horizontal, vertical and curved levels with a frame that does not deviate from the context of the written line. The calligrapher drew his letters between aṭ-Ṭuluṭ and the Persian Nasta'liq script on the scales of Arabic calligraphy; To be able to adapt the inscriptions to space on which the inscriptions are to be executed, taking into account the virtuous proportions and the method of installing the letters somewhat higher than each other.

The calligrapher in Dagestan was not just an ordinary calligrapher and an inexperienced amateur but also was a professional to the degree of creativity. He was keen to mix and overlap between the extensions of the letters and their end in an aesthetic and decorative form, which indicates the genius of the calligrapher and his ability to write and adapt Arabic letters.

In sum, from the foregoing, the contemporary gravestones of the twentieth century and the beginning of the modern era were distinguished by various characteristics, the first of which is; It follows an artistic style rarely found on the arenas of Islamic cemeteries in the Arab and Islamic world. Second; combining the pictorial scenes and the inscriptions on the tombstones surfaces, these scenes disappeared from the tombstones surfaces in the early Islamic period until the Middle Ages, but they reappeared in a new look and an unprecedented decorative form.

The sculptor was keen to circulate several slogans and pictorial drawings that expressed the function of the deceased person prior to his death, administrative positions, civil status, military aspects, jihadist slogans and war tools. The assumption of the decorative elements was not without significance, but was also subjected to an artistic design and expressed artistic connotations, religious values, a worldly goal, a military, collective, war and administrative purpose, expressing the function of the deceased person, the positions and the medals he held, the jobs he worked in, and the offices that he won the honour of guardianship.

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