

Classification and Typological Study of Safavid Lusterware and its Comparison with Blue-and-White Ceramics

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Abstract

Abstract

Among the finest artistic productions of the Safavid period is lusterware, which continued the tradition that flourished during the Middle Islamic era. Despite brief references in some sources to the distinctive nature and form of Safavid lusterware, no independent and focused study has been conducted to date. Therefore, given the formal characteristics of existing lusterware, this study aims to classify them in detail to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of their forms and then to conduct a comparative analysis with blue-and-white ceramics. To achieve this goal, the following questions have been raised: “Into what formal categories can the lusterware of the Safavid period be classified?” and “In terms of form, how do Safavid lusterware correspond to, or compare with, their contemporary blue-and-white counterparts?” In this research, data collection has been carried out through library and field methods, and the study has proceeded with a descriptive-comparative-analytical approach. The statistical population comprises 69 Safavid lusterware pieces and 40 blue-and-white vessels, which, in turn, represent 486 lusterwares and 106 blue-and-white ceramics selected as representative samples of each type based on their formal characteristics. The results of the typological study of these vessels indicate that the lusterware comprises 17 groups, which fall into two main categories: Open forms, such as dishes, bowls, and cups (Piyaleh); and closed forms, such as ewers, bottles, and pitchers. Moreover, although the two pottery types exhibit considerable typological similarity, the lusterware demonstrates greater formal diversity, whereas the blue-and-white ceramics are relatively finer in execution and somewhat larger in scale.

Keywords: Safavid Lusterware, Blue-and-White, Vessel Classification, Vessel Typology, Comparative Study.

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Introduction

With the rise of the Safavid Dynasty, a remarkable transformation occurred across all artistic and industrial fields, including pottery (Fehérvári, 1973: 134). On the one hand, Shah Abbas's comprehensive planning during this period led to a fundamental change in the production of pottery (Savory, 2010: 139); on the other hand, the potters' attention to contemporary tastes, while simultaneously maintaining a focus on indigenous elements and honoring them, resulted in the creation of potteries with distinctive characteristics of their own. The most prominent pottery types of this period include the Kubachi, Blue-and-White, Gombroon, Celadon, and Lusterware (Fehérvári, 2000: 289). In the travelogues and notes of travelers and explorers who visited Iran during the Safavid period, references are made to the production of pottery vessels across various regions of the country (Savory, 2010: 139). As Chardin, in different parts of his travelogue, refers to Iranian lusterware under the title "enameled and imitation porcelain with gilded or enameled decoration", which, according to the authors, evidently refers to lusterware when considering his description of their features. He mentions the production centers of lusterware and affirms that this pottery is among the fine handicrafts of Iranians and is widespread throughout the country (Chardin, 1956: 222, 256, 289, 290 & 222). The lusterwares of the Safavid period are recognized as a continuation of the production of lusterware from the early Islamic period and, subsequently, the middle period, which represents the era of prosperity and peak development of this art (Lane, 1971: 102). These potteries possess a distinctive brilliance, reflecting the height of artistic taste of their time. They are characterized by great delicacy and beauty and were regarded as luxury commodities in the markets of the Islamic world (Watson, 2012: 16). Among the fundamental changes that distinguish these potteries from those of earlier periods is the transformation of the brilliant golden glaze into a rich, lustrous purplish tone, which, in a sense, enhanced the luxurious appearance of the objects (Allan, 1991: 60). These potteries belong to the class of valuable wares that represented the affluent strata of society; they are often depicted in paintings, wall murals, and other visual representations, held in the hands of nobles and the elite. Their main centers of production have been attributed to cities such as Kerman, Shiraz, Mashhad, and Kashan (Canby, 2007: 157; Fehérvári, 2000: 289). Each of these researchers has made brief references to the distinctive nature of Safavid lusterware. Nevertheless, despite the considerable yet scattered remarks made by various scholars regarding this type of pottery in their works and writings, no focused or systematic research has ever been conducted on the formal classification of these wares. Therefore, the present study, for the first time, aims to examine, identify, and classify the forms of Safavid lusterwares based on their typological characteristics, and to conduct a comparative analysis with contemporary blue-and-white ceramics.

Research Questions: “Into what formal categories can the lusterware of the Safavid period be classified?” and “In terms of form, how do Safavid lusterware correspond to, or compare with, their contemporary blue-and-white counterparts?”

Research Methodology: The present research is descriptive-comparative-analytical, employing both library-based and field study approaches. In the course of this research, 486 Safavid lusterware pieces and 106 blue-and-white ceramic pieces were first selected and examined from renowned museums worldwide, as well as from collections in Iran and from archaeological excavations. From among these, 69 lusterware pieces and 40 blue-and-white vessels were chosen based on their formal characteristics and subsequently described in detail. These characteristics include the rim, diameter, base, and height of the potteries. The authors recorded the minimum and maximum dimensions of all samples for each form, calculated their averages based on the available data in catalogues, and documented them. The vessels were then classified according to their form and function, and, through library-based comparative studies, the Safavid lusterwares were analyzed in relation to their contemporary blue-and-white ceramics, with their similarities and differences systematically evaluated.

Research Background

Since lusterware is one of the most exquisite arts of the Islamic era, extensive studies have been conducted by both Iranian and non-Iranian researchers on the lusterwares of the early and middle Islamic periods, providing comprehensive information. Unfortunately, no independent, detailed research has been published on late-period lusterware and its typological analysis, except for brief references that serve as extensions of studies on early and middle Islamic lusterware. In general, the background of the present study can be divided into two main categories: 1. Historical records and written sources, and 2. Published scholarly studies. Among the European travel writers is [Chardin \(1956\)](#), who, in his reports, refers to bottles and wine cups, as well as to the centers where they were produced. In published sources, most authors and researchers, including [Ettinghausen \(1955; 1961; 1963\)](#), have examined the lusterware pieces discovered at Fustat, Egypt, dating to the Fatimid period, and have discussed the characteristics of middle-period Islamic Iranian lusterware. He also described a luster dish from the middle period, addressing the features of its decorative motifs and designs, particularly floral patterns and the types of birds commonly depicted in the middle-period Kashan lusterware. [Lane \(1971\)](#) briefly discussed the color schemes of Safavid lusterware; [Fehérvári \(1973; 2000\)](#) addressed the characteristics and external features of lusterware from the Safavid and Qajar periods, based on examples preserved in the Barlow Collection. [Allan \(1973\)](#) translated and examined the treatise of Abu al-Qasim al-Kashani but provided little analysis regarding the materials or the methods discussed in the text. [Watson \(1985\)](#)

provided an extensive classification of the chronological phases and motif characteristics of lusterwares from the early and middle Islamic periods, while his discussion of the later Safavid phase was considerably more limited. He categorized decorative styles into large- and small-scale motifs based on their geographical origin. Blair and Bloom (1994) also addressed Islamic arts and crafts, including lusterware, in both Europe and the Islamic lands, though only briefly. Porter (1995) discussed the origins of lusterware in the early Islamic centuries, identifying Egypt and Mesopotamia as its birthplaces and emphasizing that it was introduced to Iran from these regions. Grabar and Ettinghausen (2003) examined Islamic art and architecture, the emergence of Islam, and the artistic milieu of the Umayyad and Abbasid periods, as well as the post-Abbasid era, focusing on the development of decorative arts and pottery, including lusterware, from the 5th to the 13th centuries. Golombek and Mason (2014) also analyzed the social structure of Safavid society and briefly discussed various pottery types of the Safavid period, including Safavid lusterware, with illustrative examples. Likewise, Bahrami (1948), Firouz (1966), Kiani and Karimi (1985), Ettinghausen and Yarshater (2000), Tohidi (2000), Grube (2005), Pope and Ackerman (2008), and Neyestani and Rouhfar (2010) have also examined the history of lusterware production in the Islamic world and Iran, from the early and middle periods up to the Safavid era. For the Safavid period, only a limited and partial catalog has been published, offering brief descriptions of the motifs, characteristics, and external features of these wares. Only Hosseini and Farrokhfar, in an article entitled “Safavid Lusterware: Rediscovery of Form and Design”, have briefly and selectively examined twenty-one museum samples, identifying and classifying their formal and decorative characteristics. The outcome of their study was limited to the recognition of only four forms (Hosseini & Farrokhfar, 2022). Undoubtedly, however, the diversity of forms and the multiplicity of types within each category are considerably greater, and a more extensive and detailed typological study is required to provide a more accurate and reliable perspective on this art piece.

Safavid Lusterware

Safavid lusterware is a type of glazed pottery that was widespread during the Safavid period and is distinguished by its visual and technical features from earlier lusterware. The lusterware pieces of this period were produced through a specific manufacturing process: They were shaped using a stonepaste, then, after drying, the surface was coated with a transparent glaze and fired in a kiln. Thereafter, the designs and motifs were painted onto the pottery surface using tin-oxide pigments in shades of red, brown, and yellow, and the piece was then refired in a kiln under reducing or smoky (iron oxide) atmospheric conditions. As a result of the chemical interaction between the metallic

oxides and the smoke, a thin layer of metallic nanoparticles formed on the surface, producing hues ranging from golden to light reddish-brown and purplish tones, giving the vessel its distinctive brilliance (Lane, 1971: 103). It should be noted that the bodies of these vessels were typically made of dense stonepaste in diverse forms (Watson, 2012: 233; Blair & Bloom, 1994: 224). The decorative motifs primarily depict animals, birds, cypress trees, and various species of flowers, arranged in compact compositions executed in a delicate, naturalistic style. According to travelogues, several cities, including Kerman, Mashhad, Shiraz, and Kashan, served as centers of production for this ware (Fehérvári, 2000: 289).







Classification of the Forms of Safavid Lusterware

To date, no systematic classification or typological study has been conducted on the forms and shapes of Safavid lusterware. Therefore, the present research seeks to fulfill this gap. In this regard, the statistical population of the selected samples comprises 69 Safavid lusterware pieces, drawn from a total of 486 samples. For comparative purposes, 40 Safavid blue-and-white pieces were also selected. The basis of selection was the formal characteristics of each group, with priority given to samples with more complete and representative forms. The vessels of both types were drawn from major collections in Iran, such as the National Museum of Iran, the Reza Abbasi Museum, and the Glass and Ceramics Museum of Tehran, as well as from prominent international institutions including the Royal Ontario Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Louvre, the Albert Museum, the British Museum, the Ashmolean Museum, the Dallas Museum of Art, the Aga Khan Museum, and the Berlin Museum. Initially, these vessels may be divided into two major categories based on form: Open forms and closed forms (Golombek & Mason, 2014: 39 & 41). Open-form vessels have rims with a smooth or gentle curvature (Crowe, 2002: 44). Their mouth diameter is generally larger than the diameter of the base, and the shorter the height, the wider the opening. The rim of an open-form vessel is relatively broad or tends to expand outward (Ibid: 44). Examples of open forms include dish (6 samples), bowl (7 samples), cup (Piyaleh), (2 samples), cup (Finjan), (4 samples), sugar bowl (bowl and cover), (4 samples), goblet (stem cup), (4 samples), and cuplate (1 sample). Closed-form vessels, on the other hand, exhibit a rounded or bulbous profile. In creating a closed form, the main body of the vessel is first shaped, after which certain parts are trimmed to produce a flat base, upon which the principal body is then mounted. Subsequently, narrow spouts, handles, and other necessary attachments are added (Golombek, 2014: 39). Examples of closed forms include pear-shaped bottle (7 samples), bottle (2 samples), ewer (5 samples), pitcher (2 samples), spittoon (5 samples), inkpot (5 samples), Water pipe (5 samples), vase (7

samples), posset cup (2 samples), and pot (1 sample). Each of these categories can, in turn, be subdivided into several subtypes that share the same function but differ in form and size. The following sections discuss these variations in greater detail.

Dish: A vessel whose mouth diameter exceeds its height is defined as a dish (Balfet et al., 1983: 10-11). The dish represents one of the predominant open-form types of Safavid pottery (Golombek & Mason, 2014: 39). The rim diameter of Safavid luster dishes ranges from approximately 23-24 cm to 30-50 cm, about five times their height. In particular samples, the rim is slightly broadened by a few centimeters around the edges. The bases are typically flat, though in some cases they are ring-shaped. These dishes are decorated with floral, geometric, and animal motifs, demonstrating both compositional variety and stylistic refinement (Table 1; Figs. 1A-F). It appears that, based on the formal similarities between the dated blue-and-white dishes¹ of this period and Safavid lusterware, the larger luster dishes were predominantly produced during the early Safavid era and the early 10th century A.H. several huge dishes can be attributed to the late 10th century A.H., while the smaller dishes, which are more numerous, seem to have been made from the second half of the 10th century A.H. onward. In fact, this development may reflect an innovation in dining customs, as noted by Chardin, who described in his travelogue the serving of abundant meals accompanied by multiple appetizers, consisting of stews presented in about 15 to 20 small dishes (Chardin, 1956, vol. 4: 298).








Table 1: Typology of Safavid Luster Dishes (Authors, 2024).

No.	A	B	C	D	E	F
1						
	URL1	URL3	URL4	URL5	URL5	URL2

Bowl: The shape of the bowls resembles that of the dishes, differing only in general form, as the mouth diameter of the bowls is smaller than that of the dishes (Balfet et al., 1983: 10-11). Among Safavid lusterware, the bowl is among the most prevalent open-form types (Golombek & Mason, 2014: 40). The diameter of Safavid luster bowls is approximately 30 cm, with a depth of about 11 cm, and an average size of 21×10 cm. In other words, bowls are deeper and taller than dishes. A limited number of these bowls, with the characteristics mentioned above, possess ring-shaped bases measuring 3-4 cm in height. Based on the similarities observed between the Safavid blue-and-white bowls² and the luster bowls of this period among extant samples, the most common type of bowl was highly rounded and conical, with a narrow rim and a mouth that flares outward. A limited number of luster bowls have diameters ranging from approximately 10 to 45 cm, making them somewhat larger than the other samples. In general, the



Safavid luster bowls are simple in form, footed, with convex bodies and outwardly turned, flattened rims. These bowls can be divided into seven distinct types, as clearly illustrated in Table 2, Figs. 2 A-G.

Table 2: Typology of Safavid Luster Bowls (Authors, 2024).

No.	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
2							
	URL2	URL2	URL5	URL2	URL5	URL5	URL5

Cup (Piyaleh): The cup (Piyaleh) belongs to the open-form category (Golombek & Mason, 2014: 39). The decorative patterns on the Safavid luster cups are similar to those on the bowls, differing only in size. Their height ranges from 6 to 7 cm, and their diameter from 7 to 8.7 cm. These cups are adorned with arabesque and floral motifs (Ibid: 2024), (Table 3; Figs. 3A-B).

Table : Typology of Safavid Luster Cups (Piyalehs), (Authors, 2024).

No.	A	B
3		
	URL4	URL6





Cup (Finjan): The Safavid cup (Finjan) belongs to the open-form category (Golombek & Mason, 2014: 40-41). The luster cups were also made in an open form, featuring vertical rims, wide mouths, convex bodies, and no handles. These vessels are very similar in shape to the piyalehs (small bowls); however, despite being a new social phenomenon³, their differences lie primarily in size and function. Their height generally ranges from 4 to 4.5 cm, and their diameter from 6 to 6.8 cm. They are decorated with geometric and floral motifs (Table 4, Cup (Finjan); Figs. 4A-D) and can be classified into two types: Large and small (Ibid: 2024). The larger cups (Finjans), produced in the early Safavid period, were used for coffee consumption. Over time, as people realized that excessive coffee drinking caused sleeplessness, the size of the cups gradually decreased, and their use became less frequent (Chardin, 1956: 275-276). In fact, the production of small cups for drinking coffee by Safavid potters can be regarded as relatively innovative (Matthee, 2005: 148).

Table 4: Typology of Safavid Luster Cups (Finjans), (Authors, 2024).

No.	A	B	C	D
4				
	URL6	URL4	URL5	URL6

Sugar Bowl (Bowl and Cover)⁴: The Safavid sugar bowl belongs to the open-form category (Golombek & Mason, 2014: 39). The luster sugar bowls were similarly produced with convex or curvilinear bodies and wide mouths. In some examples, the rim curves outward, while in others, it inclines inward and is fitted with a lid. These vessels are handleless and covered, and their exterior surfaces are often decorated with vegetal motifs. The height of the sugar bowls ranges from 7 to 11.8 cm, and their diameter from 8.4 to 11.7 cm (Table 5; Figs. 5A-D).

Table 5: Typology of Safavid Luster Sugar Bowls (Bowls & Covers), (Authors, 2024).

No.	A	B	C	D
5				
	URL4	URL4	URL5	URL4


Goblet (Stem Cup): A goblet (stem cup) is defined as a vessel with a wide mouth, no neck, and a rim that turns vertically outward. It typically features a convex or curvilinear body and a relatively tall, broad foot (Balfet et al., 1983: 12–14). The goblets (stem cups) belong to the open-form category (Golombek & Mason, 2014: 39), and the Safavid luster samples generally conform to this description. Their height ranges from 5 to 6.8 cm, and their diameter from 5 to 6 cm. The vessels are decorated with vegetal and geometric motifs (Table 6; Figs. 6 A-D).

Table 6: Typology of Safavid Luster Goblets (Stem Cups), (Authors, 2024).

No.	A	B	C	D
6				
	URL4	URL4	URL4	URL4








Cuplate: A cuplate is defined as a tall, slightly tapering vessel of truncated conical form, without a neck, featuring an outwardly turned rim and a ring-shaped base (Balfet et al., 1983: 17-18). The cuplate belongs to the open-form category (Golombek & Mason, 2014: 39), and the Safavid luster samples conform fully to this description. The height of these cuplates is approximately 7 cm, and the diameter is likewise 7 cm. The exterior surfaces are decorated with vegetal and geometric motifs (Table 7; Fig. 7 A).

Table 7: Typology of Safavid Luster Cuplates (Authors, 2024).

No.	A
7	
	URL1



Pear-Shaped Bottle: The Safavid pear-shaped bottle belongs to the closed-form category and is characterized by its large dimensions (Golombek & Mason, 2014: 41). These vessels were likely used for storing and elegantly dispensing liquids (Golombek, 1999: 164). The curvature of the bodies of Safavid pear-shaped bottles varies considerably. The body first swells outward, then narrows inward toward the neck. Their heights range from 30 to 53 cm, and their widths from 27 to 43 cm. All samples feature a narrow mouth, a long, slender neck, and a pear-shaped body resting on a broad base. The pear-shaped bottles were made without handles and appear to have been produced in large quantities. For decoration, their surfaces were embellished with vegetal, arabesque, and animal motifs (Table 8; Figs. 8 A-G).

Table 8: Typology of Safavid Luster Pear-Shaped Bottles (Authors, 2024).

No.	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
8							
	URL5	URL5	URL6	URL4	URL1	URL4	URL5

Bottle⁵: The bottle is another closed-form vessel type commonly used in the Safavid period (Golombek & Mason, 2014: 41). The Safavid luster bottles can be classified, based on the shape of their bodies, into two main categories: Pear-shaped bottles and bulbous, turnip-shaped bottles. Their principal differences lie in the neck and base design. The pear-shaped bottles feature relatively narrow and tall necks, or in some cases, short narrow necks with wide mouths; whereas the bulbous turnip-shaped bottles possess very long, slender necks with small openings. The height of these bottles ranges from 15 to 38 cm, and their diameter from 7.6 to 10 cm. This vessel type is decorated with vegetal and geometric motifs (Table 9; Figs. 9 A-B).

Table 9: Typology of Safavid Luster Bottles (Authors, 2024).

No.	A	B
9		
	URL3	URL4

Ewer: The Safavid ewers are closed-form vessels, predominantly spherical or pear-shaped. They possess either long or short necks with narrow mouths (Golombek & Mason, 2014: 41). Since luster ewers, like bottles, functioned primarily as pouring vessels, their necks are generally shorter than those of bottles, while their mouths are usually wider. The pear-shaped ewers feature a reversed or L-shaped handle attached to the shoulder and the rim. The spout, affixed to the shoulder and body, extends upward

following a slight curve, and in some examples, molded rings appear beneath the mouth. These ewers measure 17-23 cm in height and 11-17 cm in diameter. The spherical ewers are characterized by short, wide necks with slightly turned-out rims. Their handles, which are also curved or L-shaped, connect the shoulder to the edge, and in some cases, the vessels lack handles entirely. The spouts are typically straight and slightly conical. Spherical ewers measure 20-22 cm in height and 11-17 cm in diameter. Safavid luster ewers exist in five distinct types; the majority are uncovered, though some examples include lids. Their surfaces are decorated with vegetal and animal motifs. It appears that the form of these vessels was inspired by contemporary metalwork, given the strong resemblance between these potteries and metal ewers of the period (Canby, 2007: 27), (Table 10; Figs. 10 A-E; Table 11; Figs. 11 A-B).

Table 10: Typology of Safavid Luster Ewers (Authors, 2024).










No.	A	B	C	D	E
10					
	URL10	URL7	URL4	URL11	URL5

Table 11: Safavid Metal Ewers (Authors, 2024).

No.	A	B
11		
	URL5	URL5






Pitcher: The Safavid pitchers exhibit an open form (Golombek, 2014: 41). These vessels possess narrow necks, wide mouths, and pear-shaped bodies, and are equipped with a single handle. The handle is attached at one end to the body and at the other to the rim or neck, with a narrow lip for pouring liquids. The outer surface of these potteries is decorated with vegetal and geometric motifs. The height of the pitchers ranges from 14.3 to 16 cm, and their diameter from 10.54 to 12 cm (Table 12; Figs. 12 A-B).

Table 12: Typology of Safavid Luster Pitchers (Authors, 2024).

No.	A	B
12		
	URL7	URL5






Spittoon: The spittoon is a vessel designed for disposing of saliva and chest phlegm (Dehkhoda, 1995, vol. 9: 13730). Traditionally, ash was placed at the bottom of the vessel before use (Jamaalzadeh, 2020: 221). It appears that during the Safavid period, the spittoon was not exclusively reserved for royalty or the nobility; over time, it came to be used by various social classes as part of proper etiquette and for health and hygiene (Ahmadzadeh, 2023: 12). Hence, the common misconception that the spittoon was used only by idle or upper-class individuals is inaccurate (Ibid: 19). The Safavid spittoons exhibit a closed form (Golombek & Mason, 2014: 39). The luster spittoons also display a closed shape, with bulbous bodies, relatively short and narrow necks, and wide mouths. In some samples, precious metals such as gold or silver were used to create and attach lids and handles. Most luster spittoons are nearly uniform in size, though a few larger specimens measuring 17-18 cm in diameter and similar in shape are exceptions. The average diameter is 12-13 cm, and the height ranges between 10 and 14 cm, with a mean of 12-13 cm. The exterior surfaces are decorated with vegetal, arabesque, and animal motifs (Table 13; Figs. 13 A-E). Based on dated blue-and-white prototypes with similar boat-like shapes, it may be inferred that the Safavid luster spittoons were produced during the first half of the 17th century (11th century A.H.). In the second half of the same century, Safavid potters gradually abandoned the boat-shaped profile, retaining only the slight curvature of the vessel's walls.

Table 13: Typology of Safavid Luster Spittoons (Authors, 2024).

No.	A	B	C	D	E
13					
	URL4	URL6	URL8	URL4	URL5


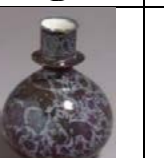



Inkpot: The inkpots are of a closed form (Golombek & Mason, 2014: 41) and resemble spittoons in shape, differing primarily in function⁷, as they were used for writing purposes (Golombek, 1999: 82). Their small and closed mouths clearly indicate this specific use. The luster inkpots possess bulbous bodies and short necks (Allan, 1991: 56). Most examples are of relatively uniform size, with diameters ranging from 10 to 15 cm and heights from 10 to 14 cm, with an average height of approximately 12-13 cm. Based on the samples examined, the inkpots can be classified into three types, each with vegetal and geometric motifs on their surfaces. Some damaged samples were repaired with metals such as silver, bronze, or brass, restored to their original forms, and subsequently reused (Table 14; Figs. 14 A-E).

Table 14: Typology of Safavid Luster Inkpots (Authors, 2024).

No.	A	B	C	D	E
14					
	URL6	URL6	URL4	URL5	URL7

Water pipe: The Water pipe represents a social phenomenon associated with tobacco consumption, and according to available evidence, it did not exist before the Safavid period. The Safavid Water pipe is considered a closed-form vessel (Golombek & Mason, 2014: 41). The luster Water pipes also exhibit a closed form, generally vase-shaped, with pear-shaped, spherical, or bulbous bodies, narrow and short necks, and relatively constricted mouths upon which the fire bowl was placed. A tube or stem is attached to the body of the vessel, and in some instances, more than one tube is present. The diameters of these vessels range from 7 to 14 cm, and their heights from 12 to 23 cm. Based on the available specimens, the luster Water pipe can be classified into five types, all of which are decorated with vegetal and geometric motifs (Table 15; Figs. 15 A-G).








Table 15: Typology of Safavid Luster Water pipes (Authors, 2024).

No.	A	B	C	D	E
15					
	URL4	URL4	URL4	URL4	URL4

Vase: The Safavid vases are of a closed form (Golombek & Mason, 2014: 41). The Safavid luster vases likewise exhibit a closed shape, displaying varied body types and diverse dimensions. They were produced with wide mouths, short or tall necks, cylindrical or spherical bodies, and either tall or short bases. The mouth diameter is generally smaller than the body diameter, though in some cases the mouth is wider and thicker. The diameter of the simpler cylindrical and spherical vases ranges from 5 to 12 cm, and their height from 11 to 29 cm. Several luster vases, similar to the Safavid blue-and-white samples, take the form of tulip-shaped vessels, which Golombek identified as “tulip vases” (Ibid: 44). These vases feature one to four tulip-shaped spouts attached to the body for holding flowers. Their bodies are convex and egg-shaped, with long necks and broad, open mouths. Their diameters range from 7 to 14 cm, and their heights from 20 to 23 cm. It appears that some of these vases originally served other functions, such as Water pipes, which, after being damaged and repaired with metals like bronze or



brass, were repurposed into multi-mouthed vases (Table 16; Figs. 16 A-G). In general, the vases are decorated with vegetal and animal motifs.

Table 16: Typology of Safavid Luster Vases (Authors, 2024).

No.	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
16							
	URL5	URL3	URL4	URL9	URL5	URL5	URL5


Posset Cup: The Safavid posset cups are of a closed form (Golombek & Mason, 2014: 39). The luster posset cups likewise exhibit a closed shape, with spherical bodies, relatively tall necks, wide mouths, and ring bases. Each vessel possesses a small, cylindrical, and moderately tall spout. On the body, there is typically one large handle or, in some cases, several smaller ones, along with a small lid that opens from the top. The height of these teapots ranges from 9.9 to 14.3 cm, and their diameter from 10.6 to 19.7 cm (Table 17; Figs. 17A-C).

Table 17: Typology of Safavid Luster Posset Cup (Authors, 2024).

No.	A	B
17		
	URL5	URL4

Pot: The Safavid pots are of a closed form (Golombek & Mason, 2014: 41). The Safavid lusterware samples likewise display a closed shape, featuring pear-shaped bodies, narrow and elongated necks, and slender, elongated spouts with a single handle attached to the body. The handle connects from one side of the body to the rim of the vessel. These potteries are lidded and decorated with vegetal motifs. The pots are 28 cm high and 9 cm in diameter (Table 18; Fig. 18 A).

Table 18: Typology of Safavid Luster Pots (Authors, 2024).

No.	A
18	
	URL11

Typology of Safavid Blue-and-White Ceramics

The blue-and-white ceramics are among the most distinguished vessels of the Safavid period. This stylistic tradition continued into the Qajar era, though the blue pigment

gradually shifted to a deep lapis tone (Golombek & Mason, 1996: 13). During the reign of Shah Abbas, I, Safavid potters succeeded in producing a highly white, semi-translucent body that closely resembled Chinese porcelain paste (Golombek *et al.*, 2001: 207). In fact, the efforts of potters producing blue-and-white ceramics represented both an imitation of and a competition with Chinese blue-and-white porcelain, which emerged amid political tensions and the disruption of diplomatic relations between Iran and China. Consequently, with the cessation of porcelain exports to Iran, this artistic and technical rivalry intensified (Crowe, 2002: 6; Golombek & Mason, 2014: 27). In the late 10th century A.H., the production of semi-translucent potteries began in Yazd, characterized by a soft paste and decorations reminiscent of Ming-period porcelains, though of superior quality, as the ornamentation was executed in two pigments: Blue and black (Golombek, 1999: 26). The Safavid blue-and-white ceramics were of high quality, so even the ordinary pieces were comparable to Chinese porcelain. Despite their derivation from Chinese prototypes, these vessels were fully harmonized with the artistic spirit and aesthetic conventions of the Safavid period (Pope & Ackerman, 2008, vol. 4: 1877). The cities of Kerman and Mashhad may be identified as the principal centers of production for this type of pottery (Golombek & Mason, 2014: 173). The potters advanced their craft to the point that they even imitated Chinese marks and inscriptions on their vessels (Golombek, 1999: 57). The blue-and-white vessels feature a variety of decorative motifs, including floral, figural, animal, and geometric designs (Pope & Ackerman, 2008, vol. 4: 1877), and exhibit diverse forms that may be classified into two main categories: Open and closed types. The open-form vessels include: Dishes (2 samples), (Table 19; Figs. 1A-B), bowls (2 samples), (Table 19; Figs. 1B-C), cups (Piyaleh), (2 samples), (Table 19; Figs. 1E-F), cups (Finjan), (1 sample), (Table 19; Fig. 2A), sugar bowls (bowl and cover), (1 sample), (Table 19; Fig. 2B), goblets (stem cup), (1 sample), (Table 19; Fig. 2C), and cuplates (1 sample), (Table 19; Fig. 2D). The closed-form vessels consist of: Pear-shaped cups (6 samples), (Table 20; Figs. 1A-F), bottles (1 sample), (Table 20; Fig. 2A), ewers (5 samples), (Table 20; Figs. 2B-F), pitchers (2 samples), (Table 20; Figs. 3A-B), spittoons (3 samples), (Table 20; Figs. 3C-E), inkpots (2 samples), (Table 20; Figs. 4A-B), water pipes (3 samples), (Table 20; Figs. 4C-E), vases (6 samples), (Table 20; Figs. 5A-F), and posset cups (2 samples), (Table 20; Figs. 6A-B).

Comparative Study of Safavid Lusterware and Blue-and-White Ceramics

The comparative analysis of the characteristic forms of Safavid lusterware and blue-and-white ceramics reveals that these categories encompass multiple types that exhibit considerable similarities in shape and function, while only minor differences are discernible between them. In this study, the term “form” refers to the external

Table 19: Typology of Closed-Form Blue-and-White Ceramics (Authors, 2024).











No.	Dish		Bowl		Cup (Piyaleh)	
	A	B	C	D	E	F
1						
	URL5	URL5	URL4	URL4	URL4	URL4
2	Cup (Finjan)		Sugar Bowl (Bowl & Cover)		Goblet (Stem Cup)	
	A	B	C		D	
2						
	URL4	URL4	URL4		URL4	





Table 20: Typology of Open-Form Blue-and-White Ceramics (Authors, 2024).

No.	Pear-shaped Cup					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
1						
	URL5	URL4	URL4	URL5	URL4	URL4
2	Bottle			Ewer		
	A	B	C	D	E	F
2						
	URL4	URL4	URL4	URL4	URL4	URL4
3	Pitcher			Spittoon		
	A	B	C	D	E	
3						
	URL4	URL4	URL4	URL4	URL3	
4	Inkpot			Waterpipe		
	A	B	C	D	E	
4						
	URL4	URL3	URL4	URL4	URL4	
5	Vase					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
5						
	URL4	URL5	URL4	URL4	URL4	URL4
6	Posset Cup			B		
	A			B		
6						
	URL5			URL4		

appearance and overall configuration of the pottery. Most Safavid lusterware and blue-and-white ceramics are utilitarian vessels such as dishes, bowls, pear-shaped cups, spittoons, inkpots, and similar items. It appears that these ceramics were produced to meet the practical demands of local and regional consumers, as well as for export to China and other territories beyond Safavid Iran. The forms and types of pottery thus evolved to meet the needs of daily life, reflecting a close connection between pottery production and the social life, livelihoods, beliefs, and cultural values of the Safavid people. Moreover, it is likely that most workshops operated under local patronage, and that the potters possessed precise knowledge of their patrons' aesthetic preferences, as well as the functional and economic expectations of their clientele (Ghochani, 1985: 5-6). Therefore, it is conceivable that this relationship also extended to the transregional trade in blue-and-white ceramics, which may have contributed to the widespread adoption of similar vessel forms across different centers of production. In addition to their refined craftsmanship, aesthetic appeal, and the use of floral, arabesque, animal, and occasionally geometric motifs in both Safavid lusterware and blue-and-white ceramics, one may also observe shared typological characteristics among these wares, particularly the prevalence of curvilinear pear-shaped and bulbous forms, produced in both elongated and compact variations. The functional nature of these potteries contributed to the relative stability of their forms, resulting in limited formal innovation. Among the mentioned vessel types, the following forms can be identified:

Dish: The lusterware and blue-and-white dishes of the Safavid period are open-form vessels, generally featuring a flat base, occasionally slightly concave, and a wide mouth diameter (Table 21; Figs. A-B; C-D).

Table 21: Comparative Analysis of the Form of Safavid Lusterware and Blue-and-White Dishes (Authors, 2024).

A	B	C	D
			
URL1	URL5	URL2	URL5

Bowl: The form of Safavid lusterware and blue-and-white bowls, both of which belong to the open-form category, is somewhat similar to that of dishes, differing mainly in that bowls have a smaller mouth diameter, greater depth, and a proportionally higher height. The bowls are generally plain, with ring bases, outwardly flaring and flat rims, and convex or vertically rising bodies (Table 22; Figs. A-B; C-D).

Table 22: Comparative Analysis of the Form of Safavid Lusterware and Blue-and-White Dishes (Authors, 2024).

A	B	C	D
			
URL5	URL4	URL2	URL4

Cup (Piyaleh): The lusterware and blue-and-white cups (piyalehs) of the Safavid period are open-form vessels, resembling bowls in shape but smaller in size, and cups (finjans) in proportion but larger in scale. These vessels feature a concave body, a wide mouth, and a base of smaller diameter than the opening (Table 23; Figs. A-B).

Table 23: Comparative Analysis of the Form of Safavid Lusterware and Blue-and-White Cups (Piyalehs), (Authors, 2024).

A	B
	
URL4	URL4

Cup (Finjan): The Safavid lusterware and blue-and-white cups (finjans) are open-form vessels, resembling small cups (Piyalehs). A convex body, vertical rim, and wide mouth characterize them. One minor distinction between the two types is that the bodies of blue-and-white cups exhibit slightly greater curvature than those of the lusterware samples. In general, both types are handle less and lack any additional attachments (Table 24; Figs. A-B).

Table 24: Comparative Analysis of the Form of Safavid Lusterware and Blue-and-White Cups (Finjans), (Authors, 2024).

A	B
	
URL4	URL4



Sugar Bowl (Bowl and Cover): The Safavid lusterware and blue-and-white sugar bowls (bowl and cover) are open-form vessels with convex or curved bodies and wide mouths. Some examples feature long necks, while others have shorter ones. The rims of these bowls are generally flared outward, though in some cases they curve slightly inward. These sugar bowls are handle less and fitted with lids (Table 25; Figs. A-B).

Table 25: Comparative Analysis of the Form of Safavid Lusterware and Blue-and-White Sugar Bowls (Bowl & Cover), (Authors, 2024).

A	B
	
URL5	URL4



Goblet (Stem Cup): The Safavid lusterware and blue-and-white goblets (stem cups) are open-form vessels of approximately equal height, featuring short bases and broad bottoms. The luster goblets have convex or slightly concave bodies, wide mouths, no necks, and upright rims flaring outward. In contrast, the blue-and-white goblets possess straight, uncurved bodies with wide mouths and scalloped rims (Table 26; Figs. A-B).

Table 26: Comparative Analysis of the Form of Safavid Lusterware and Blue-and-White Goblet (Stem Cup), (Authors, 2024).

A	B
	
URL4	URL4











Cuplate: The Safavid lusterware and blue-and-white cuplates are open-form vessels, tall and slender, neckless, with outward-flaring rims and ring bases. The distinction lies in the blue-and-white samples, whose rims are broader and turned outward, often square or polygonal in shape (Table 27; Figs. A-B).

Table 27: Comparative Analysis of the Form of Safavid Lusterware and Blue-and-White Cuplates (Authors, 2024).

A	B
	
URL11	URL11

Pear-Shaped Cup: The Safavid lusterware and blue-and-white pear-shaped cups are closed-form vessels exhibiting diverse shapes, typically featuring pear-shaped bodies and narrow, elongated necks. These necks are sometimes simple and singular, and in other cases double-necked, positioned near the rim of the vessel. The mouths are generally plain and narrow, and in some samples, metallic lids made of silver or bronze are attached. Notably, all pear-shaped cups of both pottery types are handle less (Table 28; Figs. A-B; C-D; E-F; H-G; I-J).

Table 28: Comparative Analysis of the Form of Safavid Lusterware and Blue-and-White Pear-Shaped Cups (Authors, 2024).

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
									
URL4	URL4	URL1	URL5	URL5	URL4	URL4	URL4	URL5	URL4

Bottle: The Safavid lusterware and blue-and-white bottles, used for drinking and washing purposes, are closed-form vessels resembling pitchers, with curved, bulbous bodies, slender, elongated necks, and occasionally shorter, wider necks with broad mouths (Table 29; Figs. A-B).

Table 29: Comparative Analysis of the Form of Safavid Lusterware and Blue-and-White Pear-Shaped Bottles (Authors, 2024).

A	B
	
URL4	URL4

Ewer: The Safavid lusterware and blue-and-white ewers are closed-form vessels, typically characterized by rounded and bulbous bodies, slender necks, and wide mouths. Attached to their bodies are narrow, curved handles and slender spouts, which are sometimes elongated and in other cases shorter. Most of these ewers lack lids, though a limited number have metal covers, commonly of bronze (Table 30; Figs. A-B; C-D; E-F; G-H; I-J).



Table 30: Comparative Analysis of the Form of Safavid Lusterware and Blue-and-White Ewers (Authors, 2024).

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
									
URL7	URL4	URL10	URL4	URL11	URL4	URL4	URL4	URL5	URL4

Pitcher: The Safavid lusterware and blue-and-white pitchers are closed-form vessels featuring convex bodies, necks narrower than the body, and wide mouths. The handle, often modeled in the shape of an animal, such as a dragon, is attached to one side of the body and, at the other end, is connected to the mouth or neck of the vessel. A narrow lip is also provided for pouring liquids (Table 31; Figs. A-B)





Spittoon: The Safavid lusterware and blue-and-white spittoons are closed-form, turnip-shaped vessels with narrow, short necks and wide mouths. In some instances,

Table 31: Comparative Analysis of the Form of Safavid Lusterware and Blue-and-White Pitchers (Authors, 2024).

A	B
	
URL5	URL4


they were fitted with lids and handles crafted from precious metals such as gold and silver, which enhanced their decorative elegance (Table 32; Figs. A-B; C-D; E-F).

Table 32: Comparative Analysis of the Form of Safavid Lusterware and Blue-and-White Spittoons (Authors, 2024).

A	B	C	D	E	F
					
URL4	URL4	URL1	URL5	URL5	URL4

Inkpot: The Safavid lusterware and blue-and-white inkpots are closed-form vessels similar in shape to spittoons, with the principal difference being their smaller dimensions, suggesting their use for holding ink. These inkpots feature turnip-shaped bodies, short necks, and narrow or closed mouths (Table 33; Figs. A-B; C-D).







Table 33: Comparative Analysis of the Form of Safavid Lusterware and Blue-and-White Inkpots (Authors, 2024).

A	B	C	D
			
URL7	URL4	URL4	URL3

Water pipe: The Safavid lusterware and blue-and-white water pipes are closed-form vessels shaped like pitchers, featuring pear-shaped, globular bodies with narrow necks that open into wide mouths, upon which the charcoal bowl was placed. The pipe apertures are located on the body, and the stems were attached directly to the vessel wall. It is noteworthy that in some examples, these water pipes possess two, three, or even four pipes (Table 34; Figs. A-B; C-D; E-F).













Vase: The Safavid lusterware and blue-and-white vases are closed-form vessels exhibiting diverse dimensions and varied body shapes. Some possess cylindrical or

Table 34: Comparative Analysis of the Form of Safavid Lusterware and Blue-and-White Water pipes (Authors, 2024).

A	B	C	D	E	F
					
URL4	URL4	URL4	URL4	URL5	URL4

rounded bodies, with bases that are either proportionate to the body and mouth or significantly smaller, resulting in reduced stability when standing upright. Other vases feature wide mouths with short or moderately tall necks, forming an overall tulip-like silhouette. In particular samples, two, three, or even four tulip-shaped spouts have been added to the body (Table 35; Figs. A-B; C-D; E-F; G-H; I-K; L-M). It is noteworthy that some of these vases originally served as a Water pipe and, after damage, were repaired with metals such as bronze or brass and converted into vases (Table 35; Fig. M).

Table 35: Comparative Analysis of the Form of Safavid Lusterware and Blue-and-White Vases (Authors, 2024).

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L	M
											
URL3	URL4	URL9	URL4	URL5	URL4	URL5	URL5	URL5	URL4	URL1	URL4

Posset Cup: The posset cups of these two pottery types are closed-form vessels with convex or curved bodies, wide mouths, flat bases, and ring-shaped feet. One of the main distinctions between luster posset cups and their blue-and-white counterparts lies in the presence of long or short necks extending to the rim in the former, which are absent in the latter. Furthermore, the handles of luster posset cups are curved and attached to the side of the vessel, whereas in blue-and-white samples, the semi-circular handles are joined at two points and positioned above the body. Both types feature small, relatively elongated spouts attached to the vessel's body (Table 36; Figs. A-B).

Table 36: Comparative Analysis of the Form of Safavid Lusterware and Blue-and-White Posset Cups (Authors, 2024).

A	B
	
URL5	URL5

Pot: The characteristics of Safavid luster pots have been fully described above (Table 18; Fig. 1A). It is noteworthy that among the existing examples of blue-and-white ceramics, no corresponding pot samples have been identified for comparative analysis.

Conclusion

Lusterware is a type of glazed pottery regarded as among the most exquisite productions of the Safavid period. The blue-and-white ceramics, likewise belonging to this era, were in many cases either imitations of or inspired by Chinese blue-and-white porcelain, created in direct artistic and commercial competition with it. Through the study of the form and decorative motifs of Safavid lusterware and blue-and-white ceramics, it becomes possible to discern the underlying aesthetic and intellectual concepts of the time, revealing both differences and similarities in the artistic mindset of producers and in the demands and tastes of consumers of that period. Accordingly, the needs of society and the changes that occurred during the Safavid period gave rise to new cultural patterns, reflected in consumer behavior—for instance, the introduction of new foods and beverages—which directly influenced the creation of new vessel forms. For example, the spittoon was used not only by the nobility but also by the general public, while the introduction and consumption of coffee, along with the use of the Water pipe, led to the emergence of coffeehouses, which became centers of recreation, social exchange, and even collective activity. Therefore, the social, cultural, and economic developments of the Safavid period are clearly reflected in these potteries. According to research on Safavid lusterware housed in various museums, these vessels comprise 17 distinct types, which can be categorized into two main groups: Open and closed forms.

Among the open, utilitarian forms, dishes are the most notable, existing in large, medium, and small sizes. Based on their formal similarities to dated blue-and-white ceramics, the larger dishes appear to belong to the early Safavid period, the medium-sized dishes to the mid-Safavid era, and the smaller dishes to the late Safavid period. This progression likely reflects changes in dietary customs; by the end of the Safavid era, the variety of foods increased, naturally leading to a greater use of smaller dishes on the table. Bowls represent one of the most abundant pottery productions of the Safavid period and can be classified into seven distinct types. Based on the formal similarities observed between Safavid blue-and-white and luster bowls, the most common type is a highly rounded, conical bowl with a narrow rim that flares slightly at the mouth. The cups (Piyaleh), which are essentially smaller in scale than the bowls, share similar characteristics, and a relatively large number of these samples have survived to the present. The cups (Finjan) are very similar to the cups (Piyaleh), differing only in their dimensions. Over time, however, their size gradually decreased as people realized that excessive coffee consumption could cause sleeplessness, leading to the use of smaller cups. The sugar bowls (bowl and cover) were used both with and without lids, while the goblets (stem cup) featured relatively short stems, and the simple cuplates were formed as truncated cones.

The closed utilitarian forms include the pear-shaped cup, one of the most abundant pottery types of the Safavid period, produced in various sizes without handles. The bottle, a widely used form represented by multiple variants, and the ewer, found in five distinct types, generally with handles and mostly without lids, though a few samples possess metal covers. The pitcher exhibits a relatively uniform appearance, while the spittoon, based on dated blue-and-white parallels with boat-shaped, raised bodies, appears to have been produced primarily in the first half of the 17th century. By the second half of the same century, Safavid potters gradually abandoned the boat-shaped form, retaining only a slight curvature in the wall profile as a vestige of the earlier design. The inkpot, resembling the spittoon in form, was produced in three variants. The Water pipe, with a gourd-shaped body, was classified into five distinct types, and the vase exhibited a remarkable variety of forms, the most distinctive being the tulip-shaped design. The posset cup was available in both lidded and unlidded versions, while a single surviving sample represents the pot. Based on the available evidence, open-form vessels such as dishes, bowls, and cups (piyaleh) were produced and used more extensively than other types. In contrast, among the closed forms, the pear-shaped cup, ewer, spittoon, and Water pipe were the most frequently manufactured and utilized. This distribution of forms reflects the cultural, social, and economic conditions of the Safavid era.

Furthermore, based on the comparative analysis and results from the study of Safavid lusterware and blue-and-white ceramics, it can be concluded that both groups of products exhibit high technical quality and share similar functional and decorative characteristics. These similarities extend not only to their aesthetic motifs but also to their forms and proportions. Both types are adorned with vegetal, arabesque, geometric, and animal designs. Among the shared utilitarian open forms, one may include dishes, bowls, cups (piyaleh), cups (finjan), goblets (stem cup), sugar bowls (bowl and cover), and cuplates, while the closed forms comprise the pear-shaped cup, bottle, ewer, spittoon, inkpot, posset cup, pitcher, Water pipe, and vase. The only exclusive closed form among lusterware is the pot, which does not appear in the blue-and-white category, likely because of its distinct cultural function specific to Iranian social practices. It appears that the limited quantity of both types, typically associated with the upper social classes, was determined by the demands and preferences of elite patrons. A notable difference between the two, however, lies in their fabrication and decoration: The blue-and-white ceramics tend to display greater delicacy and precision in both form and ornamentation. This aspect falls beyond the principal scope of this discussion.

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Author Contributions

Solmaz Mansouri conceived and conducted the study and drafted the manuscript. Ahmad Salehi Kakhki and Mitra Shateri supervised the research, provided expert guidance, and critically reviewed and edited the manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no financial, personal, or professional conflicts of interest related to this study.

Endnote

1. Lisa Golombek (1999: 422) has outlined the defining features of the dated blue-and-white ceramic wares.
2. The typological and decorative characteristics of the blue-and-white bowls, as noted above, are comprehensively described in Golombek's study (1999: 57-60, 416).
3. Coffee was imported from the lands along the Red Sea coast and was initially distributed throughout the Ottoman Empire from Yemen (Matthee, 2005: 6). By 1638, it was being sold in Venice, having first been used for medicinal purposes before becoming an enigmatic stimulant favored by Sufi mystics. Over time, coffee evolved into a widely traded commodity by the late 16th century, and coffeehouses began to appear throughout the regions bordering the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean, and inland territories (Ibid: 148).
4. Olearius stated that the Persians never sweetened their coffee, but they always drank their tea with sugar. He refers to the Persian custom of holding a lump of sugar in the mouth while sipping the tea over it (Olearius, 1990: 599).
5. The bottle was used for pouring liquids (Dekhoda, 1995, vol. 4: 4864; Moein, 2002: 180).
6. The ewer is a spouted vessel used for wine, ablution, hand washing, and purification. In lexicographical sources, this form is also referred to by various terms such as ābrīz, ābdastān, tāmūrah, muṭahharah, and kūzeh (Dekhoda, 1995, vol. 1: 312; Moein, 2002: 39).
7. The inkpot was used for holding ink (Dekhoda, 1995, vol. 7: 11156; Moein, 2002: 471).
8. The introduction of tobacco into Iran dates approximately to the 10th century A.H. (around 1600 C.E.). This commodity was imported from India, where it had been traded by the Portuguese (Matthee, 2005: 123).

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طبقه‌بندی و فرم‌شناسی سفال‌های زرین‌فام و تطبیق آن‌ها با سفال‌های آبی و سفید در دوره صفوی

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چکیده

سفال زرین‌فام یکی از زیباترین گونه‌های عصر صفوی است که در ادامه ساخت سفال‌های زرین‌فام دوران میانی اسلام تولید شده است. با وجود اشاراتی مختصر به خاص بودن و فرم سفالینه‌های زرین‌فام صفوی در برخی منابع، تاکنون پژوهشی مستقل و متمرکز صورت نگرفته است؛ لذا نگارندگان در این پژوهش با در نظر داشتن ویژگی‌های فرمی سفالینه‌های زرین‌فام موجود، در پی آن هستند تا آن‌ها را به‌طور مفصل طبقه‌بندی کنند و به شناخت کامل تری از فرم‌ها برسند و سپس به مطالعه تطبیقی آن‌ها با سفالینه‌های آبی و سفید بپردازند. برای نیل به این هدف، پرسش‌هایی نظیر فرم سفالینه‌های زرین‌فام دوره صفوی را در چه گروه‌های فرمی می‌توان طبقه‌بندی نمود؟ و سفالینه‌های زرین‌فام صفوی از نظر فرم چگونه با سفال‌های آبی و سفید معاصر خود قابل تطبیق هستند؟ مطرح شده است. در این پژوهش، جمع‌آوری داده‌ها به روش کتابخانه‌ای و میدانی است و با رویکرد توصیفی، تطبیقی-تحلیلی پیش رفته است. جامعه آماری دربرگیرنده ۶۹ ظرف زرین‌فام و ۴۰ ظرف آبی و سفید صفوی است که این ظروف خود، نماینده ۴۸۶ سفال زرین‌فام و ۱۰۶ سفال آبی و سفید است که براساس ویژگی‌های فرمی در هرگونه به‌عنوان نمونه‌های شاخص انتخاب شده‌اند. برآیند حاصل از مطالعه فرم‌شناسی این ظروف آن است که: ظروف زرین‌فام ۱۷ گروه است که در دو گروه باز مانند: بشقاب، کاسه و پیاله، و گروه بسته مانند: صراحی، بطری، پارچ هستند. همچنین دو گونه سفالی به لحاظ فرم‌شناسی شباهت بسیار زیادی به یک‌دیگر دارند؛ با این تفاوت که فرم ظروف زرین‌فام دارای تنوع بیشتری است و سفالینه‌های آبی و سفید نسبت به آن‌ها تا حدی ظریف‌تر و به لحاظ اندازه بزرگ‌تر هستند.

کلیدواژگان: زرین‌فام صفوی، آبی و سفید، طبقه‌بندی ظروف، فرم‌شناسی ظروف، مطالعه تطبیقی.

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