



Review and Analysis of Iran's Scent-Bottles in Different Historical Periods

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Abstract: The art of making dishes and glassmaking in Iran, with a glorious historical background, visual richness, and unparalleled beauty reached its peak of prosperity in different historical periods of Iran. The Safavid period and the Qajar era are among the brilliant periods of Iranian art, which in many fields, was the continuation of the Timurid golden age. On the one hand, these works include the most outstanding and privileged examples of court objects. On the other hand, they include the most mundane objects and household utensils produced in workshops, which in each of these two groups, depending on the social class of their patrons and creators, have unique features. One of the unique glass making in that era was the production of scent bottles. Scent bottles were containers that kept all kinds of perfumes (oily liquid, perfumes, and even pharmaceuticals) in them. Iran is one of the most important centers for producing glass perfume bottles. In this research, while briefly examining the historical background of glass production and its manufacturing technique, the form and motifs of Iran's glass perfume bottles have been examined and their manufacturing technique, shape, size, and decorative motifs have been studied. The research method is historical-analytical and the purpose is to examine the differences and similarities of perfume bottles in different historical periods, and finally the results proved that there are fundamental differences between perfume bottles through different historical periods in Iran.

Keywords: *Review, Analysis, Perfume Bottles, Iran, History of Glass.*

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Introduction

A pleasant smell was an integral part of the civilized people's life, including Iranians. The attention to perfume and the desire to use it caused the necessity of using suitable containers and perfume bottles to keep aromatic materials in a closed and cool place for longer shelf life. In the production of different perfume bottles based on old traditions, a lot of skill and genius can be seen. For example, in many cases, the shape and composition of old objects, which had a rough and large appearance, have been transformed into new style forms with more beauty and elegance. In this period, not only metal workers, but also other artists of various disciplines, including glassmaking, are noticed and encouraged by the kings. Glassmaking has long been considered among the handicrafts of human societies. This art has a long history among Iranians, and the presence of glass pipes in the Chogha Zanbil Ziggurat, which dates back to 1250 BC, proves this claim. Perfume boxes, which are used in various practical, decorative, etc. dimensions, and sometimes were of special importance for the storage of medicinal materials, and also the technique of making them in terms of color and size have been the focus of researchers. What will be researched in this study is the investigation of the social and ritual aspects of its use and the evolution of its construction in the Safavid and Qajar historical periods. Cultural patterns and progress in construction techniques that can reflect cultural interactions and archaeological attitudes will be studied in this research. Aims and necessity of the research: The aim of this research is to examine the formal characteristics of metal and glass containers in different periods and to compare them with each other to use the capabilities of these two areas of Iranian art in the design and implementation of an environmental arrangement. The importance of this research is that despite the high number of perfume boxes found in the excavations that showed that in the Islamic era, these containers had many cosmetic, medicinal, and ceremonial uses, not much research has been done on them as cultural artifacts. In general, despite the progress of machineries and laboratory practices and methods, perfume boxes have been neglected over the years. The research question is what are the different differences between Iranian perfume boxes in different historical periods?

Research method

The research method used is historical-analytical. Since the variables of the research are relics of the past, by studying the biography of Iranians in different historical periods, an understanding of the social, cultural and political context governing the time of the emergence of perfume box was obtained. Also, by examining the samples, the shape and method of making perfume boxes, the findings from the field study library documents are analyzed, and finally, a conclusion was drawn.

Research Background

The scientific activities carried out in this field include articles, books and theses in which the art of the Safavid period and the Qajar era are discussed. Among the books that indirectly deal with this issue is the sixth volume A Survey of Persian Art from Prehistoric times to the Present under the supervision of Arthur Upham Pope & Phyllis Ackerman. (2008), which covers carpets and carpet weaving, metalwork, and the secondary arts of literary devices and Music have been discussed, and in the secondary arts section, the history of glassmaking in Iran and the process of glass production in the Safavid period are described. Among English sources the two books: Royal Glass, which includes the collection of glass in the Metropolitan Museum and Corning, and also the book Islamic Glass (1986, 2003) are popular. In the section of Iranian glasses related to the Safavid era, the images and contents of the book have been used. Among the articles of

Marzieh Alipour (2013) entitled "Investigation of the effect of Khorasan school metalwork on the metalwork of the Safavid period" there are materials about the metal containers of this period. Also, in the articles of Yaqub Azhand (2004) European painters in Iran: Safavid period and Hassan Javadi (1963), under the title "Portuguese and Spanish travelogues about Iran during the Safavid period", they have described art and craft in the Safavid period. In Nasrin Moghadam's article (2013) entitled "Research on the relationship between the form and function of ancient Iranian vessels", the influence of the use of vessels on their form is stated. Similarly, in the article of Saeed Amirhajiloo and Parisa Amirhajiloo (2017) titled "Coexistence of glass making devices and the form of Safavid period pottery", there is some information about the influence of Safavid pottery form in the buildings of this period.

Discussion

Producing and working with perfume is an old and rather ancient profession that requires a delicate artistic nature, special skills and knowledge. Egyptians, Greeks and Romans (Fleming, 1996) were all familiar with perfume production methods, but in any case, the systematic distillation of perfumes was done in the Middle Ages by Iranian scientists. The history of perfume in Iran dates back to the end of the fourth millennium BC, when the first Iranian perfume was discovered in the ancient site of Silk, small marble thongs that were used to store perfume. Avicenna was a great Iranian doctor and scientist who invented the distillation method, he used the method of extracting flowers using distillation, which is commonly used in the world today, for the first time. Ibn Sina's first perfume making experience was using roses (Barbour, 1983). Distillation methods in eastern countries have significantly influenced the perfumery industry and especially chemistry in the western world. Zakaria Razi, a great Iranian scientist, also played a very important role in the development of the perfume industry by discovering alcohol. About 2,500 years ago, ancient Iranians used perfumes and fragrances in an ornamental and luxurious way. Iranians used to wash their bodies daily with aromatic substances and also used aromatic elements in their drinks. Iran has been one of the most important centers for the production of aromatic plant oils and extracts since ancient times. By soaking flowers and aromatic plants in saturated oils and mixing them together, Iranian perfume makers made different perfumes that were used all over the world (Jelink et al., 2018). During the Achaemenid period, the Achaemenid kings, their queens and other courtiers used perfumes and aromatic oils to make their hair fragrant and shiny. Historians mention an extremely precious perfume called Labyzos, which was used to make up the hair of King Xerxes. Also, in the story of Esther, one of the wives of King Xerxes, it is stated that she was anointed for 6 months with Marmak oil and 6 months with other aromatic substances to prepare for the queen's selection contest. In one of the ancient motifs discovered from Persepolis, there is an image of the Achaemenid king, with two attendants standing behind him, one of them holding a towel and a perfume holder, and the other holding a censer (Piyamani, 2010). In the list prepared by Alexander the Great, from a part of the property of Darius III, 14 perfume makers are mentioned, and in general 40 perfume makers were always with the king so that the king would always have access to the perfumes he needed. Arab chemist Abu Yusuf Kandi wrote a book about perfumes in the 9th century called the Chemistry of Perfumes and Distillation (Curtis and Williams, 2014). There are more than one hundred instructions for preparing all kinds of aromatic oils, as well as more than one hundred methods and instructions for making perfumes and perfume equipment in this book. We're going to introduce the amphora perfumes in the Museums.



Amphora perfumes

It literally means bilateral. Small glass amphora vessels have a pear-shaped body leading to a raised base; Also, they have two complete handles in the shape of “9” which starts from under the edge and continues to the ridge of the shoulder. The approximate size of the amphora is about 5 to 12 cm (figure 1) (Leonard, 1997, Curtis and Williams, 2014).

Alabaster Perfumery

These dishes originate from around the 11th century BC and from the dishes that were carved from white marble in ancient Egypt. Most types of alabasters have a narrow body with a rounded tip, most of them have a narrow neck and a wide opening without a handle. The design of the first Egyptian alabasters was inspired by the palm tree. Alabaster was published in Greece around the 7th century BC; It was also published in many parts of the East, especially in Assyria, Syria and Palestine (figure 2)(Fay, 1998: 26).

Aryballos Perfume Box

Aryballos is a small spherical glass that has a narrow neck and was used in ancient Greece. Aryballos often contained oil and perfume, and athletes used them in the bathroom. These dishes were usually attached to the waist of the athletes with a leather band (figure 3) (Shanks, 1999: 50-52, Sahlvand, 2014).

Glass perfume in the Sasanian period

The most interesting objects among the Sassanid glass found in the northwest to the southwest of Iran are those decorated with cut wheels. With deeper cuts compared to Roman glass, Sasanian glass objects were more attractive and recognizable. In the Sasanian Empire, there were centers for making glass, such as Southern Mesopotamia, Tisiphone, Ilam province, Guilan Province, Western Alborz, Shush, and Ray (figure 4).

• Glass Perfume Bottles in Islamic Period

Examining some of the perfume boxes of the Islamic period, we come to the conclusion that at the beginning of the Islamic period, the glass of most perfumes was thick and semi-transparent and gradually became thinner; - Most perfumers had colors such as: light yellow, green, blue and gray; - The condition of most of these perfume boxes is also covered with shells and sediments (figure 5) (Curtis and Williams, 2014). As we approach the 5th and 6th centuries of Hijri, decorations are added to the body of the dishes with additional bands; - Sometimes the dishes are shaped like imaginary animals and accessories such as handles are also added to them. Also the height, size and decoration of the perfume boxes have been improved (figure 6)

• Glass work in the Middle Ages

In the early post-Islamic period, there were no sudden changes in Iranian glass. At times, some of the works were made of green impure glass. Little by little, the forms evolved and were different until the Seljuk period, when some joint production processes were completely abandoned. Mold blowing almost became the dominant technique for producing most glass. There were three simple methods of glass making, with wheel engraving being the most important artistically used method (Fukai, 1977: 99). Then, in the early Abbasid period, etched glass was made using three similar but different technical methods: 1) engraving to form relief patterns. 2) Direct cutting on relief patterns and 3) a combination of both methods. Decorations were oval patterns and embossed handles, which were mostly done on vessels, containers, rams, and



Figure 1. An example of amphora perfumes,(Abgine Museum)



Figure2. An example of alabaster perfumes of the Achaemenid period. (The National Museum of Iran)



Figure 3. An example of Aryballos perfumes (Abgine Museum)

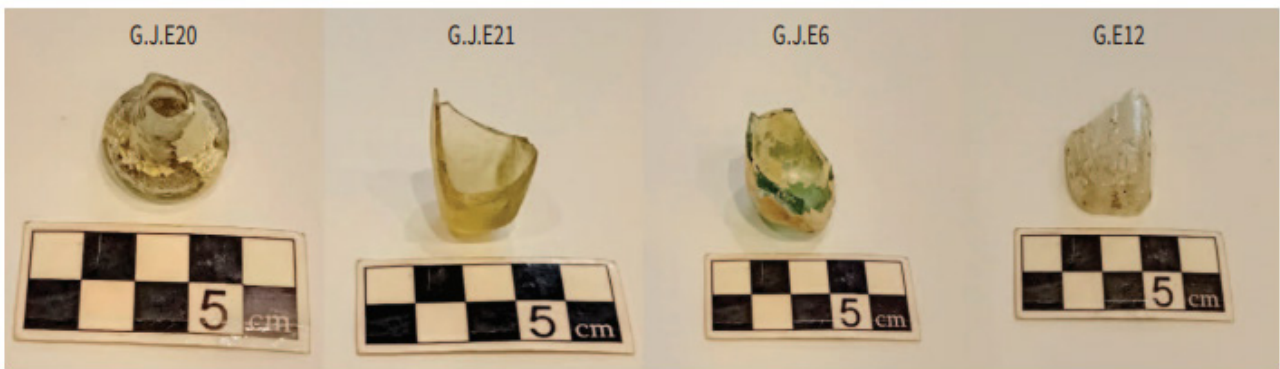


Figure 4. Photographs of a number of perfume at Ilam (Sodaie, et al. 2023)

especially perfume holders. In some cases, silver mixtures were also used to paint yellow on Egyptian, Damascus and Iranian glass. At the time of the invasion of Seljuks and Mongols to Iran, glass factories did not flourish. In the history of glass making, decorated glass works and enamel were created in some Syrian centers(Jelink, Sharifzadeh, 2009).

• *Working Glass in the Safavid period and Qajar*

As a result of Timur's attack, Syrian artists and craftsmen had to migrate to Samarkand. The general decline of the fifteenth-century glassmaking industry paved the way for the penetration of European-made glass into Syria and other markets along the eastern Mediterranean. During this period, it seemed that Armenians were the ones who imported European glassware

to Tabriz and then sent it to other cities and towns inside Iran. Instead, all kinds of silk fabrics were exported from Iran to Europe through this route. At that time, Iran was a good customer for Europeans, especially Venice, for mirrors and vases made of glass, which were used as bases for water pipes (Jenkins, 1986: 50). In this period, the expansion of political relations with the West and the presence of Venetian glassmakers, there were changes in the way of making and the form of works of art, which continued until the Qajar period. ordinary glass tools and accessories such as drinking glasses, bottles, and mirrors are made relatively well, and glassmaking is common in almost every city in Iran.

The Qajar era (1174-1304) in Iran coincided with the industrial revolution in Europe. Therefore, following the expansion of foreign relations in this period, handicrafts came into conflict with industrial goods. As a result of this change, these goods replaced the products of traditional workshops, and the products of glass factories were no exception to this rule. The best glass was produced in Qom and Shiraz, followed by Isfahan, Tehran, Tabriz, and Kerman, and the mentioned traditional workshops were only able to produce bottles, cups, glasses, and in some cases water pitchers or jugs, and hookahs, which compared to Industrial production was not comparable in terms of quality and quantity (Khanpour and Ashouri, 2012) (Table 1).

- Glass Decorations

In ancient times, in addition to glass making techniques, various methods were also used to decorate the bodies of objects and containers. Sometimes decoration methods are also used as a technique. For example, in the method of blowing in the mold, the motifs used in this technique were the same decorations on the dishes. Here, an attempt has been made to mention these decorations (figure 7) (Ali Akbarzadeh Kord Mohini, 1983).

Conclusion

The glass vessels of the Safavid and Qajar periods have many variations compared to their previous works. Openers, perfume bottles, Tanks, thermoses and kettles were among the favorite forms of the kings of this period, which had many productions in both glass and metal samples. According to travelogues and documents, due to greater communication with other European countries, during the Shah Abbas period, the greatest growth and progress in the variety of forms of containers was created. In this period, the techniques of making metals are a continuation of the previous metalworking. The main difference between Safavid metalwork and other periods is more elegance in the form of containers and the use of other metals. The most important factors affecting the formation of the form of dishes of this period are the arrival of artists and craftsmen from the West, especially from Europe, to Iran in this period, the sending of Iranian craftsmen to other countries, the increase in trade relations and the import of goods to Iran in the Safavid period, the interest and importance of the kings of the Safavid period to European works, and other regions are among the factors affecting the form of the dishes. In general, it can be said that in both the glass and metal samples, the general nature of the vessels shows their inner nature and function, and the most observed examples belong to the types of functional vessels and the indicator of teapots. The method of making the metal containers of this period is mostly molding and casting, and in glass containers, it was by free blowing or blowing in a mold. According to the examination of some cases, it can be seen that in different historical periods in Iran; The design of containers, especially perfume boxes, has different features and decorations. In some historical periods, such as the Parthian period and the Middle Ages, the dishes made had less decorations, and in later periods, plant decorations and human motifs were added to the design of the dishes and they took on more logical forms. It



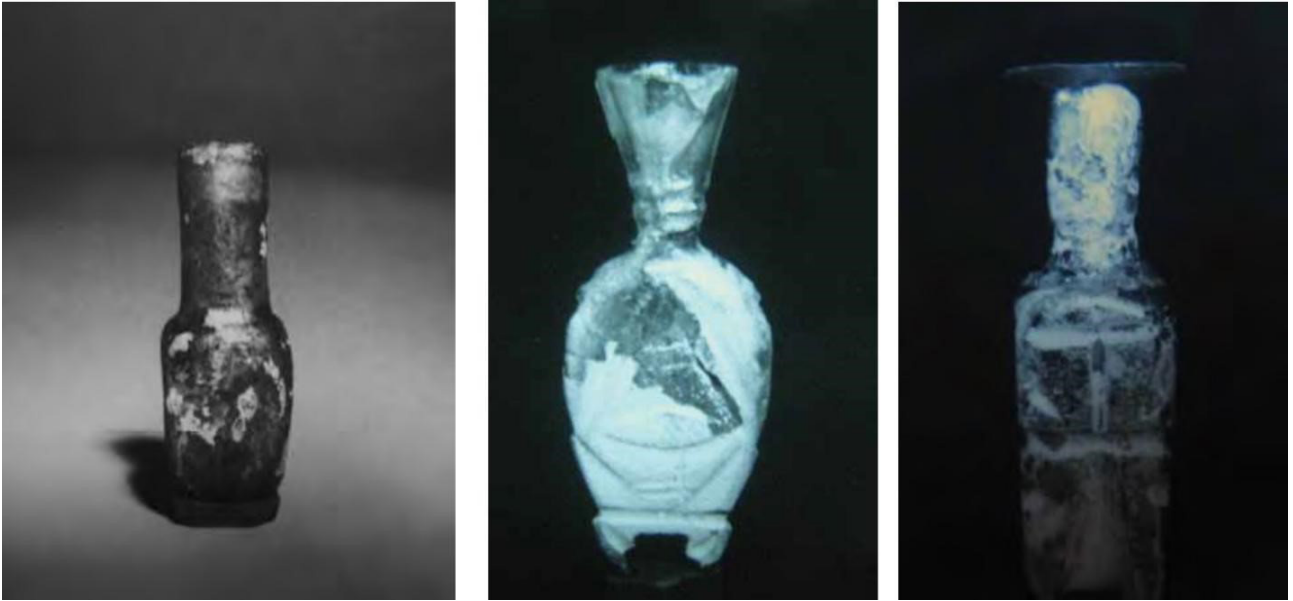


Figure 5. Types of glass perfume bottles of the Islamic period, 2nd and 3rd century Hijri (Abgine Museum).



Figure 6. Examples of Islamic period perfumeries of the 4th-5th centuries of Hijri (Abgine Museum)

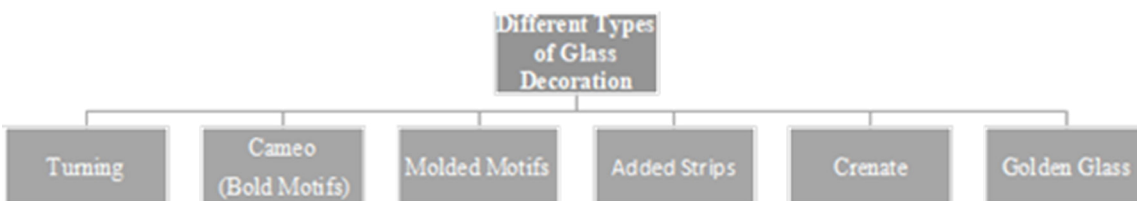







Figure 7. Different types of glass decoration

can also be seen that glass was one of the main materials used in the construction of containers and perfume boxes in different historical periods, which sometimes alone and sometimes in combination with other materials caused the creation of containers.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that they agreed to participate in the present paper and there is no competing interests.

Table 1: Survey and analysis of Iranian perfume bottles in different historical periods (authors)				
Name of Perfume Bottle	Image	Design Period	Material	Features
Perfume bottle		The Sassanid Around the 6th-7th century AD	Glass	.Sasanian perfumery found in Jahangirdar dome of Ilam province (Sodaie et al, 2023)
Glass Alabaster		Late 6th to 5th century BC	Glass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paths in opaque yellow and opaque turquoise blue. • Wide and uneven horizontal rim disc, with a slightly raised rim around the mouth, extending downwards at the top of the neck and tail decoration. • They originally contained perfumes or aromatic oils that were used at funerals, after which the bottles were left in the grave.
Spherical glass perfume bottle		Around the 10th century AD	Glass	<p>This perfume is spherical in shape and has no decorations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its green color is a symbol of Iranian art • Its height is 6.5 cm
glass perfume bottle		Safavid period	A combination of metal, brass and glass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of plant patterns on the body of the perfume • Using green color on the whole body • Narrow throat design of the perfume bottle to prevent the fragrance from escaping
Glass perfume bottle		Qajar Period	Flat Cut	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of plant patterns on the body of the perfume • Using green color on the whole body • Narrow throat design of the perfume bottle to prevent the fragrance from escaping

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