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Original Research Article

Silent Epic: Analysis of the Visual Structure of the Tile Painting of the Water Bearer of Karbala Based on Gestalt Principles

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Abstract

Problem statement: Abbas ibn Ali, known as the Water Bearer of Karbala, is one of the central figures in the Karbala event, inspiring numerous artists, especially muralists. One example is the tile painting in the shrine of Taj al-Din Gharib, created by Haj Baqir Jahanmiri. According to Gestalt theory, the human mind tends to categorize and organize visual elements during visual perception, such that the organized whole differs from the individual components. In Gestalt principles, the critical aspect of visual perception is understanding the relationships that lead to meaningful combinations. Accordingly, this tile painting represents structural changes in the visual narrative of the Karbala event during the Constitutional Era. The question of this research is How is the visual structure of the tile painting of the Water Bearer of Karbala organized based on Gestalt principles of visual perception?

Research objective: To identify the visual perception features in the tile painting of the Water Bearer of Karbala in the Taj al-Din Gharib shrine.

Research method: The research employed genre analysis and documentary methods for data collection.

Conclusion: The findings indicate that after applying the seven Gestalt principles to the mentioned tile painting, strong Prägnanz was identified in the principles of similarity, proximity, continuity, closure or completeness, and common fate, aligned with Itten's seven contrasts. Employing each of these principles facilitated a planned visual perception process. The presence of visual relationships, as emphasized by Gestalt theorists, enhanced the organization of the painting's elements and simplified the audience's understanding of the artwork.

Keywords: *Tile Painting, Water Bearer of Karbala, Taj al-Din Gharib Shrine, Gestalt Theory, Visual Perception.*

Introduction

The event of Ashura holds a distinguished position in Islamic culture. The tile painting under investigation, titled The Water Bearer of Karbala, is located at the entrance of the Taj al-Din Gharib shrine and was created during the Constitutional Era by Haj Baqir Jahanmiri, a relatively unknown Shirazi tile artist of that time. Before this creation, the Ashura event had been depicted by Aqa Mirza Bozorg in the Hosseiniyeh of Mushir during the Qajar period. This artwork, crafted during the Constitutional Era, diverges significantly from earlier depictions. Rather than focusing on stylistic differences, it reflects novel visual interpretations of the Ashura event and the role of Abbas ibn Ali. This

tile painting serves as a representation of structural changes in the visual narrative of the Ashura event during the Constitutional Era. While the application of Gestalt theory to Western artworks has yielded noteworthy results, the correspondence and influence of Gestalt principles on tile paintings have been relatively underexplored. This research seeks to interpret the tile painting based on these principles, examining how the seven laws of Gestalt theory correspond with Itten's seven contrasts to uncover their impact and utility in this artwork. From this perspective, the research problem is defined as follows: How is the visual structure of the tile painting of the Water Bearer of Karbala organized based on Gestalt principles of visual perception? The objective of this study is to identify the visual perception

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characteristics in the tile painting of the Water Bearer of Karbala at the Taj al-Din Gharib shrine.

Research Methodology

This study employed genre analysis as part of qualitative research methods. The tools for data collection included identification sheets, observation cards, and a photography camera. To better understand the relationships and principles of visual perception, the image was restored to its original form by the researchers using Photoshop. The research population consists of the tile painting The Water Bearer of Karbala at the Taj al-Din Gharib shrine, dating back to the Constitutional Era in Shiraz. The sample was purposefully selected to best address the research question and provide clear insights.

Research Background

Numerous studies have been conducted on Gestalt-based interpretations of artworks, examining the influence of Gestalt principles of visual perception on visual arts. However, few independent studies have specifically analyzed the application of Gestalt visual perception theory to the tile painting The Water Bearer of Karbala at the Taj al-Din Gharib shrine. This indicates a research gap in this field, where further exploration could enhance our understanding of how these principles are utilized in the analysis of tile paintings and their impact on conveying religious and cultural messages Babakhan & Kamrani (2020), in their article “A Reading of the Image of Miraj of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) by Sultan Mohammad based on the Principles of the Visual Perception of Gestalt”, explored the influence of Gestalt laws on the selected artwork to identify its potential in creating meaningful connections and the level of *Prägnanz* within each of the seven Gestalt principles. However, there remains a need for more focused studies on specific religious tile paintings to gain a deeper understanding of the use and impact of these principles in such artworks. Ahmadi & Nemati (2022), in their article “The Role of Religious Themes in Promoting Religious Tourism: Case Study of Ashura Art in Shiraz Tileworks”, examined religious tile paintings from the Qajar period in Shiraz,

emphasizing their importance as major attractions for religious tourists. These artworks play a critical role in attracting visitors. The book “Gestalt Signs: One Hundred and Twenty Signs” by Hakimzadeh (2021) provides a comprehensive resource for understanding Gestalt concepts in art and visual design, offering 120 examples related to Gestalt principles. While this work addresses Gestalt principles, its application to Islamic art, especially religious tile paintings from the Constitutional Era, requires further comparative analyses to highlight the unique features of these artworks. Sartipi & Valibeig (2017), in their article “Analysis of Visual Perception Based on the Geometry of Brickwork Motifs on the Spandrels of Hakim Mosque of Isfahan Using a Gestalt Approach”, explored visual laws such as similarity and continuity in architectural structures. Although this study offers a framework for understanding Gestalt principles in Islamic art, it pays less attention to comparative analyses of these principles in religious tilework, such as those from the Constitutional Era. Moreover, the connection between the historical and contextual dimensions of these works remains underexplored. The book *Principles of Gestalt Psychology* by Koffka (2013) outlines the theoretical foundations of Gestalt principles, such as similarity, proximity, and continuity, which are well-suited for analyzing the tile painting The Water Bearer of Karbala. However, this resource focuses on the general aspects of these principles and requires more detailed and applied studies in specific contexts, such as religious tilework from the Constitutional Era, to establish practical connections between theory and artistic analysis. Despite these previous studies, specific attention to the details of the tile painting at the Taj al-Din Gharib shrine has been lacking. This research gap highlights the need for a more in-depth examination of Gestalt principles in religious tile paintings within this shrine. This study aims to analyze the perceptual processes involved in understanding and interpreting the tile painting The Water Bearer of Karbala at the Taj al-Din Gharib shrine, addressing this research gap and offering deeper insights into these artworks within the historical and cultural context of the Constitutional Era.

Gestalt Principles of Visual Perception

The founders of Gestalt psychology, Max Wertheimer (1880–1943), Kurt Koffka (1886–1941), and Wolfgang Köhler (1887–1967), developed theories of human perception and visual understanding based on the earlier observations and theories of Christian von Ehrenfels (1859–1932), Ernst Mach (1838–1916), and Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) (Boudewijnse, 1999, 140–158). Von Ehrenfels (1890) published “Ueber Gestalt-Qualitäten”, in which Ueber translates to “above, beyond, or more than,” Qualitäten to “qualities,” and Gestalt to “whole or form.” His approach to perception was summarized as “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” Ehrenfels, referencing melody, explained that even if the key changes, the melody remains recognizable as a “complete effect” resulting from the interaction of its components. Similarly, Mach (1914, 235-262), in his book “The Analysis of Sensations and the Relation of the Physical to the Psychological”, offered a version of phenomenology, defining objects as logical structures based on sensory data. Husserl suggested avoiding unanswered existential questions and focusing on the systematic analysis of experience. Through the invention of phenomenology and the concept of the “lifeworld” (Lebenswelt), Husserl addressed the complex and interconnected phenomena constituting our lived experience (Magee, 2001, 212–235). Gestalt psychologists emphasized the factors influencing the relationship between human perception and the visual field, concluding that visual perception is a complex, interconnected process involving the recognition of familiar patterns and shapes (Gordon, 1997; Koffka, 1922, 531). Later theorists argued that the search for familiar patterns in perception might stem from learning and familiarity (Shepard, 2001, 581–601).

Gestalt psychologists formulated several laws of perception, including the law of proximity, the law of similarity, the law of good continuation, the law of common fate, and the law of closure (Wertheimer, 1938; Teuber, 1976, 131–151). Behrens (1998, 299-303) recently discussed the influence of Gestalt theories of perception on 20th-century art and design, particularly concerning the Japanese approach to art and design, which became prominent with the Japonisme movement in the late 19th century. One

noteworthy book, *Composition* by Arthur Dow (1913), was published over 20 times between its initial release in 1899 and the mid-20th century, having a far-reaching impact. Behrens highlights similarities between Dow’s content and exercises and those of the Bauhaus foundational courses (Itten, 1975; Bayer et al., 1975). Dow advocated three key elements of design: line, Notan (a Japanese term meaning “dark-light”), and color. He suggested that design involved manipulating these elements within specific compositional principles. Dow emphasized the importance of symmetry and subordination in design, where individual components form a “pleasing whole” through proportional relationships. While balanced compositions of dark and light were effective, Dow also acknowledged the appeal of asymmetry, which was later demonstrated in modern typography by Jan Tschichold and designers associated with Constructivism and Dadaism (Dow, 1913, 21–53; Heller & Vienne, 2012, 45). This theory of visual perception highlights the significance of relationships that result in meaningful compositions, examining visual elements such as line, form, color, and contrast in visual communication design. It particularly underscores the role of color contrasts in capturing attention and directing focus. Koffka (2013, 71-150), as a key source, elaborates on the theoretical foundations of Gestalt principles in visual perception, providing a conceptual framework for analyzing artistic structures and visual organization in religious tilework.

Tile Paintings of the Taj al-Din Gharib Shrine

The Taj al-Din Gharib shrine is one of the significant religious sites in Shiraz. It houses the tomb of Jafar ibn Fazl ibn Jafar ibn Abi Talib (AS), known as “Taj al-Din” and “Gharib.” One of the masterpieces of the Constitutional Era is the seven-color tilework adorning the entrance of this shrine (Ahmadi & Nemati, 2022, 43 & 44). The seven-color tilework of this structure stands as a prominent example of the art of the Constitutional Era, effectively reflecting the artistic and cultural values of that period. This decorative feature not only enhances the visual beauty of the shrine but also serves as a symbol of the complex and dynamic approach to art and religious culture during this historical era.

• **Visual structure analysis of the tile painting
The Water Bearer of Karbala**

By observing the entirety of the artwork (the original piece (Fig. 2) and the restored version (Fig. 1)), the Gestalt present in the composition reflects processes of learning, recall, effort, thought, and action to the viewer (Koffka, 1935, 155–250; Wertheimer, 1938; Köhler, 1947, 178 & 179). In the analysis of the composition, the figure and the horse are enclosed within a blue rectangle, separated by a dry line, and occupying approximately half of the frame. The figure itself is designed in a triangular formation, with the triangle formed from the top of the banner, the horse’s body, and its reflection in the water. This triangle is situated in a space defined by multiple horizontal lines, including the horizon line, the horizontal line of the ground beneath the trees, the horizontal line under the tree leaves, the horizontal line separating the land and water, and the horizontal line beneath the horse’s body. These horizontal elements contribute to the sense of structure and balance within the composition. The frame of the artwork plays a significant role in conveying the tile painter’s message to the audience. By generating movement and

dynamism, it evokes strong emotions in the viewer. The circular frame, in particular, subconsciously guides the observer’s attention toward the central theme (Fig. 3-1).

In this composition, similar to the rule of thirds, the golden ratio acts as a guide for placing the important element of the artwork in the golden point. The horizon line is also positioned at the golden ratio, evoking a sense of tranquility and stability. The tile painter emphasizes the surface of the image, limiting the depth of the composition and allowing greater focus on the central mass. The horizon line overlaps with the viewer’s eye level (Fig. 2-1), simultaneously marking the boundary between the upper and lower parts of the image. This alignment of the eye level reveals the relative height of the viewer’s or the artist’s perspective, located at the intersection of the horizon line and the sightline. The vanishing point determines the observer’s or artist’s position and functions as the viewer’s focal point. The diagonal line of the tree trunk directs the gaze toward this point (Fig. 2-2). The hidden perspective draws the viewer’s attention to the vanishing point, which the artist establishes to anchor the observer and aid in comprehending the subject (Fig. 2-3). The repetition of tree trunks and rhythmic elements, such

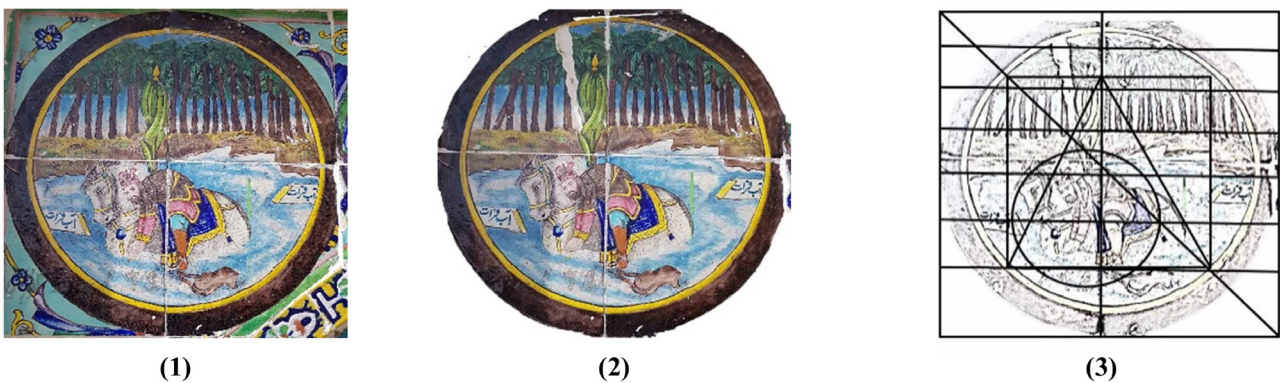


Fig. 1. (1): Restored version of The Water Bearer of Karbala tile painting by the authors, 1310 AH. Location: Taj al-Din Gharib Shrine, Shiraz/ (2): Original version of The Water Bearer of Karbala tile painting, 1310 AH. Location: Taj al-Din Gharib Shrine, Shiraz/ (3): Golden Ratio applied to the main form within the composition. Source: Authors.

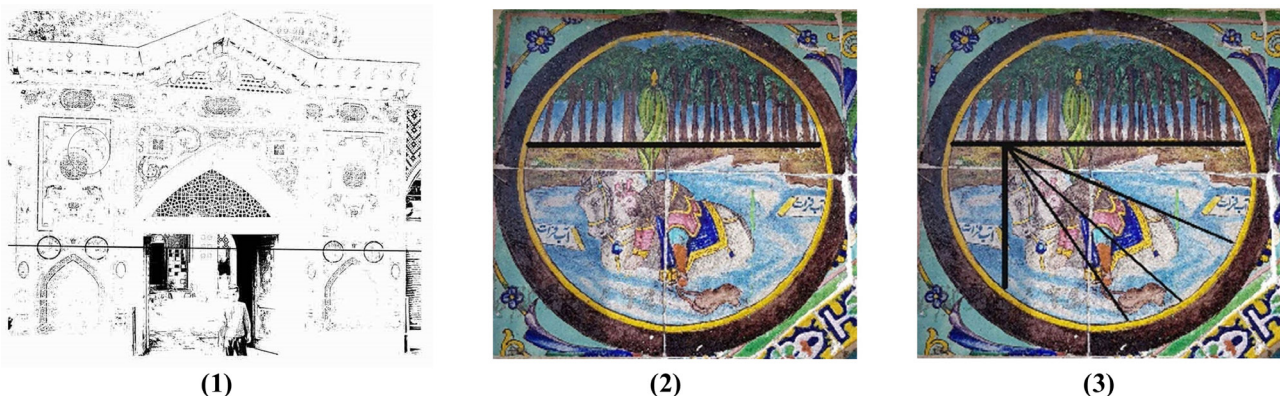


Fig. 2. (1): Viewer’s eye level in relation to the artwork and its context / (2): Overlap of the viewer’s sightline, the horizon line, and the presence of a vanishing point in the artwork/ (3): Position of the observer in relation to the artwork. Source: Authors.

as direction, size, light, and color, creates a pattern that enhances visual cohesion and the interconnectedness of the image's components (Fig. 3-1). The tile painter uses harmonious bands of brown, green, and blue, along with horizontal text frames, to draw attention to the main figure. This harmony is intentionally contrasted by disrupting the order through the movement of the figure amidst waves and tilting one of the vertical bands. This directs the viewer's eye toward the central figure of Abbas and his horse. This visual arrangement employs Gestalt's principle of similarity in dimensions, shapes, and colors to focus attention on the key elements, reinforcing the narrative and emotional impact of the artwork.

Grouping based on similarity in dimensions and size is the dominant element, making the Gestalt of the central figure stronger than grouping by shape or color (Fig. 3-2). Emphasis on the horse-mounted figure is achieved through its larger dimensions. Aside from this focal point, the vertical tree trunks are uniform and similar in size, yet the tile painter utilizes variation in scale by reducing the size of the tree trunks relative to the central mass to enhance visual attention (Fig. 3-3). This approach is also evident in the mass of the tree leaves (Fig. 3-4). The principle of simplicity, which emphasizes the human mind's preference

for perceiving organized and simplified structures, is realized in the Taj al-Din Gharib tile painting through clear forms and geometric proportions, particularly in the central mass. This principle is also observed in the tile paintings of Imamzadeh Ebrahim, where reducing the complexity of details and focusing on key components facilitates better organization and easier comprehension of the image.

The analysis of horizontal lines (Fig. 4-2), vertical lines (Fig. 4-1), diagonal lines (Fig. 4-3), and freeform lines (Fig. 4-4) reveals that the Gestalt principle of proximity and the density of lines have not been applied uniformly. Instead, through the principles of dispersion and cohesion, uniformity has been avoided, creating a dynamic visual experience. The horizontal lines of the ground and the tree leaves enhance a sense of calmness and coolness, giving the composition a broader appearance. In contrast, the vertical lines of the tree trunks evoke height and warmth, keeping the viewer's gaze within the artwork. These vertical lines, through the depiction of the banner ('alam), guide the viewer's eye downward toward the frame, leading them to the central mass. The diagonal lines are designed in opposition to the central mass, yet their convergence toward it effectively directs attention straight to this focal point, emphasizing its significance within the composition.

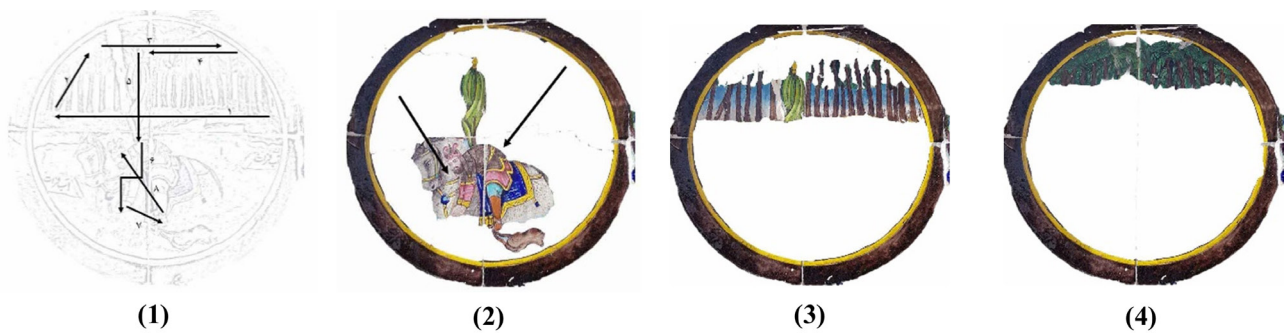


Fig. 3. (1): Stages of eye movement within the artwork/ (2): Gestalt principle of similarity in dimensions and size of the central mass/ (3): Gestalt principle of similarity in dimensions, size, and shape of tree trunks/ (4): Gestalt principle of similarity in dimensions, size, and shape of tree leaves. Source: Authors.

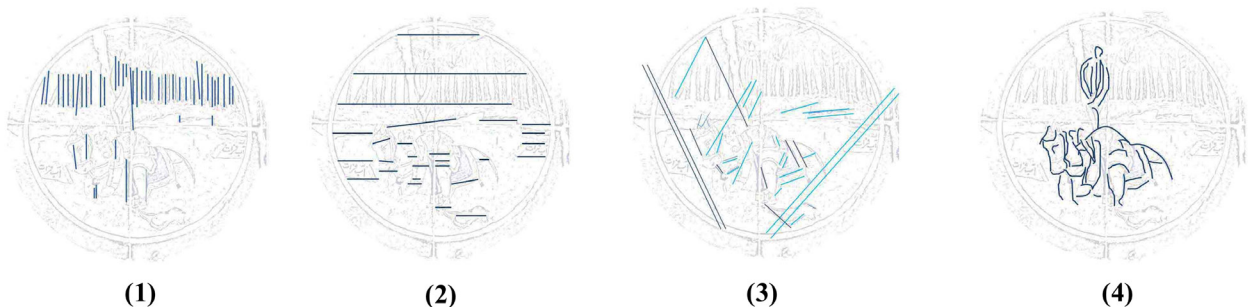


Fig. 4. (1): Analysis of vertical lines and Gestalt principle of proximity/ (2): Analysis of horizontal lines and Gestalt principle of proximity/ (3): Analysis of diagonal lines and Gestalt principle of proximity/ (4): Analysis of freeform lines and Gestalt principle of proximity. Source: Authors.

The use of the principles of similarity and proximity in this artwork creates *Prägnanz*, which strengthens the overall Gestalt. The *Prägnanz* of Gestalt is evident through the contact of the edges of the river water, the land, and the sky in this tile painting (Fig. 5-1). Gestalt is also present in the principle of overlap within the central mass, where the visual elements of the figure and the horse overlap without losing their independent identities (Fig. 5-2). However, the principle of overlap is not as distinctly observed in other areas (Figs. 5-2 & 5-3). The *Prägnanz* of the Gestalt principle of continuity in this composition is visible through the visual flow of tree trunks from right to left, leading to a break in the diagonal motif of a tree trunk, then continuing through the tree leaves to the banner (Fig. 6-1). The *Prägnanz* of the Gestalt principle of closure in the central mass allows the viewer to mentally complete the incomplete image of the horse and the human figure, thereby enhancing the visual focus on the tile painting's centerpiece (Fig. 6-2). The contrast between the figure and the ground divides the background into three levels (Fig. 6-3). By employing circular forms and paying attention to colors, particularly those associated with the concept of "Lebenswelt" (lifeworld) in the early 20th century, the artist achieves a sense of vitality in the mounted figure (Amheim, 1954; Gombrich, 1960). The flat surrounding area of the central mass simplifies the

composition, evoking calmness, while intersecting forms create an illusion of space and depth perception. In this composition, the central mass is perceived as the positive space in the foreground, while the surrounding areas are interpreted as negative spaces in the background. The Gestalt principle of common fate, emphasizing the coordinated and aligned movement of elements, is evident in this tile painting. Diagonal lines and the visual orientation of key components, such as the banner and the figure of Hazrat Abbas (AS), effectively illustrate this principle. This alignment is similarly observed in comparable works, such as the Hosseiniyeh Mushir, reinforcing the narrative message of Ashura and guiding the viewer's gaze (Koffka, 2013, 71).

The colors in this artwork have an immediate and effective impact on the viewer's perception, creating color harmony that results in pleasant visual rhythms and spatial illusions (Fig. 7-1). The analysis of the artist's color palette indicates skillful use of the three primary colors—blue, yellow, and red—as well as various secondary colors. The highest color brightness is evident in the foreground, particularly in the central mass (Fig. 7-2). To better understand the process of visual perception regarding color similarity in this painting, two main categories of warm and cool colors are identified (Fig. 7-3). The warm colors used are shown in (Fig. 8-1), while the cool colors are depicted in (Fig. 8-2). Although



Fig. 5. (1): Gestalt principle of proximity, edge contact/ (2): Gestalt principle of proximity, overlap between the figure and the horse, the river water, the water skin, and the river/ (3): Gestalt principle of proximity, overlap between tree leaves and between the leaves and the sky/ (4): Gestalt principle of proximity, overlap between the banner and the tree leaves, the banner and the sky, and the banner and tree trunks. Source: Authors.

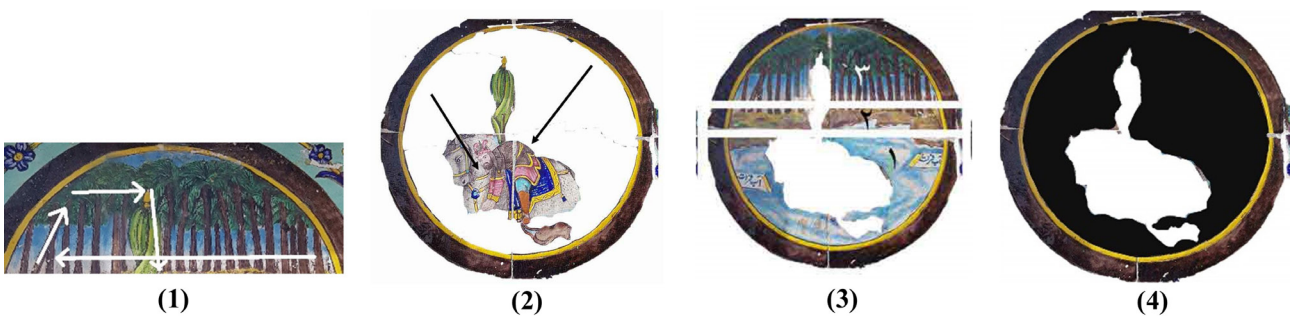


Fig. 6. (1): Analysis of the Gestalt principle of continuity in the tile painting, directing eye movement/ (2): Analysis of the Gestalt principle of closure in the central mass/ (3): Analysis of the background in the Gestalt principle of figure-ground/ (4): Positive and negative areas in the Gestalt principle of figure-ground. Source: Authors.

cool colors dominate the Gestalt of this tile painting, warm colors, due to their greater variety, provide a stronger Gestalt impact. The visual contrast in this artwork contributes to excitement and balance. The proximity of complementary color contrasts is less prominent (Figs. 8-3 & 8-4). In this piece, only yellow, ultramarine blue, orange, and navy exhibit edge contact with complementary color contrast, while green and red are perceived in complementary contrast through edge proximity. However, due to the greater distance of most colors from the three primary colors, the strength of complementary color contrast is reduced, weakening the Prägnanz of Gestalt through proximity in complementary contrasts. The impact of light-dark contrast is particularly significant for the artist (Fig. 8-4), as it enhances the visual dynamics and balance of the composition.

According to the Gestalt principle of continuity, the viewer perceives the various shades of gray in this artwork as a unified perceptual whole. All four levels of gray are seamlessly integrated into the visual experience. Based on Itten's analysis, the artwork employs three types of complementary contrasts: yellow and blue, green

and purple, and teal and brown (Fig. 8-3). The artist's deliberate use of these contrasts emphasizes key figures and enhances the relationships between the subjects. The use of different shades of gray highlights the principle of simultaneous contrast (Fig. 9-1). The juxtaposition of gray with colors like yellow and red intensifies the need for complementary colors. Contrasts in this artwork serve as tools for expressing the artist's thoughts and emotions (Fig. 9-2). The inclusion of pure colors such as green, yellow, and ultramarine blue alongside impure or blended tones mixed with black and their complements creates contrasts in quality or saturation (Fig. 9-3). Quantitative contrast, or the balance of surface area between colors, is also observed in this artwork. This type of contrast involves the brightness and purity of colors as well as the proportional size of color surfaces, contributing to visual harmony (Itten, 1961, 172). By combining complementary colors such as blue and orange, green and red, and yellow and purple, along with repetitive patterns of similar colors in varying lightness and intensities, the artist achieves color harmony and balance. These compositions establish a fundamental unity in the artwork

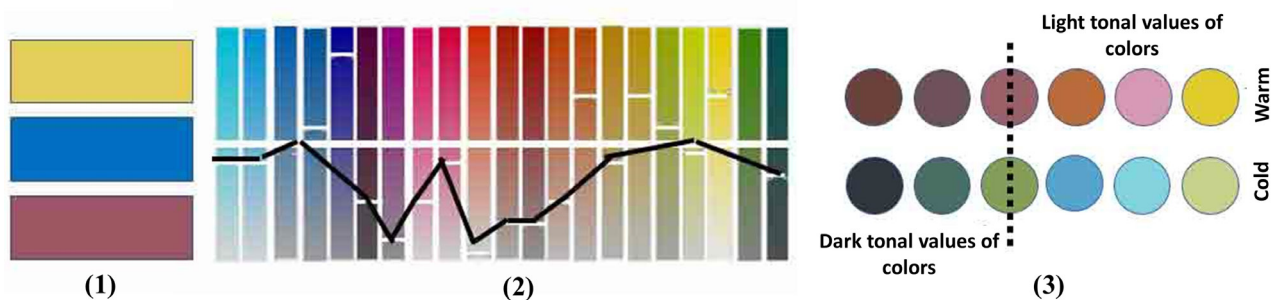


Fig. 7. (1): Analysis of the artist's color palette/ (2): Brightness and purity levels of color lightness values in the artist's palette/ (3): Light and dark tonal values of colors in the artwork. Source: Authors.

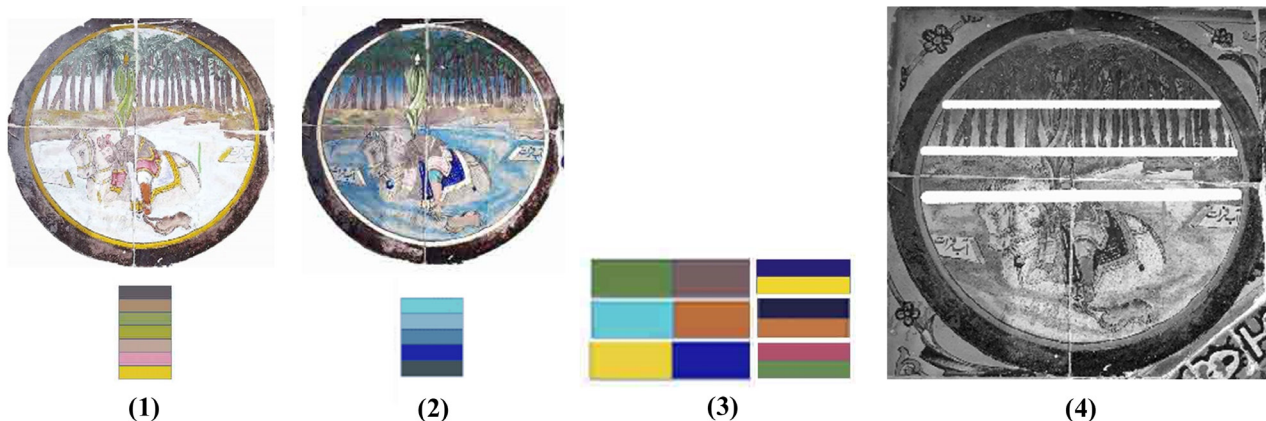


Fig. 8. (1): Analysis of warm colors and the Gestalt principle of similarity/ (2): Analysis of cool colors, the Gestalt principle of similarity, and the Gestalt principle of proximity in complementary color contrast (yellow and ultramarine blue, orange and navy, red and green)/ (3): Analysis of complementary color contrast/ (4): Analysis of light and dark contrast and the Gestalt principle of continuity in colors across four levels. Source: Authors.

while preventing monotony, ensuring an engaging and dynamic visual experience.

The yellow color, particularly in its prism-like composition (Fig. 10-1), is strategically positioned to convey political and social themes (Fig. 10-2), evoking emotions such as certainty, contemplation, and hope (Fig. 10-3). Additionally, the rotational movement of blue throughout the frame introduces a sense of coolness and tranquility, counterbalancing the warmth of yellow and red hues (Fig. 10-4). In this artwork, yellow serves as a symbol of brightness, hope, and serenity. Its upward and evolving tendency strengthens the perception of logic and self-control, contributing to the overall emotional and thematic resonance of the composition.

The analysis of the tile painting The Water Bearer of Karbala at the Taj al-Din Gharib shrine, alongside similar works such as the paintings of Hosseiniyeh Mushir and Imamzadeh Ebrahim (Fig. 11), reveals meaningful similarities and differences in the application of Gestalt principles. In all these works, the principles of similarity and proximity are prominently featured, creating visual compositions that strengthen the narrative messages of Ashura. The principle of continuity is consistently used across all three works to guide the viewer's gaze toward the central figures, such as Hazrat Abbas (AS). For instance, diagonal lines and vertical movements in

the motifs of Hosseiniyeh Mushir and Imamzadeh Ebrahim effectively focus the viewer's attention on the primary characters and narrative axes. The Taj al-Din Gharib tile painting, with its high Prägnanz and the use of contrasting colors in the central mass, generates greater visual excitement and deeply engages the audience's emotions. In contrast, Hosseiniyeh Mushir and Imamzadeh Ebrahim emphasize principles such as unity and common fate, which enhance the collective and religious impact of the narrative. Furthermore, the Hosseiniyeh Mushir tile painting employs light contrasts and horizontal framing more prominently than the Taj al-Din Gharib tile painting, evoking a greater sense of stability and tranquility. This distinction underscores the unique artistic approaches in each work while maintaining their shared thematic and cultural significance.

Thus, the comparative analysis of these three works reveals that Gestalt principles have been employed as key elements in conveying religious messages across all the artworks. However, the intensity and manner of their application vary depending on the historical and cultural context of each piece. This analysis indicates that the aim of the study extends beyond analyzing a single image; it can be generalized to include the application of Gestalt principles to other works from the Constitutional Era. Such an approach helps identify shared characteristics and distinctions in the religious tile paintings of this period.

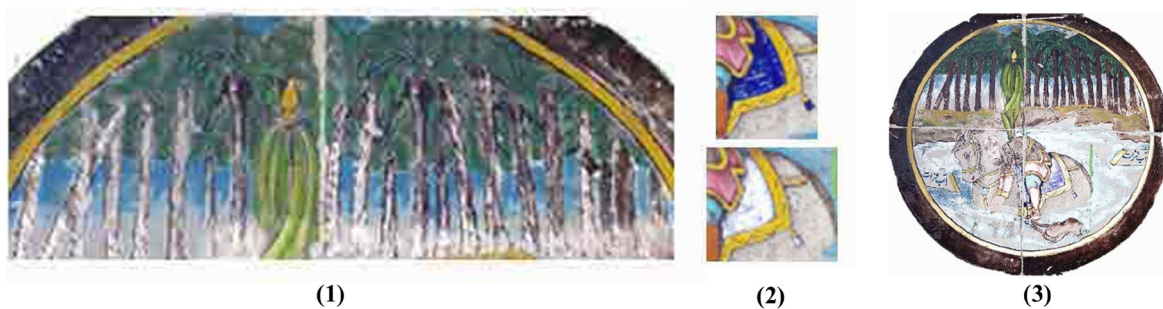


Fig. 9. (1): Analysis of simultaneous contrast between red and green/ (2): Analysis of simultaneous contrast between yellow and blue/ (3): Analysis of saturation contrast with the exclusion of yellow. Source: Authors.



Fig. 10. (1): Composition of yellow color/ (2): Composition of green color/ (3): Composition of red color/ (4): Composition of blue color. Source: Authors.



Fig. 11. (1): The Ashura Event, 1292 AH, Imamzadeh Ebrahim, Shiraz/ (2): The Ashura Event, 1269 AH, Hosseiniyeh Mushir, Shiraz. Source: Authors.

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to identify the visual perception features of the tile painting *The Water Bearer of Karbala* by Haj Baqir Jahanmiri at the Taj al-Din Gharib shrine and align them with the principles of Gestalt theory. The results of the visual structure analysis demonstrate a complex and meaningful composition that utilizes various Gestalt principles to organize and convey artistic and cultural messages. The findings confirm that Gestalt principles, such as similarity, proximity, continuity, closure, and common fate, enhance the viewer's visual perception process, enabling the overall visual impact of the tile painting to transcend the sum of its components. **Similarity:** The artist's use of color harmony and consistent dimensions of elements, such as the shape of tree leaves and the figure of Hazrat Abbas (AS), emphasizes the unity of the image and facilitates easier comprehension for the audience. This harmony reinforces the work's coherence and effectively conveys its narrative message. **Proximity:** In the design, proximity is particularly evident in the overlap of the figure and the horse of Hazrat Abbas (AS) and the edge contact of various components, such as the ground, water, and sky. These connections strengthen visual cohesion, aiding in the quicker and more effective interpretation of the painting and highlighting its narrative structure. **Continuity:** By guiding the viewer's gaze toward the vanishing point, the principle of continuity focuses attention on the central figure and the core concepts of the artwork. **Color and Visual Contrast:** The contrast between warm and cool colors in the central mass not only emphasizes the importance of the main figure but also enhances the emotional and impactful aspects of the artwork. This deliberate artistic arrangement evokes a

sense of heroism and sacrifice, aligning with the cultural and religious themes of Ashura. **Closure:** The principle of closure, encouraging viewers to mentally complete the incomplete depiction of Hazrat Abbas (AS) and his horse, exhibits high Prägnanz. This invites active engagement from the viewer and fosters a stronger emotional and cognitive connection with the artwork. The analysis of this tile painting not only validates visual perception principles as facilitators in interpreting artistic works but also highlights the specific effects of each principle on the artwork. Furthermore, the findings reveal the visual richness and artistic balance of this historical work. The application of the seven Gestalt principles—similarity, proximity, continuity, closure, and common fate—to this painting demonstrates how these principles synergistically enhance the visual message and artistic Prägnanz. Previous research has broadly explored Gestalt principles in visual arts but has rarely conducted detailed analyses of individual principles. This study shows that while Gestalt principles play a general role in visual perception, their individual and combined effects vary based on the specific composition, subject matter, and historical context of the artwork. The findings emphasize that relying solely on a single principle is insufficient for fully understanding an artwork. Gestalt principles not only serve as general rules for analyzing artistic works but their effects depend on the unique composition and historical context of the artwork. A comprehensive and multilayered analysis of Gestalt principles is essential for a deeper understanding of any artwork. These results can serve as a foundation for further studies on religious artworks and the application of visual theories in Islamic art, enabling a more profound exploration of the cultural, historical, and artistic dimensions within this rich field.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there was no conflict for them in conducting this research.

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