

# **The Symbolic and Religious Significance of the Umayyad Mosaic Decorations in the Dome of the Rock**

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## **Abstract**

Architectural heritage is a reflection of social, political, economical and religious life. The Islamic doctrine is the basis for the formation of concepts in Islamic art on one hand, and a direct mean of serving religion on the other because this art has taken its great vision in understanding the unseen and the existence together Through religion being a divine heavenly message, considered the artistic and aesthetic philosophy in which Islamic art is derived in all its details. Therefore, the relationship between art and religion appears to be a faith-philosophical relationship. The religion that was called by Islam, is translated into an amazing artistic language. The call of monotheism turns into a philosophy that governs everything: the line, the color, the space, the decoration and the relationship between them all.

The Dome of the Rock is considered a masterpiece of Islamic architecture, not only in the era in which it was built, but throughout the ages. It was known for its interior and exterior decorations, which fulfilled its surroundings with geometric, vegetative and linear forms.

This research aims to study the symbolic and religious significance of some of the architectural, geometric and linear motifs in the mosaic of the interior facades of the Dome of the Rock. An analytical study, based on a religious perspective, is an idea that was previously launched by

researchers, including Myriam Rosen-Ayalon. For this idea put forward by the writer, but, not according to the perspective of the Quran, but according to the manners of the Sunnah.

This research is divided into four chapters, as follows:

Chapter 1: deals with the decoration of the mosaic in Islamic art, and it defines its language and terminology. It then moves on to its historical development, its purpose, its features and characteristics; the decoration is an art that imitates nature from a perspective consistent with Islam's view of existence, The decoration in Islamic art is divided into floral, geometric, animal (and living) motifs, and calligraphy in the Islamic art. It then spoke about the implications of this decoration on western art. Moreover, Late in terms of mosaic decoration: the concept, its historical development, the materials used to produce them, and techniques of completion.

Chapter 2: Al-Aqsa Mosque: I discussed the definition of the mosque in general, and then I moved to talk about its religious history; faith and creeds. It also dealt with the concepts of the Aqsa Mosque and its provisions, and began to ask: Is Al-Aqsa Mosque *Haram*? Then I went on talking about its virtues, its status, its characteristics, its rulings, the religious importance, and the sequence of the prophets and messengers - peace be upon them - and then I concluded the chapter by talking about the problematic decorations and inscriptions in the mosques between jurisprudence and art.

Chapter 3: The Religious and Symbolic Meaning of the Umayyad Mosaic Decorations within the Dome of the Rock and How to Use them from a Religious Perspective: It dealt with the meanings of the decorative elements in the Islamic religion and the location of the symbolism and

thought within it, and then moved on to the Dome of the Rock in terms of its description, Which led the architect to build, and the stages of maintenance and restoration that passed by, and its status in the eyes of Muslim travelers, and then talked about the Islamic planning thought to them in terms of :

- Architectural elements, and their implications.
- The mosaic decorations in the dome .
- Distribution of mosaic decorations in the dome.
- Decorative elements in the Dome of the Rock: (floral ornaments, geometric ornamentation, or calligraphy decoration).
- The advantages of the Dome of the Rock decorations.

Chapter 4: talks about the symbolic and religious significance of the decorative elements; their concept, symbolic and religious thought before the Islamic religion, the statement of its symbolic and religious implications, which included plant elements, engineering, color significance of decoration, Living), decoration with multiple and varied shapes (such as crescent, stars, winged shape ...), and decoration using jewelry.

At the end of the research, the findings of this study, conclusions, recommendations, supplements and a summary in English were included.