

Biomorphic Ornaments in Islamic Architecture and Their Development

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Abstract : Islamic architecture is known for the ornamental patterns that cover the architectural surfaces: floors, walls, and ceilings. This quality in Islamic buildings has long impressed other civilisation, and it is a visual language that exists across the Islamic lands. Ornamentation is divided into three types: geometry, biomorphs, and Arabic calligraphy. The focus of this study is the biomorphic ornaments. This paper will aim to define and characterise biomorphic patterns and trace their development from the 7th to the 18th centuries. Although the time period is seemingly long, the biomorphic patterns and their motifs have been consistent and supported by a geometric system underlying the free flowing, symmetrical motifs. The methodology of this paper consists of analysing and comparing biomorphic patterns from each Islamic period using rules of geometry and symmetry. The study is concluded with a table showcasing the main motifs and how they developed under each Islamic dynasty. This research is a documentation of the biomorphic language and having this record will help contemporary designers employ biomorphic ornaments thoughtfully.

Keywords : architectural surface, biomorphic patterns, Islamic patterns, Islamic ornamentation

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