Colors

Color is applied to most religious works of art, and can be used to convey meaning by use of different combinations of those colors.

•“Blue, Green, and white when clustered together carried some of the same meaning associations for everyone who viewed them... In all countries, these colors are strongly associated with ‘peaceful’, ‘gentle’, and ‘calming’”. - “Color Theory and the Dome of the Rock.” Art251.web.unc.edu

Pilgrimage and the Dome of the Rock

The Dome of the Rock is a monumental sacred site built in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah. Though considered to be a Muslim building, it has been a site known for people of all religious backgrounds to come to love and admire. Arguments suggesting the original function and purpose of the site are still not resolved, however the artwork shown through mosaics that has been translated has given us clues to its past. Through the use of words, symbols, jewels and color in the mosaics, we can get a hint as to what the Dome of the Rock was intended to represent, and how these function with religious pilgrimage for not only Muslims, but all religions.

Symbols

The mosaics themselves are mostly decorative, consisting of vegetation, cornucopias, and vases. There are also representations of crowns, breastplates, and jewelry that are commonly known to art historians as “jewels”.

•Many art historians have argued that the crowns and jewels could either depict the holiness of the site by using images that tie with royalty, or displaying their power by using them to show their victories over their enemies, as in other religions, resulting in people converting to their new faith.

Words

The inscription around the interior is about 240 meters in length, and contains some of the earliest surviving verses of the Qur’an in architecture. Known as the bismillah (which translates to “in the name of God, the merciful and compassionate”), recites verses of the Qur’an, the Shahada (confession of Islamic faith), and proclaiming there is one God and that Muhammad is his prophet. It also describes Mary and Christ, and how Christ was a prophet, but not divine. By doing this, the inscription describes “the core values of the newly formed religion of Islam”, and also ties Christ in with Islam, creating similarities for Christians and Jews to relate to.

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Sadie Willey
Utah State University
Department of Art and Design
Professor Alexa Sand

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