



Original Article

## A Study of the Semiotics of the Common Language of Christianity in The Structure and Visual Motifs of the Domes of the Armenian Churches of Isfahan: With Emphasis on Peirce's theory

Nazanin Rahmani<sup>1</sup>  Abolghasem Dadvar<sup>2\*</sup>   
Ali Akbar Jahangard<sup>3</sup>  Touraj Fashandaki<sup>4</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>Department of Research Art, Ki, C., Islamic Azad University, Kish. Iran

<sup>2</sup>Department of Research of Art, Faculty of Art, Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran

<sup>3</sup>Department of Art and Architecture, Shiraz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Shiraz, Iran

<sup>4</sup>Department of Art, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

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Abstract

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**\*Corresponding author:**

E-mail address:

a.dadvar@alzahra.ac.ir

With the arrival of Christian Armenians in Isfahan during the reign of Shah Abbas Safavid, churches were built in this city, and like the mosques of this period, the structure and decorations of the church building attracted the attention of the audience. The Armenian churches of Isfahan have large domes with motifs and visual elements. By analyzing them, common signs and symbols can be identified. The main issue of the research is whether the structure and visual motifs of the domes of the Armenian churches of Isfahan have a common language and convey a common goal based on the principles of Christian belief. What are the most important components of their common language, and why were these components used? The need for research is to examine the dimensions of the common language in terms of analyzing the symbols and visual signs in these domes based on the principles of Christianity. The purpose of this research is to examine and identify the common language, the direction of the perceptions, and the kinship of the worshipers. And how to reach this common language requires semiotic analysis. Therefore, the research uses a descriptive-analytical method, and the data collection tool is a library method. It is discussed based on the semiotic theory of Charles Sanders Peirce. The findings show that the churches have circular domes with skylights. The outer covering of the domes lacks decorative motifs. The visual motifs are engraved from the inside of the building and under the domes. And they all follow the same structure. And they have Christian concepts that form a common language. Including God, eternity, resurrection, and salvation. The components that have formed the structure and visual motifs of the domes of the Armenian churches of Isfahan have a direct connection with the Holy Bible and faith in God (God the Father) and Jesus Christ (the Son), they play an important role in the perceptions and identification of the audience.

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monuments in the form of maps and images. The difference between these books and the present research is in the field of explanation about the churches of the Safavid era, with a historical overview. Rouhi et al. (2017), in an article titled Semiotic Analysis of the Designs and Visual Forms of Domes, compared Christian art and Armenian churches during the Safavid period. Additionally, Ghochani et al.(2018) have analyzed and compared the symbolic concepts of geometry used in the physical elements of Islamic and Christian places of worship (case study: Hakim Mosque and Vank Church in Isfahan) (Vank Cathedral), and the results show that, despite differences in architectural details, Islamic and Christian temples are regarded as religious foundations of these religions. Momeni et al. (2021) also conducted a comparative analysis of the manifestation of Christian principles and rituals on the spatial structure and architectural decorations of the Armenian and Jolfa churches in Isfahan. Vali Beig et al. (2016) analyzed the geometric and functional characteristics of Nar double-shell domes in Isfahan's architectural landmarks, examining their construction and implementation alongside other dome components. This research aims to compare and understand the influence of these principles

## Introduction

### Christianity and the structure of the Church

In Christian architecture, we find the basic form of the cross enclosed in a circle. However, this shape shows a secret of Christ and the composition of the universe, which is very meaningful. In fact, this circle represents the wholeness of space, and based on this matter, it is a diagram of the Wholeness of being, and the heaven and the natural divisions of the Celestial Rotation, represented by the main axes as a holy cross. In a rectangular shape, the temple is represented. The church emphasizes the shape of the cross, which is consistent not only with the specifically Christian concept of the cross but also with the role of cosmology in pre-Christian architecture. Thus, these main lines are in the form of a middle or mediator elemental cross, and the intermediary is between the circle of heaven and the square of earth. and based on the Christian perspective and the role

and rituals on the spatial structure and presentation of Orthodox churches in Isfahan and Armenia. This study focuses on the semiotics of Christianity within the structure and visual motifs of domes, aiming to establish a common language for audience recognition. Additionally, various forms of wooden coils, poppies, and other reasons for their use will be explored. Innovations in this study include applying a semiotic approach and identifying certain concepts and symbols in Christianity, particularly in the structure and visual motifs of Armenian church domes in Isfahan. Ultimately, the focus is on understanding the shared language of their symbols.

### Research Methodology

This study is descriptive-analytical research, and the information gathering method is the library research method. In gathering study samples, I used some methods such as field research, observation, and taking notes. In this study, finding symbols and other signs in Christianity and in the structure or visual motifs of domes of Armenian churches in Isfahan related to the Safavid period was examined by Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory of icon, index, and symbol

o of divine mediator and intercessor is primarily intended. Encryption of the Christian temple is based on the similarity between the temple and the dead body of Jesus Christ (Burckhardt: 2020: 65-69), which is located above the public position and sometimes looks like a double shell. Interior coverage (bottom shell) and exterior (or top shell) coverage sometimes is as the minaret or sometimes is as the spire (Rak). In a structure of the church, the dome is a symbol of Jesus Christ.

### Charles Sanders Peirce's Semiotics

Semiotics is a kind of method in the field of signs and their classification, or Cryptographic analysis and grammar, systems or etc. Based on Paul de Man, the main point in Semiotics is not what words mean, but it is about how they acquire meaning (Kazemi and Larti:2017:76-78).

## Introduction

Christianity is one of the Divine religions that is based on the teachings and words of Jesus (Jesus of Nazareth). Some teachings, like the Trinity or the Crucifixion of Jesus (death of Jesus) as atonement for sins, water baptism, and the Holy Spirit, are fundamental beliefs of this ritual (Pour Jafar and Shahidi: 2009:10). In the Safavid Era, Isfahan was a city with racial, linguistic, and religious diversities. From all nations and ethnicities, including Christian Armenians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Indians, Tatars, Russians, Arabs, Turks, Georgians, and English, Dutch, French, Italians, and Spaniards, lived together in Isfahan. The number of foreigners was very high in Isfahan. That's why speaking and calculating about the exact number of foreigners was impossible. Although many caravansaries had sufficient space and were too large in Isfahan, they were unable to accommodate all the people. Among religious and racial minorities, one of the important groups was the Armenians, who followed the teachings of the Orthodox sect. Although the history of Armenians' presence in Iran goes back to the ancient era, the exact date of their widespread and definitive presence started during the Safavid era and Shah Abbas I in 1013 AH/1604 AD (Hossini, 2011:24). Many Armenians of Iran lived in Iran before Jesus Christ (PBUH); they were the Zoroastrians or followed the Mehr (Mehrisim) religion and the Anahita Ritual. When they accepted the Christian religion, they turned their earlier ancient temples into churches. The architecture of these temples was based on the four-clasp pattern. Little by little, by adding some other components to those buildings, they became Armenian churches. Basically, this mentioned pattern was different from the patterns of European churches, because many of them had the stretched cross pattern. The Armenian church had the folded cross pattern. Thus, the structure had a dome house in its own zone where four faces from four sides were attached to it (Khakpur and Kateb 2017:56). Therefore, the main point in this research is to understand whether the structure and visual motifs of domes of the Armenian churches in Isfahan have a common language and convey a common goal based on the principles of Christian belief or not. What are the most important

components of their common language, and why were these components used? With this issue, we deal with a kind of contradiction and a question: In order to build these domes and their visual motifs, are they based on the principles of architecture and aesthetics? Are they looking for truth and fiction in the Christian religion? The necessity of this research is to study how the dimensions of common language in terms of analyzing symbols and visual signs in these domes based on the principles of Christianity, and the purpose of this study is to review and identify common language and direction of perceptions and identification of worshippers and how to reach this common language, requires to semiotic

### Research Background

A lot of research has been conducted in the field of Christianity and Armenian churches in Isfahan, which is written in books, theses, and articles, and also different issues have been written about this subject. Most of these studies from historical perspectives, structural analysis, and comparative studies are in the field of Armenian architecture and visual arts in the Safavid era. In comparison of their artworks with artworks in other historical eras indicated that the results indicated some similarities and differences in visual styles and methods. In the field of common language, different articles have been studied about the common language between music and architecture, with their results being about similarities in elements of music and architecture. No research has been conducted about the common language of Christianity or the structure or visual motifs of the domes of Armenian churches of Isfahan based on a semiotics approach. Following the rest of the prior studies, there is a need for another coherent study about the common language of art by a new approach. we can address to some studies in this field as follows: Armen Hakhnazarian (2006)"Armenian Churches of Jolfa Noo, Isfahan", published by the Academy of Art Publication House, chronicles the history of Isfahan's Armenian churches built between 1605 and 1607 and their role in the development of Armenian society. This book shows some historical

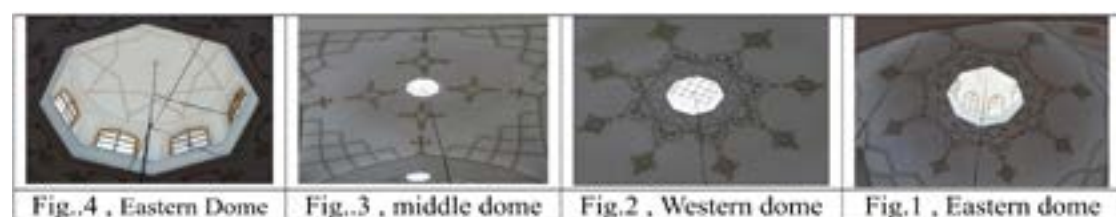
## Structure and visual motifs of domes of Armenian churches of Isfahan.

### Saint George's Church (Isfahan)

The domes and ceiling of this church are placed on some arches where three pairs of wide columns are attached to the interior walls. From these three domes, where one of them is the Eastern dome, the largest, and it is a skylight (Hovsepian:2007:68-67). Inside the interior space of the western and eastern domes of the church, some visual motifs, such as Shamseh-e-Hast with special decorations and Shamseh in the art of illumination. In its center, including the skylights of these domes, it is observable as a regular octagon. Inside the skylights, and based on the octagon, there are eight windows adjacent to each other on eight

sides. (Figure 1-2) The upper part of these skylight windows in eastern domes, namely, at the end and tip of the cupola, is designed for a (Shamsa) (the sun) (Figure 3). All inside the visual components are skylights. The light source of the middle dome in the church between two arches and cupolas is placed in the center of this monument. Just like these two eastern and western domes, it has an octagonal window skylight with quadruple decorations. These decorations contain 4 crosses and four geometric shapes that are placed on the four sides of the dome. From other decoration motifs that are observable inside the interior space, geometric motifs, as parallel and intersecting lines, and placed close to the center of the dome, will give the viewer the appearance of a shamsa. (Figure 4) (Table 1)

**Table1.**  
**indicates decoration the Eastern and Western or middle Domes of St. George Church**  
**(Authors, 2024)**



### Sourp Asdvadzadzin Church (St. Mary Church)

The church plan is rectangular (west and east) and called Round Halls in Armenian architecture, and the structure has some small curved domes. But the main dome has four light sources in the middle of the building that rely on the arches over the wide columns and are connected to the northern and southern walls (URL:vank.ir). The main and curved dome of the church is in blue and has four windows, and between these windows, some motifs and inscriptions are placed on the circular center of the dome. Exterior space of this dome, including yellow, blue, green plant motifs with a red background, and based on the image, this space has Arabesque traceries (islami) in green color with shamsa (the sun) motifs (Figure 5).

### St. Hovhannes Mkrtych Church

The dome of the church, with various light sources and its ceiling, relies on these arches (Hovsepian:2007-72). The dome and its light source of this church are placed on a square-shaped space where, inside this square seen eight windows are seen, and four corners of this square and windows, including an arched roof. Inside the interior space of the dome and above each window are drawn plant motifs with foliage. In the center of the dome, there are two circles with Arabesque (islami) and curved or spiral motifs that show a visual form of a rhombus that surrounds them. On its four sides, there is a cross motif (Figure 6) (Table 3).

Semiotics is a literary discipline that was born and derived from the Greek word "sign." Based on terminology, Semiotics is defined as a branch of knowledge that treats a wide range of objects (things) and cultural events as signs. Then it reads and processes them (Nuraini et al, 2023: 78). In order to understand and have a clearer intention, Semiotics is anything that can be considered or interpreted as signs. Based on Umberto Eco in his book (Theory of Semiotics), he assumes and defines that semiotics is related to it, and to everything that can be considered a sign. A sign can be considered a significant substitute for something else. According to Umberto Eco, "(something else) necessarily and exactly does not exist at the same time, which is an indicator or substitute for that position." Therefore, Umberto Eco often refers to it as "deception theory." Because it can be used for misleading or deceiving others (Mohd Yakin and Totu, 2014: 5). Peirce considers the concept of sign to be broader. He believes in the three-dimensional pattern as follows:

- 1) Appearance and representation: it refers to a shape that takes a sign to itself, and necessarily it is not material. Based on Saussure's perspective, it is equivalent to the same signifier
- 2) Subject: A thing that the sign refers to.
- 3) Interpretation: It is the meaning which derived from a sign, and in fact, a means which derived from a sign, and based on Saussure's perspective, it is equivalent to the signified. Pierce

considers the interaction between appearance, subject, and interpretation and calls them semiosis (or the semiosis process). this mind that says, "Red traffic light at an intersection," "appearance," "stop vehicles" (subject), and "why the red light indicates that other vehicles must stop, it is an interpretation. So, based on Peirce's perspective and in addition to the signifier and signified, the subject has a special position and can be said to indicate how the signifier and the signified are linked together. In other words, it shows that between the signifier and the signified, there is a gap. Therefore, Peirce believes that the meaning of a sign is another sign or a simpler term; the meaning of a sign is not present. There is always an undeniable and unknowable gap between the signifier, the mental

image, and the real subject, but this definition of sign by Peirce is not limited to the relationship between these three parts of the text. According to Peirce's perspective, the signs are basically recognized in context with something except than themselves and in this way, they are identified (Amiri 2021:109-11). Peirce's three-dimensional signs include:

**Icon:** In this case, the signified is perceived just for its similarity to the signifier, or it is received only for its imitation of it. To identify the signified, it will be done by looking or listening, touching, tasting, or smelling or something just like them, and the signifier is similar to the signified because it has some common qualities such as face painting, cartoons, mockups, onomatopoeia, metaphors, voice imitation, sound effects in radio plays, dubbing a movie, and imitative gestures. Based on Peirce's idea, photographs are icons, even if their style is conventional. The quality of an icon depends on its similarities with the subject, which is its marker. According to his idea, the photographs are icons, even if their style is conventional.

**Index:** Pierce has provided different standards for what makes an index. What does an index refer to? For example, the UV index, or clock, is an index of time for the day. This case refers to a real connection between the sign and its subject and is not solely dependent on the analytical mind. The subject necessarily exists. In reality, an index is connected to its subject, and this is a real connection, but it may even be a direct and physical connection.

**Symbol:** In this way, the signifier is not similar to the signified, but based on an optional contract, the signifier is linked to the signified. Therefore, this link between the signifier and the signified must be learned. For example, generally, language, including some particular components such as alphabets, punctuation marks, words and phrases or sentences, numbers, Morse, traffic lights, and flags, are conventional signs or ones that depend on individual habits (acquired or inherited). All words, sentences, books, and other conventional signs are symbols (Chandler, ۱۳۹۰:۲۱:۶۷).



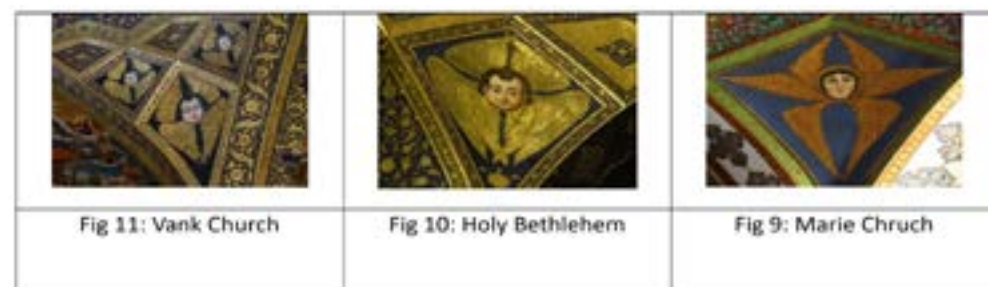
## The semiotics of the structure and visual motifs

### A. Icon winged—men or angels

In these churches, the existence of an icon is not clearly observable because, based on Pierce, "the icon of an image which is imitative with objective similarity

doesn't exist, but in many decorations under these domes of St. Mary churches and Bethlehem and Vank churches, we see the representation of combined motifs in the four corners at the ends of the domes. They are images of winged men with six golden wings in an azure and crimson background. (Figures 9-10-11) (Table 5).

**Table5.**  
**the icon of winged men, the domes of Vank churches of Isfahan**  
**(Authors, 2024)**



### Symbol: light & brightness

In the ceiling and domes of the church, the existence of windows is a symbol of light and brightness. Because of the windows, light can reach the interior space of the building. In addition to ambient brightness, a kind of spiritual space was made for worshippers over there. Light and brightness are one of the most important elements in Christianity, although it has been mentioned several times in the Holy Bible. When light shines in the darkness, the darkness cannot understand, as stated in the Gospel of John (Chapter 1:5). That is a true light that gives light to every man who is coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world didn't know him. The light in Christianity means "Lord," and God is light & brightness. Based on John 1:3-4 (all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made). He was in the life, and the life was the light of man.

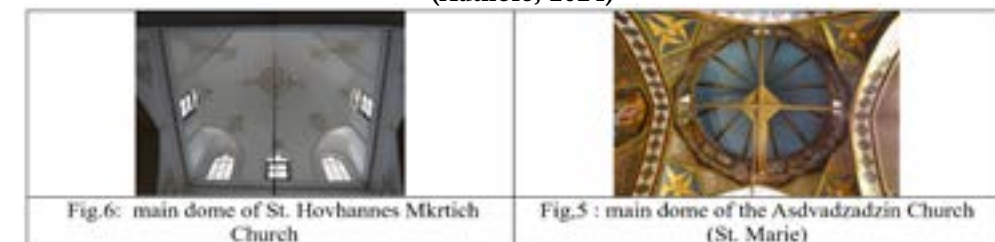
### Motifs:

#### The Plants Arabesque

The plant motifs, such as flowers, herbs, and arabesques, remind us of heaven. it can be a symbol of Paradise Gardens. The Light is based on the Holy Bible about the light: The Lord is my light. Psalms) 1:2 (and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is

the preserver of my soul; of whom shall I be afraid? This is the message from the Lord, and we have heard from him and declare to you: "God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all" (John 1:1:5). Here, Light directly refers to the Lord, and this is God's symbol. "And this is exactly what God told us: 'I have appointed you to be a light to the Gentiles, to guide them to me from the four corners of the earth.'" (Acts of the Apostles 47:13). In this sentence, the concept of light is about Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is a symbol of light from the Lord, and he is for saving human beings. The Light has always existed in different religions and sects, mysticism, literature, wisdom, and philosophy of most nations and many thinkers that noticed its concept. Based on the legacy of wisdom in ancient Iran, we have primitive and mythical accounts of Zurwani's beliefs and sometimes ambiguous or incorporated dualism about the Light. In Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism theories, which are both related to Zurwani ritual, other subjects such as ontology, angelology, and sacred fire all have interpretations based on the concept of light. In Christianity, the Lord is a light, and nobody can be close to God, also the name of Jesus is just like a light that shines into the darkness, and the darkness cannot turn it off anymore (Nezhat, 2009, 159)

**Table3.**  
**shows the Decorations of the domes in the Asdvadzadzin Church (St. Mary) & St. Hovhannes Mkrtych Church**  
**(Authors, 2024)**



### Holy Bethlehem Church

The church plan is rectangular, with dome halls placed in the west-east and containing double-glazed domes in the ceiling and eight light sources in down part of the domes. (Hovsepian, 2007: 74-75). Round domes are placed in the ceiling, and over these domes. The main dome looks like a round form, and it attaches to arches of the walls, and between them seen a shamsa (the sun) motif. Other decorative motifs inside the light sources and the main dome of this church are so similar to mosques of this period. This is a reminder of Islamic art. The geometric motifs, abstract and arabesque (Islimi), are in golden color on a navy blue background, and they are one of the most important visual elements in the Dome. In the center of this main dome, a large and small sun are inside of each other, and another circle has a decorative margin of plant motifs. In the margin of this circle, there are four rows of geometric and abstract motifs, and beside these motifs are drawn some golden arabesque motifs with a navy background and golden round margin, and blue motifs. Between these skylight windows, some paintings are seen about the stories of the creation of Adam and Eve based on old estament and stories about Jesus Christ. In the four corners

of the dome and vault space, there are two golden winged men (Figure 7).

### The Vank Church and St Hospe Armatatsi (Vank)

St. Hospe Armatatsi Church has a rectangular plan, and its exterior volume is in the form of cubic and a rectangle. The magnificent dome of the church is an adornment of the collection, seen as egg-shaped, and there is a small bell-shaped dome next to it. From the outside, on the east and west side walls (the main entrance to the nave of the church), there are no neighboring buildings, but on the northern and southern sides of this church, there are some neighboring buildings (Araklian 2014:83-84). The building of Vank Church is just like Bethlehem Church; there are round and circular domes, and there are light sources. In dome space, there are some decorative motifs such as Shamsa, arabesque, plants, and geometry that are so similar to the Safavid mosques with golden colors and azure blue background. In the margin of the skylight windows of this dome, some painting is drawn about the creation of Adam and Eve (Figure 8) (Table 4).

**Table4.**  
**some decorative domes of Bethlehem Church and St. Joseph of Vank church**  
**(Authors, 2024)**



In these religions, the relationship between light and the sun is infrangible. Not only is the sun the symbol & appearance of light, but also, there are the moon and stars, and the sun is another manifestation of light. I can confidently say that the light is one of the most common attributes of God and its existence, and this is in all religions and rituals, from primitive religions to other advanced religions, and in different cultures and civilizations. According to Iranian belief, one of the highest levels of truth is light and the embodiment of light has appeared in traditional Iranian arts, such as the symbol of shamsa (Farshid nik: 2020:34). As is clear from its name, this motif refers to the concept of light and represents a manifestation of all concepts and references that the Quran has expressed regarding the concept of light and illumination. In fact, based on Islamic mystics and Sufis, Shamsa, or the sun, is a symbol of light that comes from divine manifestations and the truth of God's light and the essence of oneness, as well as a reference to unity (Kameli and Aminpour: 2017:69). In domes of the churches, the shamsa, or sun motif, is at the highest part of this church that is placed adjacent to the skylight windows and can be counted as a kind of positional perspective. Because it is felt that an audience or a worshipper makes a kind of visual concentration while visiting the ceiling of the church, which refers to upwards. This is a symbol of the highest order, which means it is a sky or a symbol of light. Thus, we observe a symbolic representation of the sun shining in the sky or the light of the sky. That's why the sky is a place for God (creator of the world) and the Trinity in Christianity (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost). God is the God of the father, and the highest rank that the light is its symbol. Because, based on the Holy Bible or New Testament, "All things were made through him, and without him was

## Conclusion

The results indicate that all domes of Armenian churches of Isfahan followed a structure that included round or circular domes with light sources. You cannot see any decorative motifs in the exterior coverage of these domes, and all of these visual and decorative motifs are carved from inside the building and under the domes. The structure and visual motifs under the domes of Armenian

not anything made that was made. He was the life, and the life was the light of man (John 3:1-4 and John 1-4), which refers to God (God the Father). Further, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men," which means it implies that God (Father) created Jesus Christ (Son). For that reason, Jesus Christ (son) became the savior for human beings through God (father), and here, Shamsa is a symbol of light, which can be the savior for men, and Jesus Christ is that savior.

### Four crosses, for windows and for angels:

In the center of the middle dome of St. George's Church and St. John's Church, there are four crosses in the four corners of the north, south, east, and west. They can be a symbol of unity. Also there are four skylight windows of domes and representations of angels (winged men) in four

corners of the north, south, east, and west in St. Mary Church, and it refers to the Holy Bible, and the number four refers to Christianity and the four apostles of Jesus Christ (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) that wrote the Holy Bible or New Testament (Figs. 3.5.6.9).

### Seraph angels:

The icon of these angels is seen in the four corners under the dome, where they have four wings, and you can compare them with the seraphim angel that has six wings without a body. These four angels are placed on the top of the ceiling, and they are in an azure blue background, and the corners of the dome show a symbol of angels in heaven or angels entering heaven. Their wings are a golden color that is a symbol of the brightness of the candle and holiness.

churches of Isfahan have Christian concepts, and they form a common language. In the structure of domes of these churches, they attempted to build a round dome, and It is one of the components of a common language that conveys the concept and common language of immortality. Because the visual form of a circle is associated with infinity and endlessness. It can be adapted to the life and with a

**Round Domes:** One of the shapes and symbols that is linked to immortality is the symbol of the circle. In fact, humans have visualized immortality in this symbol. So, whenever it wanted to show the concept of immortality, it used the Mandala designs and circular shapes. Therefore, it can be said that the circle, which has no beginning or end or no ups and downs, induced a kind of Primary perfection and integrity or totality. In architecture, different parts of a traditional structure reflect the concept of cosmic. For example, a circle is a kind of sign that shows God's glory with the Divine concept (Bozorg Bigdely: 2007, 80-85). According to an ancient writing states "God is like a circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere." Firstly, a circle is a dot that expands symbolism or symbolic interpretation, including the concept of perfection, unity, and the absence of any kind of distinction and separation. In addition to the concept of perfection, which is implicit in the eternal point, the circle is just a symbol of creativity, which means the creation of the world depends on a creator. Concentric circles indicate hierarchies and classes of existence, and perfect circular movement is about immutability, which means without beginning or doing and changing. For this reason, the circle is a symbol of time. It has been defined as a series of moments that are repeated one after another in a sequential, unchanging, and similar manner. In addition to this, the circle, which is a symbol of the continuous and circular movement of the sky, links to divinity and conveys the concept of infinity. In turn and in a higher order of interpretation, the sky turned into a symbol. a symbol of the spiritual, invisible, and sublime world.

With these circles, or this everlasting form, we can say that the circle is more than a sphere. The circle is a sphere graphed from a cross-sectional angle. For this reason, Earthly Paradise has been shown as a circle (Khosravi, 2010). In the building of St. Hovhannes church (image 6), the ceiling of the round dome is placed over a square space. Its square structural form is a symbol of peace, stillness, and calmness, and it is a symbol of equality, and its circular and Round dome is a symbol of movement, divinity, and endlessness. Here, Square and Circle are in opposition to each other, which means the symbol of earth (square) and

the symbol of sky (circle) as well as the symbol of material and being. Namely, it is a symbol of God and the creatures. In the center of the dome (Fig. 2), there are two small circles that are drawn inside each other, and they are surrounded by the crosses and arabesque motifs, the symbol of concentration, unity, and spirituality, and the symbol of faith in God and heaven.

### The Shamsa (the sun)

The symbol of Shamsa is a symbolic and abstract painting of the sun, which is used in various arts. The Shamsa is a bergamot that forms a circle or a polygon. The Shamsa is a symbol of multiplicity in unity and unity in multiplicity. Multiplicity is the manifestation of God's attributes, which, in this form, from a single center, are emitted as other forms. As it is obvious from its name, this shape evokes the concept of light, and according to the Holy Quran, which names God as a light. Therefore, the Shamsa is a symbol of God (Nazari:2022:56). The visual imagery and symbolism of Shamsa (the sun) have a very important position in Iranian art, which attracted the attention of artists. Before Islam, the full sun was a symbol of aperture through which the light of divinity streamed to the earth, and it is similar to the image of the sun with rays coming out from around it (Shad Qazvini and Edraki 2018:6). Based on Islamic mystics and Sufis, the shamsa (the sun) is a symbol of light, which is from divine manifestations and the truth of God's Light and the essence of Oneness, and also refers to unity. In this regard, many Muslim artists showed the concept of multiplicity in unity and unity in multiplicity in their artworks. They could express this design in this way. The Holy Quran refers to light many times and introduces God as a true and absolute light. For this reason, Islamic mystics care too much about the light. Therefore, the use of these mentioned motifs, given their positions and places in the sky, can be metaphors from the invisible sky or invisible world (Hosseini:2011:11). In primitive religions, that human being attempted to respond to his sense of worship and praise by using clear natural manifestations; the sun was the most obvious manifestation of God that is full of light and brightness.



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composition of arabesque and plant motifs that symbolize heaven. It implies that after judgment day, the righteous will be taken to heaven (sky). Another component is placing windows for light and light sources, and in conjunction with of Shamsa (the sun) motif, it is the concept of the sun. At the highest part of the round dome, it is directly pointing to the Lord, and in closeness to the sky, the Lord has the highest position, and the Lord is likened to light. and Lord is another common language of these churches. On the other hand, it can be inferred that the concept of save is another common language of Armenian churches of Isfahan. Given the holy Bible, Jesus Christ is as light

## Data Availability

The data underlying the results presented in this paper are not publicly available at this time but may be obtained from the corresponding authors upon reasonable request.

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from the Lord for saving human beings. Another visual component includes decorative elements such as the Cross and icons of winged humans (Seraphim angels), which are repeated four times, and their common language is the Bible and the four Gospels. Generally, in the conclusion section, we can say that some components with form the structures and visual motifs of domes of Armenian churches in Isfahan, have direct relation with faith and the Bible, particularly about Lord (God of the father ) and Jesus Christ (the Son), and they play an important role in the audience's perceptions and identification

## Conflict of Interest

The results obtained in this research do not conflict with any individual or organization.

## Authors' Participation

This article was written by Nazanin Rahmani, and the analysis of data was done by Abolghasem Dadvar, Ali Akbar Jahangard, and Touraj Fashandaki.