

The impact of Islamic Safavid architecture on the Armenian churches at Julfa in Isfahan Applied to some models

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Abstract:

This research is concerned about the impact of Islamic Safavid architecture on the buildings of the Armenian churches in Isfahan, known as the “Julfa” churches in Arabic or “Jelfai Isfahan” in Persian, in the Safavid era (907-1135 AH / 1501-1735 AD). Isfahan did not witness the establishment of churches except in the Julfa region in The Safavid era, by order of Shah Abbas I (965-1038 AH / 1571-1629 AD); Where the number of Christians in Isfahan was limited, and distributed among the areas and regions of Isfahan. As a result of the emigration of the Armenians to Isfahan by order of Shah Abbas I. The churches build by Armenian and Iranian masters of architecture. The Safavid Islamic architecture and arts have clearly influenced the architecture of the Julfa churches; which is normal as a result of the influence of the direct context of the place, the churches were affected in terms of architectural and artistic design by the architecture of Iranian mosques and schools, taking into account the link between planning and the function of the building. This research aims to discuss the effects of Safavid Islamic architecture and arts on the architecture of the churches of Julfa, by studying some models and clarifying those influences; As well as emphasizing the specificity of those influences of the churches of the region of Julfa over other Armenian churches by comparing them with their counterparts, whether in Armenia itself, or the Armenian churches in Egypt, as well as the churches of some other cities of Iran such as Tehran, Yazd and Shiraz, in addition to comparing the churches of Julfa with the churches of Anatolia.

This research is concerned about the impact of Islamic Safavid architecture on church architecture in Isfahan, and comparing it with its counterparts from the Armenian churches, referring to the planning and architecture of these churches to serve the context of the research and without addressing a vertical descriptive study of those churches, which has no place here. The paper ended with proving the clear influence in the arts and architecture of the Julfa churches on the Islamic architectural and artistic heritage in Isfahan as it appears in the building materials, the formation of facades, the use of glazed tiles, and the methods of constructing domes, and the influence extended to the artistic composition of figurative subjects within the churches.

Keywords:

Isfahan, Julfa, Churches, Armenia, Safavid era