

Tile-working on Safavid domes of Isfahan, the four hundred year old tradition of conservation and the contemporary challenges

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Abstract The application of tile-working in decoration of domes in the Safavid capital, Isfahan, was reached to such perfection that it has been regarded as an archetype by Iranian architects. The sustainability of these historical monuments despite their structural vulnerability and the instability of social-political conditions is due to continuous collaboration of generations of local artists and craftsmen of different fields of technical and aesthetic traditional knowledge for their maintenance and repair. However, drastic changes in this process of vernacular architectural conservation seems inevitable due to the present evolution of social life styles, little interest of the young generation for learning the traditional repair techniques and the entrance of modern technology to this field. This paper is the result of long-term dialogue among the seventh generation of local artists and conservation researchers for re-understanding of the cultural and technological aspects of this historical heritage and conservation of its unity and authenticity.

Keywords Conservation of Safavid domes, Tile-working on domes, Traditional conservation systems

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