

# Comparative Comparison of Common Animal Motifs in the Sheikh Safi Al-Din Complex (Safavid Period) and the Shrine of Imam Reza (AS) (Qajar Period): An intertextual Approach

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**ABSTRACT:** Decorative motifs have evolved significantly in the architecture of the Islamic era in terms of form, structure, aesthetic, and doctrinal principles and represent the beliefs of the people in that era. In this study, an attempt has been made to provide a new possibility for a deeper analysis of common animal motifs in the Islamic periods of Safavid and Qajar with an intertextuality approach (with the help of logical reasoning and the Delphi method) to perceive decorative motifs. Therefore, the intertextuality relations between the motifs of the two historical tombs of the Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex (Safavid period) and the holy shrine Imam Reza (AS) (Qajar period) were analyzed. According to the findings, the animal motifs identified with intertextual relations included peacock (11 cases), cow (2 cases), pheasant (16 cases), duck (1 case), and dragon (16 cases). In all the motifs of the buildings, the pretext type was of the exclusive type, and the hypertext type was of the transformation type. In addition, in peacock, pheasant, and dragon motifs, the largest number of additional substitution, substitution, and substitutional -ellipsis types were observed, respectively. It seems that in selected buildings of the Safavid and Qajar periods, the change in the colors of animal motifs is more evident than in other dimensions of intertextuality. This change has had an impact on the spiritual and mystical content of the motifs, and somehow, in addition to the mystical and spiritual content, attention to material aspects (increase in wealth and abundance of blessings) has been considered in the use of various colors.

**Keywords:** Intertextuality, Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex, Shrine of Imam Reza (AS), Qajar period, Safavid period.

## INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of Iran, decorative symbolic motifs have a value beyond mere physical aesthetics in Iranian-Islamic culture and art (Esmi & Shahbazi Shiran, 2021). Animal motifs are generally divided into four main groups (Jafarzadeh, 2017; Ryan & Crabtree, 2018). The first group is animal motifs actively present in people's lives. These pets are good for people, and their existence is essential for survival. Hens, roosters, chickens, sheep or dogs, etc. can be mentioned among these animals. The second group, a symbol of purity, beauty and dignity, refers to birds such as pigeons, pheasants, and peacocks (Hill, 2013; Nikandish et al., 2019). The third group is a symbol of power and predation. These animals

sometimes threaten the lives of people, villagers, and nomadic tribes. Among these, we can mention the lion and the fox. The fourth group is animal motifs that do not have a real aspect and are mostly considered combined or symbolic (Wessman, 2021).

Intertextuality is one of the researchers' findings in the twentieth century that offers a new perspective on the relation between elements in texts and motifs and deals with the intertextual relation between them (Sardaraz et al., 2020; Namvar Motlagh, 2007). Intertextuality is based on the basic principle that no text or form is without a hypertext. In addition, no text or idea is formed randomly or without a past (Shafiq, 2014). Therefore, all knowledge and thoughts have a past or a history. Every text and motif seems to have been taken from

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previous texts and motifs, and all trends of intertextuality and trans textuality emphasize this principle (Long & Yu, 2020). As its name suggests, transformation seeks to transform pretext into hypertext through transformation and change in its style.

It should be noted that a hypertextual relation is not exclusive to one type of transformation, and it is possible to have several types of transformation in a hypertextual relation simultaneously (Namvar Motlagh, 2007). Every hypertext is always derived from one or more pretexts. If it is taken from only one pretext, the pretext is exclusive, and if it is taken from several pretexts, it is non-exclusive and mixed (Norouzi & Namvar Motlagh, 2018).

Rajabi Asl (2016), in his research entitled "Structural adaptation and analysis of architectural motifs and decorations of Sheikh Amin al-Din and Sheikh Safi al-Din tombs in Ardabil," studied all the animal and plant motifs in these two tombs and architectural decorations. The results showed that the motifs used in the architectural decorations of the tomb of Sheikh Amin Al-Din Jabrail and the tomb of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili included animal motifs of peacocks, pheasants, dragons, cows, and pigeons. These researchers believed most motifs, especially bird motifs, were related to the Safavid Shia religion and mysticism. The motifs were interpreted as a symbol of the principles of the traditional Iranian Islamic worldview. The meanings and value of symbols were discovered based on the direct teachings of revelation, Islamic holy texts, philosophical and mystical teachings, and the worldview of the Safavid era. Jafarzadeh (2017) also interpreted the battle between the dragon and the cow as the battle between good and evil in interpreting decorative motifs. Often, dragon motifs mean a demonic and evil creature in ancient Iranian myths.

Numerous studies have proven intertextuality relations between different historical periods (Azar, 2016). For example, Akhavan and Mahmoudi (2015), who examined the effect of intertextuality on the decorative motifs of pottery in Neishabour in Iran in their research, concluded that the type of intertextuality and hyper textuality patterns used included ellipsis, substitutional and additional patterns. In another study, Chitsaz et al. (2019), following a study of how to read the pretext of pomegranate motif in Iranian ornaments, concluded that contemporary artists have represented the pomegranate form in the statue of contemporary jewelry (in various dimensions of ellipsis, substitution, and addition) by maintaining the nature of pomegranate, changing the form, disturbing the symmetry, using negative and positive spaces and combining different media with jewelry. The results also indicate that the pomegranate motif inspired contemporary jewelry designers in ancient times, which was of transformation type in classifying intertextuality relations. Zamaniaghaiee and Soltanzadeh (2017) investigated the architecture of public buildings in Uzbekistan and the architectural buildings of the Timurid era in this country using an intertextuality approach in their research. According to the results, intertextuality relations of imitative,

ellipsis, substitutional, and additional types were obtained between the architectural motifs of the selected buildings in two periods. Jamali and Marasy (2013), in a comparative study of tiling decorations in the architecture of Safavid and Qajar-era mosques, concluded that religion played an important role in compiling decorative motifs. The motifs used in some religious buildings in the Qajar period were inspired and modeled on the religious buildings in the Safavid period. In addition, the most visible changes in architectural motifs in both the Safavid and Qajar periods were related to color and variety of colors. In this context, the research findings of Mansori et al. (2019) showed that despite the abundance of commonalities among decorative motifs, the main difference in the decorative motifs of selected buildings in the Safavid and Qajar periods was related to the outline and color of the motifs. In the Safavid period, azure and turquoise colors were often used in decorative motifs; but in the Qajar period, yellow, orange, pink, and brown colors were more popular. In addition, geometric and Arabic motifs in the Safavid period tiling decorations are often simple and separate, but in the Qajar period, complex forms of geometry and motifs with intricate details can be seen.

What is certain is that the Safavid period was the peak of architectural art in the Islamic era, especially in decorative works and motifs, and the Qajar period was the cause of the further development of Islamic art (Jamali & Marasy, 2013). In the Safavid period (1501-1722 AD) and then the Qajar period (1789-1925 AD), the foundation of the Shia religion was established and honored (Mansori et al., 2019; Babazadeh Asbagh, 2022). During the Safavid period, the most important religious building and the center of the formation of Shiism was the Sheikh Safi al-Din complex in Ardabil. The shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in the city of Mashhad is also known as the most prominent and important Shiite complex in Iran, which was very important from the point of view of religion in the Qajar period (Babazadeh Asbagh, 2022). Therefore, the prominent religious buildings in these two periods have inspired and continued using various architectural decorative motifs (Mansori et al., 2019; Babazadeh Asbagh, 2022). According to the cases mentioned, this research seeks to compare the decorative animal motifs used in the most important Shiite buildings in two periods (Safavid and Qajar) in the form of intertextual relations.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The nature of the study was qualitative, and an attempt has been made to provide a new possibility for a deeper analysis of common animal motifs in the Islamic periods of Safavid and Qajar with an intertextuality approach (with the help of logical reasoning and the Delphi method) to perceive decorative motifs. The selected buildings of two different historical periods, the Safavid period and the Qajar period, including the Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex and the section related to the Qajar period in the shrine of Imam

Reza (AS) were selected. Since this research has been done with the approach of intertextuality theory, decorative motifs in selected buildings were considered, and the intertextuality relations between these motifs in different historical periods and buildings were observed. By carefully examining all motifs in the selected buildings of two historical periods, the motifs used with an intertextual approach in the architectural arrays of the Sheikh Safi al-Din complex in the Safavid period and the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in the Qajar period include animal motifs of peacocks, pheasants, and dragons, cows, and duck. The Delphi method was used to increase the accuracy of intertextual analysis and verify arguments. Eighteen experts in the field of decorative motifs and familiar with the topics of intertextuality in historical works were appointed. In this way, in the first stage, the first respondent was selected with the help of theoretical sampling. In the second stage, the snowball sampling method was used to select other experts. Therefore, the sample size was determined to include 18 faculty members, specialists, and experts of cultural heritage, tourism, and handicraft organizations of Ardabil and Khorasan Razavi

provinces (Education: 66.66% have doctoral level, 22.22% have master's level and 11.11% have bachelor's level; Average age: 47.44 years and average work experience: 16.06 years).

The study's investment was a questionnaire presented to experts in three stages. The questionnaire was in the form of open questions, and the first stage, the questions were about identifying and introducing common motifs in two historical periods and selected buildings. The types of motifs were determined in the second stage, and in the last stage, the type of intertextual relations was discussed. Finally, based on the consensus percentage of the respondents, the final summary of the answers related to intertextual relations was presented. In the following, according to Fig. 1, the location of the selected buildings is presented.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Peacock

Peacock is one of the motifs used extensively in decorating mosques and religious places during the Safavid and Qajar periods. The reasons for the presence of this motif on the

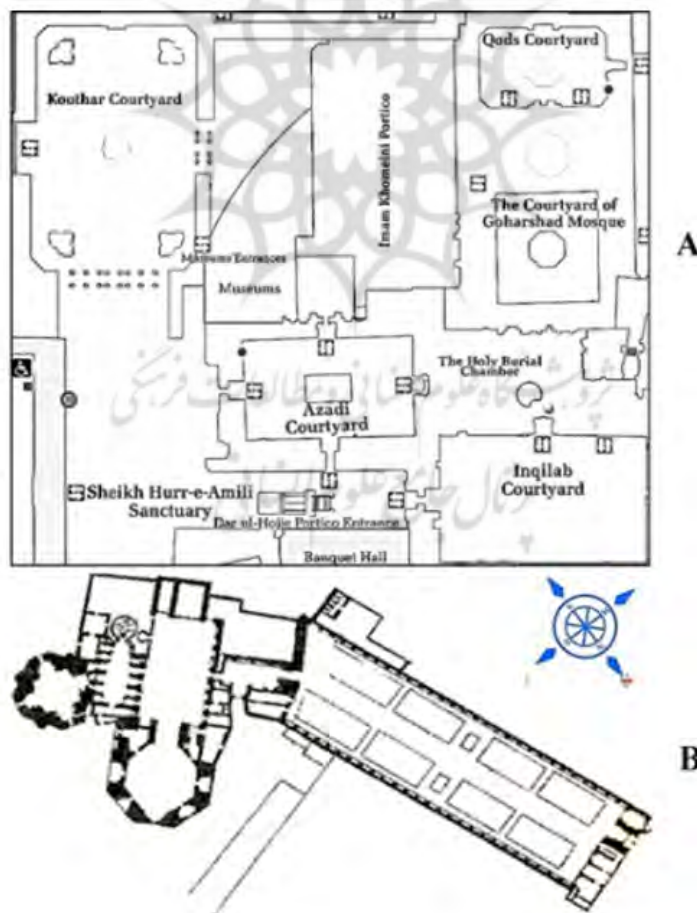


Fig. 1: Pictures of the buildings of the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza (A) and Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex (B)

entrance porch of mosques, religious schools, and Imamzadehs in the Safavid and Qajar eras is the fact that the peacock is considered a bird of paradise, and it served as a gatekeeper and guide for people in the mosque and at the same time expels the devil and invites the believers to enter (Khazaei, 2017; Rahmani & Hesami, 2017). In general, the motif of the peacock bird is often defined as a symbol of purity, beauty, and dignity in the historical works of Iran (Nikandish et al., 2019). The expansion of the divine lights (Jafarzadeh, 2017) is a symbol of eternity and completeness (Rajabi Asl, 2016), and it shows the same nature of all creatures and their softness because creatures appear and disappear as fast as a peacock opens and closes its tail (Nikandish et al., 2019).

#### **Analysis of Intertextuality Relations of the Peacock Motif**

According to Table 1 (In 11 cases), the peacock motif is an exclusive pretext type because a motif inspired this motif in the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex and was not inspired by a combination of motifs. It should be noted that according to the study's findings, in all motifs, the pretext type was exclusive, and the hypertext type was obtained from the transformation type, which has been omitted in Table 1 for brevity. Transformation type has been an additional- substitution due to internal changes in picture 2 compared to picture 1. It was added because the length and volume of the wings of motif two have increased. The nature of substitution is also since new colors have been substituted in Picture 1. The analysis of pictures 3, 4, 7, 10, 11, and 12 compared to their hyper textuality (picture 1) is the same as that of picture 2. In pictures 5, 8, and 9, the transformation type was only a substitution type due to the internal changes in these motifs. Because the only change in these pictures compared to picture 1 was the substitution of new colors. Only in picture 6 transformation was substitutional-ellipsis type due to internal changes. The nature of the substitution is due to the change of colors, and the ellipsis is because in picture 6, compared to picture 1, the peacock crown has been removed. The details of the findings are presented in Table 1 in the form of a comparative method.

#### **Cow**

The cow has been interpreted as the guardian angel of the quadrupeds. In Avesta, the word "cow" referred to all quadrupedal animals and was a prefix to the names of some animals (Pourdavood, 2015, 80). the cow embodies the great mother of all moon goddesses who have the role of sustenance, the productive force of the earth, abundance, reproduction, and maternal instinct. The horns are a symbol of the crescent moon. It also symbolizes fertility, the protective power of Masculine, royalty, and the king. It also symbolizes the earth and the wet force of nature. Cow herding or chariot pulling is the embodiment of the solar warrior. It drives away and expels evil (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 2006, 680).

#### **Analysis of Intertextual Relations of the Motif of Cow**

The results of Table 2 indicated that the motif of the cow in both cases is of an exclusive pretext type; because a motif inspired this motif in the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex and was not inspired by a combination of motifs. Among all cow motifs, the hypertext type is the transformation type. The transformation type has been a substitution due to internal changes in picture 15 compared to picture 13. The nature of the substitution is that new colors have replaced picture 15. Also, in Picture 15, compared to Picture 13, the transformation type is of the substitution type. More details of the findings are presented in Table 2.

#### **Pheasant**










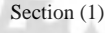
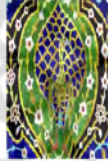


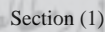



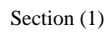



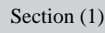


The pheasant is one of the birds that is considered a symbol of beauty in decorative motifs. It is an allegory of colorful lights, brightness, and the manifestation of the power of the sun (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 2006, 206). It symbolizes virtue, modesty, good fortune, happiness, and blessed life (Cooper, 1987, 252). In historical motifs, it symbolizes the seeker of spirituality and harmony. It symbolizes a human seeking spirituality, mysticism, and happiness associated with theology and knowledge. Male and female pheasants play an essential role in the concepts of decorative motifs in the historical building of the Far East; Its male type is a symbol of cosmic harmony and life order due to its song and rhythmic movements, and when the female bird calls the male, her voice is like a thunderbolt, and the female bird is a symbol of a blessed and happy life (Khan Hosseinabadi & Eshraghi, 2018).

#### **Analysis of Intertextual Relations of the Motif of Pheasant**











According to Table 3, the pheasant motif is of an exclusive pretext type; because a motif type inspired this motif in the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex and was not inspired by a combination of different motifs. Also, the hypertext type is the transformation type among all cow motifs. The transformation type has been a substitution due to internal changes in pictures 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 24 compared to picture 16. The nature of the substitution is that new colors have replaced picture 16. However, in pictures 22 and 23, the pretext type was additional and substitution; in picture 22, the wings and tail of the pheasant have become more and longer, and in picture 23, the volume of the bird has increased.

The nature of substitution in both motifs is due to the substitution of new colors. In picture 6, the transformation was of substitution and ellipsis type due to internal changes. The reason for the nature of substitution is due to the change of colors, and the reason for the nature of the ellipsis is also since in picture 6, compared to picture 1, the pheasant crown has been removed. The analysis of the intertextuality of the pheasant motif in picture 17 is that the transformation type has been a substitution type due to internal changes in pictures 18 and 22 compared to picture 17. The reason is because of the

Table 1: The intertextuality of peacock motifs in Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex (Safavid period) and the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) (Qajar period)

Case	Transformation type due to internal changes	Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex (Safavid period)	Motif section	The shrine of Imam Reza (AS) (Qajar period)	Motif section	Consensus percentage of respondents
1	Additional-Substitution	 Picture (1)	 Section (1)	 Picture (2)	 Section (2)	78.58
2	Additional-Substitution	 Picture (1)	 Section (1)	 Picture (3)	 Section (3)	80.86
3	Additional-Substitution	 Picture (1)	 Section (1)	 Picture (4)	 Section (4)	74.84
4	Substitution	 Picture (1)	 Section (1)	 Picture (5)	 Section (5)	87.45
5	Substitutional-Ellipsis	 Picture (1)	 Section (1)	 Picture (6)	 Section (6)	76.61
6	Additional-Substitution	 Picture (1)	 Section (1)	 Picture (7)	 Section (7)	82.73

Continuie of Table 1: The intertextuality of peacock motifs in Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex (Safavid period) and the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) (Qajar)

Case	Transformation type due to internal changes	Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex (Safavid period)	Motif section	The shrine of Imam Reza (AS) (Qajar period)	Motif section	Consensus percentage of respondents
7	Substitution	(Picture 1)	(Section 1)	 (Picture 8)	 (Section 8)	78.47
8	Additional-Substitution	(Picture 1)	(Section 1)	 Picture (9)	 (Section 9)	82.76
9	Additional-Substitution	(Picture 1)	(Section 1)	 (Picture 10)	 (Section 10)	77.80
10	Additional-Substitution	(Picture 1)	(Section 1)	 (Picture 11)	 (Section 11)	75.82
11	Additional-Substitution	(Picture 1)	(Section 1)	 (Picture 12)	 (Section 12)	79.87
The average percentage of respondents' consensus: 79.62						

substitution of colors. However, in pictures 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, and 25, compared to picture 17, the transformation type was of additional and substitution type because the wing crown and tail have been added in these pictures compared to picture 17.

#### Duck

In the Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex, a duck is placed in a golden rectangular frame flying in its context, and this art has been done by layering (Khan Hosseinabadi & Eshraghi, 2018). Some turn their heads in the opposite direction of their

Table 2: The intertextuality of cow motifs in Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex and the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) (Qajar period)

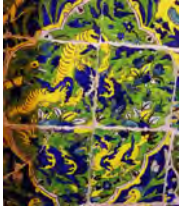






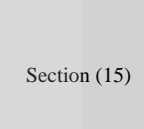




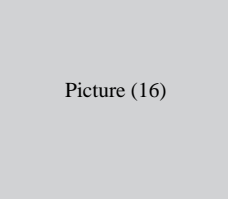
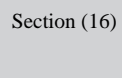









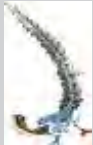




Case	Transformation type due to internal changes	Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex (Safavid period)	Motif section	The shrine of Imam Reza (AS) (Qajar period)	Motif section	Consensus percentage of respondents
1	Substitution	 Picture (13)	 Section (13)	 Picture (15)	 Section (15)	72.48
2	Substitution	 Picture (14)	 Section (14)	 Picture (15)	 Section (15)	80.36
The average percentage of respondents' consensus: 76.42						

Table 3: The intertextuality of pheasant motifs in Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex and the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) (Qajar period)

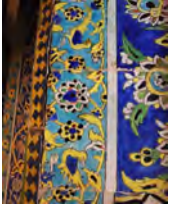

Case	Transformation type due to internal changes*	Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex (Safavid period)	Motif section	The shrine of Imam Reza (AS) (Qajar period)	Motif section	Consensus percentage of respondents
1	Sub	 Picture (16)	 Section (16)	 Picture (18)	 Section (18)	75.53
2	Sub	 Picture (16)	 Section (16)	 Picture (19)	 Section (19)	80.64

Continuie of Table 3: The intertextuality of pheasant motifs in Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex and the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) (Qajar period)

Case	Transformation type due to internal changes*	Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex (Safavid period)	Motif section	The shrine of Imam Reza (AS) (Qajar period)	Motif section	Consensus percentage of respondents
3	Sub	Picture (16)	Section (16)	 Picture (20)	 Section (20)	74.34
4	Sub	(Picture (16	(Section (16	 Picture (21)	 Section (21)	67.42
5	Sub	Picture (16)	Section (16)	 Picture ((22	 Section (22)	80.71
6	Add-Sub	(Picture (16	Section (16)	 (Picture (23	 Section (23)	72.36
7	Add-Sub	Picture (16)	Section (16)	 (Picture (24	 Section (24)	69.76
8	Add-Sub	Picture (16)	Section (16)	 Picture (25)	 Section (25)	75.52



Continuie of Table 3: The intertextuality of pheasant motifs in Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex and the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) (Qajar period)

Case	Transformation type due to internal changes*	Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex (Safavid period)	Motif section	The shrine of Imam Reza (AS) (Qajar period)	Motif section	Consensus percentage of respondents
9	Add-Sub		Picture (17)		Section (18)	80.51
10	Sub	Picture (17)	section (17)	Picture (19)	Section (19)	76.80
11	Sub	Picture (17)	section (17)	Picture (20)	Section (20)	77.42
12	Sub	Picture (17)	section (17)	Picture (21)	Section (21)	81.74
13	Add-Sub	Picture (17)	section (17)	Picture (22)	Section (22)	69.79
14	Add-Sub	Picture (17)	section (17)	Picture (23)	Section (23)	72.50
15	Sub	Picture (17)	section (17)	Picture (24)	Section (24)	70.55
16	Sub	Picture (17)	section (17)	Picture (25)	Section (25)	81.21
The average percentage of respondents' consensus: 75.43						
* <i>Add-Sub: Additional- Substitution; Sub: Substitution</i>						

bodies and look at each other simultaneously as if they tend to one axis. The text of the painting is full of flowers, leaves, and ivy and looks more like a garden from a bird's eye view. The number of ducks is 40, without considering the three birds whose half of their body is painted and the other half of their body is outside the frame (Rajabi Asl, 2016). The proportion and arrangement of the birds, which were depicted flying around an axis, is somehow reminiscent of the phrase "unity in plurality and plurality in unity." Most likely, the birds are a symbol of the angels, and their direction to the center refers to the world of truth and the oneness of God (Jafarzadeh, 2017).

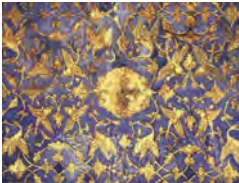



**Analysis of Intertextual Relations of the Motif of Duck**

According to Table 4, the duck motif is of an exclusive pretext type; because a motif type inspired this motif in the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex and was not inspired by a combination of different motifs in the building. Also, in these motifs, the hypertext type is the transformation type. Due to internal changes, the transformation type has been an additional- substitution type. The nature of the substitution is that new colors have replaced picture 27 compared to picture 26. The nature of the addition is since the shape of tears and circles that can be seen in the wings, body, and feathers of duck 27 have been added to the original shape. More details are provided in Table 4.

**Dragon**

A dragon is a winged serpent, a combination of snake and bird, meaning matter and spirit (Khan Hosseinabadi & Eshraghi, 2018). It is a creature with two traits, which in the most ancient times was a symbol of destruction and prosperity (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 2006, 123). The dragon concept in the West and the East has opposite meanings (Jafarzadeh, 2017). In the East (like China), it symbolizes happiness and a sign of divine power. But in the West, it is a creature associated with the gods of the underworld, destructive and evil. The dragon or the devil is trying to dominate the tree of life, which causes drought and mixing water with the pestilence of saltiness and bad taste. The face of the dragon in the mythological history of Iran is extremely fierce and ugly (Khan Hosseinabadi & Eshraghi, 2018). The dragon is the guardian of hidden treasures, so to get them, you have to defeat him (Cooper, 1987, 18). According to many traditions and myths, the dragon in Iran is a symbol of evil and the devil, and it is a symbol of death, drought, and hell. It symbolizes a concupiscent soul (Khan Hosseinabadi & Eshraghi, 2018). Therefore, in Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili's complex, it is in the concept of the battle between good and evil. Also, on the four sides of one of the rhombus-shaped forms, the blessed names of God had been engraved, which completes the sign and superiority of right over falsehood (Jafarzadeh, 2017).

Table 4: The intertextuality of duck motifs in Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex and the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) (Qajar period)

Case	Transformation type due to internal changes	Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex (Safavid period)	Motif section	The shrine of Imam Reza (AS) (Qajar period)	Motif section	Consensus percentage of respondents
1	Additional-Substitution					79.48
		Picture (26)	Section (26)	Picture (27) <small>(تصویر ۲۷-۱۳۳۰، مرغانی در حال پرواز، فرقه بالای صفا شرقی، روزگار الهوردیخان، مأخذ تصویر، نگارنده.)</small>	Section (27)	

### Intertextuality Relations in Dragon Motifs

According to Table 5, the dragon motif is of an exclusive pretext type; because a motif type inspired this motif in the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in the Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex and was not inspired by a combination of different motifs. Also, the hypertext type in all motifs is of the transformation type. Due to the presence of internal changes in pictures 29, 31, 30, 32, 33, 34, 36, and 37, compared to picture 28, the transformation type was substitution and ellipsis type. The nature of the substitution is that new colors have replaced picture 28. The nature of the ellipsis is also since the dragon's body has been removed in all the forms mentioned. Only in picture 35, compared to picture 28, is there a substitution type of transformation; the color of the dragon motif has only been changed and used in the same way as the pretext. In the analysis of the intertextuality of pictures 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, and 37, compared to picture 29, it can be said that all forms are of substitution and ellipsis type. Here, the substitution's nature is also due to the fact that new colors have replaced picture 29. The ellipsis nature is that the dragon's body has been removed in all the mentioned forms. Only in picture 35, compared to picture 29, is there a substitution type of transformation; because the color of the dragon motif has only been changed and has repeated in the same way as the pretext. More details are mentioned in Table 5.

### Transformation Types due to Internal Changes

According to Fig. 2, among the animal motifs in the selected monuments, the largest number of additional-substitution transformation types was related to the peacock. Meanwhile, the largest number of substitution transformation types was related to the pheasant, and the largest number of substitutional-ellipsis transformation types was also related to the dragon. Other types of transformation were not observed in this study.

### CONCLUSION



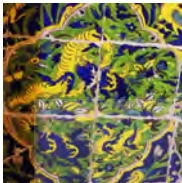

The research findings indicate the existence of intertextual relations in the majority of decorative animal motifs in the selected buildings related to the Islamic era. Also, according to the results of the Delphi method and research findings, motifs related to intertextual relations were determined in the architectural decoration of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex (Safavid period) and the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in the Qajar period, including animal motifs of the peacock, pheasant, dragon, cow, and chicken. According to the Delphi method, the average consensus percentage of the respondents was higher than 73%, which is a good value. The peacock is considered a bird of paradise, which acts as a gatekeeper and guide of people to the mosque and, at the same time, expels the devil and invites the believers to enter it. Considering the intertextual relations between motifs, the peacock motif is often determined as an exclusive pretext type. Also, the pretext type in all peacock motifs was the transformation type (the largest number of additional-substitution transformation types).

However, in picture 6, the transformation was of substitution and ellipsis due to internal changes. Considering the peacock's mystical and religious position in the Islamic era's historical works, strong intertextual relations can be observed between the buildings selected in this research for the peacock. According to the research of Chevalier and Gheerbrant (2006, 680), the cow was interpreted as the guardian angel of quadrupeds, the manifestation of fertility, the productive force of the earth, abundance, reproduction, and maternal instinct. According to the intertextual relations between the two selected buildings of the research, the cow motif is of an exclusive pretext type. Among all the cow motifs in the selected buildings, the pretext type is transformation type (often substitution). It seems that according to the diversity of cow motifs in historical buildings in Iran, the substitution in the colors of cow motifs indicates a

Table 5: The intertextuality of dragon motifs in Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex and the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) (Qajar period)

Case	Transformation type due to internal *changes	Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex (Safavid period)	Motif section	The shrine of Imam Reza (AS) (Qajar period)	Motif section	Consensus percentage of respondents
1	Sub-Ell		Section (28)		Section (30)	68.51
2	Sub-Ell	Picture (28)	Section (28)		Section (30)	81.65
3	Sub-Ell	Picture (28)	Section (28)		Section (30)	74.34
4	Sub-Ell	Picture (28)	Section (28)		Section (33)	67.44
5	Sub-Ell	Picture (28)	Section (28)		Section (34)	71.75
6	Substitution	Picture (28)	Section (28)		Section (35)	69.70
7	Sub-Ell	Picture (28)	Section (28)		Section (36)	75.52

Continuie of Table 5: The intertextuality of dragon motifs in Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex and the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) (Qajar period)

Case	Transformation type due to internal *changes	Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex (Safavid period)	Motif section	The shrine of Imam Reza (AS) (Qajar period)	Motif section	Consensus percentage of respondents
8	Sub-Ell	Picture (28)	Section (28)	 Picture (37)	 Section (37)	68.70
9	Sub-Ell	 Picture (29)	 Section (29)	Picture (30)	Section (30)	80.55
10	Sub-Ell	Picture (29)	Section (29)	Picture (31)	Section (31)	76.80
11	Sub-Ell	Picture (29)	Section (29)	Picture (32)	Section (32)	77.42
12	Sub-Ell	Picture (29)	Section (29)	Picture (33)	Section (33)	76.72
13	Sub-Ell	Picture (29)	Section (29)	Picture (34)	Section (34)	74.23
14	Substitution	Picture (29)	Section (29)	Picture (35)	Section (35)	72.55
15	Sub-Ell	Picture (29)	Section (29)	Picture (36)	Section (36)	70.11
16	Sub-Ell	Picture (29)	Section (29)	Picture (37)	Section (37)	72.26
The average percentage of respondents' consensus: 73.64						
<i>Sub-Ell: Substitutional- Ellipsis .*</i>						

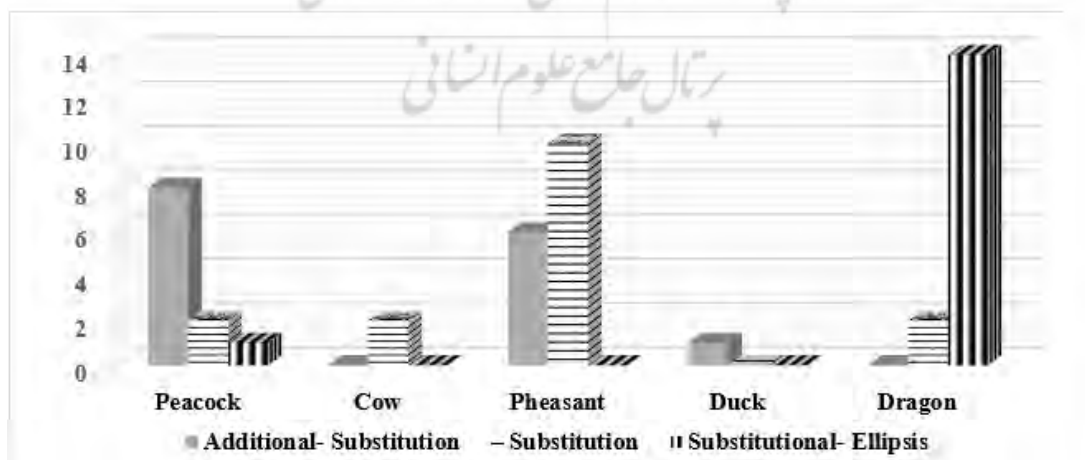


Fig. 2: Transformation types due to internal changes

conceptual change in the interpretation of the cow motif in the Islamic era. Although the interpretation of the cow motif has been emphasized in the concept of an abundance of blessings, the change to the spiritual content of the inner changes of the cow motif is hidden. The pheasant is a bird that symbolizes beauty, light, happiness, blessed life, and the sun's power. It symbolizes a human seeking spirituality, mysticism, and happiness associated with theology and knowledge.

According to the analysis of intertextual relations, the pheasant motif is also of an exclusive pretext type. Also, the pretext type in all motifs is the transformation type (the largest number of substitution transformation types). In the Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex, the proportion and arrangement of duck motifs (40 in number) which were depicted flying around an axis, is somehow reminiscent of the phrase "unity in plurality and plurality in unity." It seems that the birds are a symbol of the angels, and their direction to the center refers to the world of truth and the oneness of God. The birds were drawn like angels praising and obeying the right. According to the results, the duck motif is often of an exclusive pretext type. Also, the hypertext type in this motif is of the transformation type (additional- substitution).

In the East (like China), the dragon symbolizes happiness and a sign of divine power. But in the West, it is interpreted as a destructive and evil creature. Dragon is considered the cause of drought and mixing water with the pestilence of saltiness and bad taste. Also, the dragon is the guardian of hidden treasures, so you have to defeat him to get them. Confrontation with the dragon means overcoming difficulties to achieve the treasure of esoteric knowledge. Therefore, the collection of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili complex and the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) is in the concept of the battle between good and evil and the superiority of right over false. In the analysis of intertextual relations, the dragon motif is of an exclusive pretext type here. Also, the pretext type in all motifs is the transformation type (the largest number of substitutional-ellipsis transformation types).

In sum, the intertextual relations in the obtained motifs indicate that in all the obtained motifs, the type of relations between the motifs in the selected buildings is of an exclusive pretext type. In addition, the pretext type in all motifs is of the transformation type (often substitutional-ellipsis). It seems that in line with the results of [Jamali and Marasy \(2013\)](#) and [Mansori et al. \(2019\)](#) in the buildings of the Islamic era in the Safavid and Qajar periods, the most important changes in the appearance of the motifs, the change in color and the use of more variety of colors. This has impacted the spiritual and mystical content of the motifs. In a way, in addition to the mystical and spiritual content (the content of the template in the Safavid period), in the Qajar period, attention to material aspects (increasing wealth and abundance of blessings.) in using colors have been considered more than the previous period.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

H. Shahbazi Shiran contributed to designing and implementing the research and manuscript edition and directed the project. R. Esmi performed the literature review, analyzed, interpreted the data, and prepared the manuscript text.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no potential conflict of interest regarding the publication of this work. In addition, the ethical issues, including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication or falsification, double publication and, or submission, and redundancy, have been completely witnessed by the authors.

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