



Blackwork Journey Inspirations

Domes



Blackwork Journey Inspirations - Domes



What is a dome?

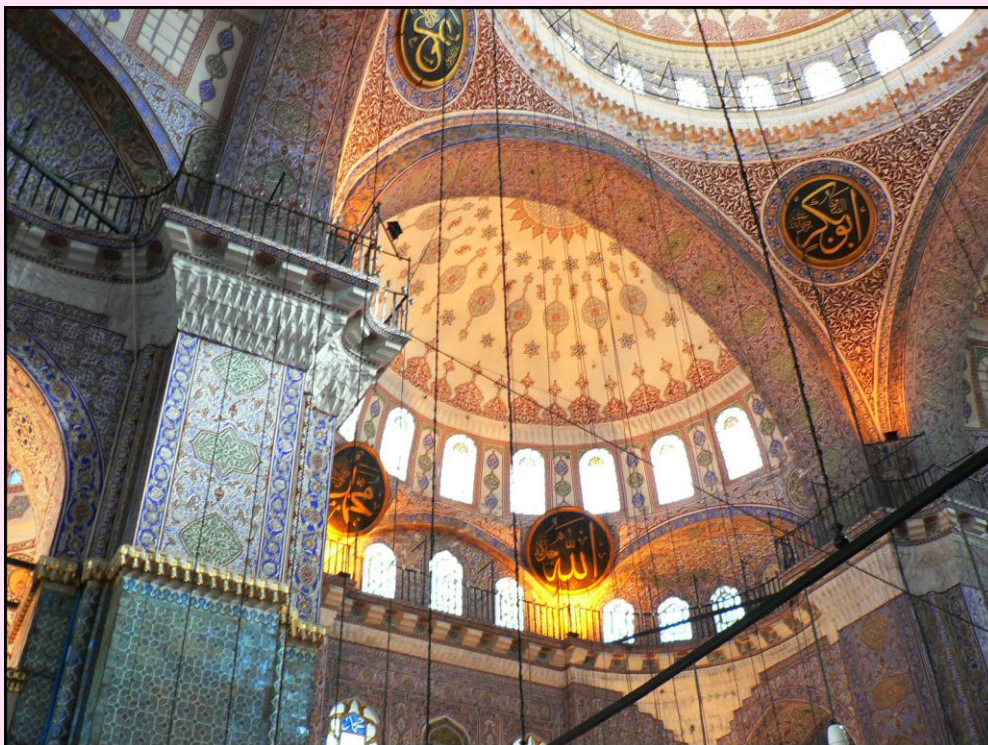
A dome is an element of architecture that resembles the hollow upper half of a sphere. Dome structures made of various materials have a long architectural lineage extending into prehistory.

Inside the Pantheon, Rome

During my travels, especially in the Middle and Far East, I have been fascinated by the interpretation of domes in architecture. Where possible I have photographed them and used them as a source of inspiration for embroidery. Whilst I was not always aware of their significance to their community at the time, I did appreciate their beauty and would like to explore them further.

The construction of the first true domes began in the Roman Architectural Revolution, when they were frequently used by the Romans to shape large interior spaces of temples and public buildings, such as the Pantheon and whilst the severity and scale of the architecture interested me I did not find it inspiring!

However, the tradition of building domes continued especially after the adoption of Christianity in the Byzantine Empire therefore investigating the architecture of Istanbul, especially the dome of the 6th-century church Hagia Sophia and the interior of the Blue Mosque provided many opportunities to explore colour, admire and inspire new designs and embroideries.



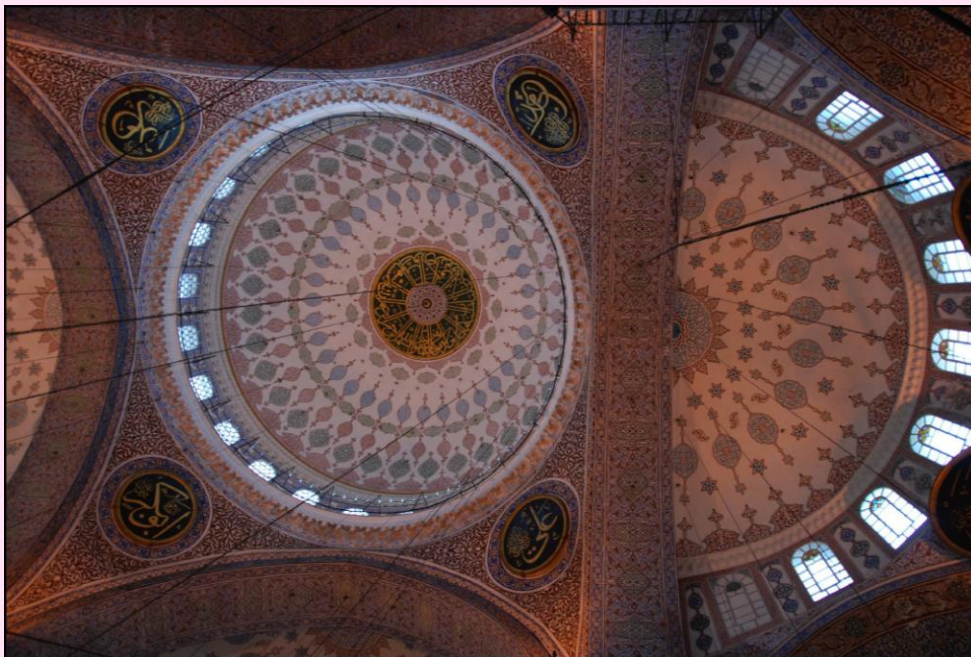
Inside the Blue Mosque decoration covered every inch of the interior.

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The Cupola, Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, Turkey Scaffolding obscured much of the interior but the Cupola soared above the visitors with its overwhelming majesty.

Construction of domes in the Muslim world reached its peak during the 16th – 18th centuries, when the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal Empires, ruling an area of the World comprising North Africa, the Middle East and South- and Central Asia, applied lofty domes to their religious buildings to create a sense of heavenly transcendence. The Sultan Ahmed Mosque,



the Shah Mosque and the Badshahi Mosque are primary examples of this style of architecture.

Ceiling of the Blue Mosque, also called the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, Istanbul

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The Sultan Ahmed Mosque has one main dome, six minarets, and eight secondary domes.

At its lower levels and at every pier, the interior of the mosque is lined with more than 20,000 handmade İznik style ceramic tiles, made at Iznik in more than fifty different tulip designs. The tiles at lower levels are traditional in design, while at gallery level their design becomes flamboyant with representations of flowers, fruit and cypresses.

İznik tiles decorate the pillars from floor to ceiling emphasising the scale of the building

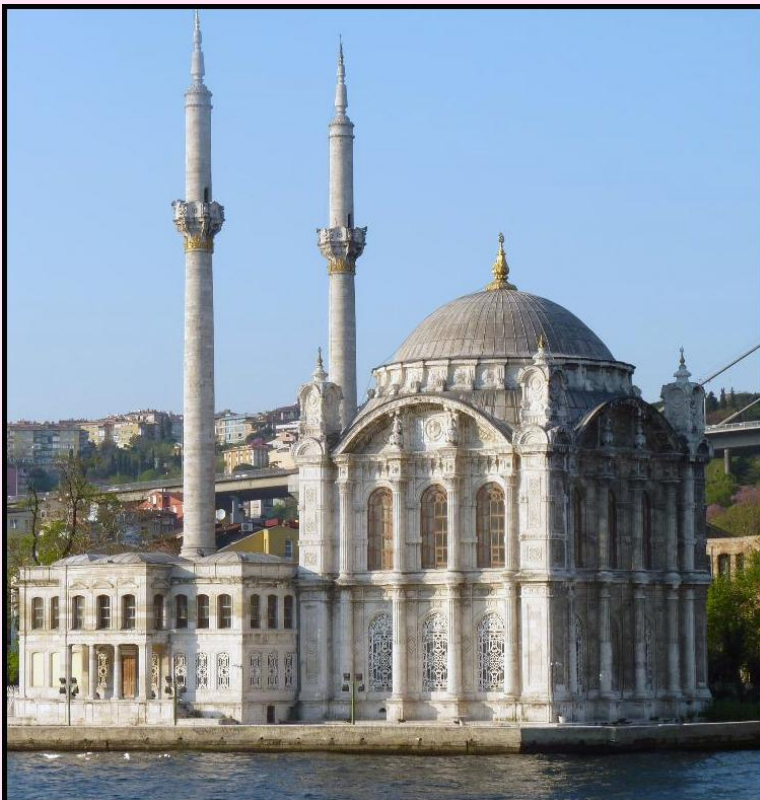


Arabesque designs can be found in the surrounding passageways

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Sultan Ahmed Mosque, Istanbul, Turkey



Ortakoy Mosque, Istanbul



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I have been fortunate to visit many mosques throughout the Far and Middle East but none more spectacular than the domes of the Sheik Zayid Mosque in Abu Dhabi.

This modern mosque opened in March 2008 combines the beauty of the past with the practicality of the future and compares and contrasts with the Taj Mahal in India which is one of the most moving buildings I have ever visited.

The domes and buildings were highly decorated both inside and out with arabesque designs and inlays of precious stones showing the highest standards of craftsmanship.



There are 82 domes in total. The outer shell of the main dome is 32.8m in diameter and 70m high -the largest of its kind in the world.

The Sheik Zayid Mosque, Abu Dhabi

- Elegance in marble!

However exotic the location there is no excuse not to stitch!



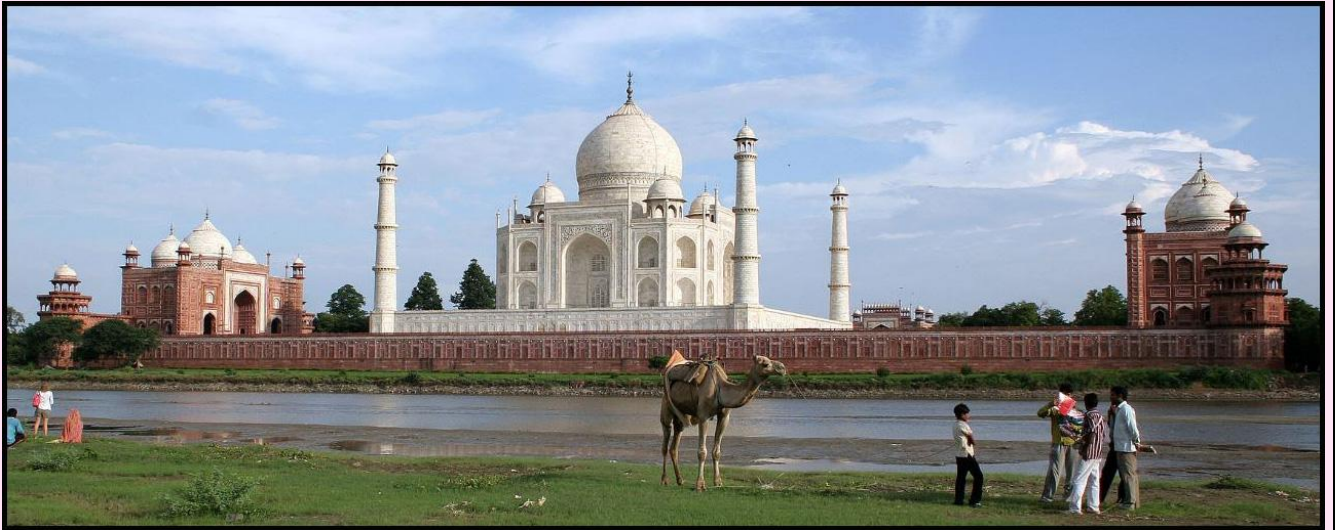
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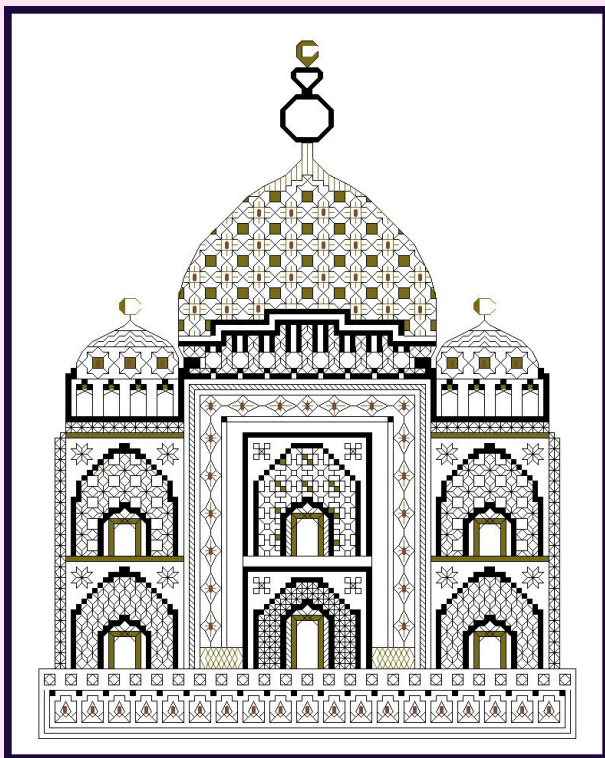
*Sheik Zayid Grand
Mosque, Abu Dhabi*



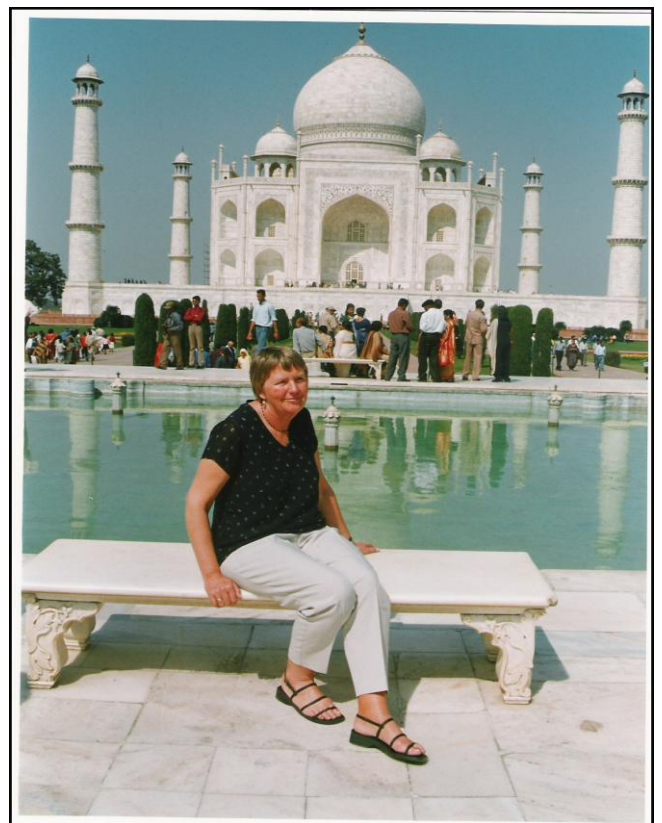
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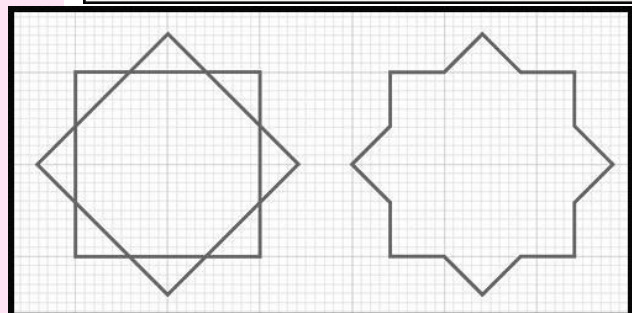
The Taj Mahal from the banks of the Yumana River, Agra, India



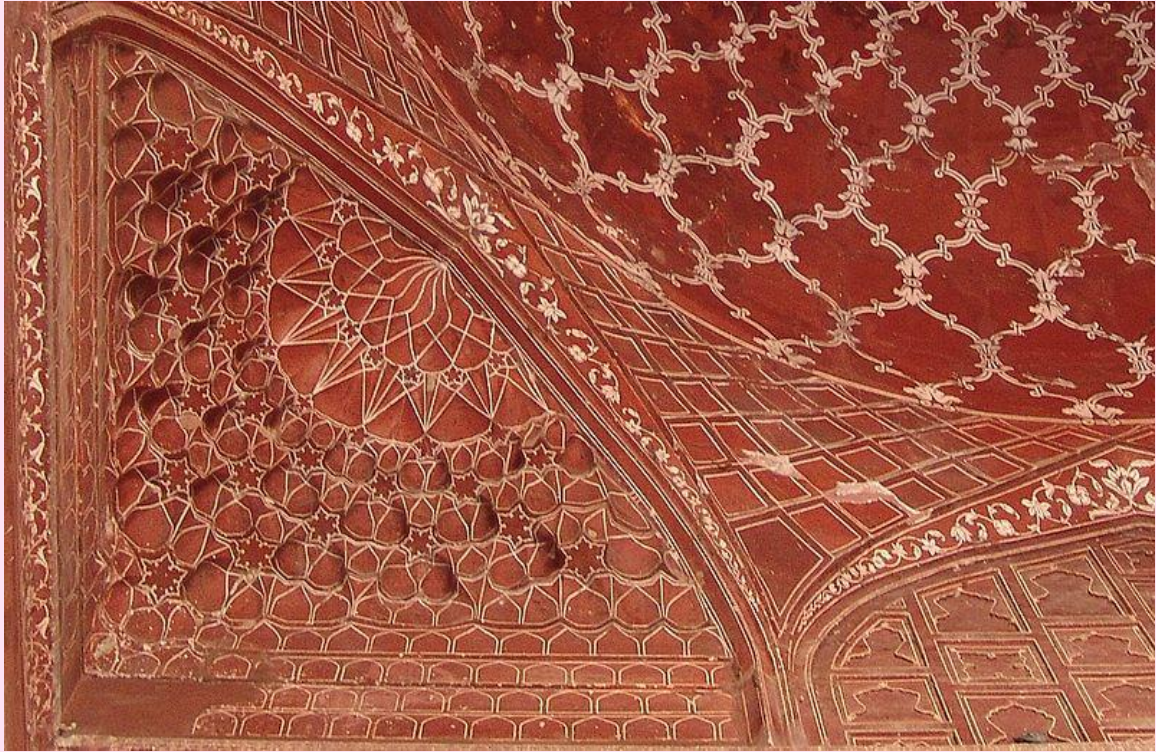
CH0047 Delhi Mosque



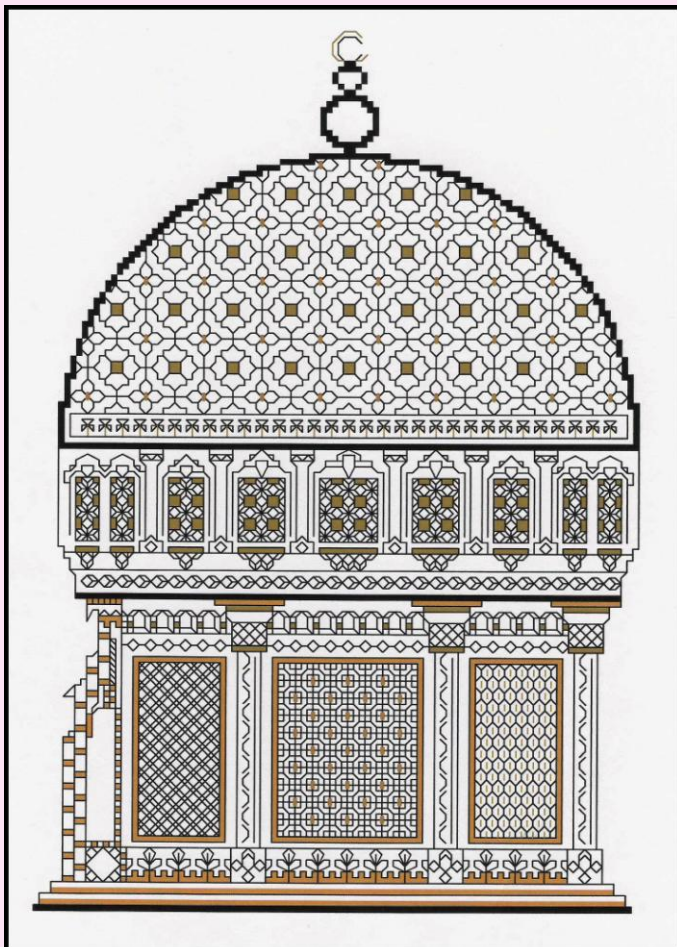
By looking carefully at the architecture many different geometric patterns begin to emerge which can be used when planning a blackwork design



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Much of the decoration inside the Taj Mahal is geometric

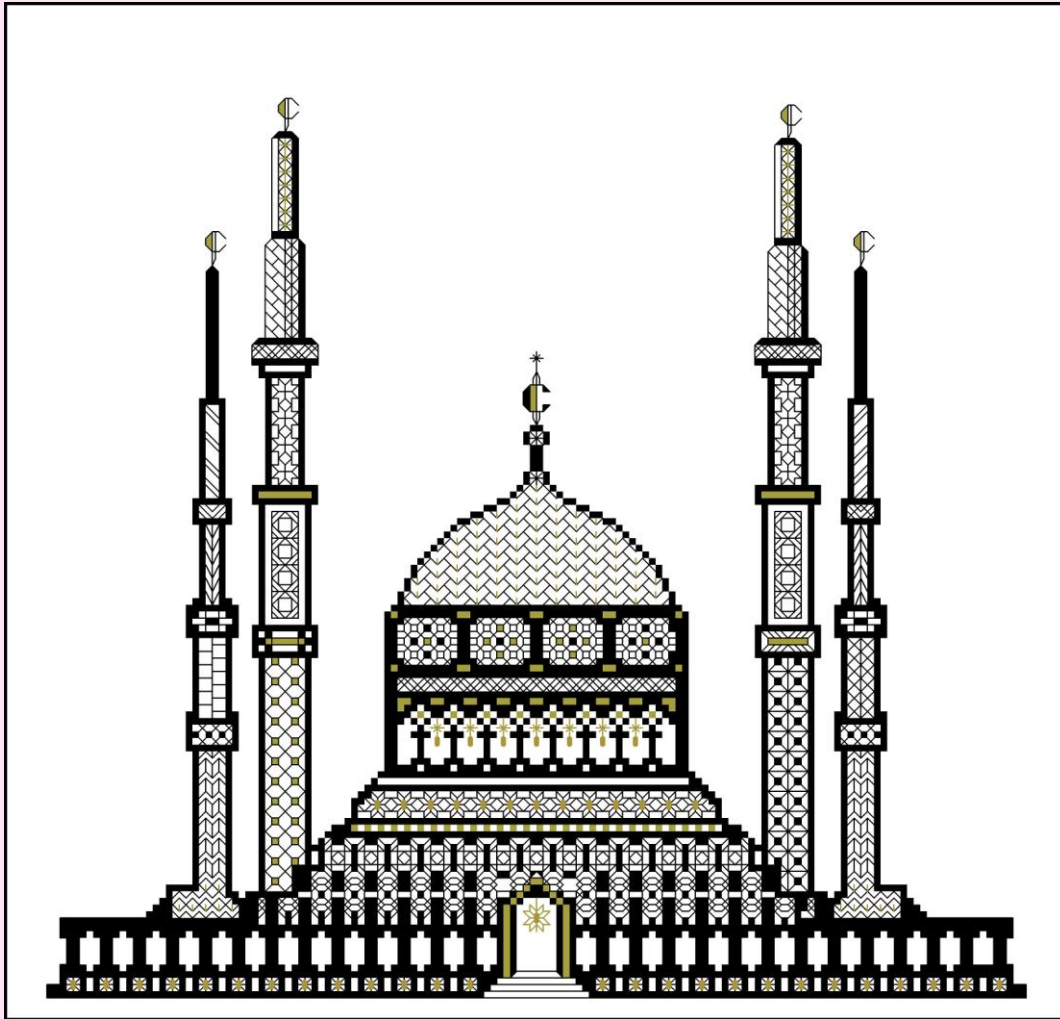


The dome is probably the most prominent feature of Mughal, Islamic and Indian architecture. It is a symbolic representation of the vault of heaven.

The dome's silhouette may vary from hemispherical, pointed, shallow or onion shaped and may be constructed in a variety of ways. They are often decorated externally as well as internally providing an impressive architectural feature wherever they are found. According to Islam, God's throne in paradise is a gigantic pearl on four pillars through which the rivers of grace run through.

CH0061 Mughal Mausoleum

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CH0162 Friday Mosque

CH0218 Bukhara

These are just some of the ideas which emerged from looking at domes in the Middle East and India... Europe's domes are still waiting to be explored!

Happy stitching,

Liz

