

# The Effect of Iran's Architecture on Mortuary Buildings of Rome's Seljuk Era\*

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## ABSTRACT

In the course of Islam's history and, especially, Seljuks Era, Iran has always been one of the primary loci of Islamic Art. On the other hand, ottomans have taken long leaps in the area of architecture through being inspired by Iranian and Byzantine Art. Due to Iran and ottoman adjacency as well as their cultural exchanges and the common governmental aspects, the art and architecture of these two territories have borrowed ideas from one another and share similarities. The goal of the present article is the comparative investigation of the architectural indices and elements of the memorial and mortuary buildings constructed during Seleucid Era in Rome and inspired by the mortuary and mosque buildings of Iran. The study theoretical framework is laid on the foundation of the perspective that the past architectural spaces are influenced by the cultural phenomena and the cultural exchanges have played roles in their formation. The present study's research methodology is historical-interpretive and it deals with the investigation, exploration and comparison of the volumetric combination of the buildings, types of decorations and tile works' images and paintings in the mortuary buildings of Seleucid Era's Rome and the Seleucid Era's Iranian edifices so as to reveal the effect of culture and cultural exchange in architecture. The present study's findings underline the issue that the art and architecture of Seleucid Era's Rome have been influenced by Damascus Art before the presence of the Iranians; however, it was with the arrival of the Iranian artists that parts of the architecture were constructed by Iranian images and decorations. The interaction between Iranians and rulers of Seleucid Era's Rome and the auspicious conditions provided by them caused the Iranians to promote culture, rites and traditions and distinct signs of science, art and knowledge that were prevalent in the then Iran upon their entry into Rome.

**Keywords:** Mortuary Buildings, Cultural Exchange, Architecture, Decorations, Iran's Seljuk, Rome's Seljuks.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the past, the architecture of every country and civilization influenced the architecture of the other countries in proportion to the political and cultural as well as influential power. Iran is amongst the far distant time's ancient civilizations and it has influenced the architecture of the other countries, especially its neighbors, in proportion to the conditions and, of course, such an influence has been different in intensity and vigor during the various eras. It is quite likely for architectural properties of this country with its richness and higher level of civilization to have influenced the other countries'; however, in regard of Iran and Anatolia which were both envisioned as two distinct powers, it is not easy to determine whose architecture has had greater effect on the other. The present study tries to investigate the architectural properties of Iran's mortuary buildings and ottoman architecture (in a given period of time for certain buildings) so as to make it clear which architecture has influenced the other and why. The time span of this study is the fifth hegira century coinciding with the Seleucid Era's architecture till the 12th hegira century coinciding with the peak of the Ottoman Empire's fame and power. Therefore, at first, a summary of the living conditions and government is reviewed in the foresaid period of time and, then, the samples on which the cultural effects have caused architectural similarities will be examined.

Following the lead of the mosques, the mortuaries account for the highest volume of the buildings remaining in the Islamic architecture (Grabar, 1999, p. 7). Except for the mosque that has drawn more attention than any other architectural type in Islamic Era's Iran, these buildings undoubtedly became known as tower, dome, mausoleum and tomb (Hillenbrand, 2000, p. 65). The construction of these buildings that became prevalent since the fourth hegira century on with the emergence of various local dynasties in the east and north of Iran was continued in the later Islamic periods. The tower-shaped mortuaries are enumerated amongst the most substantial and most prevalent types of Islamic Era Iran's morgues. Although the construction of tombs was showcased during the early Islamic era within the format of tetragons, the tower-shaped graves excelled during the late fourth hegira century. Qabus Tower, made in 1007, is the first building remaining from amongst Iran's tower-shaped tombs and it is recognized as a pattern for the other tombs with circular or star shape plan (Meshkati, 1970, p. 189).

## 2. STUDY BACKGROUND

As a social phenomenon, architecture originates from culture and influences it and it is a mirror of the human thoughts in relation to space, aesthetics and culture. Due to the same reason, the cultural properties of every era can be recognized in its architecture because

architecture comes about under the influence of the different conditions of a period of time (like political, social, economic and cultural and so forth) and it can be recognized as a live and independent entity with its specific characteristics as soon as it is created.

Having a multidimensional glance at architecture, Pope states that "architecture is the exhibition of the then culture and it demonstrates the accepted cultural values, good or bad" (Pope, 1987, p. 74). The oriental culture and civilization are amongst the civilizations influencing the culture and subsequently the architecture of the other countries. In their valuable book named "Islamic art and architecture", Shila Beller and Jonathan Bloom dedicate a part to the title "the effect of Islamic art" and speak of the continuation of Islamic architecture's effect on the European architecture (Blair & Jonathan, 2002, p. 345). According to Grabar, the world of orientalist transcends beyond the nations. Orientalism is not nationality-oriented and it approaches the cultures not the nations. The orientalist's definitions of culture is very much elucidative because it is sometimes linguistic (Arabic, Persian and Turkish) and occasionally ethnological (Kurd and Barbar and so forth) and it is also sometimes religious (Sunni and Shiite) and occasionally historical (Abbasids, Omavids and others) and it also occasionally includes geography (central Asia, Egypt and West) (Grabar, 1999, p. 6).

Andere Godar, a prominent Islamic Art historian, realizes the formation of Islamic art as being more based on thought than on the form and technique. He was of the belief that the art should not be anymore taken into account from the perspective of the masonry or stone and brick or skill and versatility of the artist rather it has to be known as the mindset and spirit of the nation's community that creates the artworks or special styles and methods. Andere Godar considers Islamic architecture, especially in the very beginning of Islam, as being imitated from the styles of the other civilizations and cultures (Musavi, 2002, p. 348). Mosque is amongst the outstanding architectural and cultural samples of every country. In the introduction to his Islamic architecture book, Robert Hillenbrand<sup>1</sup> cannot refrain from mentioning the ideological and symbolic quintessence of the mosque as a symbol indicating the faith and contemplation of its constructors as well as its effect on the building's visual indices (Hillenbrand, 1994, p. 4).

On the other hand, the mutual effect of Iranian culture and art and the other civilizations is the subject that has been taken into consideration by many of the experts and researchers and Pope has also dealt with it. But, in his mind, all of the buildings constructed in Iran feature an Iranian personality and nature. He opines that the preliminary architecture of a historical epoch is surely influenced by the other civilizations and finds the architecture of the late era before Islam as effective on the architectural styles of other spots. The topic that Pope and many of the other historians of Iranian art and architecture believed in was the interaction

between Iran's culture and art with those of the other civilizations though Pope always emphasizes on the vernacular properties of Iranian Art (Pope, 1987, p. 60).

Factors like the Iranians' extensive migration to Minor Asia and the Iranian prominent figures and scientists who were avidly needed by the Seleucid Government assisted the daily increasing inclination of the Seleucid elders towards the Iranian culture. The present study's findings underline the idea that Iranians promoted culture, rites and rituals and distinct signs of science, art and knowledge that were common in Seleucid Era's Iran along with their presence and created many scientific, artistic and literary works. In between, the interaction between Iranians and the Seleucid governors and the auspicious conditions provided by them, as well, paved the way for the growth and blossoming of the Iranian culture (Hasani & Taghavi, 2010, p. 104).

### 3. STUDY METHOD

The present study is a historical-interpretative research in terms of its nature and method and it makes use of a comparative research for recognizing the past realities. In fact, the present study interprets and explains the events related to the past. The study has been carried out based on qualitative research methodology which is completely interpretative in nature. The study has consisted of a theoretical area and a case study. After taking the preparatory measures and studying the study background and extracting the historical studies, the research is continued with the presentation of the findings. The study sample volume consists of three mortuary buildings from Seleucid Era's Rome located in three cities, namely Erzurum, Kayseri and Niğde in Anatolian Territory. The study sampling method is selective and the buildings that have been largely influenced by Seleucid Era's Iranian architecture have been chosen. The buildings selected in the present study will not be investigated in terms of function and/or structure and, in fact, the effect of culture and cultural exchange on the architectural type will be explored herein.

### 4. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

In order to investigate the common features between the mortuary buildings in Iran and Anatolia, it is necessary to examine the political and social conditions of the two countries during Seleucid Era so that the origins of the architectural commonalities can be better studied.

#### 4.1. Seljuk in Iran

The Seleucid Turks' dynasty was established at the onset of the fifth hegira century. The Seljuks always supported and promoted industries and techniques in Iran, Minor Asia and Iraq (Zaki, 1941, p. 11). During the sultanate of this clan, Isfahan, Marv, Neishabur,

Herat and Ray gained more importance and these cities were transformed to the centers of the art and profession owners' accumulation. Christian Wilson writes "in this era, the industries and architecture not only revitalized in Iran but it was also with the Seleucids' conquests that the principles and styles of Iranian industries were expanded and spread to the northern coasts of the Mediterranean Sea and even north of Africa and it is due to the same reason and quality that the Iranian artists' artworks and samples of them as well as the common Seleucid Era's industries can be seen for centuries in Egypt and Syria's industries (Wilson, 1938, p. 142). At this time, Iran per se achieves elements and factors in architecture by way of which it can take measures in line with construction of a large mosque containing a central yard and four porches in its periphery; then, the essence of religious, caravansary and school-making architecture is formed (Nasiri Ansari, 1971, p. 161).

In Seleucid Era's constructions, brick is skillfully used in various methods and, corresponding to the then traditions, the exterior surfaces of the buildings are offered without any additional coating and with the same brick-laid view that form the trivial decorations of architecture and the elements used therein. Of course, it is worth mentioning that the brick-casting art and decoration of the buildings with well-moulded bricks have been common in Iran since the fifth hegira century and continued till the late sixth hegira century (Behnam, 1963, p. 4). One of the Seleucid architectural specifications is the creation of inscriptions and decorative lines of casted brick (with protrusion and recession) that is seen in the majority of the then buildings. After the transformation of Kufi style of calligraphy to Naskh, the brick casting style and the formations of the letters and words encountered difficulties and plaster works take their place (Nasiri Ansari, 1971, p. 162) in such a way that the altars and the walls are ornamented after that with protruded plaster works and plans.

#### 4.2. Seljuks in Anatolia

Iran was captured by Khwarazmian with the defeat of Seljuks in 1142. Although Khwarazmians' government was expanded (1078-1231), it became unstable with the outset of the Mongols' attacks. The first raids by the Mongols in 1220 to the Khwarazmians' territory led to the instability of Khorasan and the other regions in Iran. In these attacks, Khorasan, the most important center of knowledge and literature and art, was damaged more than any other places and this same issue caused the migration of many Iranian literary men and artists to the other lands in Minor Asia that was still held at that time by a branch of Seljuks known as Rome's Seljuks (1078-1301). Beyond the Iranian borders, Seljuks laid the cornerstone of the establishment of a Turk government in Minor Asia. They ruled for nearly three centuries in a vast part of Anatolia in a stretch of land that encompassed various tribes. It was by their socialization that a civilization sprouted and a







government known as Rome's Seljuks was established. The Seleucid government loved culture and art and created a system that provided the opportunity for the fertilization of culture and art with its enforcement of the reconciliation policy within its realm. However, the architecture of this period can be possibly introduced as the most excellent manifestation of this government. The wealth and power of the Rome's Seljuks in this historical period made them be enumerated amongst the most important supporters of the artists and sponsors of the important constructions like mosque, schools, castles, fortresses, hospitals, inns, monasteries in such cities as Quniyeh, Sivas, Kayseri, Erzerum, Diyar Bakr and others. The presence of Iranian artists caused the formation of their artistic foundation based

on the artistic and cultural elements of Iran, especially Khorasan Style in cities like Quniyeh, Qeysariyeh, Erzerum and others and the blossoming and expansion of this territory was witnessed in all of the cultural dimensions as well as in the continuation of Khorasan's decorative-artistic style.

### 4.3. Mortuary Buildings in Seleucid Era's Rome

Here, in order to study such an effect, three examples of the mortuary and memorial buildings have been taken into account. Amongst the mortuary buildings in Anatolia, Hande Hâtun Mortuary in Erzerum, Döner Kümbet Mortuary in Kayseri and Hüdâvend Hâtun Mortuary in Niğde have been selected.

**Table 1. Specifications of the Studied Mortuary Buildings**

	Building's name	City	Construction year	Volume	Plan
1	Hande Hatun	Erzerum	1253 or 1290		
2	Döner Kümbet	Kayseri	1276		
3	Hüdâvend Hâtun Kümbeti	Niğde	1312		

#### 4.3.1. Khande Hâtun Mortuary in Seftah Minar Ali School

Minar Ali is the largest school in Erzerum (Aslanapa, 1971) and it is known as Hâtuniye School attributed to Hande Hâtun, daughter of Sultan Ala'a Al-Din Kayqobad (1220-1236) and also to Padishah Hâtun (1291-1295). These two ascriptions mentioned two different dates, i.e. 1253 and 1290, for its construction. However, it is more likely that the school had been completed before the decline of Seleucid Government in Erzerum in 1277 (675 lunar calendar) and that it was constructed after Quk School in Sivas in 1271 (669 lunar calendar) (Rogers, 1965). The school has been constructed on two floors with four porches. There is a decagonal mortuary on the southern edge behind a rectangular plan but part of its wall which is also shared by the school has collapsed. There is a band with geometrical images in a circular form beneath the inscription. Its conical roof has been divided into parts decorated with a ceiling featuring a low depth and completed with vaults and arches.

The constructor of the mortuary is anonymous and its ornamentalations have been left unfinished like those of the school (Sinclair, 1989).

##### 4.3.1.1. Investigating the Volumetric Composition

Hande Hâtun Mortuary is a cylindrical tower that is capped in its upper section with rows of bricks and stones forming a conical tower. The tower's body has been divided into ten sections with long-base circular arches. The same twelvefold classifications can be also seen in the mortuary's dome. In the peripheral wall of the tower, windows have been installed alternatively in such a way that every view has two windows. There is a small window underneath the ceiling and there is also a window installed a little down the ceiling that is decorated with arches.

Divisions have been made in the edges in Kavus Dome (constructed in 1007; 397 lunar calendar) in Gorgan; therein, ten Papils surround the mortuary's cylindrical shape and the dome has also been constructed by rows of bricks.





**Fig. 1. Erzerum, Hande Hâtun Mortuary**  
(Rogers, 1965)



**Fig. 2. Kavus Dome and its Spire Vault**  
(Bozorgnia, 2007)



**Fig. 3. The Dodecagonal Plan of Mehmandust Tower in Damghan**  
(Bozorgnia, 2007)

Spire-shaped domes have also been used for the tombs of sultans and rulers of Seleucid Era. The spire towers were widely constructed in the coastal regions of Caspian Sea and it can be stated that spire towers are more frequent in that region as compared to the other spots around Iran. The first reason for the use of such a dome is climatic considerations for these spire towers better fit the region than the circular and cylindrical ones because the precipitations are faster and better carried away than the cylindrical domes from the buildings and the other reason is the large similarity of them to slope roofs used by the region's residents (Hadi, 2013, p. 6).

The spire domes' place of emergence can be realized as the northern regions of Iran (Arianam Consulting Engineers, 2008, p. 78). The dome in Holy Shrine of Imamzadeh Muhammad (1304) and Qazan Khan Dome (1272-1304) are both of the spire type (Pirnia, 2008, p. 229). Mazandaran is amongst the centers accommodating a lot of spire towers during the 8th and 9th hegira centuries and the majority of the spire towers therein belong to the holy shrines of Imams' descendants. These buildings are situated in a geographical extent from west to east of Mazandaran and in the mountainous, forest and plateau climatic areas. The tombs point to part of the political and religious history of the region, particularly in the 8th and 9th hegira centuries and their names and addresses have been mentioned in various documents

(Rami, 2011, p. 76). Based on the reports given in the book "encyclopedia of Iran's historical buildings", the mortuary buildings are considered as the first conical and spire domes in Iran (Bozorgnia, 2007, p. 39).

The tombs remaining in Mazandaran region with various plans mark the architectural pattern of the Timurid Era's tombs. The construction of these types of tombs with their octagonal plans and spire towers has been common during the periods before the 8th hegira century and in various regions of Iran and it is clear that this style of architecture is the continuation of the tomb-making from the previous epochs in Iran and it has also been continued in this period.

#### 4.3.1.2. Investigation of the Decorations

It can be indeed stated that all of the buildings' decorations are summarized to the strap beneath the dome. This strap is divided into several parts some of which are similar to the altar decorations of Uljaytu Mosque as the main mosque in Isfahan. In the lowest part of the strap beneath the dome, a narrow braid with seven and eight textures has been implemented that is similar to the braid implemented in the periphery of the arch in Uljaytu's altar but, of course, in a more distinct manner. The braid in the upper section of the decorative strap features a very familiar design in the brick-laying works of Seleucid Era in Iran and a similar example of it can be seen in the brick-laying works of Kharqan Tower.



**Fig. 4. Erzerum Decorations of Hande Hâtun Mortuary**  
(Rogers, 1965)



**Fig. 5. Isfahan, the Altar in Isfahan's Main Uljaytu Mosque**  
(Shekofte, Ahmadi, & Oodbashi, 2015)



**Fig. 6. Kharqan, Kharqan Tower**  
(www.arianica.com)

The narrow muqarnas works underneath the dome is amongst the decorations that were implemented during Iran's Seljuks in the upper section of the

minarets (like in Damghan's Mehmandust Tower) as well as in the part beneath the dome (like in Maraqqeh's Kabud Dome). It is worth mentioning that the

muqarnases are ornamental elements that were used in Iran before Islam; but the pre-Islam muqarnases were notably different from those after Islam. Musavi realizes the application of muqarnases before Islam as being incorporative of two substantial periods, i.e.

250BC to 224AD and 224AD to the emergence of Islam. Of course, it is necessary to mention that there are also found samples belonging to 550BC in this regard (Groter, 1996, p. 13).



Fig. 7. Erzerum, Decorations of Hande Hâtun Mortuary



Fig. 8. Maraqa's Kabud Dome

#### 4.3.2. Döner Kümbet in Kayseri

Döner Kümbet that literally means rotating mortuary was constructed in the last semester of the 13th century for Princess Lady Shah Sihan Hâtun. There is a short marble stone showing her name but the construction date has been eliminated. It can be recognized from its style similarities to the tombs in Ahlat that the mortuary has been built in about 1276 (674 lunar calendar). This is one of the notable and decorated tombs in Kayserie (Akurgal & Léo, 1980).

##### 4.3.2.1. Investigation of the Volumetric Composition

The external shape of the mortuary is dodecagonal and it is cylindrical on the inside. The foundation is

square in shape and it is connected by bilateral steps to the entrance gate. Mehmandust Tower in Damghan possesses twelve joints and it is more elongated in terms of the proportions in contrast to Döner Kümbet. In Anatolia, the absence of the tall towers with heights twice or thrice taller than this (like the one existing in Iran) is notable and it is partly due to the special emphasis made in Anatolia on the exterior view of the cellar whereas no cellar can be seen in many of the towers of the Iranian tombs and, even if there is found a cellar, it is located under the ground (Hillenbrand, 2000, p. 307). The shape of Döner Kümbet's dome is conical similar to the domes of Kavus and Mehmandust towers (spire dome) but it has not collapsed (Aslanapa, 1971).



Fig. 9. Kayseri, Döner Kümbet  
(Akurgal & Léo, 1980)

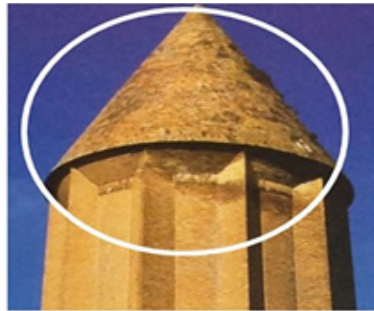


Fig. 10. Kavus Dome, Spire  
Tower of Kavus Dome  
(Bozorgnia, 2007)



Fig. 11. Damqan, Dodecagonal  
Plan of Mehmandust Tower  
(Bozorgnia, 2007)

##### 4.3.2.2. Investigation of the Decorations

Each of the twelve joints of the mortuary has been engraved with projected paintings of flowers and geometrical shapes with certain added plates showing pictures of plants and animals, including two dragons and a two-head eagle. The connection place of the dodecagonal body to the conical roof has been decorated with geometrical images and muqarnas

inscription. Amongst the decorations on the body, the geometrical shape of the twelve-sided star can be seen. In Iran's Seleucid buildings, the twelve-sided star shape has been used in various forms. For example, it is seen in the brick decorations of Shagerd Porch, the eastern porch of Isfahan's main mosque. Additionally, the configuration of the ceiling in Seleucid Era's seraglio, the western front of Isfahan's main mosque, conveys an image of a twelve-sided



star. On the other hand, the twelve-sided star also exists in brick form on the body of Kharqan Tower

as well as in the brick works on the wall of Gonabad Mosque that bears a similar geometrical shape.



**Fig. 12. Kayseri, Döner Kümbet**  
(Akurgal & Léo, 1980)



**Fig. 13. Isfahan, Jami Mosque, Soffeh Shagerd**  
(www.Gonabadnews.com)



**Fig. 14. Kharqan, Kharqan Tower**  
(www.arianice.com)



**Fig. 15. Gonaabd, Main Mosque**  
(www.arianice.com)

Amongst the animal motifs observed on the transom in the mortuary, the two-headed eagle can be pointed out and it is sometimes considered as Seljuks' symbol. Amongst the Iranian arts, the image of the two-headed eagle is seen in the very precious silken fabric motifs from Buyid's Era (932-1062; 320-454 lunar calendar)<sup>2</sup> more than any other eras. These fabrics have very diverse motifs, including the image

of a two-head eagle. This motif has been frequently seen in the fabric decorations of Iran's Seleucid Era between 1040 and 1194 (431-590 lunar calendar), as well<sup>3</sup> 9 (Khazaei, 2007, p. 44). The motif of flower pot is also seen on the body and stone carvings of the inscription on the southern porch of Isfahan's Jami mosque in a brief form.



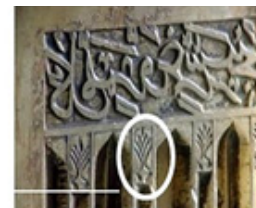
**Fig. 16. Kayseri, Döner Kümbet**  
(Akurgal & Léo, 1980)



**Fig. 17. Ray, the Images of Two-Headed Eagle on a fabric from Buyid's Era (932-1062)**  
(Khazaei, 2007)



**Fig. 18. Ray, the Images of Two-Headed Eagle on a fabric from Seleucid Era (1040-1194)**  
(Khazaei, 2007)



**Fig. 19. Isfahan, Stone Inscription on the Southern Porch of the Central Mosque**  
(www.arianice.com)

The braid carved of flower shape in the periphery of the entrance gate is similar to the plaster braid worked in the Uljaytu altar of Isfahan's main mosque. Additionally, this image is also seen in the braid worked at the side of the porch in Gonabad's main mosque. On the other hand, the braid work carved of flower in the strap underneath the dome is similar to the tilework braid on the body of the plaster minaret in Uljaytu Altar of Isfahan's main mosque with the difference that it is made of stone. In confirming this statement

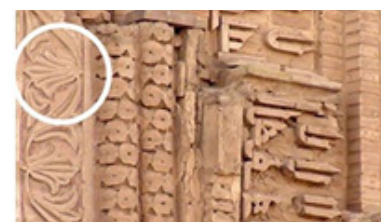
by Hillenbrand in Islamic Architecture Book that the architecture of the Anatolian mortuary buildings have copied the Iranian tombs' patterns to the extent that their architects were craving for transcribing the shapes of the Iranian brick-works and even the brick and plaster ornaments to stone even without trivial changes (Hillenbrand, 2000, p. 297), it can be stated that there are seen other geometrical configurations on the body of mortuary that remind of the tileworks in the main entrance of Isfahan's main mosque.



**Fig. 20. Kayseri, Döner Kümbet**  
(Akurgal & Léo, 1980)



**Fig. 21. Uljaytu Altar of Isfahan's Main Mosque**  
(www.arianica.com)



**Fig. 22. Gonabad's Main Mosque**  
(www.gonabadnews.com)



**Fig. 23. Kayseri, Döner Kümbet**  
(Akurgal & Léo, 1980)



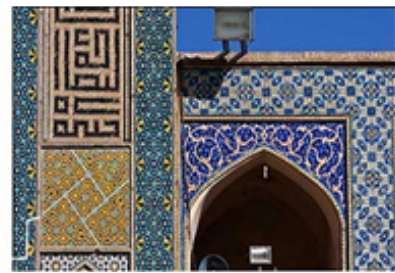
**Fig. 24. Isfahan, Southern Porch's Minaret in the Main Mosque**  
(www.arianica.com)



**Fig. 25. Kayseri, Döner Kümbet**  
(Akurgal & Léo, 1980)



**Fig. 26. Isfahan, Main Entrance of the Main Mosque**  
(www.arianica.com)



**Fig. 27. Isfahan, Main Entrance of the Main Mosque**  
(www.arianica.com)

#### 4.3.3. Hüdâvend Hâtun Kümbeti

The last sample indicating the quality of the continuation of Seleucid style in the early 8th hegira century is the mortuary of the Seleucid princess, Hüdâvend Hâtun. The façade of the entry gate on the eastern section consists of an octagonal tower with arabesque decorations. The rich decoration of the tomb is the last blossoming of Seleucid Era's hollow plaster style (Blair & Jonathan, 2002, p.343). Hüdâvend Hâtun Kümbeti (Mortuary) was constructed during Mongol's Ilkhanate time by the governor of Sanqorbeyg in 1312 (712 lunar calendar) in Niğde. Hüdâvend Hâtun is the daughter of Qilich Arsalan IV, one of the last Seleucid Sultans, who was buried in this octagonal tomb (Şaman Dogan, 2013, p. 126).



**Fig. 28. Niğde, Hüdâvend Hâtun's Tomb**  
(Şaman Dogan, 2013)



**Fig. 29. Kharqan, the Octagonal Plan of Kharqan's Tower**  
(Bozorgnia, 2007)



**Fig. 30. Damavand, Octagonal Plan of Shebelli Tower**  
(Bozorgnia, 2007)



**Fig. 31. Octagonal Plan and Conical Dome in the Holy Shrine of Imamzadeh Seh Tan Amol**  
(Khazaei, 2007)

#### 4.3.3.1. Investigation of the Volumetric Composition

The lower part of Hüdâvend Hâtun's tomb is octagonal. This tomb is divided into sixteen sections in its upper part by the assistance of triangular muqarnases; however, the spire of its tower is still octagonal. Its dome has been constructed in a conical shape like the mortuary buildings existent in Sari, Babol and Amol (holy shrine of Imamzadeh Abbas in Sari; holy shrine of Imamzadeh Seh Tan in Amol; holy shrine of Imamzadeh Qasem in Amol; the tower of Sultan Muhammad Taher in Babol; Fakhr Balaserest Tower in Babol; the tower of Sultan Zain Al-Abedin in Sari; and the tower of dervish Fakhr Al-Din in Babol are amongst the mortuary buildings with conical domes). The bodies of Kharqan's towers are also octagonal and, of course, there is a small and round column in each corner on the outer side of them. Amongst the other octagonal mortuary towers in Seleucid Era's Iran, Damavand's Shebelli Tower can be pointed out.



#### 4.3.3.2. Investigation of the Decorations

The exterior body of the tomb has been decorated with stars and various images. This tomb is called brutal man considering the ancient tombs in Xanthos<sup>4</sup> because it is ornamented with the images of winged spirits and creatures belonging to the underworld. On the surface of this tomb, there are images of the

mythical Greek creatures on the Seleucid building. The image of a two-headed eagle has been worked masterfully on one of the surfaces thereof. The building's decorations are very colorful due to the use of various stones and a strap of marble stone. Both of the geometrical and flower-like paintings have been created very skilfully.



**Fig. 32. Niğde, Hüdâvend Hâtun's Tomb**

(Şaman Dogan, 2013)



**Fig. 33. Ray, the Image of Two-Headed Eagle on a Fabric from Buyid's Era (320-454 Lunar Calendar)**  
(Khazaei, 2007)



**Fig. 34. Ray, the Image of Two-Headed Eagle on a Fabric from Seleucid Era (431-590 Lunar Calendar)**  
(Khazaei, 2007)

During the late Seluecid Era in Iran, pottery reached its utmost degree of growth. Generally, the images on the clayware can be divided into human, animal, plant-like and sphinx types as well as lines and geometrical paintings. The animal shapes used on the pots from Seleucid Era include the images of horses,

birds, lions and other animals. The sphinx images are frequently seen in the margins of the containers. Besides the image of the two-headed eagle, the bird with a human head (or, in other words, the winged sprites) and winged horses can be also seen in these decorations.



**Fig. 35. Niğde, Hüdâvend Hâtun's Tomb**

(ŞAMAN DOĞAN, 2013)



**Fig. 36. Kashan, Golden Clayware from Khwarazmshahi Era**  
(Abeddost, 2009)



**Fig. 37. Tareq Rajab Museum in Kuwait; Golden bowl from Ilkhanate Era**  
(Fehrevvari, 2000)



**Fig. 38. Arthur Sakler's Gallery in New York; Golden Seleucid Era's Bowl**  
(www.saklergallery.com)



**Fig. 39. Niğde, Hüdâvend Hâtun's Tomb**

(Şaman Dogan, 2013)



**Fig. 40. Sialk Holl, a Winged Cow on the Prehistorical Claywares**

(Akbari, 2008)



**Fig. 41. Cemetery B, Winged Horse on the Prehistoric Clayware**

(Akbari, 2008)



**Fig. 42. Berlin Museum, Decorative Image of Griffon on a Sassanid Era's Plate**

(Şaman Dogan, 2013)

Amongst the decorative plans that are frequently seen in the body of this building, the image of a

leaf with jagged edges can be seen. This image is the most common decorative design after the entry

of Islam into Iran and it is rooted in the pre-Islamic era. The decorator artists during the Islamic Era and, particularly, the artists from the three periods of Seleucid, Ilkhanate and Timurid have made a frequent use of the designs with jagged edges in their complicated plaster works (Sahafi Asl & Ayatollahi, 2011, p. 76). The present examples of this design from Seleucid and Ilkhanate Eras in Iran were mentioned above. The multisided flower designs are amongst the common images in the buildings of Achaemenid,

Parthian and Sassanid Era and they have been used for decorative purposes as well as depending on the symbolic concepts related to the ancient Iranian rituals. The use of this design can be observed in such buildings as Noh Gonbad Mosque from Sassanid Era in Balkh, Main Ferdows Mosque, Main Mosque from Seleucid Era in Maibod, Main Mosque from Ilkhanate Era in Bastam and the Main Mosque from Timurid Era in Neishabur.



**Fig. 43. Niğde, Hüdâvend Hâtun's Tomb**  
(Şamamın Dogan, 2013)



**Fig. 44. Balkh, Noh Gonbad Mosque's Plaster Work**  
(Pope, 2003)



**Fig. 45. Isfahan's Main Mosque**  
(Pope, 2003)



**Fig. 46. Plaster Work from Ctesiphon**  
(Pope, 2003)



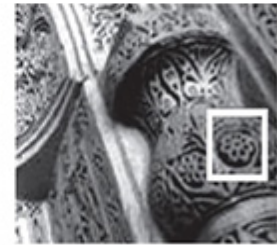
**Fig. 47. Niğde, Hüdâvend Hâtun's Tomb**  
(Şaman Dogan, 2013)



**Fig. 48. Maibod, the Altar of Seleucid Era's Main Mosque**  
(Pope, 2003)



**Fig. 49. Ferdows, Brick-Works in Seleucid Era's Main Mosque**  
(Pope, 2003)



**Fig. 50. Bastam, the Altar of Ilkhanate Era's Main Mosque**  
(Pope, 2003)

## 5. CONCLUSION

In general, in a comparison of the mortuary buildings in Iran and Anatolia, several parts draw the attention, including the shape of plan and number of edges, type of roof (in other words, dome's shape), building's height, type of the exterior view's masonry, types of the decorations as well as the decorative shapes and images. According to the summing table, the comparative study and investigation of the properties of the mortuary buildings give the following conclusions:

The majority of the tombs in mortuary towers from pre-Ottomans' era in Anatolia are said to have been built based on Iranian shapes and styles because they are in the form of a cylinder or a polygon with a conical or pyramidal cap and, of course, the climatic and regional changes are visible in them. Of course, the statement by Rice is affirmative of the idea that the tower tombs have been preliminarily constructed in tall cylindrical forms and a spire-shaped and conical or the so-called rows of brick-laid circles covered the roof section. This type of building was the basis of one of the primary architectural forms in Iran during

three centuries of Seljuks' governance of the country from which it was spread to Minor Asia.

Height is one of the differences between the Iranian and Anatolian tower tombs. The majority of the buildings in Anatolia are in a range of height from ten to 15 meters whereas a large number of the Iranian tower tombs are in this range of height (almost all of the ones made in Mazandaran). In Anatolia, the absence of the tall towers with heights two or three times taller than the foresaid height (like the ones existing in Iran) is notable.

Except a few number of the graves in Sivas, Dioriji and other places that have been worked with brick and, as Hillenbrand puts it, feature exterior views of the Iranian type and bearing the names of the constructing masters from Aran, Marand, Maraqa and the other Iranian cities, the masonry used in the rest of them is entirely stone. On the other hand, although the use of muqarnases in the buildings, especially, in the edges beneath the dome has been inspired from Iran, the entrance gate's transom and façade of the Anatolian buildings are unique and it can be stated that they have become the specific Anatolian style of arch-working.

**Table 2. Analyzing the Properties of the Studied Mortuary Buildings**

Building's Name		Hande Hâton Tomb	Döner Kümbet	Hüdâvend Hâton's Tomb
Volumetric Composition	Number of edges	10	12	8
	Dome's shape	Conical	Conical	Spire
	Geometrical images	Combination of irregular hexagons	12-sided star and combination of squares and circles	Combination of pentagonal and hexagonal stars
Decorations	Plant images	-	Image of a flower pot full of wheat and the image of a leaf with jagged edges	The image of a leaf with jagged edges and the image of a multisided flower
	Human and animal images	-	The image of a lion The image of a two-head eagle	The image of a winged human being The image of a winged horse The image of a two-head eagle
	Inscriptions	-	An inscription with Thulth style of calligraphy	A relief with Thulth style of calligraphy
	Arches	Margins below the dome Facade of the entry gate	Margins below the dome Facade of the entry gate	Facade of the entry gate transformation of the base octagon to hexadecagon

**Table 3. Comparative Investigation of the Studied Mortuary Buildings and Iranian Specimens**

Building's Name		Hande Hâton Tomb 1253 or 1290	Döner Kümbet 1276	Hüdâvend Hâton's Tomb 1312
Volumetric composition	Number of edges	10 (Qabus Dome, 1007)	12 (Damqan's Mehmandust Tower, 1097)	8 (Kharqan's tower, 1068-1094; Shebelli Tower, the third quarter of the fifth hegira century)
	Dome's shape	Conical (Holy Shrine of Imamzadeh Muhammad Dibaj 985 and 1304; Muhammad Uljaytu constructed the dome)	Conical (the dome of Mehmandust Tower that is collapsed, 1097; Qom's Green Dome; as stated by Donald Wilber, it was built in 1316)	Spire (Qabus Dome, 1007; Qazan Khan Dome, 1272-1304)
Decorations	Geometrical images	-	12-sided star of Kharqan's tower (1068-1094; Gonabad's main mosque, 1213)	-
	Plant images	-	The image of a flower pot full of wheat (Isfahan's main mosque) The image of a leaf with jagged edges (Gonabad's main mosque, 1213)	The image of a leaf with jagged edges (Gonabad's main mosque, 1213) The image of a flower with multiple petals (Maibod's main mosque, second hegira century; Ferdows Main Mosque, seventh hegira century)



	Animal-human images	-	The image of a two-head eagle on the fabrics from the early Seleucid Era's Iran (1040-1194)	The image of a winged human The image of a winged horse The image of a two-headed eagle
	Inscription	-	Embossment with thulth style of calligraphy	Relief with thulth style of calligraphy
	Arches	Margins below the dome Facade of the entry gate	Margins below the dome Facade of the entry gate	Facade of the entry gate transformation of the base octagon to hexadecagon

It can be generally stated that the burial school that has been closely associated with Iran and, in the meantime, has preserved its prestige to some extent is that of Anatolia. The Anatolian tombs clearly grew from a tradition richer than the Syrian tradition and also from a more respectable tradition, i.e. from the burial architecture of Seleucid Era's Iran and there were only left a shadow of them.

As it was mentioned before, the use of the regular geometrical and multi-sided shapes in the construction of the mortuary buildings as well as their shapes of

domes (spire and conical domes) the examples of which are seen for the first time in Iran and, on the other hand, the shape of the decorations and signs used in the mortuary buildings are reflective of the effect of Iranian architecture and culture on its adjacent territories in Anatolia, Azerbaijan and Iraq. In sum, the Mongols' invasion of Iran and the migration of the artists to the land of the Rome's Seljuks and Iraq and Azerbaijan played an important role in the expansion and continuation of the Iranian art and architecture in these lands, especially Anatolia.

## END NOTE

1. In his valuable book "Islamic Architecture", Hillenbrand deals with the technical investigation of the architectural artworks in the Islam World.
2. In 1925, it was found in an ancient cemetery and the peripheral hills of holy shrine of Bibi Shahrbanoo in Ray.
3. For more information about the symbolic concept of this image, please refer to Henry Carbon, "earthly paradise", tr. Sayed Zia'a Al-Din Dehshiri, 2004, 3rd ed., Tehran, Tahuri, pp. 44 - 46.
4. The name of a region with Greek culture in the southwestern side of Turkey.

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