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## Aesthetic Evaluation Of Seljuk And Ottoman Period Mosques

### Selçuklu ve Osmanlı Dönemi Camilerinin Estetik Açısından Değerlendirilmesi

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#### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine and compare the aesthetics of Seljuk and Ottoman mosques in terms of architecture and the most important features of both religious architectures were presented with a comparative approach. In the study, the religious and periodical features being effective on the mosque architecture, which were revealed in both state periods, were emphasized. Starting with the idea of achieving beauty by imitating Allah, Turkish-Islamic architecture started to design mosques with aesthetic concerns starting from the Seljuk period. The architecture of the Turkish-Islamic mosque has reached its peak in aesthetic terms during the reign of Mimar Sinan. The main reason for this is the application of symmetry in all the mosques. This situation also shows the most important difference between Seljuk mosque architecture and Ottoman mosque architecture. As a result, albeit being built with aesthetic concerns, Seljuk mosques could not preserve their organic integrity since they were built gradually and built by different architects; on the other hand, Ottoman mosques had more aesthetic appearance than they were built with a specific plan.

**Key Words:** Cultur, Ottoman Architecture, Aesthetics, Mosque, Symmetry.

#### ÖZET

Çalışmada Selçuklu ve Osmanlı dönemi cami mimarisi estetik açıdan değerlendirilmeye çalışılmış ve karşılaştırmalı bir yaklaşımla ele alınmıştır. Çalışmada her iki devlet döneminde ortaya koyulan cami mimarisinin üzerinde etkili olan dini ve dönemsel özellikler vurgulanmıştır. Tasarlanan camilerde Türk- İslam mimarisi Allah'ı taklit ederek güzele ulaşma fikriyle yola çıkan ve daha sonra estetik kaygıları da içine alan bir gelişim evresi Selçuklular döneminden başlamaktadır. Osmanlı dönemini ele aldığımızda Türk-İslam mimarisi eserlerin özellikle Mimar Sinan döneminde doruğa ulaştığı görülmektedir. Mimar Sinan döneminde pek çok eser ortaya koyulmuş ve özellikle simetri anlayışı bu döneme damga vurmuştur. Genel çerçevede Selçuklu ve Osmanlı dönemi mimarisi değerlendirildiğinde en önemli farklılığın simetri olduğu görülmüştür. Bunun en önemli nedeni, simetrinin, diğerlerinden farklı olarak camilerin tüm mekânlarını etki edecek düzeyde bir unsur olmasıdır. Ayrıca çalışmanın sonunda, estetik kaygılarla yapılsa da Selçuklu camilerinin genellikle aşamalı olarak inşa edilmesi ve farklı mimarlar tarafından yapılması nedeniyle organik bütünlüğünü koruyamadığı buna karşın Osmanlı camilerinin belirli bir planla yapıldığından daha estetik görünümüne sahip olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kültür, Osmanlı Mimarisi, Estetik, Cami, Simetri.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

When we say 'aesthetics', we are living in a time when cosmetic surgery, perfumery, cosmetics, modeling, and advertising agencies come to mind. Today, products called aesthetics are sold for sale in the market as a commodity (Hünler, 2011: 9). Thus, aesthetic care and surgical services have become a major sector today. On the other hand, 'aesthetics' is a complete confusion of ideas and concepts today. The concept of aesthetics is mostly associated with the philosophy of art. One of the reasons for this is the existence of thinkers who used aesthetics and art philosophy in the same sense in the past<sup>1</sup>.

The German philosopher Alexander G. Baumgarten<sup>2</sup> (1714-1762) first used the concept of 'aesthetics' and established aesthetics as an independent discipline. Baumgarten has suggested that aesthetics is the science of thinking about beauty. Starting from this meaning of the word 'aisthanesthai', which means to perceive with Greek senses, Baumgarten defines aesthetics as the science of sensory knowledge. He sets the subject of aesthetics concerning logic, which is a formal science. According to this understanding, the science of logic is to investigate

<sup>1</sup>Kavuran and Dede emphasized that when it comes to concepts such as art and aesthetics, it is necessary to look at the works of Plato and Aristotle, who approach the subject philosophically, in the study titled "Plato and Aristoteles' Art Ethics, The Concept of Aesthetics and Its Reflections" written in 2013. The reason for this is stated that the views of these two philosophers lie based on many contemporary art and aesthetic theories.

<sup>2</sup>In his study titled "Aesthetic Judgment and Factors Affecting Aesthetic Judgment" (p.150), which he carried out in 2015, Tekel emphasized that the concept of aesthetics began to be seen as identical with the concept of beauty in the 18th century and the foundation of this was laid by the German philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten. It is also mentioned in the work that Baumgarten is the person who enabled aesthetics to enter philosophy.

the competence of mental knowledge. Aesthetic science, on the other hand, investigates beauty as the competence of sensory knowledge (Yetişken, 2009: 13).

After Baumgarten in the 18th century, the German philosopher Kant, who lived in the same century, played an important role in the development of aesthetics as a discipline. He uses the concept of aesthetics in the sense of sensuality in 'Transcendentale Aesthetik', where he devotes part of his book 'Critique of Pure Reason' (Tunalı, 2011: 13). Determining the positions where the good and the beauty overlap and leave, Kant (Hauser, 1995: 108-109; Hançerlioğlu, 1996: 201) has drawn the limits of aesthetics. According to him, a sense of aesthetic should be distinguished from other feelings. Therefore, all of the situations that give me pleasure in my life are not aesthetic. Acting with this idea, Kant defines the inner aesthetic intuition, which is neither practical nor conceptual in his 'Critique of Judicial Power' (Townsend, 2002: 39). According to Bauhaus (Bulat, Bulat and Aydın, 2014: 105-120; Erden, 2019: 5-27), one of the schools that advocate this view, even the products, the tools and equipment used by a human, for example, table or salt shaker are as good as they are useful (Yetişken, 2009: 18).

Considering the aforementioned views, we can say that there is no consensus on the meaning of the concept of 'aesthetics'. Moreover, aesthetic history reveals a wide variety of attempts to define. For this reason, we will express the concepts commonly used in these identification attempts. Just as we talk about moral philosophy, we look for common elements on which all moral acts and correct action are based, and in aesthetics, we will look for common elements on which aesthetic actions are based (Townsend, 2002: 77).

What are the factors that make something beautiful that we call beautiful, and are these factors found in the subject or object? Are there some aesthetic standards? Can we talk about a separate experience called aesthetics? What common and different characteristics are mentioned in values such as beauty, goodness, and accuracy? Are the criteria that affect us when evaluating an object or work beautiful, or are it unconscious? Apart from these determinations, another issue that should be considered about aesthetics is that although aesthetics is the subject of arts, it should not be confused with the philosophy of art. Because aesthetics, instead of the beauty created only in artworks, treats beauty as a whole (Cevizci, 1997: 255). On the other hand, the understanding of beauty varies widely between different cultures and religions. Therefore, architectural structures belonging to different cultures and religions were designed differently from each other.

## 2.ARCHITECTURE IN THE SELJUK AGE

When the history of the Turkish States is examined, it can be said that the Turks are handled in two different periods, the period before the acceptance of Islam and the period after the acceptance of Islam. Although the Turkish States existed in both periods, the accepted religion affected the administration and politics of the established state. The Seljuk State, which was established with the Dandanakan War, in which Tuğrul Bey defeated the Ghaznavids, continued to expand and grow with the succession of Alparslan. The state was later destroyed in 1157 with the capture of Sultan Sencer (Yaman, Arslan and Arslan, 2018: 159)

The Seljuk state is one of the four great states established by the Turks in history. The Seljuk State has an important place in Turkish history in terms of the state's policy and management style, the way it handles and reflects the thought of Islamic Civilization, and the sectarian policies it has developed. While the Seljuks were a small principality, they established a large state in a short period. Undoubtedly, the effects of the social structure and culture in the environment in which they were established did reflect the Seljuk social and cultural life. In particular, it is possible to see the effects of the rooted Iranian culture in the geography where they were founded, on the socio-political and socio-cultural structure. The Seljuks created very valuable works, especially with the cultural characteristics of the geography they lived on and new approaches to their own culture. Examining the works, they created by adding their souls is very important for the Turkish world.

The Seljuk period represents a new understanding of Islamic civilization in terms of fine arts. The consciousness of the sovereignty (Öz, 2011: 19-35) in the Turks gave the Seljuk architecture a special form. Tent-shaped domes show the flow of the nomadic spirit. The Seljuks applied this understanding by being influenced by the large mosques in Iran, Turkestan, and Iraq, and thus gave them a monumental view (Atçeken and Bedirhan, 2012: 183-184). This dome shape, which is mostly used in tombs, has also inspired the Ottoman mosques. Especially the early Ottoman mosques were influenced by the Seljuk architecture along with the Western Anatolian Principalities (Özçakı, 2018: 385). The dominant approach in the Ottoman period is that the real architect is Allah and that the entire universe is a mosque with large domes, candles, and luminous candles, bright windows and high arches (Faroqhi, 2004: 161).

With the influence of this idea along with Seljuk architecture, domes began to dominate the Ottoman mosques. This means that the earth is considered as a masjid and the sky as a dome (Mutluel, 2008: 61). It is evident that in

Islam, the source of beauty lies in God. Only by understanding and discovering beauty can one put forth art. So one can perform art only by imitating beauties. According to Islam, the universe is an indispensable source of inspiration for art. Because the universe is a magnificent work of art. No man can create such a perfect work of art. Artists can only imitate such a work (Kalkan, 2007: 135-149). So the artist can reveal beauty only if he can imitate Allah's work of art to a certain extent. For this, you need to discover its beauty. According to Islam, the best artist is the discoverer of beauty (Ayvazoğlu, 1992: 12).

During the Seljuk period, the crown gates at the entrances of the buildings added the most beauty to the mosques. Particularly in Anatolian Seljuk Architecture, the crowned door, which is an important architectural element on the façade, was used to increase the effect of the entrance, in other words, to emphasize the invitations (Yılmaz Çakmak and Şahin, 2018: 17). Furthermore, the shadow left by the sun's rays in the morning reveals the 'Crowned Woman's Head', as shown in Figure 1, on the east-facing door. However, even the head of a woman seen in the morning in this door is the result of the reflection of sunlight on geometrical shapes only.

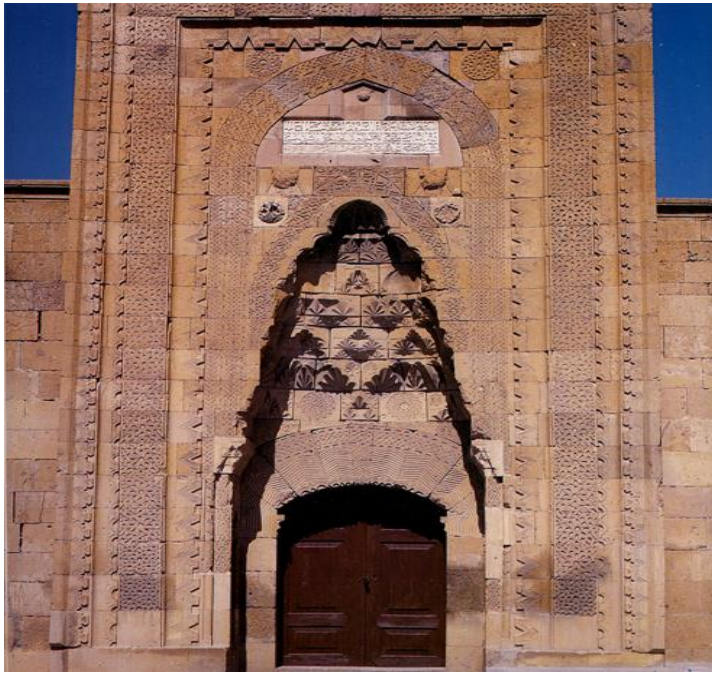


Figure 1. East Crown Gate of Nigde Alaaddin Mosque

One of the aesthetic parts of the Alaaddin Mosque is its domed space. At the transition points to the dome, triangles and mosaic tiles with different geometric shapes (e.g., stars, sun, and etc.) were used. Another aesthetic part of the Alaaddin Mosque is its pulpit, which has preserved its originality to the present day. In the pulpit, triangles and different geometric shapes are included. These structures are symmetrical and in great harmony (Aslanapa, 1989: 121-122).

The idea that there is a tendency to utilize the existence of geometric elements and imitate nature in human beings is strongly supported by many scientists. Scientists advocating this thesis assume that this principle applies to the medieval Islamic arts (Mülayim, 1982: 69). Especially in the case of religious structure, the idea of achieving beauty by imitating God is dominant. This idea influenced Ottoman architecture very much.

### 3. ARCHITECTURE IN THE OTTOMAN AGE

The Ottoman Empire, which was founded by Osman Bey in 1299, expanded rapidly and enlarged its borders with the understanding of jihad. All the sultans who came to the throne after Osman Bey followed a policy of conquest and aimed to bring Islam, the religion of Allah, to all parts of the world. As its borders expanded, the empire began to conquer geopolitically important cities and became a "state", which is very important in the world, with people from various religions, sects, and cultures.

With the strengthening and expansion of the Ottoman Empire, it carried its lifestyle and cultural elements to the conquered new places and made them immortal with the works it created. For the social life to continue without any problems and for worship, aid, meetings, and education to be carried out comfortably, soup kitchens and zawiya were started to be built. Thus, an Islamic identity was given to the cities that joined the Ottoman lands. These soup kitchens and zawiya have changed the urban fabric as a reflection of Ottoman culture. In these

structures, especially in the 15th century, the iwan and the dome stood out. These imarets and zawiya, which were created with early Ottoman architecture, were later converted into mosques (Akbaş, 2020: 125).

In the following processes, the most beautiful and characteristic examples of Ottoman architecture began to be seen in mosques. Keeping the attention and importance given to Islam in the forefront in places of worship shows itself as the equal positioning of the community in mosques as a reflection of the idea of equality underlying Islam. In addition, conditions such as the proportional spread of the acoustics in the mosques, the careful and various techniques of writing the inscriptions used on the walls and the dome, and the use of tiles, which is one of the most important features of Ottoman architecture, are kept in the foreground. With the growth and development of the Ottoman state, religious perspective, cultural texture, and aesthetics were combined, and mosques became more than just places of worship, but also a reflection of culture and art.



Figure 2. Bursa Orhan Gazi Mosque

Ottoman architecture, reflecting the idea of achieving beauty by imitating Allah, built mosques intertwined with nature, starting from the time of Orhan Gazi. For example, the windows of the Orhan Mosque in Bursa are so large and low that the interior is drowned by the sun. The people who worship in this mosque, even as they are seated in Figure 2, see the trees and flowers outside the windows on both sides, in other words, the most beautiful manifestations of God. In this way, instead of worshipping in an environment where doors and windows are closed tightly, people in the mosque can worship by looking at the beauty of both man and God (Armağan, 2006: 395).

There are vaulted rooms on two corners of the entrance facade and a three-domed structure in the middle. The three-domed building in the middle is the place of the congregation. There are arches on the sides of the central structure. In the dome in front of the mihrab, there are prism-filled trumps and in the middle dome, there are Turkish triangles. These triangles are mostly inverted. These structures provide the transition to the dome (Aslanapa, 1989: 222).

In addition to being intertwined with nature, one of the most important features of Ottoman religious architecture is that mosques are designed to be able to pray in tidy ranks (Mutluel, 2008: 67). Ottoman mosques were built accordingly so that when the congregation kept it pure for prayer, there was no unnecessary gap between them. Therefore, according to the aesthetic understanding of Ottoman religious architecture, beauty is not only a value arising from the exterior appearance of the space. The appearance of people who worship leads to the emergence of beauty (Kalkan, 2007: 197; Yetkin, 1965: 246). As it is known, this understanding does not reflect much to our contemporary architecture, but continues today. For example, in today's mosques, imams turn to the congregation at the beginning of the obligatory prayer and say 'keep the ranks steady and smooth!' warnings.

#### 4. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN OTTOMAN AND SELJUK MOSQUE ARCHITECTURE

Architectural works are one of the most important carriers of culture. Seljuk and Ottoman architecture, which is equipped with various cultural and aesthetic elements that still fascinate those who see it even after centuries, continues to be a source of inspiration for both national and international structures today, being examined, discussed, and researched. Seljuk and Ottoman architecture show similarities and differences in terms of symmetry, dome, facade arrangement, light order and amount, animal figures, plant and flower figures, geometric shapes, sun symbols, and color type.

The interior design of the Seljuk mosque architecture has changed over time in the form of structures that first show latitude and then longitudinal orientation. The desire to create collective space began to dominate only in time. In Seljuk architecture, the multi-unit schema, in which each unit has an independent cover, has become widespread to fully control the space. In the following period, the desire to create a collective space began to be implemented. In other words, the mosques of the Anatolian Seljuk period reflect a highly supported plan scheme. Malatya Ulu Mosque, Konya Alaaddin, and Kayseri Huand Hatun Mosques are examples of this (Küskü Gündüz, 2014: 161). The mosques of the Ottoman period were designed with the idea of gathering the interior under a single dome.



Figure 3. Malatya Ulu Mosque

Another reason why Ottoman mosques were designed in this way, unlike the Seljuk mosques, is to try to prevent some people from using their bad habits such as arrogance and vamping. For this reason, a design plan was introduced in which each segment of the space reflects faith equally. This plan reached the most perfect point in the design of the Selimiye Mosque of Mimar Sinan, which is the pinnacle of the Ottoman architecture. Under a single dome, all believers settle on equal points, and all kinds of hierarchical relationships inside are excluded (Armağan, 2006: 396). As a matter of fact, Erarşlan describes the dome for Mimar Sinan in her work titled “The Relationship between Carrier, Cover and Space in Mimar Sinan's Hexagonal Baldaken System Mosques”

*“For Sinan the Architect, the dome is a multi-purpose architectural element that aims both to create a central universal space and to create a symbolic effect. For Sinan, who tried very different and very rich variations of the domed cover, the dome is not only a structural element but also a formal element that crowns the architectural composition. In his buildings, the visual and physical relationship between the dome and the interior complements the effect of space” (Erarşlan, 2018: 32).*

Another reason why most of the Ottoman mosques are designed in this way is that Islam recommends that believers share the beauties they have acquired with other people and make them permanent. Besides, in Islam, people's beauties against other people to be used for bad habits such as boasting and arrogance also sees ugly and prohibits (Mutluel, 2008: 45). In such a case, worship does not result in beauty or aesthetic satisfaction, but rather ugliness.

Another aesthetic element considered in the architectural designs of Ottoman mosques is light. The light, which is thought within the aesthetic quality of the form in religious Ottoman architecture, has a great role in providing physical vision and evaluation processes. Light is important for any architecture. However, illumination in religious places was seen as more important as it could allow the desired spiritual and spiritual atmosphere to be experienced and the beauties to emerge. Because in a closed space, light must be the only sign reflected from the outside world. In the classical Ottoman mosques built with this approach, the most important element of the effect of space is the direct introduction of natural light into space. Small windows on the skirts of the central dome in the Ottoman mosques also take the light to the dome surfaces and the dome forms a single light zone that illuminates the entire volume. Also, the high level of light in the space provides light from a single center to spread (Oral, 2006: 80-81).

For example, when one enters under the large dome in the middle of the Green Mosque in Bursa, one can watch the astonishment and admiration of the light given by the sunlight into the mosque. Even the large pool made of white marble inside this mosque is designed to contribute to the light feast. In the middle of the large pool, water sprays from the fountains made of matt white agate stone, while the water droplets evaporate, so beautiful pieces of mist form inside the mosque. Among these pleasant fog fragments, one can enjoy the colorful carved and embroidered decorations of the dome and the dark tiles of the dwellings (Ovalıoğlu and Gündoğdu, 2011: 42).

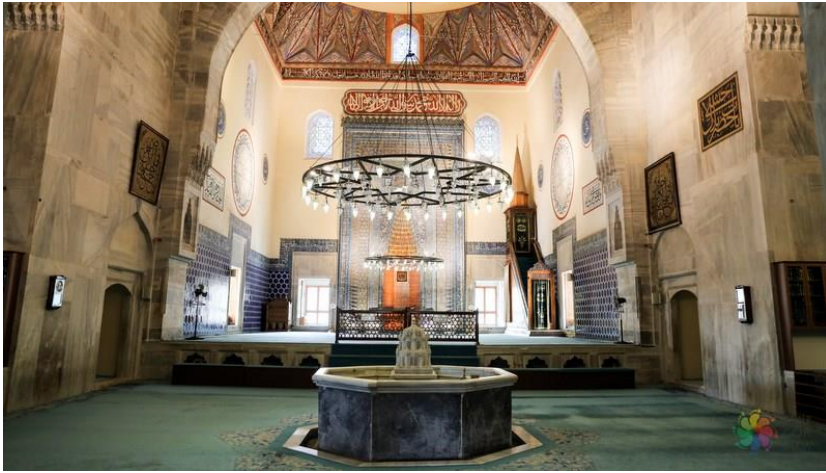


Figure 4. Bursa Green (Yeşil) Mosque

Seljuk mosques, on the other hand, have produced works that we cannot say successful in terms of lighting. The main reasons for this are that the parts of the building are built by different architects or they are subject to additions under different rulers. For example, Konya Alaaddin Mosque has been able to have its current plan through three stages. On the other hand, this mosque was restored on various dates and some parts of it were enlarged. This was also the most important cause of organic disruption and improper light effects. In short, the lighting problem during the Seljuk period did not reach a solution due to weak construction power (Aydın, 2014: 35; Doğan, 2013: 303).

One of the common features of the Seljuk mosques is that façade architecture creates a crown-centered arrangement. However, the crown door is not sufficient to characterize a mosque alone. In terms of symmetry, the relationship between the other elements and the door and facade is also important. For this reason, Seljuk facade arrangements are grouped under two main groups as symmetrical and asymmetrical. Most of the Seljuk mosques have asymmetrical arrangements even on the entrance facades. Examples include Niğde Alaaddin Mosque and Ankara Arslanhane Mosque (Küskü Gündüz, 2014: 175-176). One of the main reasons for this is that the Seljuk mosques do not have a dome in a small-scale structure, rather than a dome center. This is because a central dome, which has been designed by measuring with mathematical calculations, causes the main space under the dome to have a symmetrical appearance. The Ottoman mosques were designed to have a central dome and were more symmetrical than the Seljuk mosques.

For example, in Bayezid Mosque built by Bayezid II, a large space was obtained by adding the half domes from the front and back to the big central dome in a symmetry principle. The ratio of large dome diameter to ground height is equal to the ratio of side dome diameter to ground height. In addition, the courtyard in front of the northern façade of this mosque is symmetrical because it is equal in size to the mosque space. Therefore, the Bayezid Mosque emerged as an outcome of an architectural understanding that has two half domes and a natural course. It is possible to see the reflection of this symmetry understanding reaching the point of perfection in the design of Beyazid Mosque in many Ottoman mosques, including the Three Şerefeli Mosque and the Old Fatih Mosque (Ödekan, 1987: 311-313; Yetkin, 1965: 237).

According to Islam, the phenomenon of symmetry that underlies the design of Ottoman mosques with this understanding is a feature that exists in nature as well. This is clearly stated in the Qur'an that creation is double. Symmetry is possible in almost all living things. This can also be considered as the fundamental law of nature. In symmetry, both wings overlap each other. When viewed as a whole from a vertical line, there is a balance, repetition, and harmony between the right and left parts. It consists of two sections that are identical to each other. When the two parts are superimposed, it coincides without any shift (Mutluel, 2008: 111-114). In the Ottoman mosques built in accordance with the symmetry phenomenon that Islam attaches importance to, this understanding has taken place at the highest level with the works of Mimar Sinan, the most famous architecture (Ödekan, 1987: 313-315).

Another element that adds beauty value to the Seljuk and Ottoman mosques is the minaret. In Islamic civilization, minarets, which were started to be built in order to recite the call to prayer from high, were used as an indicator for the viewers to see that the building was a place of worship. However, over time, the minarets began to be designed for the city to have a more beautiful silhouette. Especially after the Ottoman conquest of Istanbul, a significant part of the minarets they built was built to serve this purpose. Most of the mosques that have such minarets in Islamic civilization are located in Istanbul. With the influence of the elegant minarets, Istanbul has a beautiful view,

including the Great Mecidiye Mosque, Suleymaniye Mosque, and the Blue Mosque. These mosques add distinct beauty value to the silhouette of the city, especially at sunset, as shown in the picture below. The Ottoman minarets were built with a thin body in order to have an elegant appearance.



Figure 5. Great Mecidiye Mosque

The minarets built during the Seljuk period have a shorter and thicker body. The elements that add the most beauty value to the minarets of the Seljuk mosques, all of which are made of bricks, have been brick and tile work. Especially the minarets of the Great Seljuk mosques are decorated with geometric patterns and floral motifs using tiles, mosaic tiles, and glazed bricks (Parlak, Kunt and Kocadağstanlı, 2008: 171).



Figure 6. Siirt Ulu Mosque (left) and İznik Green Mosque (right)

Among the mosques that have such minarets, Siirt Ulu Mosque is the most well-known mosque. This understanding was dominant in the early Ottoman period. The mosque, which has the most beautiful appearance with the effect of the tiles used in the Ottoman period, is İznik Green Mosque. İznik Green Mosque has a beautiful appearance thanks to its minaret, where glazed bricks are skillfully processed alongside the tiles. However, in the later periods, the minarets were abandoned to be built using tile and glazed bricks, as the contribution of the minarets to the city's silhouette was given importance.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Artifacts belonging to the Ottoman and Seljuk periods continue to preserve their importance for centuries. The mosques, which carry the traces of both cultures and were created with various aesthetic elements, have carried the traces of previous civilizations until today. As Öten (2021) emphasized in his work "The Use of Wooden Materials in the Sultan Ahmed Complex, One of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Artifacts in Ottoman Classical Architecture", Ottoman architecture still appears at a point that still has mysterious points and continues to be studied by researchers. At this point, the features that shape the aesthetics of the mosques, which are a reflection of the Ottoman and Seljuk period architecture, were determined with a different perspective, and the findings were tabulated by considering the literature review;

Table 1. Architectural Aspects of Seljuks and Ottoman Mosques

Features	Seljuks Mosques	Ottoman Mosques
Symmetry	Corrupted by insertions	Fully symmetrical
Dome	Two or three in the middle	Single central dome in the middle
Facade Arrangement	Symmetrical and asymmetrical	Symmetrical
Light pattern and quantity	Few and irregular	Adequate and regular
Animal Figures	Available	Not available
Plant and flower figures	Available	Available
Geometrical shapes	Braided and very	Little
Sun symbols	Available	Very little
Color Type	Little	Very

As can be seen in the Table 1, generally the Seljuk mosques are asymmetrical since they were constructed by more than one architect and disrupted by additions, while the Ottoman mosques are fully symmetrical. The most important reason why the Ottoman mosques are symmetrical unlike the Seljuk mosques is that the single central dome tradition began to emerge in Ottoman architecture. On the other hand, since the mosques were built symmetrically from the beginning, they were not allowed to add interiors, thus preserving the symmetry of the mosques.

Like the exterior of most Seljuk mosques, the façade arrangement is asymmetrical. The main factor that makes the façade arrangements of the Seljuk mosques generally asymmetrical is the use of bearing elements in the Turkish architecture that serve as columns. These carrier elements, which are frequently used in early Islamic geography mosques, also affected Seljuk architecture. These carrier elements have another function. As is known, it is a sin to pass the prayer in Islam. There is no harm in passing through the columns in front of the prayers. However, due to the importance of symmetry in the Ottoman period, the design of the mosques' facades was abandoned. The best example of this is Edirne Selimiye Mosque, the masterpiece of Mimar Sinan. One of the most important features of this structure, which was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2011, is that it has a single central dome without any carrier elements. Like the Hagia Sophia Church, people who see the Selimiye Mosque admire the fact that the dome, which was not supported by any carrier, survived for centuries without collapsing.

One of the main features of the Seljuk mosques is the use of animal figures, especially in the stonework. Lion, tiger, and eagle are among the animals whose figures are mostly used. As it is known, the lion and tiger are the symbols of power and independence, and the eagle is the symbol of freedom with power. These figures are often included in other Seljuk architectural works such as palaces and baths. Many researchers associate these figures with the fact that some of them are on the twelve-animal calendar used by the ancient Turks. The flag of the Anatolian Seljuk State has an eagle figure. In the Ottoman period, animal figures were not included in the architectural works as in the flag, and Ottoman mosques were decorated with plant figures that could be described as more simple. The reason for this can be explained by the fact that the Ottoman Empire was so centralized that it did not require figures that symbolized power.

Seljuk mosques are decorated with geometric shapes along with animal figures. The most common shapes are circles, squares, triangles, and stars. Some of them, especially the stars, are decorated with braids. These shapes were also included in the Ottoman mosques, but these geometric shapes do not have the characteristics of being the main composition. This situation can be explained by the fact that the Ottomans abandoned decorative stonework. The most beautiful examples of stone workmanship are seen in Seljuk works. Starting from the early Ottoman period, with the use of marble, baroque-style figures began to be used in many places of the mosques, especially on the doors and pulleys of the mosques. As in many Byzantine works, Ottoman mosques were embellished with vegetative figures, braided and curved lines. Thus, during the Ottomans period, artworks began to emerge in a more ostentatious, colorful, harmonious synthesis of the main elements of Islamic and Christian architecture.

Ottoman architects designed the most beautiful works of Turkish mosque architecture. For example, the admiration of Ottoman architects such as Sedefkar Mehmet Aga, Mehmet Tahir Aga, and Mimar Sinan still continues today. This form of a copy of the mosque, designed by such architects, continues to be built in Turkey today. As is known, in addition to mosques, lodges are also included in religious architectural structures. However, other religious structures outside the mosque are among the structures where members of certain congregations or sects come together. In particular, the lodge is a religious structure, as well as religious structures. Other religious structures outside the mosque do not reflect the aesthetic attitude of any Muslim community, but rather the aesthetic attitude of Muslims belonging to a particular community. Therefore, mosques are seen among the religious structures that should reflect the aesthetic attitude best by a large part of the society. For this reason, criticisms of Islamic aesthetics are mostly directed towards the design of mosques. Today, there is still a lot of criticism by architects about the lack of aesthetics of the structures they have created when designing a mosque. The criticisms are more



concerned with the aesthetics of today's mosques that are not as impressive as the Ottoman mosques. This study justifies the criticisms regarding the designs of contemporary mosques. There is a great harmony between interior and exterior architecture in most of the Seljuk and Ottoman mosques where careful attention is paid to the finest details of the workmanship. In today's mosques made by pouring concrete into molds, unfortunately, the details of craftsmanship are not paid attention. The most important reason for this is that with the introduction of technology, the traditional handicraft masters are gradually decreasing. As is known, there must be demand for the continuation of handicraft art and this art should be used in many works of art. Turkish religious architecture can only enter the process of development with the implementation of mosque designs that value traditional craftsmanship. Otherwise, the mosques will continue to be built as a bad replica of the Ottoman mosques.

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