

The Mausoleums of Qom in the 13th-14th centuries

Architecture and Ornamentation



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Dedicated to My Father

به پدرم

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Nota bene

- The word "Qom" comes in various written forms in different sources, namely: Qom, Qumm, Qum and Ghom. This paper refers to the city as "Qom", in accordance with transliteration standards (DMG: e-o system)
- Regarding the adaptation of the Lunar Hijri and Solar Hijri calendars in historical sources and inscriptions, this paper provides Lunar Hijri dates in both the Lunar Hijri and the "Georgian format". Solar Hijri dates are converted to the Georgian format.
- The publication dates of the Persian language resources are all converted to Georgian.
- The titles of books written in Persian are transliterated, without translation.
- Photographs and maps without references to their copyright owners in the captions are taken or created by the author herself.
- All undated photographs were taken by the author between 2015 and 2016.
- the DMG e-o system of transliteration that is widely accepted in Oriental Studies has been employed for the transcription of Persian names. Referring to the following table (T.1), the equivalent of each Persian alphabetic character can be found.
- The popularized transcription is used only for a few particular words, for example, the word Islam instead of Eslām. Also, major dynasties such as ‘Abbasid, Sasanian, Seljuk, Il-khanid, Timurid, Safavid and Qajar and also certain major cities and provinces are not transliterated.
- This paper uses the Persian transliteration of words that are both Persian and Arabic, such as *Moḥammad* or *Šādeq*. Arabic transliteration is used only in translations of Arabic inscriptions.

List of Abbreviations

AeI	Athar-é Iran
TQ	Tārīḥ-e Qom
GAQ	Ganġīne-ye Āstār-e Qom
TP	Torbat-e Pākān
Arslsl	Ars Islamica
DKTMSI	Maqālāt-e Dovomīn Kongere Tārīḥ-e Me‘mārī va Šahr Sazī-ye Irān
EI2	Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition
EIr	Encyclopedia Iranica
ICHTO	Iranian Cultural Heritage Organization
OOQ	Ouqāf organization in Qom
SBU	Šahīd Beheštī University
OFU Bamberg	Otto-Friedrich University Bamberg
AMQ	Āstāne Museum of Qom
b.	Ebn-e
Ch.	Chapter
Img.	Image

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Pers. Letters	transliteration	Pers. Letters	transliteration
آ	ā	و	v
ب	b	ه	h
پ	p	ه	e
ت	t	ی	y
ث	<u>t</u>	ا	a, e ,o
ج	ğ	او	ū
چ	č	ی	ī
ح	ḥ	Fatḥه َ	a
خ	ḫ	Kasre ِ	e
د	d	Zamme ُ	o
ذ	<u>z</u>	ء	ʿ
ر	r		
ز	z		
ژ	ž		
س	s		
ش	š		
ص	ṣ		
ض	ẓ		
ط	ṭ		
ظ	ẓ		
ع	ʿ		
غ	ğ		
ف	f		
ق	q		
ک	k		
گ	g		
ل	l		
م	m		
ن	n		

Chapter 1 - The Research in General

1.1 Subject Definition

The mausoleums of Qom are among the most important and interesting works of Islamic culture, as well as of Iranian culture in general. Building mausoleums and paying tribute to the elderly and infallible figures, one of the Shiite religiopolitical practices in the 13th and 14th centuries in Iran, became a common trend during the Il-khanid era. Before the rise of the Il-khanid Dynasty, Sunnism was prevalent in Iran. However, through the rise of the Mongols, and later with the growth of Shiite influence on Il-khanid kings, foundations were laid for the expansion of Shi'ism across the Iranian society. During this period, the Shiites in Iran gradually managed to shift from a resistance movement to a religious division with their own, distinct beliefs and practices, including distinct architectural traditions (Fazlī Nežād, 2015:86). When the Shiites in Iran were fighting for legitimacy, inscribing infallible *imams'* names on buildings was a satisfactory presentation of religious values; however, after consolidating their position in the society, they explicitly tried to make use of structures and monuments as a means of representing their beliefs. Consequently, religious rules and guidelines remolded the architecture of religious buildings, such as mosques and tombs, all of which had their own architectural backgrounds. During this era, the efforts of Iranian ministers and officials triggered shifts in Il-khanid ruler's attitude towards religious sanctuaries. As a result, construction of tombs and reconstruction of tombs of various key Shiite figures, in accordance with a new, distinct architectural tradition, gained traction throughout the country.

It is emphasized that architecture is considered in the domain of culture and blended in popular tradition and does not alter with a change in political structure. Therefore, after the fall of the Il-khanid dynasty (1335), architectural activities faced no interruption. In fact, the architectural style and practices developed in this era were preserved and manifested in the buildings constructed in the following centuries. Such continuity can be observed in the architectural practices in the form of projects to build Shiite tombs in the city of Qom.

The city of Qom, which was a part of the territory of Iran throughout the history of the majority of Shiite dynasties, is one of the areas that experienced this architectural phenomenon in the 13th and 14th centuries. In fact, the preparedness of the city in terms of the political power provided the needed basis for the construction of these artworks. This building project was certainly aided by the city's long tradition of Shiite shrine construction. There are many such buildings from previous centuries, suggesting that the necessary skills were easily available.

The city had witnessed the construction of the tomb of Fāṭeme Ma‘šūme, the sister of *Emām* Reżā, in earlier centuries of Islam, which according to the *Tārīḩ-e Qom* (988) could be considered one of the earliest examples of shrines built during the Islamic period in Iran, and which begat the popularity of the construction of similar Shiite tombs in this city. The trend persisted in the 14th century and, thanks to the powerful local and religious rulers it became a project that could be termed as the bulk construction and renovation of Shiite tombs.

These sites are of special sanctity and respect among the Shiites in Iran and across the world. In fact, a strong emotional bond has been established between the people and these buildings throughout the centuries. The style, form, and structure of these monuments are partially borrowed from past architectural traditions, while they have their own special elements and unique characteristics, all influenced and in harmony with the rituals and beliefs and with various social, political, and material factors of the society of that era. The goal of this research is to identify these features in the fifteen remaining tombs from that era and to discover the main factors that led to the construction of these structures.

1.2 Introduction: The Different Sections of the Thesis

Funerary monuments have a distinct place among architectural works, especially those of the Islamic era. Considering the broad historical, artistic, religious, and social aspects of these artworks, taking a nuanced approach, which accounts for the myriad of contextual considerations which affect the construction of tombs, seems mandatory for conducting a comprehensive study.

This research aims to provide a multi-dimensional understanding of the above-mentioned features of funerary monuments specifically located in Qom City: valuable structures that were created during a wealthy period in Qom's history. This thesis is organized into six sections:

Chapter one discusses the general research, which includes a brief explanation of the subject, followed by a concise literature review. Difficulties, purposes and outcomes, and the methods used in this study are among the topics covered in this section.

Chapter two includes an analysis of concepts, terminology, functionality, and morphology, followed by some tables based on the typological features of tombs structures. The chapter continues with introducing the mausoleums of Qom with a brief history of the tomb of Fāṭeme Ma‘šūme.

The third chapter introduces the historical context of the tombs. The chapter starts with a brief geographical and climatological study of Qom. This is followed by a historical overview aimed at understanding the socio-historical development of the city through time. Based on the findings about the town's layout, an evaluation and analysis of the city structure is presented. The chapter then identifies the locations of tombs within the old city and their connection with well-known urban elements, such as gates, old routes and the city walls.

The fourth chapter includes a brief summary and documentation of fifteen mausoleums of Qom. The architectural and artistic features of these towers will be documented and described in detail in fifteen sub-sections.

Chapter five provides an analysis of the data described in chapter four. This section includes three parts: architecture, epigraphic material, and decorations, all analyzed through text and visual media (such as tables and graphs).

Chapter six includes general conclusions that answer the research questions defined at the end of Chapter 1, The results and the new findings of the study are also presented in this chapter.

1.3 Research Record

Many articles and books have been written about the funerary monuments in Iran, either in the form of case studies or regional syntheses. However, most of these publications are simply an introduction to the issue along with a general description of some more important historical buildings, providing a useful starting point but usually no in-depth analysis. For instance, an encyclopedia of the Iranian funerary monuments entitled: *Dāyerat al-Ma'āref-e Banāhāy-e Tārīhī- e Iran dar Dorey-e Eslāmī -Banāhā-ye Ārāmgāhī*, which was collected in 1997, only lists and briefly introduces tombs across Iran by categorizing them in a number of sections, namely: Mausoleums, Emānzades, Towers, Domes and Tomb complexes. This classification conforms with the title, for which the constructions are famed for, and follows an alphabetical order. A general information about the existing condition of the building (related to 40 to 60 years ago) can be found by referring to it.

Ganġnāme, published by Šahīd Beheštī University, is another example of such a resource, which contains documentation of a wide range of funerary monuments in Iran in volumes 11, 12 and 13. Again, this book mostly provides introductory information, although plans of some

mausoleums are included. Though not always accurate, these provide a good starting point for further research.

Both Iranian and non-Iranian researchers have worked on the general history of Iranian art and architectural stylistics in different eras. Some notable examples include Karīm Pīrnīyā¹, Donald Wilber², Robert Hillenbrand³, Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom⁴, Arthur Pope and Phyllis Ackerman⁵, and Peter Jackson⁶. Wilber's "*The architecture of Islamic Iran -the Il Khānid period*" can be considered the most notable study of the history of art and architecture in the Il-khanid era. "*Persian Art before and after the Mongol Invasions*"⁷, edited by the University of Michigan Museum of Art, is another example of a comprehensive study of this period.

Additional studies exist, either focused generally on Il-khanid funerary architecture. These listed below form the backbone of current scholarship on the topic, and they will be used throughout this text for context and information.

Sheila Bair's work covers the Naṭanz Mausoleum⁸, as well as Soltānīye⁹; Robert Hillenbrand has analysed the Baštām mausoleum¹⁰; Abbās Danešvarī's work deals with medieval tomb towers more broadly, with a focus on morphology of the monuments, and includes a case study of Gonbad-e Kabūd at Marāḡe¹¹. Reżā Naẓarī Aršad has conducted another, more general study of funerary monuments in Hamadān, describing their architectural features and reviewing their history¹². Alīreżā Mošabbakī Eṣfahānī has also published a paper in which he compares tombs constructed during Il-khanid and Seljuk era in the city of Marāḡe¹³. Faršād Mo'zanī and Yāser Ḥamzavī have also conducted a joint study on the tomb of Pīr-e Bakrān, a notable example of a funerary monument built in the Il-khanid era, focusing mostly on the decoration of the

¹ *Sabk Šenāsī Me'mārī*, 2001.

² *The architecture of Islamic Iran -the Il Khānid period*, 1955.

³ *Islamic Architecture. Form, Function and Meaning*, 1994.

⁴ *The art and architecture of Islam 1250 – 1800*, 1994.

⁵ Arthur, Pope; Phyllis, Ackerman: *A Survey of Persian Art. from Prehistoric Times to the Present. New studies 1938-1960* 1960.

⁶ *Mongols and the West. 1221-1410*, 2005.

⁷ *Persian art before and after the Mongol conquest*, 1959.

⁸ *The Ilkhanid Shrine Complex at Natanz and The Octagonal Pavilion at Na.anz. A Re-examination of Early Islamic Architecture in Iran*, 1983

⁹ *The Mongol Capital of Sultaniyya, the Imperial*, 1986.

¹⁰ Hillenbrand, Robert: *The Flanged Tomb Tower at Bastam*, 1982.

¹¹ *Medival Tomb Tower of Iran and Complementary Notes On the Tomb Towers of Medieval Iran I: The Gunbad-i Kabud at Maraghe 593/1197*, 1982.

¹² *Banāhāy-e Ārāmgāhī in Hamadan*, 2005.

¹³ *Moqāyese Tatbiqī Me'mārī-ye Maqāber-e Dore-ye Salḡuqīan va Ilkhanian Dar Marāḡe*, 2018.

monument¹⁴. Ana Marija Grbanovic's more recent paper in *Muqarnas* is another example of an analysis dealing with the architecture and decoration of this monument¹⁵.

There also exists a rich literature on the architecture and decoration of the Dome of Soltāniye, the largest tomb structure developed in the Il-khanid era. Blair has significantly contributed to the body of research regarding the art and decorations of this huge monument¹⁶. Other notable examples include the work by Piero Sanpaolesi¹⁷ as part of an architectural restoration project. The research by Eleanor Sims,¹⁸ who has worked extensively on this Mausoleum's decoration and ornamentation, as well as reports of the excavations and research conducted by the Cultural Heritage Office in Zanḡān, provide further information.

Regarding historical sources about the city of Qom, *Tārīḡ-e Qom* is the most important and the oldest. This book is an early local history (comp. 378/988) by Ḥasan b. Moḡammad Qomī in Arabic and it has been preserved in an early 9th / 15th-century Persian translation by Ḥasan b. 'Alī Qomī. Among modern sources, Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī's work is invaluable. He published a considerable number of books, historical documents and articles on the historical background of Qom city between 1971 and 1976. His most important works are *Qomnāme*, *Torbat-e Pākān*, *Qom dar Qarn-e Nohom-e Heḡrī and Ḥāndān-e 'Alī Ṣafī*, among others¹⁹. However, one of the latest and most comprehensive contemporary works on this topic is the valuable work of Andreas Drechsler, who has expounded the social and political conditions of Qom until the 13th century.²⁰ Finally, a research project by Aḡmad Sa'īdnīyā, collected by Yūsof Kīānī and published in the book *Šahrhāy-e Irānī*²¹, is the chief source of information regarding mapping and the urban structure of Qom city.

There exists a large number of texts and images specifically about the architecture of mausoleums in Qom, built in 13th and 14th centuries, many of which form part of the literature review used in this project.

Generally, early texts about these tombs are developed by travelers and art history researchers and are mostly presented by the means of images and reports. Although these writings are

¹⁴ *Ārāyehāye Me'mārī Otāq Maqbare Banāy-e Pire Bakrān*, 2013.

¹⁵ *The Ilkhanid Revetment Aesthetics in the Buq'a Pir-i Bakran*. 2017.

¹⁶ *The Epigraphic Program of the tomb of Oljaito at Soltaniyeh: Meaning in Mogul Architecture*, 1987.

¹⁷ *La Cupola di Santa Maria del Fiore ed il Mausoleo de Soltanieh*, 1972 and *Progetto di Restauro del Mausoleo di Olgeitu a Soltanieh*, in collaboration with R. Kasa'i, no date.

¹⁸ *The Internal Decoration of the Mausoleum of Oljeitu Khudabanda, a Preliminary Re-examination. Solṭāniye III* 1982 and *The Iconography of the Internal Decoration in The Mausoleum of Ūljāytū at Sultaniyya*, 1988.

¹⁹ Bibliography of Dr. Moḡammad Ḥosain Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī in <http://tazkereh.kateban.com/post/519>

²⁰ *Die Geschichte der Stadt Qom im Mittelalter (650-1350) politische und wirtschaftliche Aspekte*, 1999.

²¹ *Qom Ḥāstgāh-e Šahr* 1987.

mostly introductory in their nature, images taken by early researches have made a fairly significant contribution to the historiography of these structures. Notable figures in this realm (in chronological order) are Friedrich Sarre²², who wrote a one-page report on the Tomb Towers of Bağ-e Sabz between 1895 and 1900, accompanied by pictures of the structure, published in his book in 1910; Ernst Herzfeld²³, who traveled to Iran and Qom in 1922 and in 1926, wrote a brief report and took some photos of the Tomb Towers of Bağ-e Sabz, which were published in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*. Another report by Arthur Pope and Farağollāh Bazl was published in 1935 and described the visit they made to Qom and its tombs. This report finds similarities between the architecture of tombs with the architectural traditions manifested in other structures built between 1307 and 1546. About sixteen tombs are mentioned in this report, among which the tomb of Šāh Ebrāhīm Mazdīgān is traced back to the Seljuk era, though the author has not specified the reason for this dating.²⁴The last in this line is André Godard's text about the Luster tiles of Emāmzāde 'Alī b. Ğa'far Tomb, written between 1930 and 1940 and published in *Āthār-e Īrān*²⁵.

The reports on the present condition of these buildings are normally short, but Donald Wilber has conducted some more comprehensive work. Wilber prepared a map of the location of the structures in the city and categorized them into three groups according to the location of the old city gates. He also compiled a list of nineteen buildings with their names and dates.

Regarding books about historical sites in Qom more generally, Rašīd Yāsami's *Rāhnamā-ye Qom*²⁶ published in 1938 is an important source. Additionally, two local researchers, Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī and 'Abbās Feyz, have collected reports and documentation about all the historical and religious sites in Qom, mostly based on their personal observations. Their findings are published in two books titled *Torbat-e Pākān* by Ṭabāṭabā'ī²⁷ and *Ganğīne-ye Ātār-e Qom*²⁸ by Feyz. Documentation provided by both authors consists of either reports or photographs and maps. In some cases, they also provide detailed descriptions. As their work was conducted before the restoration and reconstruction, it is invaluable to any current efforts aimed at determining the original form of the buildings. They also provide useful information about those tombs which are completely wrecked.

²² *Denkmäler persischer Baukunst* 1901-1910.

²³ *Reisebericht*, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 1926.

²⁴ *Preliminary Report of the Tombs of the Saint at Qumm*, 1931.

²⁵ *Datées de céramique de Kāshān à décor lustré*, 1937.

²⁶ *Rāhnamā-ye Qom*, 1938.

²⁷ *Torbat-e pākān. Ātār wa banāhā-ye qadīm-e maḥdūde-ye konūnī-ye Dār-al-Mu'minīn-e Qom*, 1976.

²⁸ *Ganğīne-ye Ātār-e Qom*, 1971.

As for comparable later work, Kāžem ‘Arab, an archaeologist at the Cultural Heritage Organization of Qom City, wrote his MA thesis on the mausoleums of Darvāze ye Kāšān in 1994²⁹. Unfortunately, it does not include currently existing features (such as the crypt) as it was carried out before the archaeological exploration and development operations which unearthed these features. He also wrote a few articles mostly introducing the structures and providing descriptions of their architecture and decoration³⁰. ‘Ammār Kāvūsī also published a book called *Me ‘mārī-ye Emānzādegān-e Qom dar Qarn-e Haštom* with a brief description of four Emānzādes of 14th century located in Qom³¹. Hillenbrand’s 2014 article presents both an overview of the history and a description of the architecture, ornamentation and inscriptions of the Tomb towers in Bāg-e Sabz³².

With regard to the decoration of monuments, Moḥammad Ḥosain Raḥmatī has published a book titled *Ārāyehā-ye Gačī dar Āsār-e Tārīḥī –e Qom*, which provides short descriptions of 14th century buildings, in particular their stucco ornaments, elaborating on both the technical aspects of their production, as well as on their patterns³³. Āstāne Museum of Qom has published a book called *Kāšīhā-ye irānī*, describing the collection of tiles kept in the museum³⁴.

Other works on the funerary sites of Qom include their registration on the list of Iranian national heritage and a series of study projects and excavations monitored by the ICHTO, though not much of the information and reports from these processes are available. Most of the properties in question are owned through endowment, and there have been manipulations and alterations to their physical structure in the past years authorized by the Qom Office for Endowment (Oūqāf), though they were monitored by Qom ICHTO whenever possible. Such interventions as renovation and restoration, demolition, refurbishment and expansion have caused many of these properties to lose their original and visual identity.

1-4 Research Difficulties, Purposes and Outcomes

The difficulties specific to carrying out this type of research can be summarized as follows:

²⁹ ‘Arab, Kāžem: *Barrasī-ye Vižegīhā-ye Borǧ Maqāber-e Darvāze-ye Kāšān*, unpub. Master thesis, Tarbiyyat Modarres University, Tehran 1994.

³⁰ ‘Arab, Kāžem: *Gozareš va Mo ‘arrefī ye Banāhā-ye Tārīḥī va arzešmand-e Qom*, in: *Aṭar* 33-34(2002), pp.146-163.

³¹ Kāvūsī, ‘Ammār: *Me ‘mārī-ye Emānzādegān-e Qom dar Qarn-e Haštom*, Qom 2005.

³² Hillenbrand, Robert: *A Shi ‘i Building Boom in 14th-Century Qum. The Case of the Bagh-i Sabz Towers*. in F. Suleman (ed.), *People of the Prophet’s House: Artistic and Ritual Expressions of Shi ‘i Islam*. The Institute of Ismaili Studies (2014), pp. 72-82.

³³ Raḥmatī, Sayyed Moḥammad Ḥosain: *Ārāyehā-ye Gačī dar Ātār-e Tārīḥī –e Qom*, Qom 2011

³⁴ Kolbādī Nežād, Maryam; Behzad yūsofzāde: *Kāšīhā-ye Irānī. Dore-ye Eslāmī*, Qom 2011

- Urban development and changes in the architectural fabric of the city, often carried out without any records, created various difficulties in locating elements of the old city (such as gates, towers, city walls, etc.) and the project-related monuments within the old city. Thus, some buildings and features of urban topography could only be marked approximately on the map.
- Many buildings do not have accurate architectural plans, nor was it possible to measure or survey the current condition of these buildings. It was only possible to measure some of the main dimensions, while for the rest, documentation was made using the existing plans, with some adjustments made based on photographs.
- The religious and conservative nature of the communities in Qom limits fieldwork such as photography and mapping. Furthermore, religious sites are actively used for various occasions and ceremonies, substantially limiting the time available for such fieldwork.
- Limited access to information due to the lack of central archives and the haphazard distribution of information in the ICHTO because of mismanagement.
- The dated inscriptions on some buildings were partially or totally destroyed by natural or artificial causes.
- Unscientific changes and restoration have created problems with identifying the original form of buildings, which for some sites required excavation that the current project could not perform.
- Some epigraphic materials were damaged by inaccurate repairs and required validation with old photography before the repairs, which was not always possible
- Usually there are local architectural words and terms that facilitate descriptions of detailed documentation. However, many such terms in Islamic arts are still unknown or untranslated. In such cases, either the local terms are used, or close/approximate equivalents are used (e.g. for some decorative patterns and techniques).

Research purposes

The main purpose of this piece of research is to identify the historical stylistics of architectural and artistic elements in funerary architecture of Qom, specifically that dating from the Il-khanid era, and to define the factors affecting and influencing their construction and development. This will help determine the place and role of these buildings within the canon of architectural techniques and structures, and functional and decorative designs of the historical Iranian architecture. Moreover, it attempts to scientifically and systematically introduce, identify, document and assess these historical sites to assist conservation and protection of historical and cultural works.

This thesis will try to answer the following questions:

1. What has caused and informed the construction of a high number of tomb structures in Qom?
2. Which factors determine the distribution and location of these tombs in the city?
3. What are the artistic characteristics of these buildings? Is there a shared architectural style?
4. What past structural and decorative models inspired the architectural and artistic features typical of the tomb structures of Qom?

1.5 General Research Methodology

The research procedure in this essay is historical-analytical and based on library and field studies, including the study of primary and secondary sources, archaeological reports and analytical essays.

Library research included reading and collecting data from historical books, travelogues, articles, trustworthy publications and academic dissertations in the Iranian National Library, various libraries in Germany and the Noor Digital Library website.

Field study activities include the following:

- Collection and categorization of archaeological and restoration reports, building registers in ICHTO of Qom and the Endowments Organization of Qom;
- Collection of old image of buildings from tourists' archives, historical researchers' archives, the Photographic Archive of Golestān Palace in Tehran, Berlin Islamic Arts Museum, Photographic Archives of Tehran University, University of Bamberg and Šahīd Beheštī University;

Chapter 1

- Collecting aerial photographs and maps of cities and buildings from the Topography Organization of Iran, ICHTO, Šahīd Beheštī University and Municipality of Qom;
- Mapping the historical constructions and landmarks using Google Maps, comparing the old city with the modern, developed city through software such as AutoCAD or Photoshop in order to adjust the appropriate scale and highlight the relevant elements;
- Creating detailed photographs, maps and sketches of the buildings and their surroundings;
- Comparing the current state of the structures with their earlier forms as known from the old images of the monuments and exploring their change through various time periods (from the moment of construction when possible).
- Taking photographs of artefacts belonging to each building in the museum of Islamic period in Tehran, the Āstāne Museum of Qom and the Pergamon Museum of Berlin;
- Interviewing local people about the surrounding area of the sites, their memories of the sites before various changes and developments, the function of different spaces and their development over time.

2-1 Basic Definition: Mausoleum

Mausoleums are among the oldest monuments known throughout the history of mankind, and all human societies have benefited from such constructions in one way or another. The dominant beliefs and rituals of a given culture have had major impact on their shape and quality. “From a sacred or religious perspective, the construction of a mausoleum is a ritual that reveals the afterlife and the evolution of existence, and depicts the passage from a material state to a spiritual one, with the objective of highlighting the eternal character of the spirit and the continuation of life” (Dānešvarī, 2011:11). At the most basic level, mausoleums portray the social standing and position of their owners; they contain important information about the condition of their patrons and owners. Today, historical tombs and mausoleums have the role of establishing a link with past individuals, who were among the most important prominent and religious figures of a society. In fact, these types of buildings are representations of power or holiness, of how religious rules and guidance, which are rooted in the beliefs and tenets of the period, blend in with the art and architecture of the era and are ultimately manifested as mausoleum architecture. In Iran, mausoleums are the most numerous surviving historical monuments after mosques, and have been constructed at different periods on the tombs of important national, military, scientific and religious figures, who often defined the eras they lived in.

2-2 Islamic terminology for the mausoleums

As is common in Islamic architecture, there are various terms associated with the concept of tomb, many of which are found in the Persian and Arabic references as well as in the inscriptions, and many are still common today. These terms are specific to the time and region of their construction, as well as to the type and function of such structures (Leisten,1998:67).

The terms used at times reflect the outlook and the spirit of the tomb’s patron, such as the selection of the word *Marqad* (resting place) instead of *Madfan* (the place of burial) because of its more delicate connotation. In some cases, the choice of the word bestows a greater value and prestige on the building and ultimately leads to honor for the tomb’s patron, for example the application of the word *Qaṣr* (palace) to denote the tombs of rulers (Hillenbrand, 1994: 257). Some expressions were used for holy and religious figures or for the saint who was near to God, including: *Maqām* (site, abode), *Qobbe* (cupola), *Mašhad* (the place of martyrdom), *Āstāne* (the threshold), *Mazār* (grave), *Dargāh* (the threshold).

These locations are always considered as a pilgrimage sites, some of which, such as *Āstāne*, are exclusively for the Shiites. Occasionally, the choice of the term refers in fact to an attribute of the deceased, words such as *Rauze* (paradise, garden) is a testimony to the piety of the occupant (Hillenbrand, 1994: 258). The term *Mašhad* means the place of martyrdom, with a martyr being a person killed for his/her faith and belief. Hence, this place might not be a simple tomb, instead, it may well be a memorial for a martyr. Nevertheless, in some texts and inscriptions this word is associated with a tomb (Leisten, 1998: 67 – 69).

Some words became popular and common as they referred to the shape and the appearance of the tomb, for example: *Gonbad* (dome), *Borġ Maqbare* (Tomb tower) or *Borġ* (tower).

Other common expressions include *Qobbe* (cupola), which refers to the arched or a covered ceiling of a building and invokes primarily an integral part of it; whereas the term *Torbat* or *Turba* is another common word for the tomb and not the building, despite being mentioned in the inscriptions of some of the Islamic shrines (Leisten, 1998: 71-2).

Emānzāde is Another term used extensively today to describe many sacred Shiites shrines in Iran. The word *emānzāde* literarily means the offspring or descendant of an *imām*, and in Persian it also refers to their shrines, which are quite abundant in Iran. The *Emānzādagān* are thus sayyids [q.v.], but all sayyids are not accorded the title of *emānzāde*. (Lambton, 1960-2007). Some historical references such as the history of Qom mention the migration of descendants of four *imāms* to the cities of Qom and Kashan, after the presence of Emām Reżā, the eighth *imām* of the Shiites in Mašhad. However, there are doubts about the true lineage of some *emānzāde* whose biographies are unclear. Nonetheless, they enjoy a great respect among the people and these shrine-tombs function as centers of Shi'i devotion and pilgrimages. These tombs are also believed to have miraculous properties and the ability to heal (Esposito, 1995: 185). The reasons for this terminological diversity related to the mausoleums are rooted in the different social factors pertaining to their construction, such as the social class of the deceased, the outlook of the monument's patron and the local literary tradition of the region. Today, some mausoleums may even be known under names different to their original ones, which is due to the cultural, social and environmental changes throughout history.

2-3- Classification of mausoleums

Mausoleums can generally be divided into two major groups. The first is defined through the identity of the deceased and the second refers to the architectural form and structure, which can be further divided into different subgroups.

2-3-1 Classification of the mausoleums according to the identity of the deceased.

The mausoleums can be divided into two groups according to the social status and identity of the deceased. The first are the mausoleums of sacred religious figures, the pilgrimage to whom has become a key ritual in parts of the Islamic world. The second group comprises the tombs of kings and other important political figures.

I. Mausoleums of religious figures

Despite many disputes about honoring the dead in Islam, many tombs have been built in Iran for religious figures such as the clergy, the offspring of the Shiite *imāms*, and the gnostics. Most of these are referred to as “*emāmzāde*” and their tombs are always a center for pilgrimage.

The strong belief in the powers and the sanctity of the *imāms* has led to the ritual of visiting and reverence of their shrines among the Shiites, and the significance of this pilgrimage led in the tenet of meeting a holy figure. This practice has a special status among the Shiites for its spiritual rewards. The *imāms*' powers appear in such forms and healing the sick, solving the dire problems affecting the people and restoring the lost rights. The beneficiaries, be they the healed patient or those whose problems have been resolved thus gain an added status of having had their calls answered by the *imām*. It is the healing and mediating powers of the *imām* that enable him to impart blessings and intercede for his followers long after his death. Touching the shrine of the *imām* or any object associated with it is considered as the means of receiving this *baraka* (Takim, 2004:106-107).

In *Tārīḥ-e Qom*, for instance, it is written that those who visit the mausoleum of Fāṭeme Ma'ṣūme belong to paradise (Qomī, 2006:573). The history also mentions various visits to the tombs of religious figures undertaken by royals and politicians. For instance, Malek Šāh, the great Saljuq sultan (465-85/1072-92) visited the mausoleums of Shiite *imāms*, while Neẓām al-Molk, vizier of two Seljuk sultans (408-485/1018-92) visited the tomb of Ebn-e Ḥanbal (241/855), the Sunni theologian¹ (Dānešvarī, 2011:66). The *Ĝāme' al-Tavārīḥ* has underlined the veneration of the prophet's family and pilgrimage to their mausoleums (Hamadānī, 1994: 1359). In the same manner, it is written about the presence of Ölgaitü accompanied by Rašīd al-Dīn Faẓlollāh and a gathering of scholars on the visit to the *'Atabāt-e 'Ālīāt* (great

¹ "Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, the imām of Baghdād, celebrated theologian, jurist and traditionist (164-241/780-855), and one of the most vigorous personalities of Islam, which he has profoundly influenced both in its historical development and its modern revival. Founder of one of the four major Sunnī schools, the Ḥanbalī...". (Laoust, H, EL2: 2012)

mausoleums) during a trip to Baghdad in the year 709/1310 (Hamadānī, 2007: 323-4). *Emānzādes* are always the gathering sites of people, whose needs are not met in the material world, and who engage in offering and sacrifice in these locations (Noṣratī, 1998: 38). For this reason, unlike our second type of mausoleums, these admit pilgrims. As a result of this, these tombs influence their surrounding in a specific way, shaping the surrounding urban fabric through their mere presence. Pious foundations with functions of study and teaching are established in their vicinity and the gathering of people leads to cultural exchange.

On the other hand, the belief in the rewards of burying the dead near sacred and religious persons, stemming from a belief that these holy figures are intermediaries who can intercede on one's behalf on judgment day, has resulted in the appearance of cemeteries alongside these tombs over time (Ḥosain Hašemī; Alīyān, 2016: 38-9). The establishment of cemeteries and the existence of important pilgrimage centers at these mausoleums in themselves augment the reputation of their neighborhoods and, ultimately, entire cities. Over time, many mausoleums expand in their functions to become not only burial sites, but also pilgrimage destinations, places for prayers and adoration, sites of religious functions and rituals, religious schools, spaces for ideological, religious, and political discussion. Of course, such activities often require much space, and some mausoleums expand over time, adding various auxiliary spaces such as mosques, libraries, ablution houses and shoe lockers to better fulfill these varied roles (Pārsī, 2019: 14).

Ultimately, through the addition of these functions, the new concept of a “tomb complex” becomes complete. Given their extraordinary importance, shrines such as the Fāṭeme Ma'šūme Complex in Qom, the Emām Rezā Complex in Mašhad and the tomb complexes at Karbala and Najaf in Iraq are at the core of urban development. For the reason of the consecration of shrines, numerous cemeteries, which usually include the less important tombs of their followers, grow around the mausoleums, and the holy shrines themselves have become the main hub of urbanization. Bodies from different cities and even countries are transported here for burial; indeed, it should be noted that the dimensions of these cemeteries are always larger than the city's requirements (Pārsī, 2019: 16).

II. The mausoleums of political figures

This class of the mausoleums belonging to the elites and to important political figures, including monarchs and politicians, gnostic, sheikhs and scientists. They are classified as religious buildings too. These mausoleums are sometimes in the form of complexes, such as the Soltān Saṅṅar tomb complex at Marv (1157) or the shrine complex at Naṭanz (1307), while

at other times they function as individual tombs, such as the Borǧ-e Qābūs at Qorgān (1006). The tombs of political figures fulfilled different functions to those of religious personalities such as the *emāmzāde*. Most were erected as commemorative structures and remained so over time, although some, like their religious counterparts, begin receiving pilgrims. However, in this case such a change in functionality was sometimes accompanied with a change of the mausoleum's name, quite often of a religious figure who would be buried there later on, or else to the name of an influential religious person who visited the place, or even (more rarely) to the name of any secular influential person in the region. The clear example of such changes occurred in the monuments called *emāmzāde*, which in Iran are very numerous in the cities of Qom and Māzandarān, like the tomb of Šāh Esmā'īl in Qom, who was a warrior general and who is now referred to as Emāmzāde Esmā'īl. Either way, for both types of monuments their key *raison d' être* is to represent the power and prestige of their patrons, funders and constructors, while also gaining spiritual rewards for them.

2-3-2 Classification according to the architectural form and structure of the mausoleums

The tombs of the Islamic period have a great diversity in form, which formally can be broadly classified into two types: dome chambers and tomb towers.

Dome chambers, which include most of the earliest examples of mausoleums, include the two subgroups of domed squares and domed octagons. They can include one or two floors; in the latter case, the top floor would constitute the "tomb chamber: or the place of pilgrimage, while the basement would be the crypt where the deceased person was buried. If present, the crypt would be accessible either through a small entrance directly from the tomb chamber, or separately from the outside. Some chambers also include a *mihṛāb*, which highlights their religious aspect. The dome chambers 'shape resembles Čāhār Tāq, which was built in Iran during the Sassanid period (Hillenbrand, 1994: 281).

The first example of this type of architecture in the Islamic period is perhaps the mausoleum of Amīr Esmā'īl Sāmānī at Boḥārā 10th century monument. The original design of this mausoleum is a square plan with a dome cover, 10 meters per side, with a doorway on each side (Mohammadī; Neyestānī, 2012:37).

Other early examples currently considered sacred pilgrimage sites include the mausoleum of Šāh 'Abd al-'Aẓīm at Rey and the Shrine of Emām Reżā at Mašhad, which, according to historical documents, were both built on square plans (Pīrnīyā, 2001: 244), though today their structure has changed.

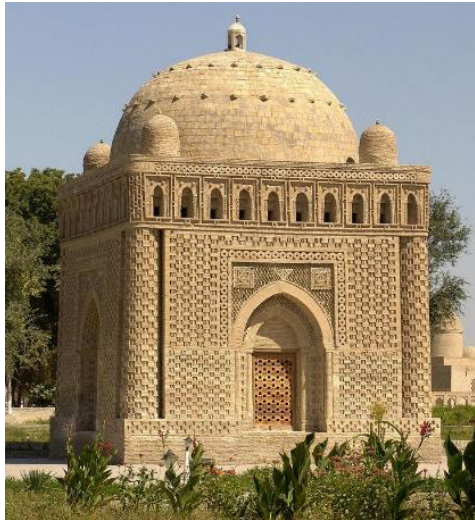


Image 1. the Mausoleum of Amīr Esmā'il Sāmānī at Boḥārā 331/943
(Source: *sabatarch* site 24.11.2019)

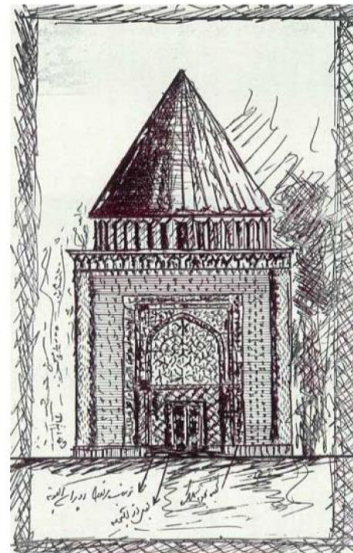
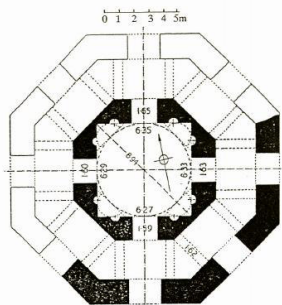
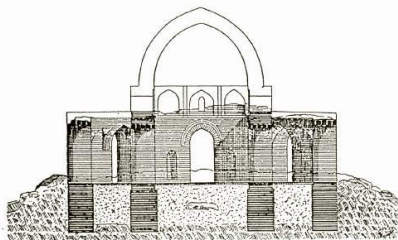
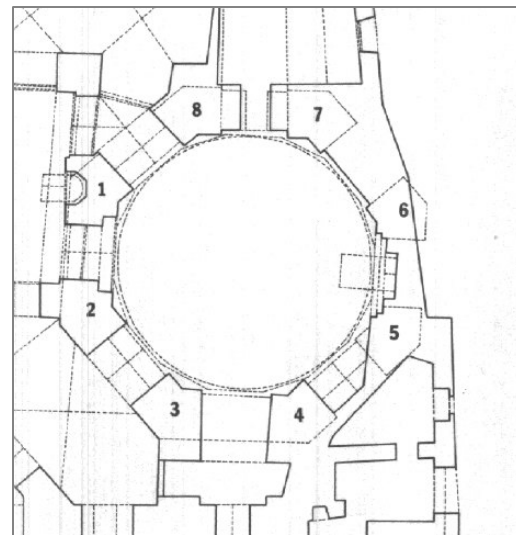


Image 2. Reconstructed elevation of Šāh 'Abd al-'Azīm's Mausoleum Drawn by Pīrnīyā
(Source: Moštāfavī: *Āsār-e Tārīḫi-ye Tehrān*)

The first examples of Islamic mausoleums in the shape of a domed octagon include the 9th century Qubbat aš-Šulaibīya at Samarra, where the octagonal structure was accessible from the exterior on all sides (Leisten, 1998 :254; Hillenbrand, 1994: 254 - 5). The Octagonal Pavilion at Naṭanz (399 / 998 – 9) in Iran is another example (Blair, 1992: 58).



Drawing 1. Plan and section of Qubbat aš-Šulaibīya at Samarra,
(Source: *Architektur für Tote*, fig.27, T. Leisten, 1998)



Drawing 2. Plan 2 of Octagonal Pavilion at Naṭanz (Source: S. Blair *The Octagonal Pavilion at Naṭanz* fig. 2, 1983)

In the next centuries the mausoleum of Šeyḫ Ğonayd at Taft (544/1149), the 12th century mausoleums of Rāšid Bī-llāh at Ešfahān and Ḥvāḡe Atābak at Kerman, the Emāmzāde Ğa'far at Ešfahān and the tomb of Ḥabqūq-e Nabī at Hamadan (13th century) and the Qom

Emāmzādes, which date back to the 14th century, are among the surviving monuments of this type. Most are pilgrimage centers, which suggests that domed buildings were erected specifically with this purpose in mind (Anīsī, 2007: 87).

The second type of mausoleums according to their architectural structure are tomb towers, called so due to the visual emphasis on their height and their stretched form. The early examples of these are the Gonbad-e Qābūs (396/1006) and the Gonbad-e ‘Alī at Abarkūh (448/1056). The plans of these towers vary and include circles, octagons, dodecagons and hexagons.



Image 3. Gonbad-e Qābūs 398/1006
(Source: UNESCO World Heritage
Convention Nomination of Properties for
Inscription on the World Heritage,
Gonbad-e Qābūs 2011, fig. 26)



Image 4. Gonbad-e ‘Alī at Abarkūh
448/1056
(Source: *wikimedia* site 25.11.2019)

The circular towers have an elongated, cylindrical body, usually topped with a conical dome. The exteriors of some such towers, such as Gonbad-e Qābūs and Borġe-e Ȧoġrol, have protruding flanges, probably to break the monotony of the tower’s surface. Most of the surviving circular towers were built between the 10th and 12th centuries and were mainly the tombs of rulers and political figures such as Borġe-e Ȧoġrol (table 1).








	Name	date	location	plan
1	Gonbad-e Qābūs	1006	Gorgān	
2	Rādekān-west	1016-1020	Golestān	
3	Pīr-e 'Alamdār	1021-6	Dāmḡān	
4	Borḡ-e Toḡrol	1139-1140	Rey	
5	Borḡ-e Lāḡīm	11 th century	Māzandarān	
6	Mo' mine Ḥātūn	1186	Āzarbāyeḡān	
7	Mīl-e Rādekān	1205-6 or 1280-1300	Ḥorāsān	

Table 1. Sample plans of cylindrical tomb towers in Iran, from the 11th to the 13th century in Iran

Chapter 2

The essential difference between an octagonal tomb tower and a domed octagon is the ratio of width to height, usually in the range 1: 3.5 - 1:5.5 (Hillenbrand, 1994: 282). Hillenbrand observed that the more the ratio of height to width approaches 1, the greater the probability of religious intentions of the tombs (Ibid. 282 – 3). It is because of this that most *emāmzādes* are classified as domed octagons, while the elevated octagonal tomb towers were reserved for rulers and politicians. The octagonal tomb towers include the mausoleum of Yūsuf b. Koseyr (Kotaya) at Naḥḡavān (1162) and the Ḥaragān Towers (1067-1093).

The selection of octagonal plans, in the two forms of a domed octagon and an octagonal tomb tower, was also maintained during the Mongol era (Ibid. 290). This octagonal space met the needs of the tomb with greater facility and provided greater work-space for the execution of ornaments and decorations. The mausoleum of Ölgaitü was a milestone of tomb architecture of Islamic era in Iran. This great octagonal tomb was constructed under royal orders and it incorporates particularly lavish decorations.



Image 5. Mausoleum of Ulğaito at Soltānīye 1303 (Source: *wikipedia* site_20.08.2018)



Image 6. Gonbad-e Sorḡ at Marāḡe 1148 (Source: *Wiwand* site 25.05.2020)



Image 7. Borḡ-e Ḥaragān- east 1067 (Source: *Mapio* site 25.05.2020)

The last surviving examples of large octagonal tomb towers in Iran are the tomb towers of 14th century Qom, built with characteristic polyhedral roofs and hexagonal drums style, which was later simplified in 15th century Māzandarān. Elsewhere Tomb towers are exceedingly rare in Timurid times, and indeed, as noted above, they were never to regain their former popularity (Hillenbrand, 1994: 287).


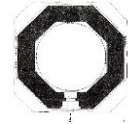
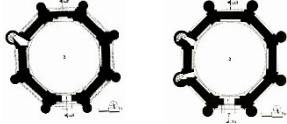
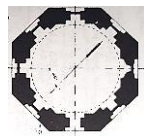
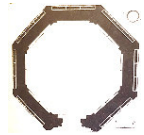
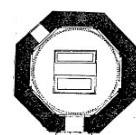
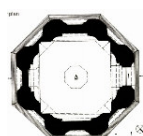
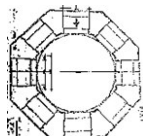

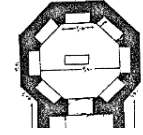
	Name	date	location	plan
1	Natanz Pavilion	998-9	Națanz	
2	Gonbad-e 'Alī	1056	Abarqū	
3	Borğ-e Ȥaragān	1067-1093	Qazvīn	
4	Šeyğ Ğonayd	1148-9	Taft	
5	Yūsof b. Koseyr	1162	Nağğavān	
6	Rašed Billāh	12 th century	Esfahān	
7	Ȥvāğe Atābak	12 th century	Kermān	
8	Šāhzāde Sarbāz	12 th - 13 th century	Bost	
9	Borğ-e Radekān	1205-6	Qūčān- Ȥorāsān	
10	Emāmzāde 'Abdollāh	12 th century	Qazvīn	

Table 2. Sample plans of the octagonal tombs from the 10th to the 12th century in Iran

Chapter 2


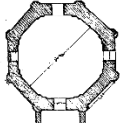
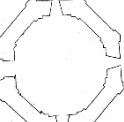
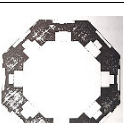
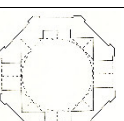
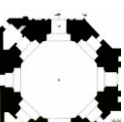
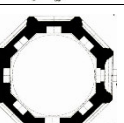
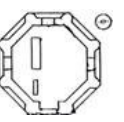
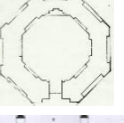
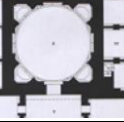


	Name	date	location	plan
1	Ḥabqūq-e Nabī	12 th century	Hamadān	
2	Kāfar Gonbad	12 th - 13 th century	Qazvīn	
3	Ošqūn bābā	12 th or 13 th century	Bīḡār	
4	Gonbad-e Ğabalīyye	13 th century	Kermān	
5	Šāh Ğa'far	1268	Qom	
6	Gonbad-e Soltānīye	1305-16	Soltānīye	
7	Chelebi Oghlu	13 th	Soltānīye	
8	Emānzāde Ğa'far	1324	Esfahān	
9	Emānzāde 'Abdollāh	12 th or 13 th century	Gūdzar	
10	Emānzāde Yahyā	1307-08	Varamīn	
11	Emānzāde 'Abdollāh Āyīne varzān	1330	Damāvand	
12	Emānzāde 'Alī b. Ğa'far	1339-40	Qom	

Table 3. Sample plans of the octagonal tomb structures of the 13th to the 14th century in Iran

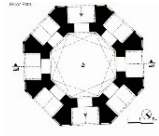
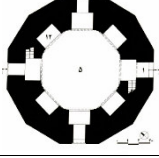
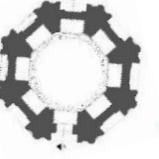
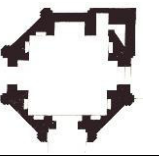
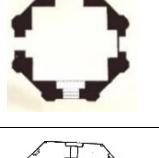
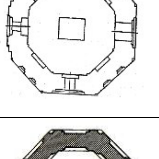
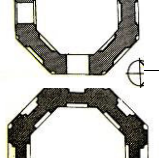
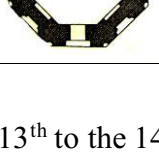
	Name	date	location	plan
1	Šāh Fīrūz	13 th or 14 th	Sīrġān	
2	Borġ-e ‘Alī Ābād	13 th or 14 th century	Kāšmar	
3	Šāh Ebrāhīm	14 th century	Qom	
4	Emāmzāde Sarbaḷš	1374-75	Qom	
5	Šāh Aḡmad-e Qāsem	1378-79	Qom	
6	Emāmzāde Ebrāhīm	14 th century	Bābolsar-Māzandarān	
7	Emāmzāde Solṭān Moḡammad	14 th century	Bābol-Māzandarān	
8	Emāmzāde Setan	14 th century	Amol-Māzandarān	

Table 4 -Sample plans of the octagonal tomb structures of the 13th to the 14th in Iran

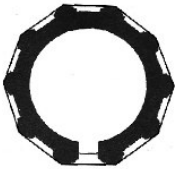
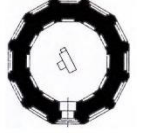
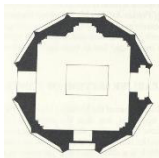
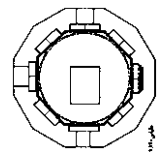
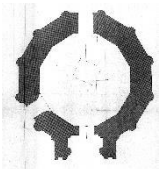
	Tomb structure	Date	Location	Plan
1	Mo' men-e Hātūn	1186-87	Naḥḡavān	
2	Borḡ-e Qorbān	12 th century	Hamadān	
3	Emānzāde Nūr	12 th century	Gorgān	
4	Emānzāde Hārūn	14 th century ?	Sāve	
5	Pīr Morād Ābād	13 th or 14 th century	Farahān	

Table 5 -Sample plans of twelve-sided Tomb structures in Iran

2.4 Religious background of the mausoleums of Qom

The mausoleums of Qom, which are the subject of this research project, generally are structures erected over the graves of any immediate descendant of a Shi'i *imām*, a scholar or a Shiite martyr, as well as of influential political and religious figures, who played a significant role in this city between the 13th – 14th century.

After Mašhad, the Fāṭeme Ma'šūme shrine in Qom is the second most important pilgrimage center in Iran. The presence of this shrine and the security established by the Shiite government in Qom resulted in the city becoming the focus of attention and ultimately the destination of many clergymen, scholars, students of religious sciences and descendants of the *imāms*. In historical chronicles, the arrival date of many elites and offspring of the *imāms* from cities such as Baghdād, Medina, Mecca, Kufa, Našibīn, Hamadān, Ešfahān, etc. to Qom is said to begin in the ninth century. The books of *Ansāb* and *Tārīḫ-e Qom* have reported in detail the arrival of *Alawis* and have mentioned the different groups of *Sādāt*², (Ch.3, pp. 39-40) including the Mūsavī, the Ḥamzavī, the Ḥosainī, the 'Omarī, the Šağarī, etc. (Pāk, 2003: 35; Qomī, 2006: 536 – 678). Of course there is a few centuries' gap between the dates of these persons' presence in Qom as mentioned in the texts, and the dates of the monument as mentioned in the inscriptions (13th and 14th centuries). Hence the question is always raised as to how many of these monuments are truly the tombs of the descendants of the Shiite *imāms* or *emānzādes*, which were merely reconstructed or renovated in this period. In this time were constructed also grandiose mausoleums for political figures associated with the city, such as the tombs of Bāğ-e Sabz, which, in comparison with the *emānzādes* are loftier and with more elaborate decorations.

Today, these monuments are considered to be of great historical importance, crucial to the identity of the city, and they preserve much historical, political, social, cultural and artistic information about the conditions of the city and its people when they were built. Based on the identity of the deceased, the mausoleums surviving from this historical period of Qom, which today, in the light of their function, have religious or non-religious significance, can be divided into two groups of the so-called *emānzāde*, which are pilgrimage tombs, and the non-pilgrimage tombs of the rulers and sheikhs.

The mausoleums of *emānzādes* are highly revered by the people of Qom and, on a larger scale, by the Shiites throughout the Middle East. Due to their popularity as pilgrimage sites, they have been subject to numerous renovations and repairs until present day. On the other hand, the non-

² **Sādāt** is a suffix, which is given to females believed to be descendants of the Islamic prophet, Mohammad.

emānzāde tombs belonging to the rulers and other influential figures of the city, despite a profusion of religious inscriptions, ultimately remains secular, urban monuments and commemorative buildings and are consequently much less visited by people and pilgrims.

Regardless of their type, the architecture of the mausoleums has much technical and artistic value. They are important historical monuments and represent the social and cultural life at the time of their construction. Currently, fifteen tomb structures in Qom survive well enough to be identified, which is quite a remarkable figure. Their architecture and ornaments are very distinctive, different from both mausoleums built in different eras and even contemporaneous ones from other parts of Iran, which ensures their special status in the history of architecture in Iran.

The dated mausoleums studied here were all built or extensively renovated between the years 650/1252 and 850/1445. The historical remit of this project is set by the monuments available for study from this period in history, and the geographical range of the mausoleums reviewed is limited to the Province of Qom and its rural districts, which, during the historical period discussed (13th-14th centuries) were either a part of Qom or politically dependent on it. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

Unfortunately, historical information about the existence of tombs before this period, which could in theory provide important contextual information, is very scarce indeed. The only exception is the shrine of Fāṭeme Maʿšūme, which could have served as a model for the construction of these tombs, but which has now undergone so many essential changes and modifications that it can be only of very limited use to this study. I provide a brief summary below.

2-4-1 The shrine of Fāṭeme Maʿšūme

Fāṭeme Maʿšūme was the daughter of Mūsā b. Ḡaʿfar, the seventh *imām* of the Shiites, who was exiled from Madina, travelled to Iran on her brother's instruction, got struck down by illness in Sāve and requested to be taken to Qom, where she passed away in the year 201/817 (Qomī, 2006: 565). She was a very prominent figure among the Shiites of Qom and the shrine they built for her may have been the most important model for the construction of tombs in subsequent centuries. However, we have very little information about the original shape of this monument, and even what we have has been called into question. The only clear evidence of any dating comes from the dated tiles and the lustre-tile *mīhrāb*, dated between 602 – 607 AH. Conveniently for us, these point to the existence of a magnificent shrine with unique decorations during the Il-khanid period.

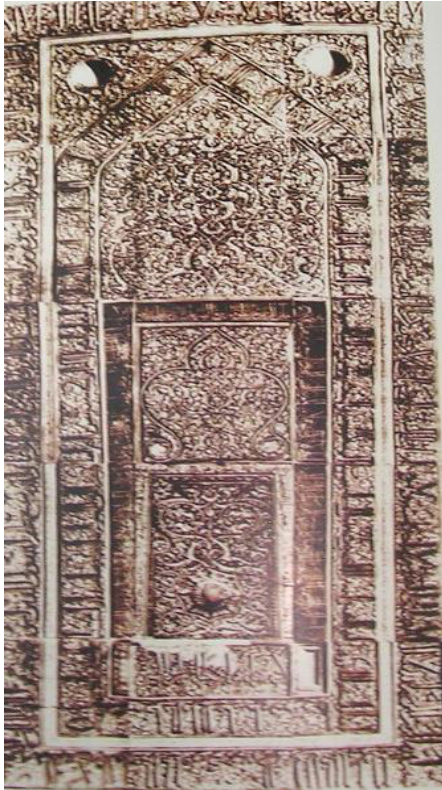


Image 8. Luster-tile Mihrāb of the shrine of Fāṭeme Ma'šūme (603 H) (source: *Kāšihā-ye Irānī*, p.123)



Image 9. A piece of luster tile dated to 602 AH, from the shrine of Fāṭeme Ma'šūme in AMQ.

Tārīḥ-e Qom describes the shrine as “...her shrine in today the sacred garden in the region of Bābelān, which later on turned into the large city cemetery and that she was buried in a crypt”. (Qomī, 2006: 566). Then, a straw canopy was erected above her grave. This canopy was there until the middle of the third century, when, half a century after her death, a woman named Zeynab (daughter of Moḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Rezā) constructed a tomb made of brick and plaster in shape of a tower above her tomb (Qomī, 2006: 566 – 567 and Faqīh Ġalālī, 1997: 211). Zeynab’s construction remained intact at least until the year 378/988, when the *TQ* was written, and the building underwent no modifications until the year 350/961. Subsequently, we know that Abū al-Ḥasan Zeyd b. Aḥmad b. Eṣfahānī, the governor of Qom, extended the portal from the river side and installed a bigger door, and in that period the monument had two doors (Qomī, 2006: 572). In the year 529/1135, a dome was erected on it by the daughter of ‘Emād Beyk. According to historical records, she removed some small cupolas and instead build a taller and larger dome, with its exterior covered in tiles (Feyz Qomī, 1970:415; Faqīh Ġalālī, 1997:213). The small cupolas mentioned by Feyz were probably the ones belonging to the mother of Mohammad and the daughter of Mūsā Rezāy’īye, her sister, and a number of other women named in the *TQ*, which were attached to the cupola of Fāṭeme Ma'šūme (Qomī 2006:

570 – 571). According to Faqīh Ğalālī, the dome was a polygon with eight corners, and on four of its parallel sides there were four doors made of walnut wood (Faqīh Ğalālī, 1997:213), but the historical accuracy of this description is not clear.

Amir Mozaffar the Great of Āl-e Mozaffar dynasty assigned the master tile makers of his era to decorate the tomb. The exquisite tilework of the building was completed in the year 613/1217 (Ibid). There is no information about the changes in the mausoleum until the year 925 / 1519, after which important modifications and repairs were undertaken. Sāh Esma‘īl Şafavī demolished the previous dome and constructed new buildings and a new dome (Ibid. 214). Most historical records describing the shrine of Fāṭeme Ma‘şūme are from the Safavid period onwards. For instance, in his travel journal, Tavernier described the shrine’s building as octagon, with each side containing a door. He mentioned that the grave was located at the end of the mosque, and around it they had erected a large shrine made out of silver. The interior of the dome chamber was covered with exquisite colored tiles and its ceiling was decorated “in the style of Arabs” (Tavernier, 1984: 82). Based on historical references, the general information about the original shape of the monument can be summarized as follows:

- 1- Free-standing structure in the shape of a domed chamber over two floors (with a crypt)
- 2- The building was made out of bricks and plaster
- 3- Octagonal plan, open on four sides
- 4- Polygonal dome and covered with tiles

This monument and its general specifications probably served as a model for the construction of tomb structures over the subsequent centuries, but there are no documents on its actual form and features, or on whether it has been subject to modifications and changes in the 13th and 14th centuries – establishing this would require further archaeological research.

Chapter 3 - Identifying the Region of Qom

3.1. General Geographic Location and Climate of the City of Qom

3.1.1. Geographical location of the Region of Qom

Due to its specific geographical and natural location, Qom has always occupied a distinctive position among Iranian cities. Qom is the capital of Qom province, which is located in the north-central part of Iran, to the south of the Alborz Mountain Range. The province is located at 31-51° E and 15-35 and 15-24° N, 920 meters above sea level. It borders Tehran province to the north, Semnān province to the east, Markazī province to the west and southwest, and Eşfahān province to the south. Qom province is located to the west of Namak Lake and Dašt-e Kavīr. (Ğoğrāfiyā-ye Ostān-e Qom, 1997: 28;).



Image1. location of Qom in Iran (Source: wikipedia 12.11.2014)

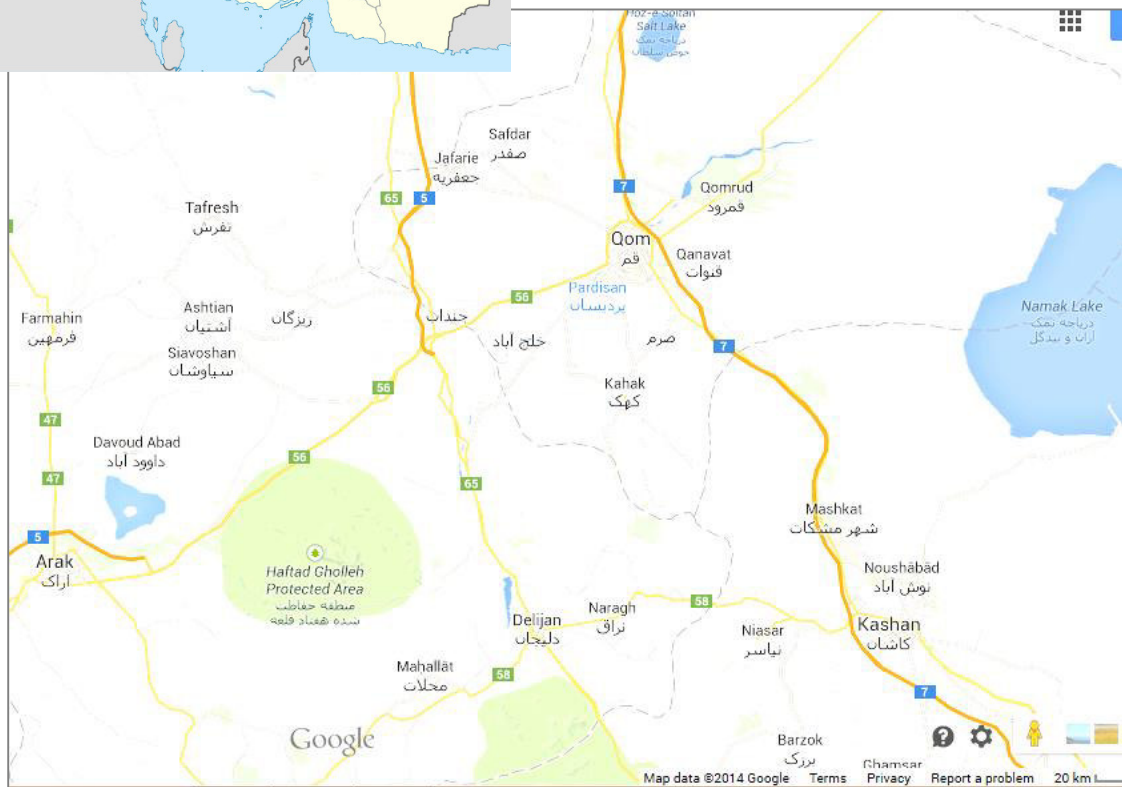


Image 2. Geographical boundary of Qom province and its nearby cities (Source: Google 10.11.2014)

Qom county became an independent province in accordance with the resolution of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (1996). It consists of one county, four districts (Markazī, Salafčegān Ḥalağestān, Ğa‘farābād), and three cities (Qom, Kahak, Ğa‘farīye) (Ibid).

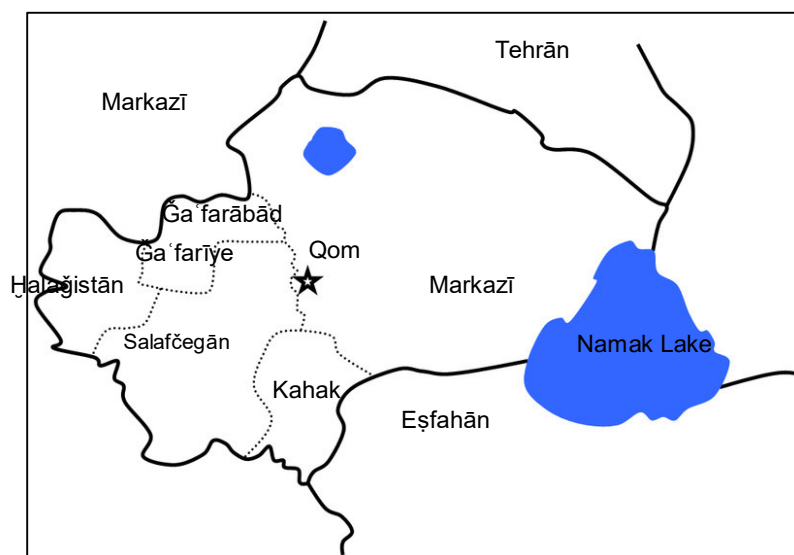


Image3. Qom province and its cities (source: *Wikipedia* 08.12.2018. With addition by the author)

3.1.2. Physical Geography of Qom

3.1.2.1. Mountains

There are three distinct, topographic zones within the province of Qom: mountains (in the south and southwest), foothills (in the south and southwest), and plains (north and center) (Karīmzāde Yazdī, 1997: 24). Its most famous mountains are Valiğā, Taḥt-e Sar Ḥouž, Qolīq and Palang-e Ābī. (Ğa‘farī, 2000: 947).

3.1.2.2. Plains

Approximately 25% of the area of the province is mountainous or belongs to the foothills, while the remainder consists of plain terrain.

The center, north, and east of the province is covered by plains, gently sloping towards the Ḥouž Solṭān Lake and the Namak Lake. Geologically, these plains usually comprise alluvia with particles of different sizes. Due to its soils' high permeability, this region is rich in groundwater. Since the alluvia have been formed through gypsum and salt, the local water is highly saline (Āqābābāyī, 2004: 15).

3.1.2.3. Rivers

The province includes two major rivers, “Qomrūd “and “Qarečāi “, to which a number of creeks flow. Qomrūd streams from the Ḥānsār highlands and, joined by multiple streams on the way (most famously Darband), flows northward and enters Golpāyegān county. After passing

Golpāyegān, Hōmeyn, Mahallāt, and the Salafčegān plain, it enters the county of Qom (Ĝa‘farī, 2000: 337). After passing through the city of Qom, Qomrūd flows northwards into the Qarečāi River. Qarečāi River originates in the highlands of the south Šāhzand, Arāk province, and flows towards Namak (Āqābābāyī, 2004: 16).

3.1.2.4. Lakes

There are two lakes within the Qom Province: Lake Namak and Lake Hōuž Solṭān. Namak, as part of the Dašt-e Kavīr desert, is a saltlake, located to the east of Qom. It is a relic of the Paratethys Sea, which dried in the Pleistocene (Badī‘ī, 1991: 123). Hōuž Solṭān Lake, often called "Sāve" or "Šāhī" lake, is an oval-shaped lake, whose size varies widely depending on the annual rainfall. It is located 790 meters above sea level (Āqābābāyī, 2004: 18).

3.1.3. Climate

Situated in the mid-latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere, Qom province should mainly have a temperate climate. However, the influence of various topographic and climatological factors (e.g. significant variation in elevation – 600-3330 above sea level) has a marked influence on the local climate, resulting in three different climate zones within the province: mountainous, semi-arid, and hot and dry arid (Geography of Qom Province, 1997: 6).

3.1.3.1. Wind

Winds, especially eastern and western ones, play a major role in the climate of the province. The eastern winds blow from the central deserts of Iran and are dry and dusty. In winter, northeast winds sometimes cause severe temperature drops. The western winds also affect the region in the autumn and winter, effecting significant rainfall. The prevailing winds in Qom blow eastward (Geography of Qom Province, 1997: 6-7).

3.1.3.2. Precipitation

Due to the far distance from the sea, Qom Province’s climate is quite arid, though with much variation in precipitation levels throughout the year. Rains usually occur during the spring and winter, accounting for about 74% of the province's annual rainfall. Summer is the most arid season in the province. At the lowest altitude of Qom province, i.e. on the shores of Namak Lake, the annual precipitation is less than 100 mm, but it exceeds 450 mm in the southern and western highlands, where occasional snowfall is also not uncommon (Geography of Qom Province, 1997: 10).

3.1.3.3. Temperature

Due to climatic variation, the average temperature is not the same across different parts of the province, as it ranges between 14-18 ° C. The lowest temperatures vary from -12 to -30 ° C, while in the summer, the highest temperatures reach between 41-45 ° C. The number of frost days each part of the province receives also varies, from 40 in Qom to 87 in the 'Abbās Abād meteorological station (Geography of Qom Province, 1997: 9).

The general pattern of climatic variability in the Qom Province is that moving from the south west to the north east, average temperatures increase, while annual precipitation and the number of frost days decrease.



Image 4. Topographic map of Qom province (source: *google* 08.12.2019)

3.2 The General History of Qom

3.2.1 Etymology of Qom

Scientists and historians have expressed different opinions on why the city in question has been called Qom¹. In *Tārīḥ -e Qom*², Ḥasan Qomī explains that The Arabic word ‘Kuma’ قم denotes the place where water is stored; since Taimore and Anār water reservoirs were situated in this region, it was called Qom (Qomī, 2006: 41-40). As a second explanation, Qomī refers to the word “Kuma”, which points to houses built in the meadows of the area; he proposes that the word has been shortened to Kum and then Arabicized to Qom (Ibid, 42). Elsewhere in the book, the writer states that the city has been founded by Qomsare b. Lohrāsb (Ibid, 44). E‘temād al-Saltāne refers to ancient Qom as “Kūvānā or Qūānā (E‘temād al-Saltāne, 1984: 106).

A different etymology is given by Ḥamze b. Ḥasan Eṣfahānī, who argues that “Qom” is derived by the Aš‘arī tes from “Komeydān” كميدان - one of the villages of Qom in 8.Jh. The last four letters have been removed in order to shorten the word to become “Kom”. Next, “K” ك has been changed to “Q” ق and the present-day name has emerged (Drechsler, 1999: 33; Bayātī; Rağabī, 2017: 82).

3.2.2. Historical References to Qom in the Islamic period

Throughout history and given its geographical location, which allowed the shortest and easiest access to other cultural hubs such as Esfahan, Kashan and Rey, the region of Qom was not only always prosperous, but was also the site of many historical and cultural events. For this reason, it has been mentioned extensively in historical texts.

The most comprehensive historical source for the history of Qom is probably *Tārīḥ -e Qom* by Ḥasan al-Qomī (378/988-89). It provides invaluable information on the political, social, and economic history, as well as details on the shape, structure, and geography of Qom, which cannot be found in other sources. Other important sources covering the period up to the 13th century include a lot books (see footnote),³ which are important first-hand references containing

¹ *Deḥḥodā Dictionary* provides a comprehensive description of the city of Qom.

² *The Tārīḥ -e Qom* or The History of Qom was written in Arabic by Abū ‘Alī Ḥasan b. Maḥmūd b. Ḥasan al-Qomī in 988-9/378. In fact, it is regarded as one of the oldest and most valuable references in local historiography

³ *Al-Buldān* by Ya‘qūbī (died 248/897 or 292/905), *Fotūḥ al-Buldān* by al-Balāzurī (died 278-279 /892), *Kitāb al-Buldān* by b. Faqīh (289/902), *Tārīḥ al-Ṭabarī* by Ġarīr al-Ṭabarī (224/839—310/923), *al-Masālik va al-Mamālik* by al-Iṣṭaḥrī (died 340/951), *al-Masālik val-Mamālik* by b. Ḥauqal (died after 378/988), *al-Masālik val-Mamālik* by b. Ḥordābeh (205/820 or 211/825-300/912), al-Mas‘ūdī’s works (died 345/956), *al-A‘lāq va al-Nafīsa* by b. Rustah (died 300/912), *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm fī Ma‘rifat al-Aqālīm* by al-Moqaddasī (334/945-380-990), *Hudud al-‘Ālam* (372/982-83), *Risāla al-Ṭanīyya* by Abū Dulaf (348/959-60?), *Ātār al-Bāqīya* by al-Bīrūnī (died 1050), *Tārīḥ -e Bayhaqī* by Bayhaqī (385/995-451/1077), *al-Maḥāsen* by al-Barqī (died 274/896), *Fārs Nāme* b. Balḥī, (died 511/1117), *al-Kāmil fī Tārīḥ* by b. Aṭīr (630/1160-1233), *Tārīḥ -e Ṭabarestān* by b. Eṣfandīyār (died 1206), *Tārīḥ -e Ġahāngošāy* by ‘Aṭa al-Malik Ġovaynī (623/1226–681/1283), *Mo‘ğam al-Buldān* by Yāqūt al-Ḥamavī (570/1179-626/1229), *Ātār al-Belād va Aḥbār al-‘Ebād* by Qazvīnī (605/1208-682/1283), *Taqvīm*

detailed information about various historical aspects of the city. Although there are quite a few contradictions between different accounts, the abundance of sources allows for detailed scrutiny and fruitful comparisons.

3.2.3. Qom from the Beginning of Civilization to the Arab Conquest

Water is crucial to human settlement. Qom, being located on the Qomrūd (or Anārbār) river, has good access to fresh water, which has made it attractive to human settlement since antiquity. Its strategic location (more on that below) and especially its position along the main cultural-commercial roads of the ancient Near East would have constituted another draw. Indeed, archaeological excavations demonstrate long-standing settlement in Qom, dating back to the ancient times.⁴ (6000 BC) (Sarlak, 2010: 7).

The first, the specific historical references to Qom date to the Sasanid period and describe it as one of the counties of Eṣfahān, populated by Zoroastrians. One of the neighboring villages of the city, Mazdīgān, has an ancient fire temple called Āzarḡašnef,⁵ which was one of the three major temples revered by ancient Iranians (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1971:109). It is stated in Moḥtasar al-Buldān that Qobād (488 to 531) carried out many religious and civil reforms in the area, leading to its territorial, cultural, and political development. According to the author of *TQ*, Qobād turned Qom into one of the most prosperous areas in Iran. Famously, he improved and repurpose many fire temples (Pāk, 2003: 18). Substantiating the history of the region of Qom are also remnants of fire temples, castles dating from the Sassanid era (Qal' e Doḡtar, Gabrī Qal' e and Qīz Qal' e), and also the archaeological site of Qolī Darvīš, or the Ancient Qom, occupied between mid-4th to the 1st millennium BC. More modest archaeological remains include numerous mills, villages, bridges, and rivers (Sarlak, 2010: 19).

3.2.4 The Conquest and Settlement of Qom by the Arabs

al-Buldān by Abū al-Fida' (627/1273-732/ 1331), *Ātār va Ahyā* by Rašīd al-Dīn Faẓl Allāh (645/1247-718/1318), *Tārīḡ -e Banākātī* (Banākātī 730/1330), *Nozhat al-Qoloub and Tārīḡ -e Gozīda* by Ḥamd Allāh Mostaufī (680/128 –750/1350?), *al-'Ebar* by b. Ḥaldūn (732/1332 –808/1406), *Tārīḡ -e Rawẓat al-Šafā*, (Mīrḡānd, 837/1433-904/1498), *Ḥolāse al-Buldān* by Šafī al-Dīn Qomī, 1668).

⁴ As an example, the excavations conducted in Qareh Tapeh in Qomrūd suggest the existence of this region in the sixth to fourth millennium BC as one of the most important cultural centers of the sedentism era and the Chalcolithic Age in the boundary of the Central Desert of Iran. Also, evidence from the Šāh Qolī ḡān hill, located in the historical area of the city of Qom in the Čāhārmardān neighborhood, illustrates the ongoing social, cultural, and economic life of the city from the fourth millennium BC until the present day. The results obtained from excavations of the Iron Age cemetery of Šaram hill, Šamšīrgāh residential site, and the Median, Parthian, and Sassanid area of Zārbolāq, and finally the records collected from Qolī Darvīš site on the southern outskirts of the city confirm the seven-thousand-year old history of the region (Sarlak, 2010: 7).

⁵ Āzarḡašnef or Āzarḡašnaf

The conquest of Qom by the Arabs cannot be traced with complete certainty. Qom was initially conquered by Muslim Arabs under the leadership of Abū Mūsā Aš‘arī in 644. However, the people remained Zoroastrian and did not convert to Islam (though they had to pay a special tax, ‘*Ġīzye*) (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1974: 110). Seventy years later, during the reign of ‘Abd al-Malek, a group of Shiite Arabs of the Aš‘arī tribe – that is, attributed to Abū Mūsā Aš‘arī – immigrated to Iran, fleeing their oppression at the hands of the Umayyad Dynasty. In 94 AH, they entered the region of Qom. *The Tārīḫ-e Qom* puts the arrival of the immigrants at the beginning of the new year (Nowrūz). It records that, upon their arrival, the chief of the fortress of Abaraštīgān, called Yazdānfāzār, welcomed them and allowed them to settle in the region (Drechsler, 1999:87). The ancestors of the Aš‘arītes were Qaḥṭānī Arabs who lived in Yemen. The first Aš‘arī who moved from Yemen to Medina in order to convert to Islam before the Prophet was Malek b. ‘Āmer, who later attained a high position among Muslims.

The immigration of the Arabs and, later, of a particular group of them, the Ṭālebīyān (who introduced Shia culture to the region) led to the remarkable development of the city of Qom. Among the important achievements of the Arab immigrants within just a few years of their settlement was successfully fighting off Daylamite highwaymen; this victory entailed the replacement of the governor of Mamaḡān, the Zoroastrian Yazdānfāzār, by two Arab brothers, ‘Abdollāh and Aḥṡas, in 100/718. The brothers were the heads of the Aš‘arī tribe and were accommodated at the residence of the elders of Mamaḡān (Ibid). Subsequently, owing to their greater wealth compared to the locals, the Arabs began to buy land for cattle grazing, which led to them slowly dominating more and more local villages. After the local ruling classes became subordinate to this new elite, the Arab control over Qom was cemented in 115/733, following the death of Yazdānfāzār, which itself followed the rise of civil strife among the new Persian inhabitants. After the Persian ruling family were killed, even more Arabs immigrated to the region. Migration, settlement, and subsequent construction projects in the two generations after the first wave of Arab immigrants resulted in the integration of the six main villages of the region, turning Qom into an urban complex which included a *qanāt*, fortifications, a Friday mosque, and a market (Drechsler, 1999:87-9)

3.2.5 Qom during the Islamic Period

Because of its specific location in Iran and the establishment of Shia Arabs, the city of Qom has over centuries witnessed momentous political and social events which cannot be fully described in this text. Nevertheless, a summary of Qom’s history is presented below; though

by no means exhaustive, it provides important context to the subsequent architectural analysis.⁶

3.2.5.1 The increasing dominance and expansion of the Arabs in the region of Qom (8th-9th centuries)

The establishment of the Arabs, especially of the Shia denomination, as the driving force in the city, the Abbasid Revolution, and administrative independence from Eṣfahān in 188/804-ordered by Hārūn al-Rašīd, are important milestones of this period. The death of Fāteme Ma'ṣūme in Qom (201/816-817), who passed away while on a journey toward her brother (ʿAlī b. Mūsā al-Rezā, the 8th of Shiite *Imam*) in Ḥorāsān, led to the building of an important shrine dedicated to her, which was to become one of Qom's landmarks. Coupled with the migration of a leading hadith narrator from Kufa to Qom in the mid-9th century, this clearly points to the growth of Qom's importance, both political and cultural.

However, this development played out against a backdrop of frequent political unrest. In 210/825-826, the people of Qom staged a revolt against the caliphal power in protest of the high taxes levied on them. The same tensions flared up again in mid-9th century, when Mofleḥ, a Turk commander, attacked Qom in 867 and massacred a group of residents, in retaliation for their refusal to pay taxes. Subsequently, Mofleḥ ruled Qom for over 5 years. Many distinguished ʿAlavī figures migrated to Qom in these years and there are reports of a very close relationship between the representative of the 11th Shia *imām* and the inhabitants of Qom in then. Shortly after, in 256/870, the first Friday mosque of Qom was founded on the site of a fire temple (there are reports concerning a possible earlier Friday mosque, but they are quite cryptic) (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1976, 115-16; Drechsler, 146-48).

This intertwined relation between political strife and religious development continue well until the end of the 9th century. In 261/881-2, Qom was occupied by a Turkish military leader, Edgu Tegin (Arabic Yadkutakin b. Asātakīn or Aḍkutakin), and around the same time the first traditionalist Shia school celebrated its victory (Drechsler, 1999:151). Sectarian tensions within the Shia community also flare up, and in 280/893, all members of the Ġolāt (a group of religious dissidents accused of exaggerating the importance of the *imāms*) were expelled from the city by the Aš'arī Shaikh of Qom, Aḥmad b. Moḥammad b. ʿīsā Aš'arī.

⁶ The five stages of political history of Qom (650-1350) are proposed by the contemporary German historian Drechsler in *Die Geschichte der Stadt Qom im Mittelalter (650-1350): politische und wirtschaftliche Aspekte* (1999). This comprehensive study, itself based on first-hand sources, is currently one of the best second-hand references which could be utilized to investigate the history of Qom up to the late Il-khanid period. The first five parts of the book present the in-depth research of the author. Due to the importance of this historical era, parts 6 and 7 relate the period after the collapse of the Il-khanid dynasty and the emergence of local dynasties in Qom.

From 282/ 895-6 onward, Qom is tied to a Turkish family of military leaders who served in the Army of the Caliph Mo‘tazed and who had helped establish firm state control and administration outside the capital. In the same year, the great (and ever-expanding) fire temple (Mazdīgān), situated across the shrine of Fāṭeme Ma‘šūme, was demolished. In this period, the minister of Mo‘tazed, ‘Obayd-Allāh b. Solaymān, visited Qom and imposed certain new taxes on the inhabitants. However, the locally Arab monopoly in Qom was waning: independent selection of judges by Arab residents of Qom ceased after 296-297/902-908, and an Arab-Iranian delegation was attached to the minister, Ḥamīd b. ‘Abbās. Ḥasan al-Qomī considers this latter event to represent the end of one stage of Arab monopoly in Qom (Drechsler, 1999:154-160).

3.2.5.2. Qom until the dominance of the Daylamites (early 10th century)

This new phase began with the rule of ‘Abbās b. ‘Amr al-Ġanavī (293-297/905-909) and is marked by the presence of non-Twelve Shias in Qom and by the emergence of an institute consisting of tax non-payers, called Qahbands (financial officer). In 297/909, Ḥosain b. Ḥamdān b. Ḥamdūn was appointed by the caliph al-Moqtader as governor of Qom and was obliged to accompany the caliph's army in the war against Saffarids in the region of Fārs. He was in power for two years. In 301-315/913-927, a new tax was introduced – an invention by the caliph that entailed the appointment of yet another governor to meet the demands of the state in the region. As has been the case in the previous centuries, this led to more unrest, disrupting the regional balance of power, which was already exceedingly delicate due to the near-constant struggle for power between different factions (Daylamites, Ziyarids, and Samanids). Eventually, Qom fell into the hands of Daylamite warriors and the caliph had no direct control over it. These new overlords exploited the city ruthlessly through heavy taxes. (Drechsler, 1999: 161-180)

3.2.5.3. Qom during the reign of the *Buyids* (10th century)

The Buyid was a Shia Iranian dynasty of Daylamite origin. By 340/951-2, the authority of the Buyids was firmly established in Qom. Politically, this period was less turbulent than before, but stagnant economic conditions persisted. The dominance of Shias made Qom somewhat isolated among Iranian cities. Religious change continued, as the Shrine of Fāṭeme Ma‘šūme was expanded and the number of ‘Alawī residents in Qom escalated. Much of the city belonged to the Twelver hadith schools, and many of the important Shia scholars of the time either studied or lived in Qom (e.g., b. Bābūye, b. Qūlūye, Sa‘d b. ‘Abdollāh Qomī, etc.). In 378/988-989,

about 331 of 'Alawīs lived in Qom, who descended from the *Imāms* and were supported through regular stipends. In addition to the Twelvers, there were other Shia and Sunni people living in the city. The payment of yearly taxation (*jizya*) indicates that there were also Zoroastrians in the city, though their population could hardly be estimated to exceed several thousands by the end of the third century. This population diminished even further in the next century. Most Zoroastrians made a living through agriculture. In this period, the formerly powerful Aš'arītes had lost their authority and leadership by the end of the fourth century. This change is understandable considering the new social conditions in the region to which Iranians, like Arabs, contributed to prevail. In 387/997, Qom became entangled in a series of internal conflicts between Buyid authorities. At this historical juncture (late 10th century), Qom entered a phase of gradual decay (Drechsler, 1999:181-193).

Before this decay, however, the city developed significantly. There were about eight public squares, whose function is not clear, and three mosques within the city (we have almost no information about *madrasas*). The shrine of Fāṭeme Ma'sūme must have still been quite small, as only two cupolas are mentioned in historical sources. A bazaar and bathhouses must have existed, too, as well as certain administrative buildings (prison, mint). Five bigger and eight smaller roads indicate good traffic connections, which were supported by at least three (and perhaps as many as nine) city gates. (Drechsler, 194-198)

3.2.5.4. Qom during the Saljuq Dynasty (11th-12th centuries)

This period is associated with the relatively peaceful rule of the Saljuqs and the construction of another major mosque in the city. The Saljuqs did not occupy Qom at once, but rather consigned it, along with the Jibal [Ĝebāl] region, to Kakuyids for ten years. Later, from 442/1050-51 onwards, the city was directly ruled by the Saljuqs.

In the first half of the fifth century, Qom was neglected due to the civil war and the fact that the Saljuqs followed the Sunni denomination, making a known Shia centre rather unimportant. However, the city resumed its progress from the second half of the 12th century. When the Minister Mīr Abolfāzl 'Irāqī was in office, various mosques, minarets, and schools were built; the dome of Fāṭeme Ma'sūme was renovated; and the activities and services of ministers and officials such as of Tāğ al-Molk and Mağd al-Molk Barāvestānī, as well as of Kamāl al-Dīn Tābet Moḥammad Ḥān, brought tremendous prosperity to Qom and made it one of the most flourishing cities in the empire. Thus, Qom enjoyed favorable economic conditions. Although the Sunnis strongly opposed the Shias, the latter succeeded in implementing a kind of practical policy, such that a good relationship developed between the famous minister Neẓām al-Molk

and the Saljuq Sultans on the one hand and between the clerical class and noble indigenous families on the other. According to historical reports, the Saljuq Sultans visited the shrine of Fāṭeme Ma'sume, generally, there is a few record of religious persecution against the inhabitants of Qom. In fact, a number of historic religious monuments were erected in Qom during the Saljuq dynasty. At least ten schools built at the time are well-known today. Two Friday mosques were operating in this period too, and in 528/1133-34, Solṭān Toğrol II ordered another mosque to be constructed outside the city.

Much power within the city was concentrated in the hands of a few prominent Shia families. The Ḥosainīd of 'Alawis family beget a number of community leaders (*Naqīb*), who exercised great influence and power in this period. The Da'wīdār were another influential Shia family who worked as judges in the city, reflecting Qom's shift from a predominantly Sunni city to a purely Shia center. Toward the end of this period, the Atābakān-e Āzarbāyğān and Ḥvārazmšāhs took control of the city for a while and employed a different system of governance, though this lasted a relatively short time. Though religious tensions did not disappear (witness the murder of 'Ezz al-Dīn Yaḥyā, the *naqib* of the Shiites, by the Ḥvārazmšāh Tekeš in 592/1196), the art produced in these years on the tiles of the Shrine of Fāṭeme Ma'sūme is wonderful. Paradoxically, this indicates a certain economic prosperity at a time of strained political relations. This prosperity continued until the Mongol invasion, which turned the city into a victim of sectarian prejudice and left it devastated and massacred (Drechsler, 1999: 208-231).

3.2.5.5. Qom during the Il-khanid dynasty (13th-14th centuries)

The conquest of Qom by Mongols in 621/1224 ravaged the city. Despite the great strides it made towards becoming a true cultural and intellectual centre for over half a millennium, it now lay in ruins for twenty years. Many historical sources suggest that the Mongol invasion wreaked havoc on the city of Qom and left it totally overlooked during the Il-khanid dynasty (Drechsler, 1999: 238).

Mīrḥvānd and Ḥvāndamīr considers the Mongol invasion of Qom to have been provoked by the Sunnis in the army of Ğebe (the well-known Mongol general). In *Rauzat al-Şafā*, Mīrḥvānd states: "After the massacre of Rey by the commanders of Ğebe Noyān, the Mongols turned to Qom. But since Ğebe Noyān wanted to get to Hamadān as soon as possible, he initially refused to conquer Qom. However, he decided to slaughter its citizens after a group of Sunni Muslims in his camp told him that it was a virtuous act to kill the inhabitants of Qom due to their being

‘rāfiẓa’ (Rāfeẓī)⁷. In order to enter the city, he commanded to besiege it and destroy its walls through tunnels and gunpowder explosions. Other than the few who escaped, everyone was killed (famously, Abū al-Ma‘ālī Esmā‘īl⁸ was among the casualties). In this attack, Qom was reduced to a pile of dust and ash” (Mīrḥvānd, 1960: 98).

After Genghis Khan's [Čangīz Ḥān's] return to Mongolia and his death in 1227, there occurred a lapse in the Mongols’ activities in Iran, though Genghis Khan’s former military commanders still ruled the country. In the meantime, the last Solṭān of Khwarezmians, Ğalāl ad-Dīn, made his last attempts to gain power against the Iranian princes. He probably passed Qom and Kāšān but, after an unsuccessful battle at Eṣfahān, was caught by Mongols (in August 1228/ Ramadan 625) on his way back to Kāšān. After that, the Mongol army set up its winter camp near Qom in 628/1230. The next reported event is the death of Ğalāl al-Dīn in 1231, after which his country was ruled by Mongol kings for 120 years (Drechsler, 1999: 233-34).

There is scant information about what happened to Qom immediately after this period, and the reports only point to a slight improvement in the situation of the city. The Mongol invasion was so devastating that the city had a minimum population after 20 years. At that time, Šaraf al-Dīn Ḥvārazmī was the governor but in 641-44/1243, he was appointed as viceroy in Arghun Khan’s [Argūn Ḥān's] empire. Later in 651/1253, Nāser al-Dīn ‘Alī Malek was appointed the military governor of Eṣfahān, Kāšān and Qom. He also served under Hulāgu Khān [Holākū Ḥān] and Ābāqā Ḥān, two Il-khanid monarchs. One of the most important events in this century is the murder of al-Mo‘taṣem, the ‘Abbasid caliph, by Hulāgu Ḥān in 656/1258, which ended the dynasty rule of the ‘Abbasids in Baghdad.

Despite this spell of impoverishment and decay, there is some archaeological evidence that points to construction activities in Qom at the time⁹. The Shrine of Šāh Ğa‘far (665/1266-67), for instance, dates to this period. Furthermore, this was the period when the Fathān family, later instrumental to the construction and renovation of some Tomb towers and other religious buildings, became prominent in Qom. Other political events related to the city were the coronation of Abāqā Ḥān, son of Hulāgū Ḥān, and his accession in 663/1265 in the borough of Farahān, near Qom. After the death of Abāqā Ḥān, his successor, Aḥmad, became the first Il-khanid Muslim ruler in 680/1282. After two years, however, Aḥmad’s reign ended through a coup organised by the rebellious son of Abāqā Ḥān, Argūn, who executed him in 1284 and was

⁷ The term is used contemporarily in a derogatory manner by some Sunni Muslims to refer to Shia Muslims on the grounds that Shia do not recognize the first three caliphs — Abū Bakr, Umar, and Uthmān — as the legitimate successors of Muhammad. Shia believe ‘ī as to be the first successor. (<https://islamqa.info/en/date:20.05.2018>)

⁸ The Khwarazmian bureaucrat known as Sayyed Sarbaḥš, whose monument is called Emāmzadeh Sarbaḥš.

⁹ Like the *mīhrab* of Qom (663/1264-65) and the cenotaph (661/1262-63)

subsequently appointed the fourth Il-khan in Iran. His first official appointment was to elevate his son Ġāzān Ḥān to the position of governor of Ḥorāsān, Māzandarān, Ray and Qom in 1285/684 (Drechsler, 1999: 234-237). Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī quotes Ġāmi' al-Tavārīḥ: "It seems that in the year when Qāzān Ḥān ruled Qom, the city was greatly revitalized." (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1971: 5).

In 1284, the famous Il-khanid minister, Šams al-Dīn Ġuvaynī, took refuge in the Shrine of Fāṭeme Ma'šūme. There are no reliable reports on the political conditions of Qom during the Il-khanid period after Juvayni's residence. During the reign of Ölgaitü (703-16/1304-16), who had some Shia tendencies, the city thrived to a certain extent. Ölgaitü made special efforts to rebuild religious sanctuaries and partially compensated for the past devastation. There is compelling evidence showing that Qom gradually recovered from the late 13th century to the beginning of the 14th century (Drechsler, 237-239); in the early 14th century, Mostaufī observed that most of the city was still in ruins, but its fortifications, about 10,000 feet wide, were in place (Mostaufī/le Strange, 1983: 67). It appears that intensive work must have been carried out to restore them since the Mongol invasion. There are also reports of the construction and reconstruction of Shia sanctuaries, probably undertaken by rich citizens, in the second twenty years after the Mongol invasion. These holy sites date from the late 13th century to the early 14th century. Other historical pieces of evidence include an anonymous school with a portal dated to 1325. On the inscriptions of some of these monuments, one can discern the name 'Aṭā al-Molk Mīr Moḥammad Ḥasan, who might have been responsible for carrying out these projects (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1976: 43). Moreover, in some *waqf*-Archive documents dated 720/1320, one encounters the name of the wealthy and influential family of Fathān, who played a significant role in the establishment of holy sites and schools from the Il-khanid dynasty to the beginning of the Safavid dynasty (Drechsler, 239-40).

In summary, although many available sources report that Qom was a ruined city during the reign of the Il-khanids, a closer look at the historical and architectural data illustrates that Qom may actually have developed during this period. Under the Il-khanids, the poor organization of the urban system was consolidated and Qom was greatly revitalized. Nonetheless, Qom was never a major Il-khanid political centre.

3.2.5.6 Qom up to the Timurid domination (14th-15th centuries)

Sadly, little information is available on the state of Qom towards the end of the 14th century. Historical records rarely discuss Qom in this period. Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī is one of very few scholars who have studied the conditions of Qom in the post-Il-khanid era. He writes: "Until the fourth decade of this century, Qom was still within the territory of the Il-khanid empire and was ruled by a local dynasty" (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1985: 12).

Ṭabāṭabā'ī collected and critiqued historical texts related to this time. He mentions the 14th-century poet and literary scholar Šams Faḥrī. Faḥrī lived in Qom with Ḥvāḡe Qavām al-Daule, a hermit from Eṣfahān in 732/1332, and has composed a *qaṣīda* (ode) praising Ġīyaṭ al-Dīn Amir Moḥammad, the minister of Abū Sa'īd. It could be inferred that the region was still under the authority of the Il-khanid dynasty during this period (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1978), as the Iranian historian Waṣṣāf refers to the appointment of Malek Šoḡā' al-Dīn as the governor of Qom in 1338/738 (Drechsler, 1999: 237).

Ṭabāṭabā'ī maintains: "after the abolition of the Il-khanid reign in Qom, it no longer belonged to any dynasty at the time. *Tārīḡ-e Ġa'farī* considers Qom to have been later annexed to the territory of the Mozaḡfarid dynasty or to have a bordered on Chobanid¹⁰ territory¹¹" (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1976: 11-13), while Drechsler mentions the Chobanids, who might have then belonged to the domain of the Jalayerids,¹² however the exact course of events in this confusing period remains unclear. According to most historical documents, after the fall of the Mongols and until Timur [Teimūr] established his dominance, Qom was ruled by one of the powerful local families, who have managed to keep their semi-autonomous position under the Mozaḡfarids (Ibid). Similarly, *Tārīḡ -e Ruyān* states that Qom and its suburbs were still ruled by local dynasties in 764 /1362, and Ḥvāḡe 'Alī Ṣaḡī has been mentioned as 'Sepahsālār' the Grand Commander in Qom (Āmolī, 1969: 196). Discussing the events occurring in 793/1391, Ḥāḡīz-i Abrū refers to the arrival of the last Mozaḡfarid ruler, Šāḡ Manṣūr, in Qom as well as to the local family who governed the region. In *Tazkare-ye Daulatšāḡ*, Samarqandī states that Ḥalīl Mīrzā, the son of Ḥalīl Mīrānšāḡ and a descendant of Timur, was the Amir of Iraq in 812-814 /1409-1411 but had no control over the city of Qom as it was governed by local rulers (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1978: 5).

¹⁰ Chobanids, whose rule in Central Persia ended at about 1343 (Roemer, 20)

¹¹ Ṭabāṭabā'ī proposes this view based on the writings of Šabānkāreī, b. 'Arabšāḡ, Ḥāḡīz-i Abrū, and b. Šahāb Yazdī.

¹² if the brief mention of Qom in the Resāla-ye falakiyye of 'Abd-Allāḡ b. Moḡammad Māzandarānī from around 1363 can be taken as a proof; see Bayānī, 191-92, 206; see also Ġalāyerids)

3.2.5.6 Qom during the reign of local dynasties

The powerful Şafî family was one of significant political influence and social status, in no small part thanks to the extensive material culture they left behind, including architectural works and coins minted in their name¹³. For two centuries (from 736/1335-6 to 815/1412-13), the Şafî independently ruled Qom and the neighboring areas.

There is no precise information on the historical record of the Şafîs except for the account given in *Ğāme‘ al-Tavārīḥ-e Ḥasanī*. This book recounts the events of the year 815/1412-13, including the killing of the last Şafî Amir by Eskandar, the son of ‘Omar Şeyḥ Mīrzā, which terminated the two-hundred-year rule of the Şafîs (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1973: 6). There are other credible sources from the 14th and 15th centuries confirming the dominance of this local dynasty over Qom. In this regard, *Tārīḥ-e Ruyān* (764/1362) records the powerful rule of the Şafî: This was one of the most potent local and regional powers in central Iran which was recognized by other rivals. Sometimes, it interfered in conflicts outside the ‘Irāq region, and its ruler was also known as the Sepahsālār-e ‘Irāq (Āmolī, 1969: 196). Some of the monuments built under this local dynasty show the titles they rulers adopted, such as “Şāḥebe al-Qerān” (prosperous lord¹⁴) which was the title of great kings, as well as “al- Moṭā‘ al-Şahrīyār al-‘adl va al-‘Elm” (who has to be obeyed, the most just and learned ruler), and “Ḥalīfa al-‘Arab wa al-‘Ağam” (caliph of ‘Arab and non- ‘Arab). All of these titles suggest the sovereignty of Qom in that period. The strategy of this local dynasty was based on peaceful coexistence with all of the neighboring rival powers. As a result, they survived unscathed, even though they were surrounded by hostile forces and their rule coincided with one of the most tumultuous periods in the Iranian history, especially in the central parts. *Ğāme‘ al-Tavārīḥ Ḥasanī* confirms that neither the city of Qom nor its region was damaged in the course of contemporary conflicts and battles (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1985: 18-19). Hāfız-i Abrū explains that the Şafî, as the occasion demanded, reconciled with remote powers in order to disperse neighboring invaders. They generally had peaceful relationships with their contemporaries (Ibid, 19).

The rulers of this family paid special attention to knowledge and arts; they were also highly respected in their neighboring regions. As Ṭabāṭabā’ī testifies, Qom's reconstruction and revitalization after the Mongol destruction is partly owing to the services of the Şafî (Ibid).

Unlike other local authorities in the country which were gradually annexed to the territory of one of the contemporary dynasties, the Şafîs maintained their autonomy for a long time. The

¹³ Maḥmud b. Şafî (d.1389/791 or 1390/792) had coins minted in his own name as Sulṭān.

¹⁴ More information about “Şāḥebe al-Qerān” can be found in the book *Farhang-e Mo‘in* and *loğatnāme-ye Dehḥodā*, in: www.vajehyab.com.

earliest information about this dynasty is related to Ḥvāḡe Aṣīl al-Dīn. He was the son of ‘Alī Ṣafī, the founder of the Ṣafī, and the vice-president of real estate of Ḥvāḡe ‘Ala’ al-Dīn Moḡammad Hendū – a well-known minister in Qom. The first Amir of this family who ruled the region was Ḥvāḡe Taḡ al-Dīn ‘Alī, (Aṣīl al-Dīn’s son) followed by Ḥvāḡe ‘Alī Ṣafī II, the son of his aunt on his father’s side. After Ḥvāḡe ‘Alī Ṣafī, four other persons from this family ruled Qom and its surroundings. Many other people in the family were involved in other important political jobs, and there are records pertaining to some of these activities (Ibid., 14-15).

Through detailed knowledge on the rulers of this family who played a major role in the construction of religious tombs (which is the main topic of this project), one can better understand the political atmosphere in Qom at that time. Unfortunately, there are few historical sources available covering this period. This limited information, nevertheless, clearly shows the authority and influence of the Ṣafī in Qom. The family was one of the most important factors contributing to its growth and development, and more specifically to the construction of valuable architectural monuments in the 13-14th centuries. Based on the research findings of Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā’ī, published in several articles and books, we present six of the most principal figures of this family along with the historical events that took place during their reigns.

3-2-5-6-1 The most famous figures of Ṣafī family

- Ḥvāḡe Taḡ al-Dīn ‘Alī Aṣīl

Ḥvāḡe Taḡ al-Dīn, the son of Ḥvāḡe Aṣīl al-Dīn and a descendant of ‘Alī Ṣafī the senior, was the first in the Ṣafī family to rule Qom and its surroundings. His reign began after the death of Abū Sa’īd Bahādor Ḥān in 736/1355. However, there is no precise information on the end of his authority, except that he was assassinated in 759/1358 while still in charge, but his position then is not quite clear. In historical garden Bāḡ-e Sabz is the tomb of Ḥvāḡe Taḡ al-Dīn and his father, Aṣīl al-Dīn, which Ḥvāḡe ‘Alī Ṣafī built for them (761/1360) (i.e. his uncle and cousin on the father’s side, respectively) (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1985: 20). In the tomb inscription, Ḥvāḡe Aṣīl al-Dīn is called “Al-Ṣahib al-Ṣahīd al-Maḡfūr.”, which suggests a violent death.

- Ḥvāḡe ‘Alī Ṣafī

Also known as Ḥvāḡe Ġamāl al-Dīn ‘Alī, this is the second governor [Amir] of the dynasty and son of Ḥvāḡe Ṣafī. He was a prominent political and social figure in ‘Irāq-e ‘Aḡam in the 14th

century. According to historical sources, he ruled Qom until 774/1372. He is commonly referred to as Qom's Hakīm and Sardār, Şaheb Ażam and Sepahsālār of ‘Irāq (Ibid, 21). He had two sons, Qīyāṭ al-Dīn Amīr Moḥammad and Amīr Ğalāl al-Dīn. The monumental inscriptions of this period, including on the tomb of Ḥadīġe Ḥātūn, as well as on the tomb of Ḥvāġe Aşīl in Bāġ-e Sabz Garden, which are two of the most remarkable mausoleums of this period, refer to Ḥvāġe ‘Alī Şafī using these titles: Ouşāf al-Maulā al-Maḥdūm al-Moṭlaq al-Moṭā’ (The Lord and Master of all the rulers), Şahrīyār al-‘Adl wa al-‘Elm (The ruler of justice and science), Ḥalīfa al-‘Arab wa al-‘Aġam (caliph of the Arabs and non- Arabs), Şahib al-Saif wa al-Qalam (Owner of sword and writing), Ḥafīz al-Bilād wa Nāşir al-‘Ibād (Land keeper and helper of servants), Modabber-e Omūr-e Mamlekat (tactful in the affairs of the country), which all suggest a powerful ruler (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1985: 21).

On account of his authority and power in ‘Irāq-e ‘Aġam, Ḥvāġe ‘Alī Şafī also interfered in conflicts outside Qom. An example, mentioned in *Tārīḥ-e Ruyān*, includes the conquest of the Qausayn Castle by Ğalāl al-Daule Eskandar. He had a convent (Ḥānqāh) in Qom outside Kankān gate, to which Ğa‘farī (*Tārīḥ -e Kabīr*), Samarqandī (*Matla‘ al-Sa‘dain*), and Ḥasan Beg Rumlū (*Aḥsan al-Tavārīḥ*) refer (Ibid, 20-2).

No information is available on the date and year of his death. It is only known that he died before 1390, as he is buried in the middle Tomb tower of the Bāġ-e Sabz garden next to the Kāşān Gate, which was built at 792/1390. Ḥvāġe ‘Emād al-Dīn, his brother, and Amīr Ğalāl al-Dīn, his son, are buried next to him. The south monument of the Bāġ-e Sabz Garden, where his uncle (Ḥvāġe Aşīl al-Dīn) and cousin (Taġ al-Dīn) are buried, was constructed by his order in 792/1390.

Apart from Ğalāl al-Dīn, he had another son named Qīyāṭ al-Dīn Amīr Moḥammad, who ordered the construction of two other important tombs (Ḥadīġe Ḥātūn in 770/1368, and Esmā‘īl Sarbaḥş in 774/1372).

- Ḥvāġe ‘Emād al-Dīn or Ḥvāġe Maḥmūd Qomī

Ḥvāġe Maḥmūd is the son of Ḥvāġe Şafī al-Dīn and Ḥvāġe ‘Alī Şafī's brother. He was in charge of the state in 791/1389. His coins bear the inscriptions of “Al-Solṭān ‘Adl Solṭān Maḥmūd” and “Al-Solṭān Maḥmūd Ḥān”. Ṭabāṭabā’ī believes that he died in 792/ 1390 and was buried beside his brother in the middle part of the Bāġ-e Sabz Garden.

- H̄vāġe ‘Alī Aṣīl al-Dīn Qomī

He was the fourth ruler of the Ṣafī dynasty and the son of H̄vāġe Taġ al-Dīn ‘Alī, one of the first rulers of the Ṣafī dynasty. He took over the throne immediately after H̄vāġe ‘Emād al-Dīn Maḥmūd. Due to the special circumstances of the last decade of the 14th century and the turmoil in the central part of Iran, he established friendly relations with Šāh Mansūr, the Moẓaffarid ruler. The battle between H̄vāġe Aṣīl and Zayn al-Ābidīn, the son of Šāh Šoġā‘, over the rule of Qom in 793/1391, has been narrated in historical sources such as Hāfiẓ-i Abrū’s book, *Tārīḫ -e Ġa‘farī*, *Tārīḫ - e Moẓaffarīyān*, *Ḥabīb al-Sayr*, and *Moġmal Faṣīḥī* (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1985: 24-25).

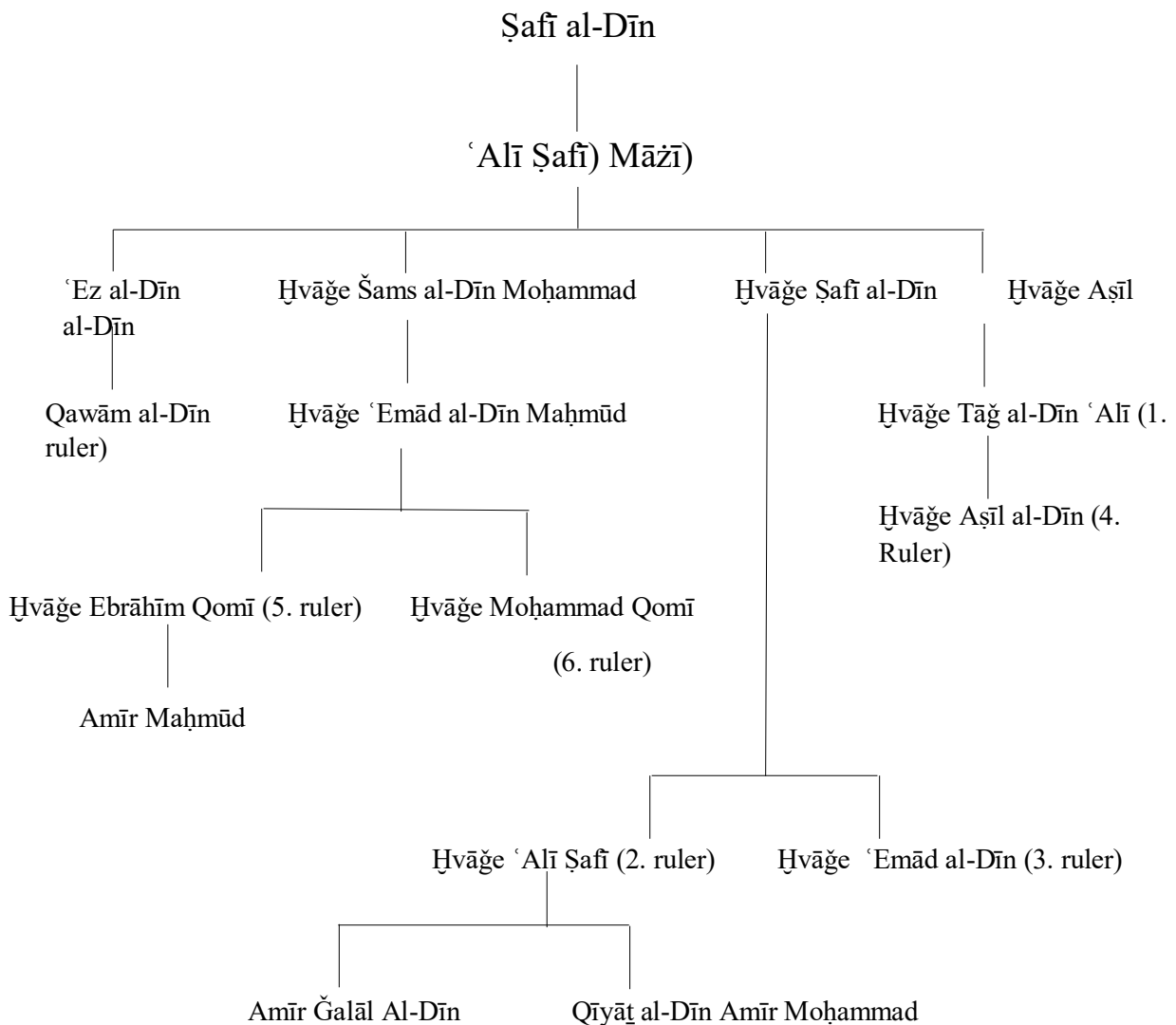


Diagram 1. Family tree of the Ṣafī (source: Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *Qomnāme*, p. 17)

-Ḥvāḡe Ebrāhīm Qomī

Ḥvāḡe Faḥr ad-Dīn Ebrāhīm, the son of Ḥvāḡe ‘Emād al-Dīn Maḥmūd, was the fifth ruler of the Safis. He had a son named Amīr Maḥmūd. He was the ruler of Qom and its surroundings from 795/1393 to 806/1403. He was a valiant ‘hunter of enemies’ and an independent ruler who embraced hardship and struggle. In *Tārīḡ -e Alefī*, Ṭabāṭabā’ī states that in 993/1585, Ḥvāḡe Ebrāhīm, along with other independent ‘Irāqī rulers, accompanied Timur in the battle against Bāyazīd I (the Ottoman Sulṭān). He ordered the translation of *Tārīḡ -e Qom*, written by Ḥasan b. Moḥammad Qomī (379/1007), which was finished in 806/1403. (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1985: 26-27). *Ġāme’ al-Tavārīḡ Ḥasani* records that the brother of Ḥvāḡe Ebrāhīm was the ruler of Qom until 806/1403, when the translation of this book finished (Ibid, 32). Hence, he must have died in the late 806/1403 or early 807/1404. It is said that a mausoleum called Šāhzāde Ebrāhīm was built near the Kāšān Gate in 805/1402 at the behest of Ḥvāḡe Ebrāhīm’s wife, called “Šafvat al-Islām va al-Moslemin”(Selected Islam and Muslims) (Ibid, 36).

- Ḥvāḡe Moḥammad Qomī

Ḥvāḡe Moḥammad Qomī is the sixth and last Amir of the Šafi. He was the brother of Ebrāhīm Qomī, one of the children of Ḥvāḡe ‘Emād al-Dīn Maḥmūd. In 795/1358, Ḥvāḡe Moḥammad ruled over some important castles in the region of Qom, including Gīv Castle, which was located in a village near Qom. This is mentioned in *Zafarnāma*, *Montaḡab al-Tavārīḡ-e Mo’īnī*, and *Rauzat al-Šafā*; Ṭabāṭabā’ī also discusses it. While staying at Gīv Castle, Ḥvāḡe Moḥammad Qomī was arrested by ‘Omar Šeyḡ, Timur’s son, and was sent to Timur's court (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1985: 28).

Ḥasan b. Šāḡab al-Dīn Yazdī, a historian of the Timurid period who wrote *Ġāme’ al-Tavārīḡ* (857/1453) to address post-Timur events, describes the situation of Iran during the reign of Ḥvāḡe Moḥammad thus: At the time when His Majesty Šāhebqarān [Timur] passed away, he had assigned governors to Turāniān and Irāniān territories. Thus, Samarkand was granted to prince Ḥalīl ; Ḥorāsān, Herāt, and Māzandārān were given to prince Šāhroḡ Bahādor; Tabriz, Georgia, and Širvān along with their provinces, including Azarbāiḡān, were bestowed to prince Mirān Šāḡ; (...) Hamadān, Nahāvand and their surrounding areas were allocated to Amir Eskandar; Fārs, Yazd, and Abarqū were given to prince Pīr Moḥammad b. ‘Omar Šeyḡ; and Kermān and Mokrān were assigned to prince ‘Omar Šeyḡ; furthermore, Qom and its nearby areas whose people were autonomous for long times were governed by Ḥvāḡe Moḥammad Qomī (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1987: 13-21). According to historical sources, Ḥvāḡe Moḥammad Qomī became the ruler of Qom in late 806/1427 or early 807 /1428. *Ġāme’ al-Tavārīḡ-e Ḥasani*

presents a detailed account of Eskandar's attack and siege of Qom and the final defeat of Ḥvāḡe Moḥammad. After Ḥvāḡe Moḥammad was killed, the 200-year-old rule of the Ṣafī ended and Eskandar exercised their power in the new territory (*Ġāme' al-Tavārīḡ Ḥasanī*, 1987:37). Another source, *Maṭla' al-Sa'dain*, records that after Ḥvāḡe Moḥammad, Eskandar's son 'Omar Šeyḡ and then Šāhroḡ ruled the region of Qom (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1985: 286-89). Though there were some other influential figures within the Ṣafī family, such as Ḥvāḡe 'Alī Ṣafī Maḏī, Ḥvāḡe Šams al-Dīn Moḥammad and Qavām al-Dīn 'Alī, very little information about them survives to this day.¹⁵ Known Ṣafī coins include those minted under Ḥvāḡe Maḥmūd, which were struck at Qom *Dār al-Darb* (mint facility).¹⁶

When it comes to cultural production, the Ṣafī period is particularly notable for the translation of the most important historical reference for Qom: *Tārīḡ - e Qom* by Ḥasan b. Qomī. Furthermore, seven major tombs in Qom, displaying quite unique architectural and decorative features, were built in this period. Constructed or renovated tombs are among the most important parts of the Ṣafī dynasty's heritage. Other important monuments, as referred to by Aḥmad Qomī in *Ḥolāsa al-Tavārīḡ*¹⁷, are the Ṣafī Ābād Square (close to the Ešfahān Gate, now known as the Kāšān Gate, and near the former conduit of Qomrūd) and the *Ḥānqāh* of Ḥvāḡe 'Alī Ṣafī outside the Kangān Gate (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1985: 35-7)

3.2.5.7 An overview of the history of Qom from the 14th century to the present

3.2.5.7.1 Qom during the Timurid dynasty

There is much controversy about the veracity of Timur Gurkāni's attack on Qom and of how severe it really was. According to a modern historian Bījan Sa'ādat, the horrific memory of the Mongol invasion had not yet been blotted out when the bloodthirsty Amir Timur Gurkāni attacked Qom and, because people closed the gates and resisted, blew up the walls of the city. He massacred all the people except the scientists and the artists, and once again Qom was ravaged (Sa'ādat, 1977: 90). However, the author of *Qom dar Qarn-e nohom- e Heḡrī* posits that in the course of his invasions, Timur neither passed Qom nor destroyed it (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1971: 8). Yazdī and Šāmī, in their respective *Zafarnāme*, did not mention Qom; besides, Qom was not included in Timur's military campaign of imperial expansion (Ḥākrend, 1998:166). It seems that the fifth amir of the Ṣafī, Ebrāhīm b. 'Alī Ṣafī, who also commissioned

¹⁵ More information on their lives can be found in the book , *Qomnāme* by Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī.

¹⁶ The image of two coins from a private collection, published with a somewhat poor quality of the book *Qomnāme* by Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī page 45.

¹⁷ *Ḥolāse al-Tavārīḡ*, Aḥmad b. Šaraf al-Dīn Ḥosain Ḥosainī Qomī Ebrāhīmī in the year (953-1019/1546-1610)

the translation of the *TQ*, submitted to Timur in 795/1393, although there are already coins from Qom dated 791/1389 that mention Amir Timur. The Şafî retained their leading role under the Timurids until 815/1412, when the Şafî dynasty in Qom was overthrown in 815/1412 by Mîrzâ Eskandar, Timur's grandson, who had the last of the Şafî rulers, Hÿvâĝe Moĝammad, killed (Modarresî Ṭabâtabâ'î, 1984: 5-6; Drechsler, 1999:13).

Mîrzâ Eskandar, the rebellious vanquisher of the Şafî, was overpowered in 816-817/1413-1415 and blinded at the behest of Şahroĝ, Iran's ruler at the time. After Eskandar, Sa'd Vaqqâs, another Timurid prince, was appointed as the new governor of Qom. In this way, Qom came under Sunni control. However, people actively resisted their new Sunni overlords. This had also been the case during the 'Abbâsîd caliphate, when the rulers of Qom had no choice but to join the Shiites, for otherwise the citizens would cease to support them (Samarqandî, 1987: 139-40; Raĝmatî, 2012: 48-49).

As the author of *Tārîĝ -e Ğadîd-e Yazd* asserts, the Timurids had a key motive to extend their direct control over Qom: its geographical and strategic location at a time when Iran was ruled by a motley of local dynasties (Kâteb, 1978: 230). For a while, Qom even was a regional, Timurid capital: in 846/1442, Mîrzâ Soltân Moĝammad, the son of Bâysonqor, was appointed by Şahroĝ, his grandfather, as the ruler of the 'Irâq region and he chose Qom as his capital. This is why Sayyed Zâĝîr al-Dîn refers to the city of Qom as Dâr al-Saltane (capital). (Sotûde, 1968: 251). After the death of Şahroĝ, Soltân Moĝammad Bahâdor, his grandson, declared independence, set up a capital at Qom and had coins minted in his own name there (Ibid, 165). Lambton briefly describes the political situation in Qom from 1442 to 1467 thus, appointed as the governor of Rey, Hamadân, Qom, Qazvîn, and many other cities by Şahroĝ in 846/1442, Moĝammad b. Bâysonqor made Qom his capital. Abû al-Qâsem Babûr, his brother, defeated and murdered Bâysonqor in 855/1452. Bâysonqor had ruled and chose governors for Qom and Sâva. These transformations encouraged Ğahânşâh, the Qara Qoyûnlû, to go westwards from Tabrîz and to threaten Qom and Sâva. Babûr was determined to defend these regions, but the turmoil in Harât prevented him and forced him move eastwards. In 857/1453, Pîr Bûdâq, Ğahânşâh's son, became the ruler of Qom and the father dominated 'Irâq- e 'Aĝam region. After his death in 827-8/1467, Qom and many other parts of Iran fell to Uzûn Ḥasan of the Āq Qoyûnlû (Lambton, 1990:330).

There are only scanty pieces of information from the remaining years of Āq Qoyûnlû rule in Qom, although it seems to have remained one of the most important cities in that civil war ridden empire. After to Uzûn Ḥasan died, Qom was chosen as the winter capital of the Āq Qoyûnlû. Soltân Ya'qûb stayed in Qom in 886/1448-2, (Ibid) Then the latest Āq-Qoyûnlû ruler

of Qom Morād and Alvand likewise chose Qom as their winter capital in 892/1486-7. was Solṭān Morād's governor Aslamaš Beg who might have belonged to Afšār clans which partly controlled the city until the Šafavid Šāh Esmā'īl I took Central Persia in 908-9/1503 (Lambton, 1990: 330; Drechsler, 2009:13-14)

3.2.5.7.2 Qom from the Šafavid period to the present

In 1474, two Venetians, Giosafato Barbaro and Ambrogio Contarini, visited Persia during a diplomatic mission. Barbaro describes Qom as a city whose buildings lack elegance; not an industrial but an agricultural city, with big vineyards and many orchards, growing large melons that occasionally weigh up to 30 pounds. He mentions some twenty thousand houses in the city. Contarini, by contrast, considered Qom small but beautiful; he described its setting on a plain and its surrounding mud walls. Both agreed that everything was available in abundance and noted the large market, which was a center of trade in handicrafts and worsted goods (Barbaro; Contarini, 1873: 73,129,132; Sarvqadī,1995: 142).

In the early 15th century, Qom slowly develops into one of the major, regional cities again. By the end of the second decade of the 15th century, the ruler of the 'Irāq- e 'Aḡam resided in Qom. This led to the city's tremendous growth and prosperity which, in turn, made it into one of the most populous cities in Iran (Ḥākrend, 1998:165-6).

During the Šafavid period, Qom's significance grew due to the Šafavid's Shiite predilections. The presence of a crucial shrine (Fāṭeme Ma'sūme) was especially important, as the Šafavid kings, such as Ṭahmāsb I and Esmā'īl I, often traveled to Qom and had the shrine of Fāṭeme Ma'sūme and other monuments repaired and renovated. Šāh 'Abbās invited pilgrims to go to Qom and Mašhad instead of Naḡaf and Karbalā, which at the time were under the control of the Ottoman Empire. The shrine of Faṭeme Ma'sūme was expanded and decorated, and many clerics arrived at Qom to study religion. The tombs of Šāh 'Abbās II (d.1666/1077), Šāh Soleymān (d.1694/1105) and Šāh Solṭān Ḥosain (d. 1726/1139) are located in Qom.

It can be inferred that by then, irrigation was advanced enough to further facilitate the prosperity of the region. Most of the qanats in Qom were made or repaired in this period (Lambton, 1990: 331).

Chardin describes Qom as a big city encircled by a moat and wall, preserved by half-ruined towers, and surrounded by large gardens (Chardin, 1961: 390). He refers to numerous mosques and mausoleums and the commonly held opinion of local people regarding the existence of around 400 'Emāmzadehs' in the nearby area. During the Šafavid period, pilgrimage was an

enormous source of income for the city. Pilgrims travelled to Qom from all over the country to visit the shrine and *Emāmzades* in the vicinity. The great traffic of corpses coming from different parts of the country to be buried in Qom was another source of financial gain (Lambton, 1990:331).



Image 5. Picture of Qom, designed by Adam Olearius ,1654 (Source: *Vermehrte Neue Beschreibung der Muscowitischen und Persischen Reyse*)

This big and renowned city suffered greatly during the Afghan invasion. This is no surprise, as Qom was at the border of the areas occupied by the Afghans. It was even turned into a garrison town by Maḥmūd Hotak, in order to prevent possible attacks by Ṭahmāsb II from Qazvīn and Rey. The shrine of Fāṭeme Ma‘šūme was particularly affected: after Ašraf Hotak was defeated by Nāder Šāh Afšār, all ornaments, jewelry, and other valuables from the shrine were plundered when the Afghan ruler was passing Qom. The city was later conquered by Āqā Moḥammad Ḥān Qāḡār in 1208/1793. His successor, Fath ‘Alī Šāh Qāḡār, devoted much of his reign to improving and developing Qom again. This period marked the beginning of radical cultural changes in the Iranian society, with the Qāḡār rulers working hard to disrupt the links between the ulama and the merchants, as well as the intellectuals, and to legitimize their monarchy. Thus, to attain religious approval, Fath ‘Alī Šāh made much show of his interest in religious affairs and spent a lot of money repairing and decorating sacred places like Qom (Lambton, 1990:333; Solṭānzāde, 1988: 167).

Fath ‘Alī and his successor Moḥammad Šāh were both buried in Qom in this period. Some of the leading Shia clerics and commentators haven lived in Qom in the past two centuries. There were thousands of ‘Sādāt’ people in Qom at the end of the 19th century. Of these, the majority were religious scholars, a couple of them had positions in the secular government, many were farmers and ran their estates, and some were businessmen (Lambton, 1990:336).

Since the Pahlavi era, Qom has been regarded as one of the main centers of the Shia clergy and its people are assumed to have been keenly interested in Shia Islam at different stages of its history. Except for a brief period during the Iranian Revolution, Qom has never been at the forefront of political turmoil, and it has never become a major capital like Tehrān, Eṣfāhān, or Tabrīz. Nonetheless, because of the special position of the city as a sacred place, it has always enjoyed government support and attention. Today, as a tourist/pilgrimage destination, Qom daily receives a large number of Shia pilgrims from all over the world, who come to visit the Fāṭeme Ma'ṣūme Shrine and the tombs of many other *Emāmzādes*.



Image 6. A view of Qom. Drawing by Flandin, 1851-54 (Source: *Voyage en Perse*)

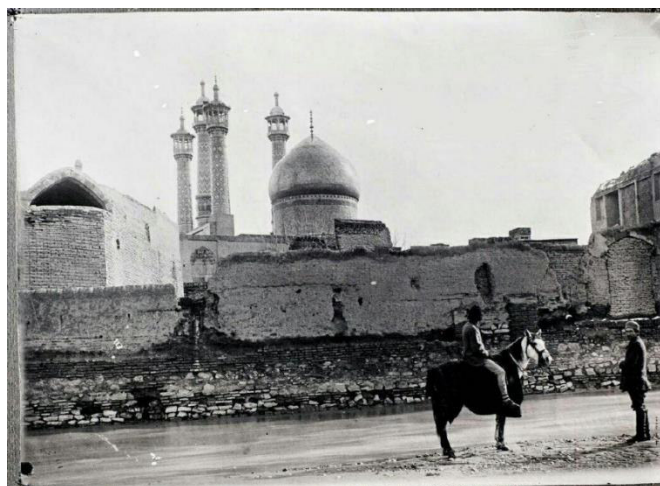


Image 7. A view of the dome and minarets of Fāṭeme Ma'ṣūme Shrine, Photo by A. Sevruguin, 1901 (Source: *Sevruguin and the Persian image: photographs of Iran, 1870-1930*)

3.3. Understanding the physical and structural features of Qom

In addition to studying the political, social, and religious geography of Qom, understanding the habitat and traditional spaces of the city may also provide a wealth of information on people's life, relationships, culture and religion, as well as on politics and political events. In fact, these two strands of investigation are interdependent. Qom has been one of the most important provinces of central Iran in different historical periods. Its proximity to central governments, as well as to important trade routes, has created good conditions for the development of politics and economics and contributed to Qom retaining its original location for centuries.

3.3.1 Historical sources on the urban topography of Qom

Understanding the evolution of any city's geography is not possible without examining historical books and reports. In this regard, the most authoritative source is *Tārīḥ -e Qom* (378/988).¹⁸ It presents information about the geographical location and width of Qom and its adjacent cities, roads, squares, mosques, gates, towers and fortifications, mines, qanats, mills, streams, and rivers, together with explanations on the source and origin of each place. Such detailed information is very helpful in visualizing the city. Other available sources¹⁹ contain more or less geographical information from various cities, including Qom. Generally, in old historical sources written up to the 10th century, one has to explore Qom within the Ğebāl region; thereafter, it can be found in the 'Iraq-e 'Ağam region (Mostaufi/Le Strange, 1915: 67; Eṣṭahrī, 1989: 146).

In *Al-Maḥāsen* (277/887) and *TQ*, Qom is reported to extend over a region of 40 parasang square, including 4 areas: the first from Hamadān and Sāve, the second from Rey, the third from Dīz Ābād village (in Farhān), and the fourth from Rāvand (in Kāšān) (Qomī, 2006: 55-58; Nāṣer al-Šarīat, 1963:5). There is no precise information concerning the founding and earliest development of the city, but archaeological evidence suggests that the city predates the advent of Islam, as confirmed by the ancient names of the villages nearby. (Bayātī; Rağabī, 2017: 83).

¹⁸ It is also one of the oldest and most valuable sources of local historiography also this book presents information about the geographical location and width of Qom and its adjacent cities, roads, squares, mosques, gates, towers and fortifications, mines, qanats, mills, streams, and rivers together with explanations on the source and origin of each place. Such detailed information is very helpful in visualizing the city.

¹⁹ Other available sources include: *Al-Masālek va al-Mamālek* by b. Ḥordābah (205/820 or 211/825-300/912), *Al-Buldān* by Ya'qūbī (died 248/897 or 292/905), *Al-Mas'ūdi's works* (died 345/956), *al-Buldān* by b. Faqīh (289/902), *Al-Masālek va al-Mamālek* by al-Eṣṭahrī (died 340/951), *Al-Masālek va al-Mamālek* by b. Ḥauqal (died after 378/988), *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm fī Ma'refat al-Aqālīm* by Al-Moqaddasī (334/945-380-990) and *Nuzhat al-Qoloūb* by Ḥamd Allāh Mostaufī (680/128 –750/1350)

3.3.2 Evolution of the physical structure and development of Qom in the Islamic period

The most important element in the development and civilization of Qom has been the presence of Anarbār River or Qomrūd, which provides favourable agricultural conditions. It could be argued that this river sustained rural and urban life of the Qom region before the Islamic period and for some time throughout it. Many of the agricultural lands which *TQ* calls ‘Ağamīyye (no Arab) villages’ have survived and often retained their names, which were those of famous farms. Lands such as Ğamkarān, Barāvastān, Abarastīğān, Mazdīğān, and Mamağān continue to be called by their ancient names. (Qomī, 2006: 85-58)

According to *TQ*, before the Arabs came to Iran, the region of Qom was a wide realm extending from Komeydān and Mazdīğān to Abarastīğān and Ğamkarān. At the time, there were seventy villages scattered in this region (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1976: 12). These villages were divided into four districts: Rūdābān, Abarastīğān, Serāğe, and Saṅğarōūd. Each used the water of a creek originating from Qomrūd. There was a central fortress in each of the village complexes that was named after its respective creek. Indeed, the region of Qom used to be called “Čehel Heṣārān” [Forty Fortress] because of its large number of castles (Bayāfī-Rağabī, 2017: 84).

Šahrestān district, in Lang-e Rūd area, is an important place which is considered to be an ancient site and is currently located in southeast Qom. In the 12th century, Šahrestān, derived from Šārestān, meaning city, referred to a village or castle. Back then, the main part of the city where the governor resided was called Šahrestān and people commonly built their houses around it. Following the emergence of Islam, Qom, like many other Iranian cities such as Rey and Hamadān, expanded in the outskirts, while the part called Šahrestān declined. Most likely, this latter area was destroyed during the Muslim conquest by the army of Abu Mūsā Aš‘arī (Sa‘īdnīyā, 1987: 145).

Reliable historical texts such as *TQ* and Ya‘qūbī’s *al-Boldān* point to a new part of the city called Mamağān, which was considered the entrance to Šarīstān. Visiting Qom in the third century, Ya‘qūbī observed: “the city of Qom, also called Mamağān, is said to be an honorable and distinguished city that has around one thousand ways (Ya‘qūbī, 1977: 49). The author of *TQ* noted that Mamağān had been at the center of the area. These writings indicate that Mamağān fortress or village was located in the heart of the city, where citizens lived until the 11th Century. (Sa‘īdnīyā, 1987: 159).

According to *TQ*, Mamağān had a moat around which the Arabs initially settled. Later, they filled the moat and moved towards the fortress wall (Ibid). There were still signs of a moat in the 12th century, and Qomī points to its traces while locating Mamağān: “It is the place where ‘Alī b. ‘Abdīl lives; it includes al-Yas‘ Square, Sūren Ābād sewer system (moat), and Čāhār

Ṭāq Gate" (Qomī, 2007:87). Qom was separated from Eṣfahān province in 189 / 804-805 and its six distinct rural settlements were integrated into an independent city (Drechsler, 1999:113). As Qomī points out, Hārūn al-Rašīd ordered this separation due to economic, cultural, and social differences between Eṣfahān and Qom, as well as the large number of settlements and subsidiary farms of the latter (Qomī, 2006: 73-74; Bayātī, Rağabī, 2017: 88). As the immigrant Arabs purchased more and more lands, acquired a greater share of water, achieved agricultural prosperity, and consequently their population soared, Qom expanded and encompassed all neighboring lands of Mamağān and Mālūn, as well as some of the adjacent rural areas such as Qīzdān, Ğomar and Sakān (Sa'īdnīyā, 1987: 149).

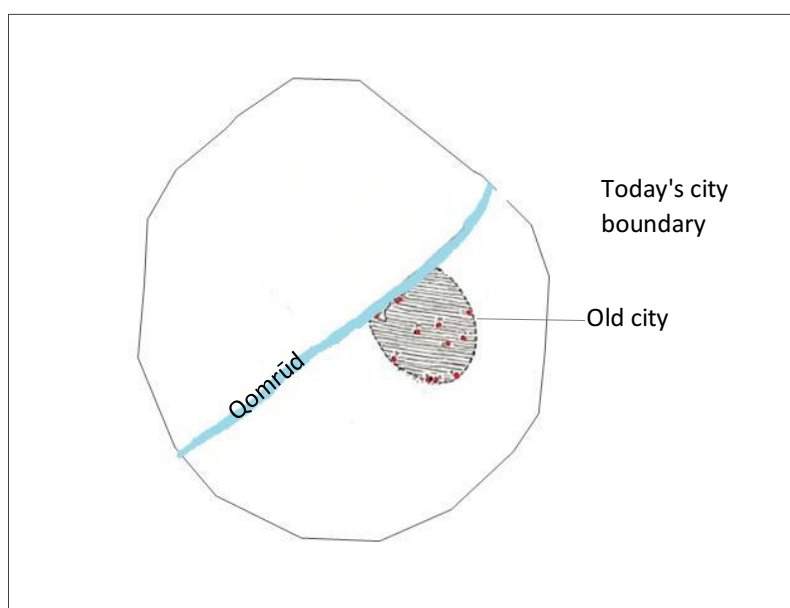


Image 8. The location of the old city in the new city of Qom, based on Sa'īdnīyā's drawing, With additions by the author

The city's buildings extended to the banks of the river, and senior Arabs began building their houses within the city. Thus, the ancient village of Mamağān, also known as Šahrestān Gate, became a major city in the course of two centuries. Komeydān was located on the other side of Qomrūd. According to Qomī, it had its own fortress separating it from Mamağān, located in the centre, which consisted of six villages united by a single fortress. Some villages like Sakān were entirely within the walls of this fortress and others, like Ğomar, were partly outside it (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1976: 13; Sa'īdnīyā, 1987: 148-149).

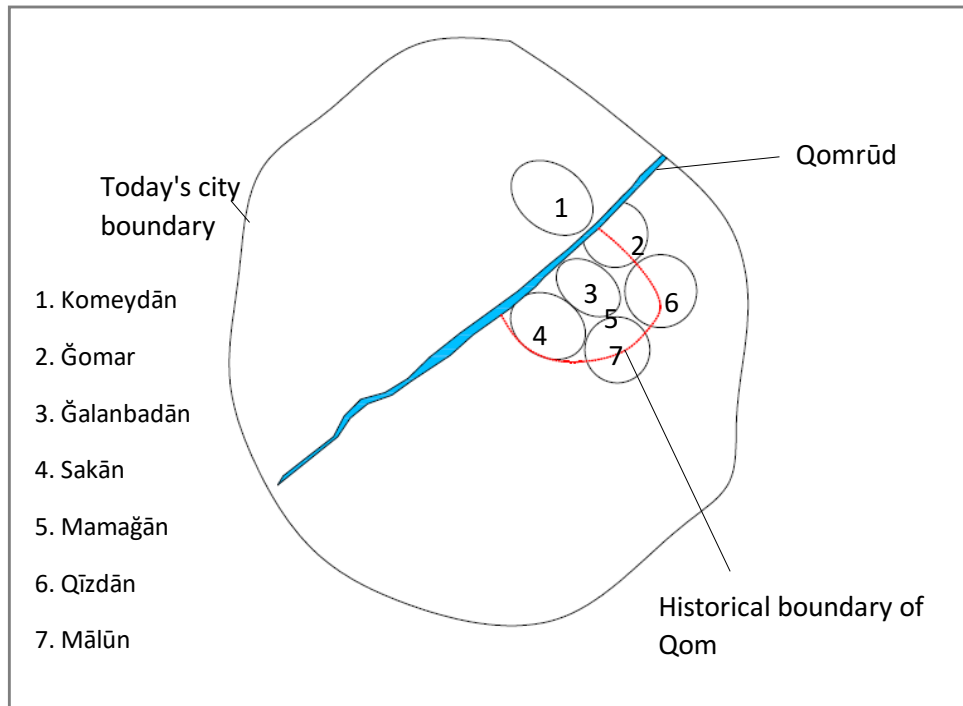


Image 9. The constituent villages of the old Islamic city of Qom, based on Sa‘īdnīyā’s drawing, With additions by the author

According to *TQ*, the first fortress of the city had thirteen gates, six of which linked the city to the main routes of the region, while the remaining seven connected it to the surrounding farms and villages. The most important gates included: Sohalvīye, Noābād, Šahrestān, ‘Alavīye, Barīd, Kūhestān, Tele Ğār (Talaq Ğār), Rey, Kāšān, Mālūn, Ğomar, and ‘Abdūye (Qomī, 2006:62-66). There are no traces of these gates today, and only some neighborhoods or passages like Rey Gate Alley and Kāšān Gate Area have preserved their names.

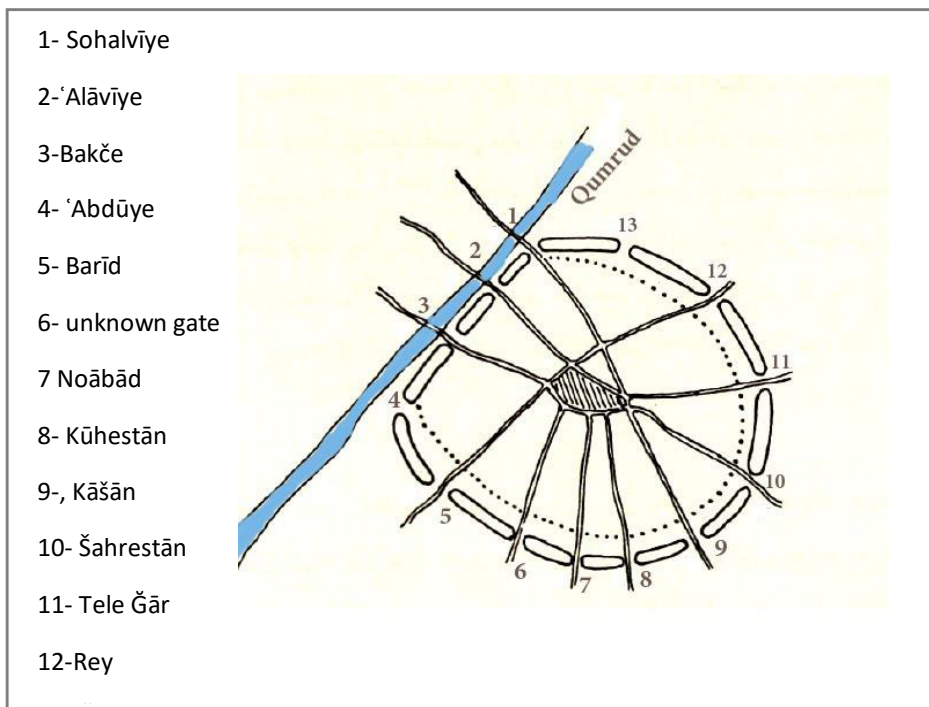


Image 10. The old fortress and the location of city gates, based on Sa‘īdnīyā’s drawing, With addition by the author

Apart from the main city wall, there are other places and monuments dating from the early Islamic period, such as the Fāṭeme Ma‘šūme Shrine, the tomb of Šāh Aḥmad Qāsem, the tomb of Šāh Ḥamze, the tomb of Mūsā al-Mobarqa‘, and Reżāyī Mosque, situated alongside the old Bāzār, which determine the (approximate) boundaries of the old city. There is compelling evidence suggesting that the Islamic city of Qom was located within the 500-meter radius of the present-day Kohne Meydān (old Square.) (Sa‘īdnīyā, 1987: 149).

In this context, Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā‘ī suggests that *TQ* clarifies that the old city existed at the current area of District One, located on the east side of the river. Hence, the Bābolān region and the tomb of Fāṭeme Ma‘šūme were located inside the fortress. This fortification was destroyed during the reign of Ma‘mūn in 210/825 and was rebuilt three times until the publication of *TQ* (379/989). There were lush gardens both inside and outside the city's fortress. In the 12th century, the fortress was reduced on the west side; consequently, the Fāṭeme Ma‘šūme Shrine and the Freiday Mosque of ‘Atīq were situated outside the city (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, 1976: 16; Sa‘īdnīyā, 1987: 157).

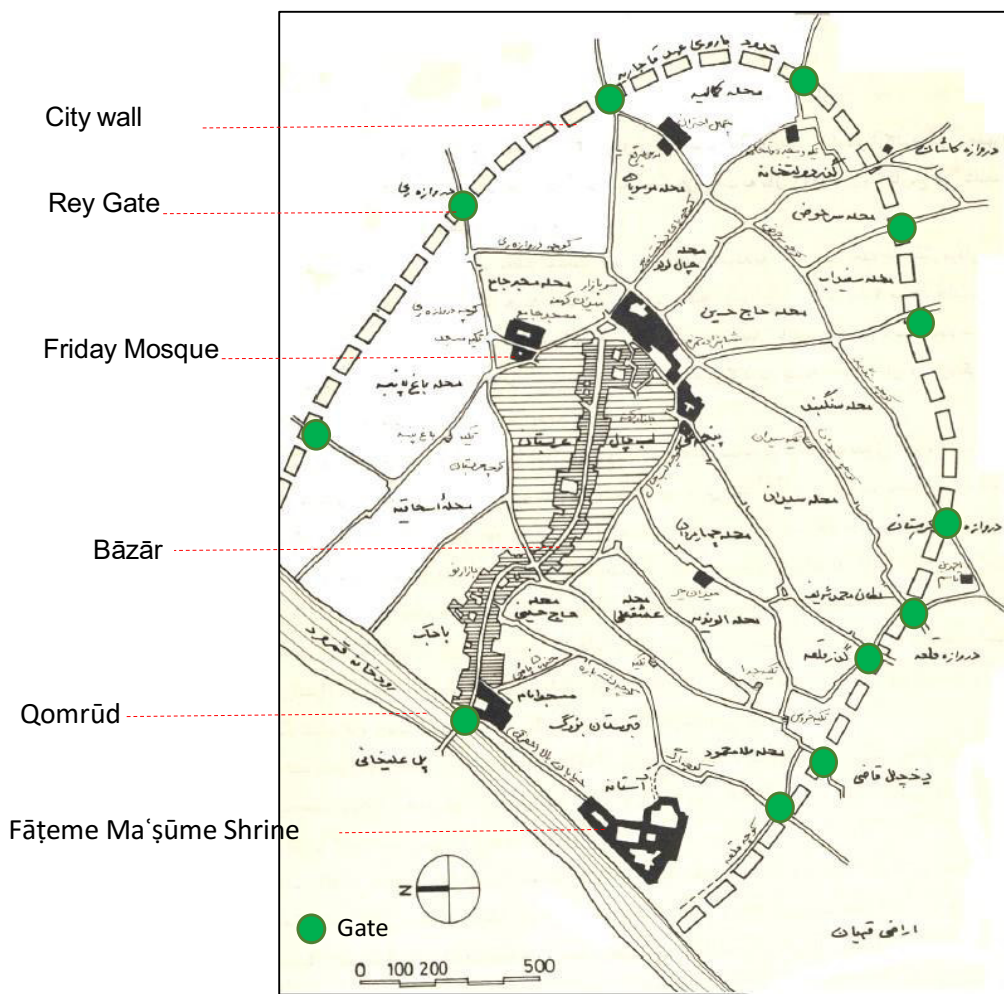


Image 11. The old city of Qom in 18th century, based on Sa‘īdnīyā’s Drawing, With addition by the author

The main passages of the old city had developed in such a way that each major route could serve as the axis of one of the old neighborhoods. The overall, ‘skeletal’ structure of the neighborhoods illustrates that the old city had a center consisting of residential areas, Bāzār, square, and historical-religious sites. Other neighborhoods, with the exception of the Fāṭeme Ma’šūme Shrine Complex and the Daulat Ḥāne/Sangband Neighborhood, were organized as circular sectors around such centers. Through their major routes, each of these neighborhoods was connected to the communication center of the city, i.e. Kohne Square and Lab-e Čāl Alley. In addition, examining the routes and passages of the old city reveals that, except for the shrine (Āstāne) Neighborhood and part of Sangband Neighborhood to the east and west of the old city, all residential neighborhoods were situated along the routes connecting Qom to nearby towns, villages, and farms. These routes constituted the main passage of each neighborhood. It can be safely assumed that these passages were vital to the development of the neighborhoods. It seems that houses and other local elements such as mosques, tekyehs, squares, baths, and bazaars evolved around these axial points (Sa’idnīyā, 1987: 153).

3.3.3 Network of old routes to Qom

Qom was one of the key trade hubs in the ‘Irāq-e ‘Ağam region. Situated in the center of Iran, it was located approximately along the main north-south and east-west roads of the Iranian plateau. It was particularly important for the Solṭānīye, Rey, and Ḥorāsān roads. The main road linking Eṣfahān to Solṭānīye also passed Kāšān, Qom, and Sāve, suggesting the importance of Qom in this route.

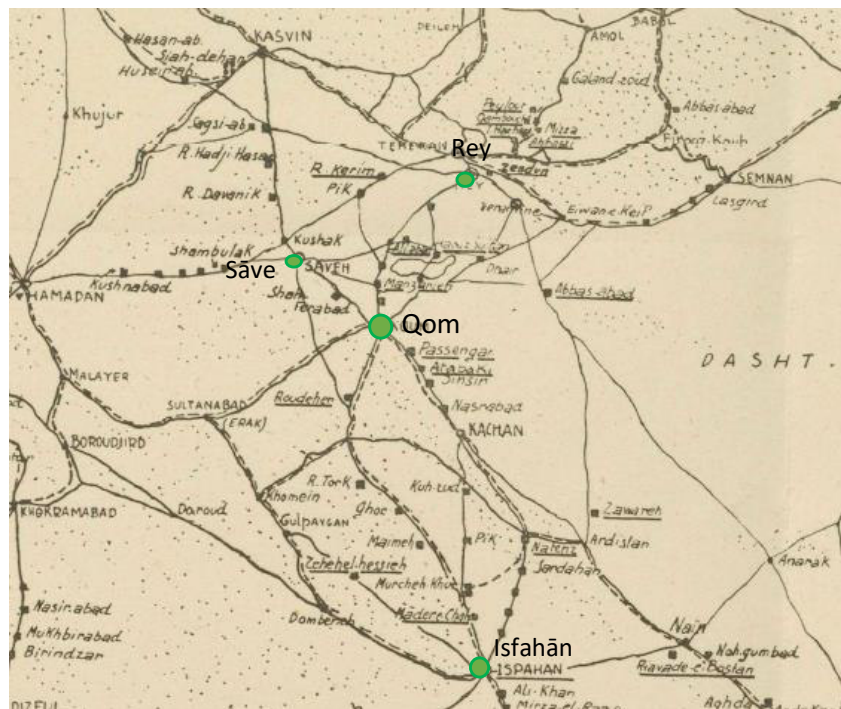


Image 12. The old routes to Qom, (source: Maxime Siroux, *Caravanserais d'Iran et petites constructions routieres*, p. With addition by the author)

Today some of the major routes of Iran pass through Qom. The city lies on the main roads connecting the east, central, and south-west parts of the country.

Moreover, Qom's location on the Ḥorāsān Road, and its position according to Mostaufi, 1340 on the main south to north of Iran connection road (Hormoz – Soltāniye Axis) turned this city into an important hub for commerce and boosted its economy (Mostaufi-e Qazvīnī, 2003: 203; Raḥmatī, 2012: 52)

The descriptions which *TQ* provides about Qom's routes and gates indicate that a number of vital roads passed through the city. Studying the network of roads, streets, and alleys within the fabric of the old city confirms that many of these routes went through the old gates before passing the city. The routes ended in the old center of the city (i.e. Meydān-e Kohne). The most famous of these roads which passed through the gates of the city were: Ḥorāsān Road through Rey Gate, Sāve Road, Āve Road, and Hamadān Road through Bakče Gate, Kāšān and Ešfahān Road through Kāšān Gate, and 'Irāq Road through Naṣr b. 'Amer Gate (or Barīd gate) (Qomī, 2006: 62-66).

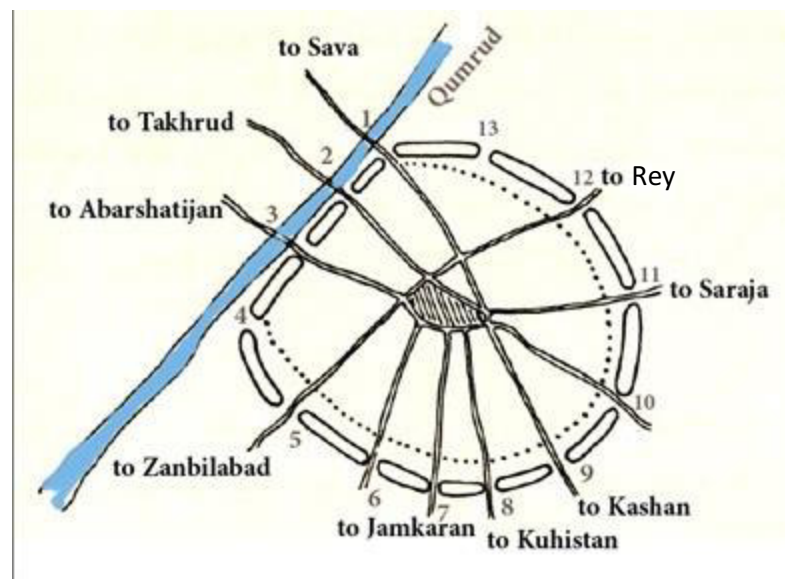


Image 13. The old fortress and roads of Qom - based on Sa'īdnīyā's drawing (p. 158), With addition by the author

In addition, there were roads connecting the city to neighboring fortresses, villages, and farms, some of which are mentioned below. Čebāl (Kūhestān) Road passed through a gate of the same name, and it was known in the early Islamic centuries as the Gate of Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Ādam Aš'arī. Saraḡe Road passed through Tele Ġār Gate, Ġomar Road passed through Gomar Gate, and Mīyānrūd Road went through Mālūn Gate. There was another route which ended in Motḡe Mill beside the Farābe Creek and passed through the Noābād Gate (possibly the present-day Qal'e Gate). Mazdīḡān (Mazdīḡān-Taqrūd) Road, leading to Sāve, passed through the Bakča

Gate. Sāvarān Road, leading to Abarastīgān fields and villages, possibly went through Ramle (Rīkestān) Road and passed through the ‘Abdūye Bridge Gate. One can imagine that Qom at that time had access to the ancient fort of Šahrestān through the Šahrestān Gate (Sa‘īdnīyā, 1987: 152).

Studies on the formation and development of Qom in the Islamic era propose that the characteristics of the first fortress of the city existing at the outset of this period are almost the same as those of the fortress reported in the Qajar period. To this day, in addition to some geographical names referring to vanished neighborhoods, a few remnants of the walls of their fortifications can still be seen (Ibid, 152). Historians’ descriptions in later centuries, as well as the names of old neighborhoods, city gates, and sacred places and tombs dating from early (Islamic) centuries imply the geographical persistence of Qom throughout this era and reinforce the notion that the city's fabric has [largely] remained stable from its beginning until now.



Image 14. Approximate location of the gates and boundaries of Qom superimposed on the current map of the city. (source: *Google Earth*, 08.04.2018, With addition by the author)

3.3.4. The environs and suburbs of Qom

TQ provides a comprehensive list of the villages belonging to the city up to the 12th century, and it relates that the region of Qom was so vast (extending from Hamadān to Rey and from Eşfahān to Qazvīn) that the Aš'arī Arabs had to separate it from Eşfahān. Specifically, *Tārīḥ-e Qom* (in 284/897 and 303/915-16) refers to about 21 districts which collectively included 900 villages (Qomī, 2006: 176-9). These were politically and economically administered by Qom and their taxes were collected accordingly. More important of these outlying areas include Lanġerūd, Rūdābān, Rūdbār, Sarāġa, Ğabāl, Vāzkarūd, Anār, Varārdhār, Ware, Gāst, Gahrūd, Qāsan, Vazve, Tabrīz or Tafreš-e Sāve, as well as the surroundings of Sāve, Kāšān, Hūy, Farāhān, Kūdzar, and Dīyār Eşhāq (Drechsler, 298-503).

During the 13th and 14th centuries (the focus of this project), various sources referred to a number of areas surrounding the city, some of which exist to this day. In the 14th century, the major areas governed by Qom were as follows:

1. Farahān Boroūq located between Qom and Hamadān²⁰
2. Karahroūd Boroūq located in the central part of the current Arāk province²¹
3. Gūzal Dara, a village to the west of present-day Sāve
4. Gīv Boroūq, located today in the village of Dastġerd in Qom²²
5. Kere, in Roūdābān district²³
6. Ğarā area, also known as "Ğara" and "Ğarā'", located near Qom²⁴
7. Sāşarm, a suburb of Qom²⁵
8. Merūn, an area once located between Gīv and Karahroūd²⁶
9. Sāva, formerly within the jurisdiction of Qom; called "Sāve of Qom" in the annals of 1486/886 (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1971: 47-49).

²⁰ mentioned in 13th century texts such *Tazkare-ye Daulatšāh Samarqandī*, *Hāfiż Abroū's History*, *Zafarnāme*, and *Maṭla' Sa'dain*

²¹ mentioned in *Şarafnāme* and *Zafarnāme*

²² mentioned in *Maṭla' Sa'dain* and *Montaḡab al-Tavarīḡ Mo'īnī*

²³ mentioned in *Tārīḡ -e Qom* and *Historical Documents and Correspondences of Iran from Timur to Šāh Esmā'īl*.

²⁴ mentioned in *Montaḡab al-Tavarīḡ Mo'īnī*, *Matla' Sa'dain*, and *Zafarnāme*

²⁵ *Hāfeż Abroū's History* refers to its castle

²⁶ mentioned in *Zafarnāme*

3.3.5 The relation of Tomb structures to the boundaries of the old city

With the exception of the Fāṭeme Ma' sūme Shrine and several other old mausoleums (13th-14th century) located within the old fabric of the city, most of the tombs were built in the vicinity of Qom and in connection with its main gates or routes. As shown on the map below, two mausoleums²⁷ were located in the northwest of the city along a major road that led to the old city, and eight of the mausoleums from the north and northeast to the south and southeast were built near the city gates. As mentioned, in the light of modern urban expansion, there are no signs of the city walls and gates left today, and except for the remains of the southern ditch and wall, next to which was the Noābād Gate as well as the scarce and concentrated remnants of the city wall, everything else has been destroyed. However, it is possible to estimate the approximate location of some city gates from available references, including: historical sources, old images (e.g. from Qajar period), the names of neighborhoods or roads that have taken on those of the gates (such as the Darvāzeh-ye Kāšān neighborhood or Darvāzeh-ye Rey Road) as well as the statements of old residents of areas near the gate. Based on this information, we can specify with certitude the locations of eight tombs (Ahmad Qasem near Noābād gate, five tombs near Kāšān gate, and two tombs close to Rey gate) around the gates.

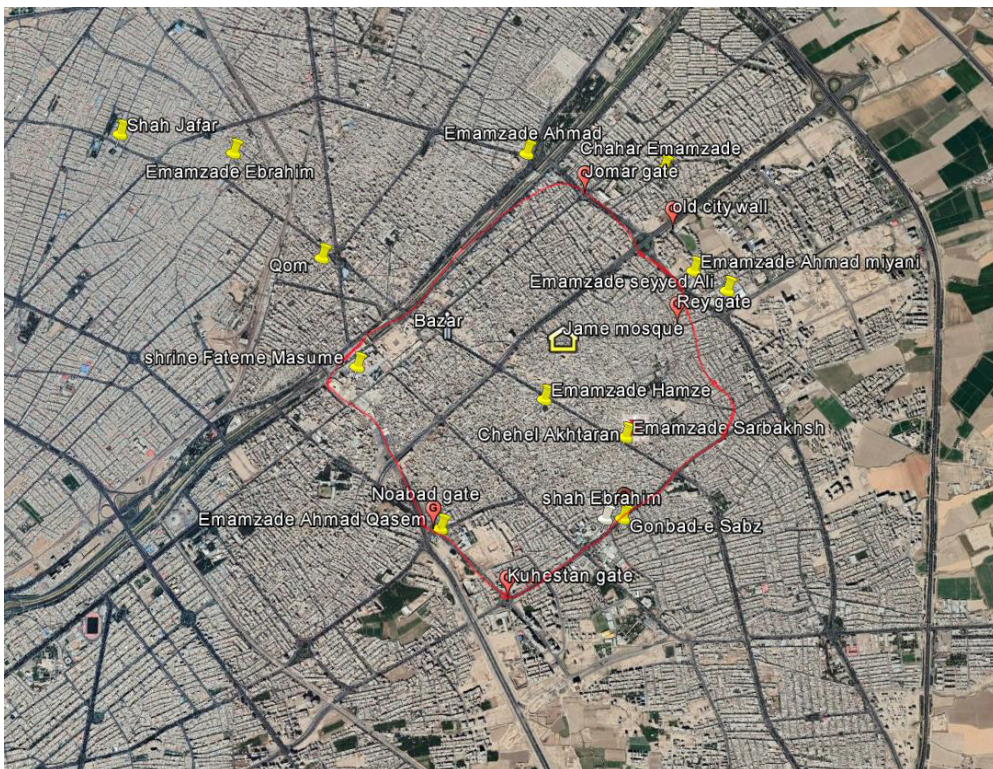


Image 15. Approximate boundaries of Qom in its 13-14th century and the superimposition of mausoleums on the current map of the city. (source: *Google Earth*: 08.04.2018, With addition by the author)

²⁷ Tombs of Šāhzāde Ebrāhīm and Šāh ġa' far alongside Šāh Ebrāhīm in Mazdīgān

Two other tombs²⁸ located inside the city were also alongside the same east-west road of Qom, which was probably of great importance at the time. The western part of the city and the Fāṭeme Ma'šūme Shrine, located in the Āstāne Neighborhood, bordered the river Qomrūd.

In terms of their location, the art historian Donald Wilber has divided these tombs into four main categories: Rey Gate tombs (north), Kāšān Gate tombs (east), Qal'e Gate tombs (south), and Hamadān Gate tombs (west) (Wilber, 1955: 114). Though this is a useful classification, it should be noted that Wilber has mislocated the tomb of Emānzāde Mūsā Mobarqa'; furthermore, he does not provide any information concerning Emānzāde Sarbaḥš, Čāhār Emānzāde, and two other monuments outside the city. It is also worth remembering that some tombs are no longer called by their former names which Wilber recorded in his map.

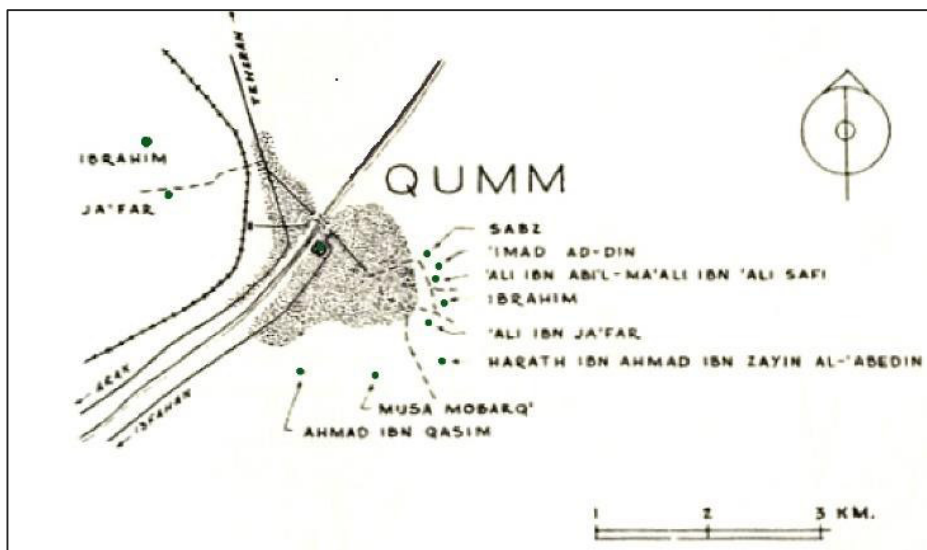


Image 16. Wilber's schematic of the approximate boundaries of Qom and the location of Tomb structures – (Source: *Iranian Architecture in the Il-khanid Period* (Abb.2))

The Kāšān Gate tombs - including three Tombs of Bāq-e Sabz (green garden), the tombs of 'Alī b. Ğa'far and Emānzāde Ebrāhīm - are located in the eastern part of the city. The tombs of Emānzāde Šāh Ğa'far and Šāh Ebrāhīm lie in the western part of the city, in the Mazdīgān area, along the road that leads to Taqarud and Markazī province about 1.5 km from the 'Alavīye Gate. The tomb of Emānzāde Aḥmad b. Qāsem lies to the south along the Qal'e Gate. The tombs of Emānzāde Mūsā Mobarqa', Emānzāde Sayyed Sarbaḥš, and Emānzāde Zeyd are located inside the structure of the old city along the route passing through the tombs of Šāh Ebrāhīm and Šāh Ğa'far, and close to the Šahrestān Gate²⁹. Three other tombs: Emānzāde Aḥmad Mīyānī, Emānzāde 'Alī, and Čāhār Emānzāde, were located in the north and outside

²⁸ Emānzāda Sayyed Sarbaḥš Shrine and Čhel Aḥtarān Complex

²⁹ Wilber mistakenly locates these tombs on the south part of the city.

the old city near the Rey Gate and, possibly, the Ğomar Gate. All of these buildings were visible from a far distance because of their great height, which is one of the most prominent features of Il-khanid monuments (Wilber, 1955: 33).

3.3.5.1 Gardens and Cemeteries: the location of tomb structures

The scant information available through historical sources and the current status of monuments suggests there were gardens around at least some tower tombs. Historical texts have frequently referred to the abundance of gardens and their crops in Qom. Ebn-e Ḥauqal, the renowned 12th century traveler and geographer, described the great wall of the city of Qom along with its lively gardens (Malakūtī, 1996: 2). In *Aṣār al-Bilād va Ahbār al-'Ebād* (674/1275), Qazvīnī too acknowledges the existence of numerous gardens in the city (Qazvīnī, 1987: 442). In the same vein, in his 17th century travelogue, Chardin points to the tomb of one of the Georgian rulers, "*Rostam Ḥān Tomb*", in Qom, which had been built in of the several gardens situated around the city. He considers these gardens to have been popular recreation sites (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1977: 26). *TQ* records that Fāṭeme Ma'ṣūme was buried in a famous garden called Bābolān (Qomī, 2006 :561-567), which would later become the city's public cemetery. There is a document (1295/1875) attributed to Mohāmmad Taqī Beyk Arbāb, which states that there were more than fifty gardens in Qom. Specifically, Arbāb mentions fifty-three gardens; ten years later, in *Tafṣil Ahvālāt dar al-Imān Qom*, he points to fifty-six gardens. Additionally, there were more gardens next to the city gates: twelve by the Kāšan Gate, ten by the Rey Gate and twenty by the Qal'e Gate in south. (Malakūtī, 1996: 2). A 1723 painting by Chardin (image 17) shows the panorama of Qom, with many gardens clearly visible.

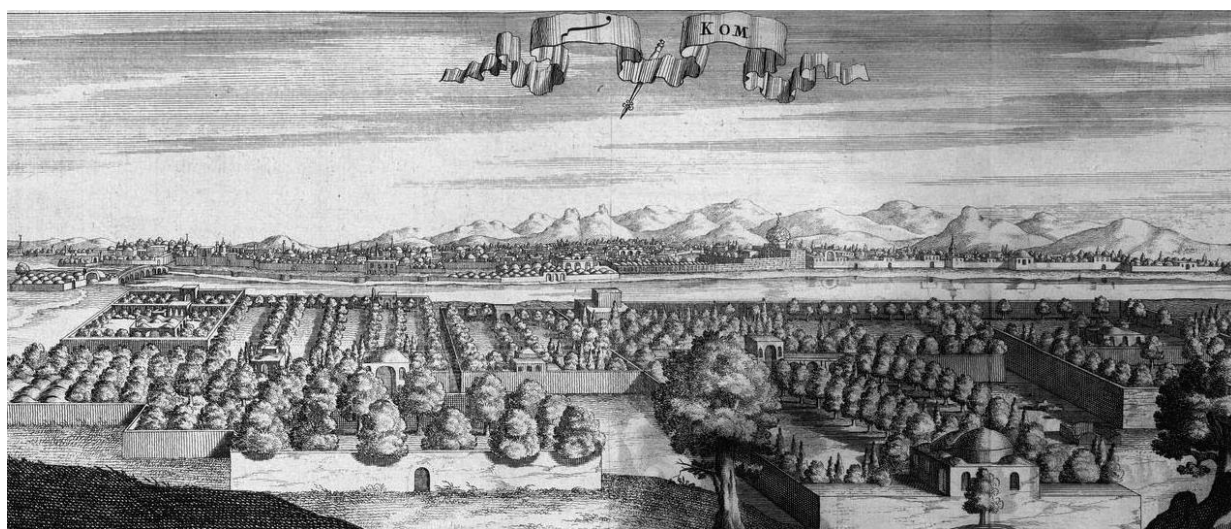


Image 17. The Gardens around of city of Qom, Chardin,1723 (Source: *gallica.bnf.fr* site, date:15.04.2019)

Based on this evidence, it is not far-fetched to suppose that tower tombs had been built within gardens. The tower tombs of Bāq-e Sabz are the perfect example where we know such a thing happened. Meanwhile, it could be hypothesized that the tombs could have been initially built as pavilions in a garden and, later, the whole garden and even its neighboring lands had been turned into a cemetery - as in the abovementioned example of Bābolān.

It is noteworthy that on the earliest map of Qom, drawn by Karīmān in 1949, many gardens and farms are marked around Qom, despite the pronounced urban development at the time. It can be argued they were considered good places for cemetery and tomb construction, though we have no information on when these turned into cemeteries (or other urban elements).

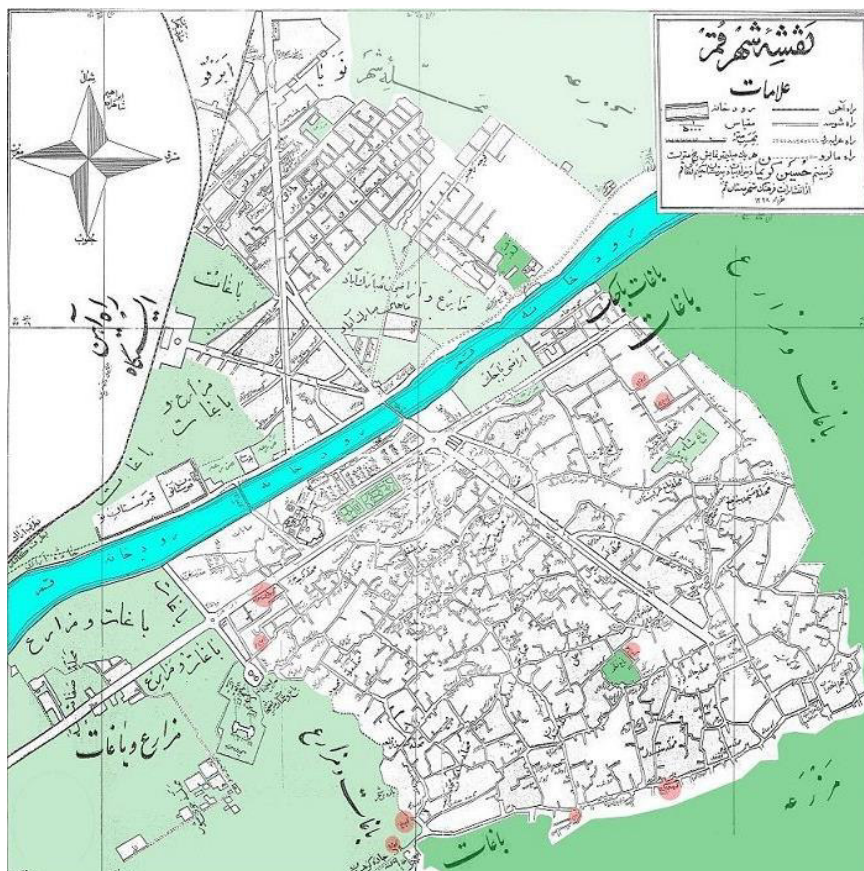


Image 18. The locations of farms and gardens on the map of Qom, by Hosain Karīmān, 1949. (Source: *qomshenasi* site, date: 05.12.2019)

Examining the present location of these tombs suggests that all of them, except for those of Bāg-e Sabz, are within cemeteries. The question is whether the cemeteries or the tombs are older and whether the cemeteries expanded after the burials of politically or religiously influential people. Some light can be shed on this question by the extant cemeteries. Two of these, Darb-e Behešt, which includes the tomb of ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far, located to the east, and Mālūn Cemetery, which includes the tomb of Aḥmad b. Qāsem, located to the southeast of the old city (and also mentioned in *TQ*) (Qomī, 2006 :606), are quite old. However, the other cemeteries

surrounding medieval tombs are quite new, as evidenced by gravestone inscriptions. Therefore, they could not have developed before the much older tower tombs or shrines within them. It is much more probable that the cemeteries were later established and expanded because of the Shia belief that “burial in holy places is a virtuous act” [facilitating God’s grace]. In other words, owing to the sacredness of these [saintly] individuals among the general Shia population, they buried their dead ones beside them so that they would, in effect, mediate their salvation in the Hereafter.

The study of the tombs’ siting and their adaptation with important urban elements leads to this conclusion that in the 13th and 14th centuries, they were planned next to city gates and on the main roads to the city. These elements announced the existence of a city from a distance to travelers, and their surrounding gardens offered the visitors, who were mostly on pilgrimage to Fāṭeme Ma’šūme Shrine, a delightful space and a provisional respite. Many of the lands and gardens around the city of Qom have gradually dried out due to climate change, and have turned into graveyards.

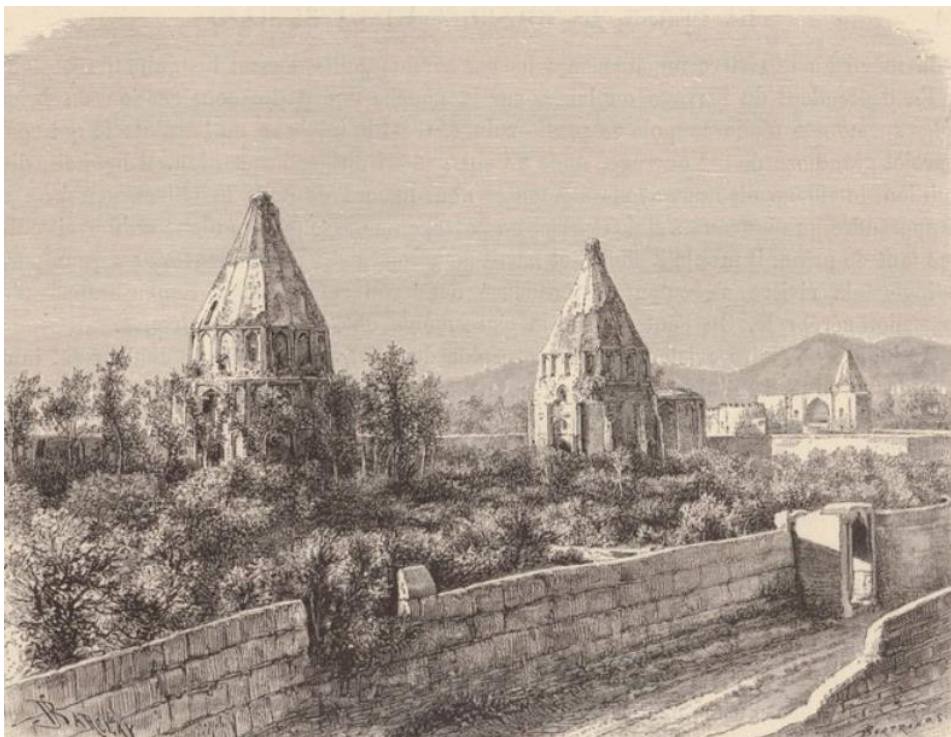


Image 19. Tomb tower of Bāg-e Sabz in Qom
(source: *La Perse, la Chaldée et la Susiane* - Jane Dieulafoy, p.175)

Chapter 4- Documentation of the Tomb structures of Qom

Chapter 4- Documentation of the Tomb structures of Qom

Architectural documentation has always used for classification and analysis of historical buildings, paving the grounds for future research towards comprehensive architectural knowledge. The state and type of a building's architecture determines the tools required for documentation, with the appropriate methodology defined according to the aims which the data gathered through documentation is supposed to serve. The sources of architectural documentation can be very varied: the architectural structures themselves, but also written documents or oral accounts, charts, images, plans and sketches. The first step in documentation involves the collection and classification of documents, including old photos, drawings and sketches of artists and travelers, aerial maps and photos, geographic maps, satellite photos, historical texts and literature and initial observation of the monument. The field study of the building will lead to a report on its present condition, which includes photos, sketches, plans and a report on the details of the architecture, decorations and inscriptions of the building. Of course, the techniques, quality and precision of interpretations vary according to the type and objectives of using this information (Fallāhfar, 2006: 15-70).

Examples of such architectural documentation are the catalogues introducing the location, history and a brief description of the building and architectural elements, such as those prepared by Wilber in *The architecture of Islamic Iran – the Il-Khanid Period* or else the more detailed catalogues presented in the *Ganġnāme* series on Iran. The aim of documenting the mausoleum in this project was to answer the questions raised in chapter 1. This is done through extracting the following information from the structures themselves:

- 1- Identification of the geographical location of the monuments in the city;
- 2- Identification of the architectural forms, spaces and structural elements;
- 3- Identification of the materials and technologies applied in the buildings' structures;
- 4- Identification of changes and modifications of subsequent eras to discover the original shape of the structures;
- 5- Identification of written materials and inscriptions to establish the dates and to discover the individuals involved in shaping the construction and decoration of the buildings;
- 6- Identification of the methods of decorations and decorative motifs applied in the monuments.

This section documents a total of 15 mausoleums. The focus is on the original (that is, Il-Khanid and post Il-khanid) architectural shape and form of the buildings; consequently, no attention is paid to the modifications and manipulations of later periods. The documentation is based on various sources such as books, reports, photographs and personal field studies. It

should be noted that in some cases the comparative studies study was applied for a deeper knowledge of the history and the style of the building's architecture or decorations.

There are over 15 tombs remaining in the region of Qom region and their list is provided in the book of *Ganġīne-ye Ātār-e Qom*. However, not all the 15 benefitted from adequate historical accounts related to the 13th and the 14th centuries.

The criteria for the selection of the tombs analyzed were:

- I. Buildings with marked and known dates from the 13th and 14th centuries (such as the five mausoleums at Kāšān gate, Emāmzāde Aḥmad Qāsem, Emāmzāde Esmā'īl Sarbaḥš and Ḥadīġe Ḥatūn's mausoleum)
- II. Those structures which have been partially restored but still keep some original features (like portals or fragments of decorations), which indicate the dates of construction as corresponding to those being considered in this project (such as Emāmzāde Zeyd, Emāmzāde Mūsā Mobarqa').
- III. Fully restored buildings, of which some fragments of decorative architectural elements are kept at museums (Emāmzāde Esmā'īl in Bīdeqān)
- IV. Fully demolished structures which are replaced by new buildings, but reports about them are still available (Emāmzāde Šāh Ġa'far, Emāmzāde Ebrāhīm in Mazdīġān)

Documentation of these mausoleum has been compiled into separate catalogues for each, which include the following parts:

1. Historical and current location of the structure in the city
2. A description of the architectural features, components, measurements, materials and techniques used:
 - a. This section discusses the outer parts first, and then elaborates on the interior. It must be noted that the documentation was based on the original form of construction. In cases where there were photographs available, the chronology or construction phases have been discussed too. Those buildings which have been altered or manipulated were merely listed without inclusion of any further details.
3. Presentation and description of inscriptions (their content, style, and meaning)
4. Description of decoration types and techniques used
5. The history of the building
 - a- If there are is any evidence showing the construction date, who was buried in the mausoleum, the names of the builders and founders, craftsmen and artists, it would be mentioned here too.

Number	Name	Date	location	Museum	Present Situation	Historical evidence		Decorations
						historical picture	Old reports	
1	North Tomb tower (Bāg- e Sabz)	714-60/1315-59?	east		restored	*	*	stucco
2	Middle Tomb tower (Bāg- e Sabz)	792/1339	east		restored	*	*	stucco
3	South Tomb tower (Bāg- e Sabz)	761/1360	east		restored	*	*	stucco
4	Emānzāde 'Alī b. Ğa'far	740/1339	east	*	restored	*	*	Stucco, luster tile
5	Emānzāde Ebrāhīm (Kāšān gate)	805/1402	east		restored	*	*	stucco
6	Emānzāde Šāh Aḥmad Qāsem	780/1378	south	*	restored		*	Stucco, luster tile
7	Emānzāde Esmā'īl Sarbaḥš	744/1372	northeast		restored		*	stucco
8	Emānzāde Šāh Ğa'far	667/1269	west	*	Fully renewed	*	*	Stucco, luster tile
9	Tomb tower of Šāh Ebrāhīm Mazdīgān	669-766/1300-65?	west		Fully renewed	*	*	stucco
10	Emānzāde Ḥadīge Ḥātūn	770/1369	around Qum		restored		*	Stucco, luster tile
11	Emānzāde Zeyd or Ḥvāge Bahā' al-Dīn	847/1443	northeast		Fully renovated		*	stucco
12	Emānzāde Mūsā Mobarqa'	851/1447	northeast		Fully renovated		*	stucco
13	Emānzāde Šāh Aḥmad Ḥanafīye	14 th ?	north		restored		*	stucco
14	Čāhār Emānzāde	14 th ?	north		restored	*	*	stucco
15	Emānzāde Šāh Esmā'īl in Bīd eqān	661/1263?	around Qum	*	Fully renewed		*	Stucco, luster tile

4-0 Tomb towers of Bāg-e Sabz

These mausoleums are located in the east of Qom, bordered to the north by the Šahīd Rūhānī Boulevard and to the west by Košar Street. They are enclosed by a small pomegranate garden known as Bāg-e Sabz. The ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far's mausoleum, located inside the old Darb-e Behešt cemetery and adjacent to the Martyrs' graveyard, is located to the south, at a distance of 210 meters. To the west, 95 meters from the Bāg-e Sabz, there is the Emāmzāde Ebrāhīm's mausoleum. These five mausoleums are known as the Tomb towers of Darvāze-ye Kāšān [Kāšān gate].



Image 1. Current location of the Tomb towers of Darvāze –ye Kāšān (Source: *Google Earth* 20.10.2006, with additions by the author)

The Bāg-e Sabz tombs are located outside the fortifications of the old town of Qom, at a rather short distance from one of the important gates to the west of the city, which leads to the Ešfahān and Kāšān roads. There are numerous mentions of this gate and the area in various historical texts; in particular, the Bāg-e Sabz and the associated Tomb towers are described in detail in various travelogues from the Safavid and Qajar periods. Ṭabāṭabā'ī mentions that local people refer to the three mausoleums as the tombs of three brothers called Sa'd, Sa'īd, and Mas'ūd, believed to have been members of the prominent Aš'arī tribe, known for rebuilding and developing Qom in the early Islamic period (100/718) (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1976: 53).

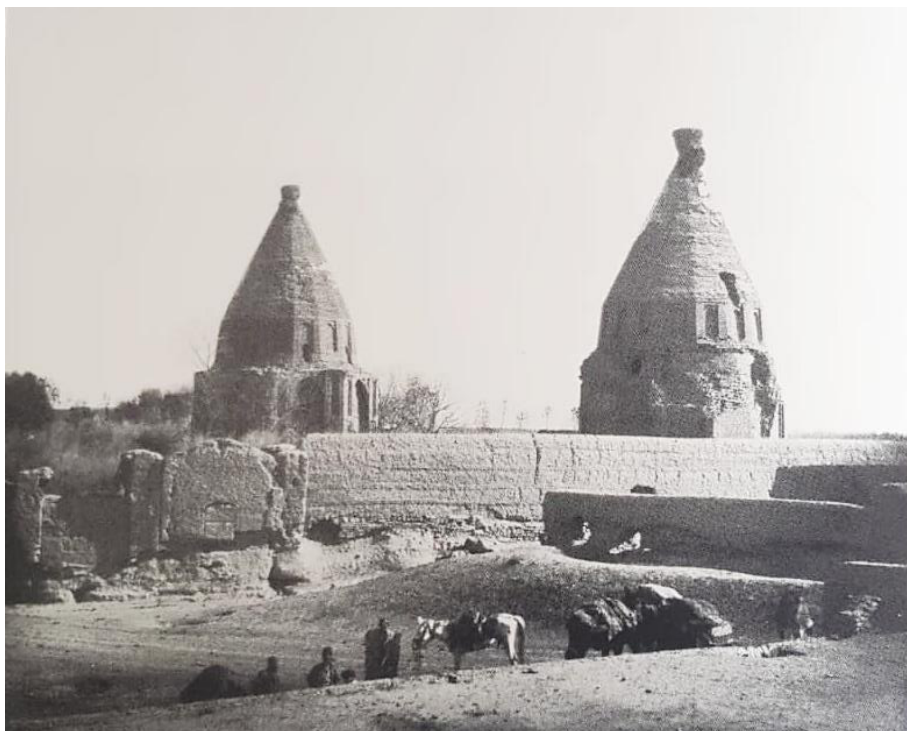


Image 2. Tomb towers of Bāg-e Sabz in the Qajar period, view from SW, Holtzer (Source: *Qom-e Qadīm*, p. 165)



Image 3. Tomb towers of Bāg-e Sabz near Šahīd Rūhānī Boulevard, view from SW (2015)

Unfortunately, the old gate and city walls have all vanished and there is no trace of them today. However, a picture from the Qajar period clearly shows the location of Tomb towers of Kāšān gate in relation to the gravestones and mud walls. The picture is taken from approximately south-west, probably from the top of the ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far's Mausoleum, around which there is an old graveyard. Between the building from which the photograph was taken and the domes of Bāġ-e Sabz, there are ruins of two other buildings, one of which is built in an architectural style similar to the Tomb tower. They are assumed to be remnants of a building of the same type as the other Tomb towers, whose dome has collapsed. In the front, there was also a building stylistically more similar to Safavid architecture. In the very far distance, inside the city, the conical dome of yet another Tomb tower is visible. Given the location and orientation of the map, this can be identified as the mausoleum of Emāmzāde Esmā‘īl Sarbaġš.

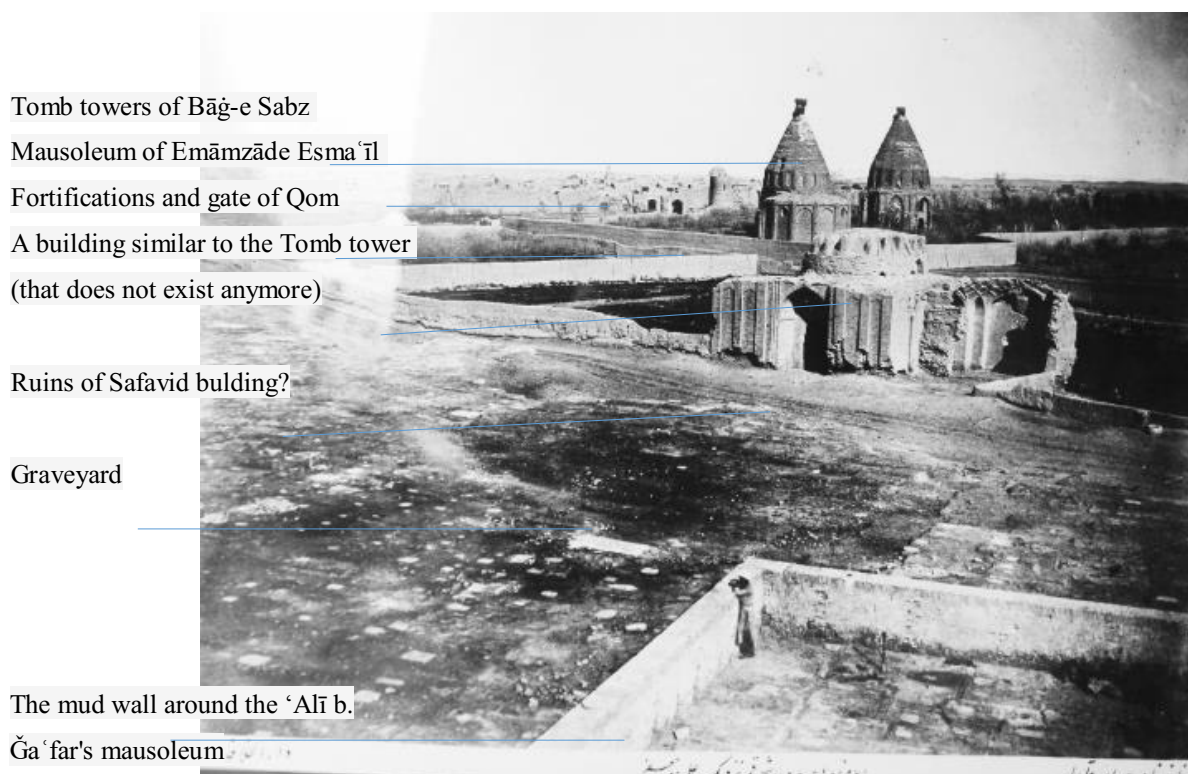
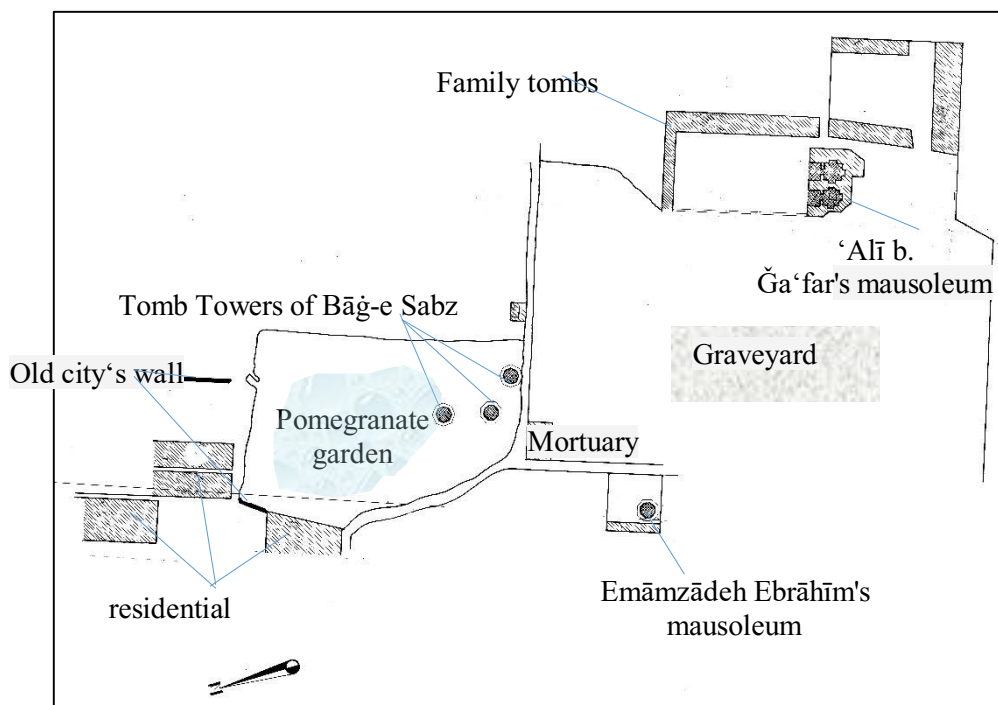


Image 4. A historic photo of the tombs of Bāġ-e Sabz from the Qajar era, view from the south (Source: Golestān palace- archive in Tehran, with additions by the author)

A sketch of the Tomb towers of Kāšān Gate from 1975 clearly shows how close the old features of the town (remains of old fortifications) were to the Tomb towers and the historical cemetery, corroborating the evidence from the previously-discussed Qajar photographs.



Drawing 1. The Tomb towers of the Kāšān gate area from 1975, (Source: Archive of ICHTO, with additions by the author)

Image 5, taken from the same spot and at the same angle as the historical photographs discussed, clearly demonstrates the modern expansion of the town, while also showing that the old graveyard near the 'Alī b. Ğa'far's mausoleum is still in its original location.

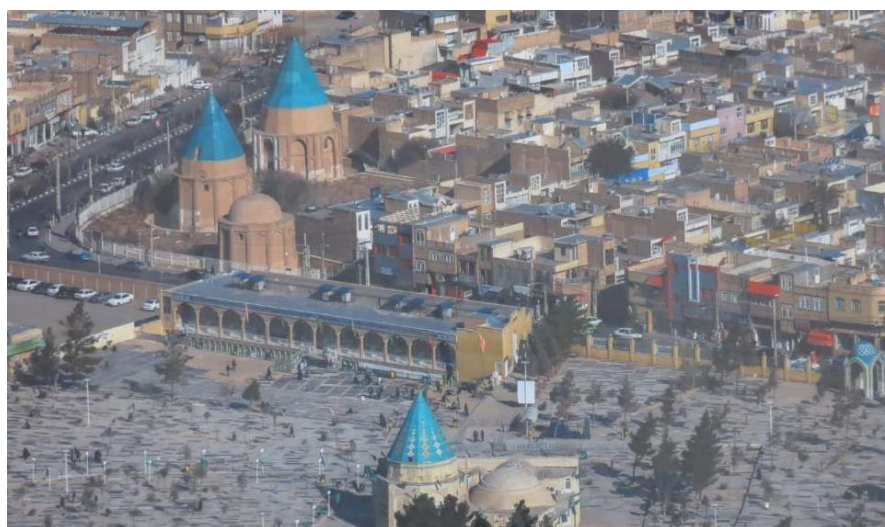


Image 5. Aerial image of the Tomb towers of the Kāšān gate, view towards the north (Source: Archive of ICHTO)

Other relevant historical documents include a drawing by Eugene Flandin (1840-1841), which shows the gate and walls of the town in more detail. The tower adjacent to the gate is similar to the one in the photograph from the Qajar period (Img. 4). In this picture, there is no garden around the buildings, but a creek flows southward next to the North Dome. It also seems as if the towers were elevated from the base level of other structures surrounding them. An engraving by Pascal Coste from the same period shows a similar picture to Flandin's painting. However, according to reliable pictures, such as the Qajar photographs discussed, as well as to a historical map (Drawing 1), the Tomb towers on Coste's engraving are not in their exact geographical location. Rather, it seems that Coste wanted to present all the important elements of the area together, regardless of their actual location and realistic perspective. This is why on his engraving, the the Tomb towers of Kāšān Gate, the city fortifications, and the building next to one of the tombs, which might be a water reservoir or mortuary, are all perfectly aligned.

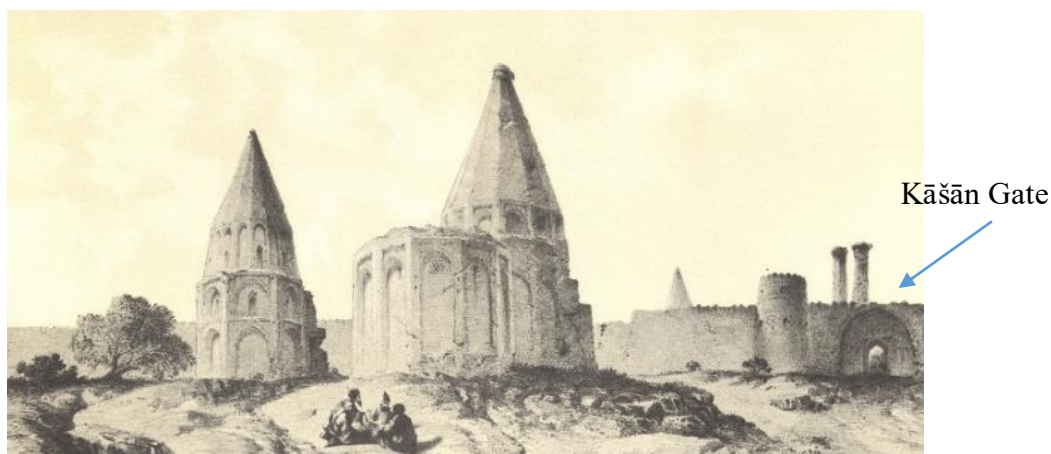


Image 6. The Tomb towers of Bāg-e Sabz, and Kāšān Gate represented on the other side of picture, E. Flandin 1840, (Source: *Voyage en Perse de MM*)



Image 7. The Tomb towers of Bāg-e Sabz, Pascal Coste 1840 (Source: *Monuments Modernes de la Perse*, 1876)

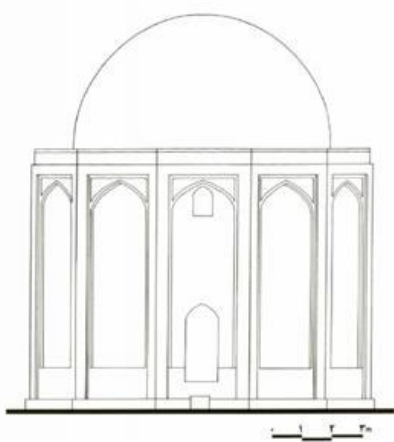
The three towers inside the garden, which are taller than others, are the burial site of the rulers of the time. Today, they are significantly less popular with tourists and pilgrims than the Emānzāde. The three towers share a similar style of architecture, with their domes being similar in height, size and form. Only the Southern Dome looks different, but that is because it

has collapsed at the zone of transition. All Tomb towers have been fixed and restored many times, and one can spot the differences between their present condition and the old pictures.

The Tomb towers of Bāg-e Sabz have been given various names, and researchers are not unanimous on who is buried in them. Thus, they will be referred to as the Southern, Middle, and Northern Tomb in this work, according to their geographical location.

4-1- Bāg-e Sabz: South Tomb tower

Located at the southern end of the pomegranate garden known as the Bāg-e Sabz, this dome is called 'Alī Ṣafī's Dome by Wilber (D. Wilber, 1955: 115) and Ḥvāḡe Aṣīl al-Dīn by Feyz and Ṭabāṭabā'ī (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 420; Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1976: 53). What marks the difference between this tower in its present condition and the other two towers is the part above the shaft and the shell, which is covered with a spherical dome, in contrast to the tent-shaped domes of the two other Tomb towers. Most probably, the outer shell of this dome had once been tent-shaped, but it has collapsed and has subsequently been replaced with the current one. The oldest pictures available of the complex show this tower without an outer dome shell, which indicates that it must have had collapsed a long time ago.



Drawing 2. North elevation of the South Dome (Source: *Ganġnāme*, p.205, with additions by the author)

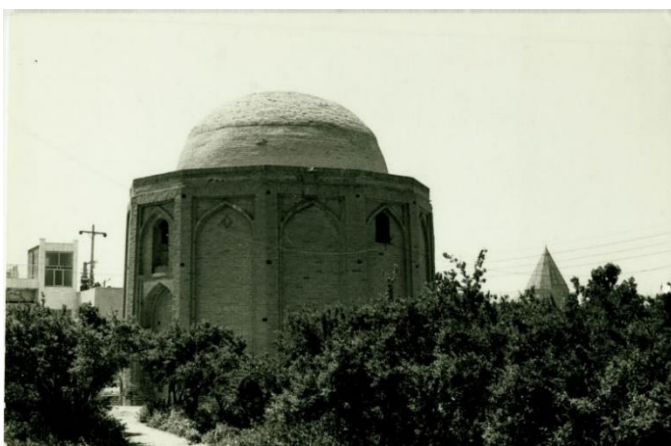


Image 8. General view of the South tomb of Bāg-e Sabz, looking northwest (Source: Archive of ICHTO)

4-1-1 Architectural specifications

Exterior

The structure is a regular dodecagon, circa 3 meters long on each side. Along each of the twelve sides, there is a shallow, recessed, rectangular panel, with a blind pointed arch, 2 meters wide and 0.20 meters deep. These panels are 7.3 meters high from the socle of the walls. The only exception is the panel on the north side, which is deeper and has a smaller arch. This panel contains the outer archway, leading to an intramural staircase not accessible at ground

level. There are four axial windows on four sides (NE, SW, NW, SE) of the building; they reach up to the zone of transition, where they are shaped as pointed arches. There is some brick *bannai* decoration on the south and east sides, which spells the name 'Alī. The upper part of the tower has been demolished. However, based on the similarities between the measurements and architectural style of this and the Middle Dome, it can be reasonably assumed that the Southern Dome once also had a drum with sixteen recessed blind arches, and it was probably of a discontinuous double-shell type, with the outer shell being definitely shaped like a tent roof. It is stated in the ICHTO reports that following the establishment of the Organization for Protection of Cultural Heritage, a new dome was erected over the tower, which included an elevated platform around the dome to prevent and control humidity (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 421)

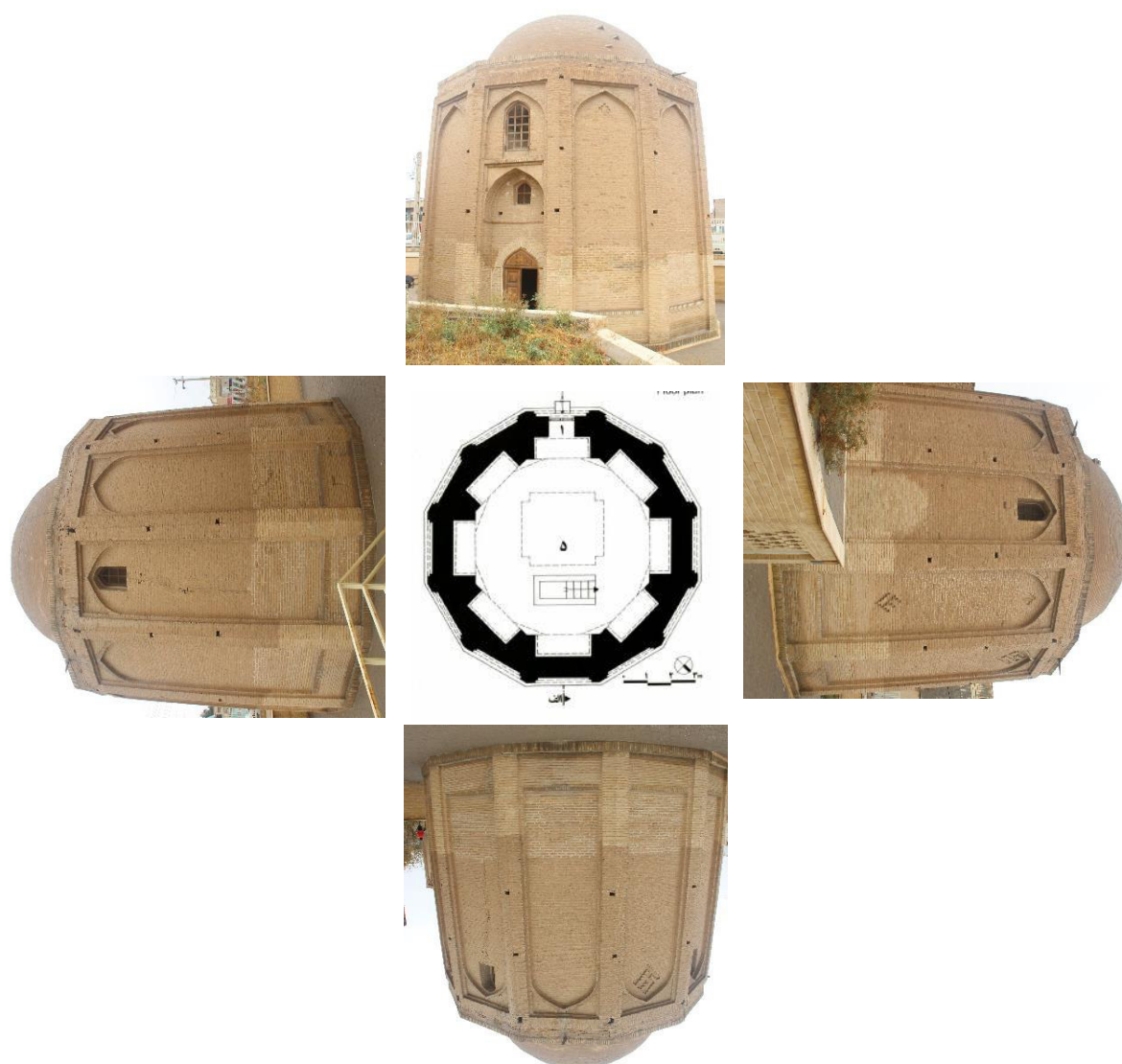
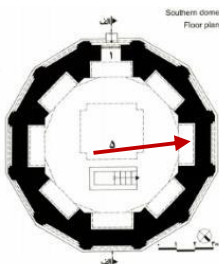


Image 9. Visualization of the eight facades of the South Tomb of Bāg-e Sabz
Drawing 3. plan of the South Tomb, (source: *Ganġnāme*,2010:205, with additions by the author)

Entrance

There were originally three doorways in the building, as visible on old pictures, but today only the north entrance is open. Its two-story façade, as well as the greater depth of its arch, mark this side as the main entrance. The entrance is 2.6 meters high and 0.8 meter deep. The other doorways may have been blocked to better protect the building. Even with only one entrance, enough light inside is provided by the four windows mentioned earlier.



Drawing 4. location of the east doorway (source: *Gangnāme*, P. 203, with addition by the author)

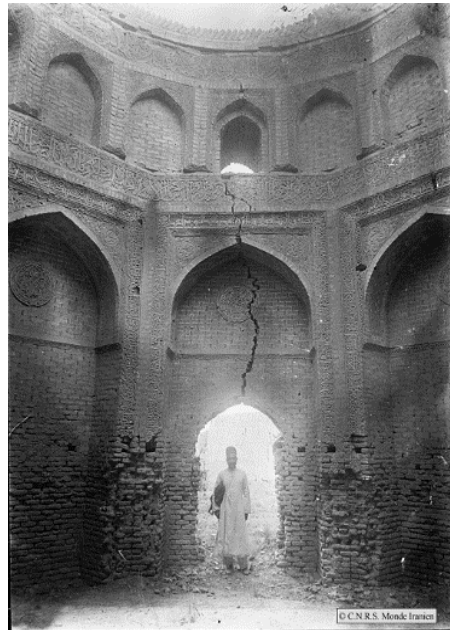
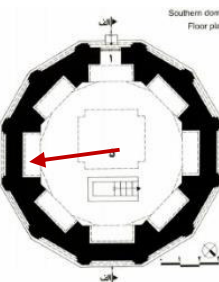


Image 10. The east doorway before restoration, H. Viollet. (1911-1913) Source: *C.N.R.S. Monde Iranien HV857*



Image 11. The present condition of the east doorway



Drawing 5. location of the west doorway (source: *Gangnāme*, P. 203, with addition by the author)

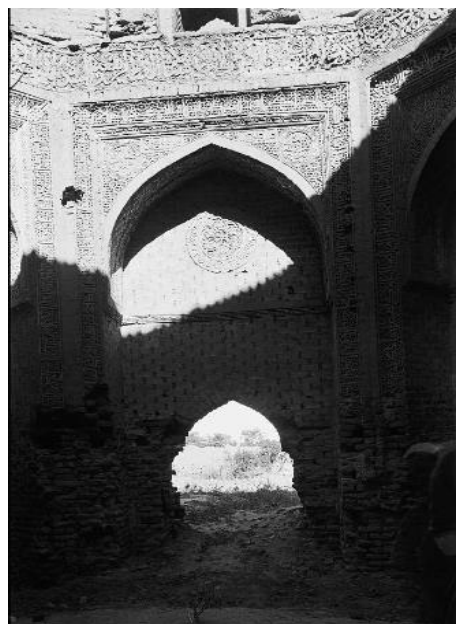
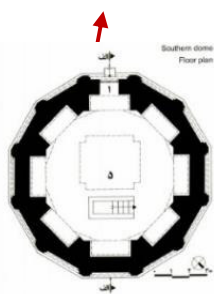


Image 12. The west doorway before restoration, Herzfeld, 1925 (source: *learninglab.si.edu* site 25.10.2016)



Image 13. The present condition of the west doorway



Drawing 6. location of the north doorway (source: *Ganġnāme*, P. 203, with addition by the author)

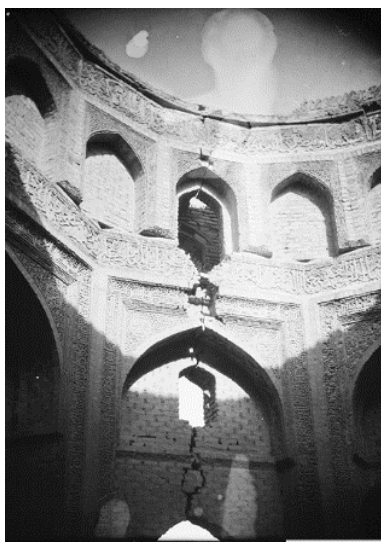


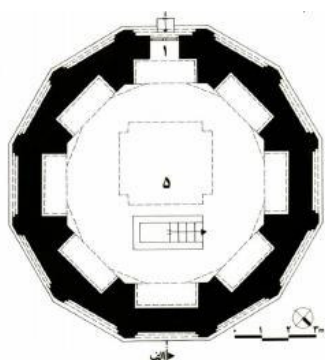
Image14. The northern doorway before restoration, H. Viollet. (1911-1913) (Source: *C.N.R.S. Monde Iranien* HV768)



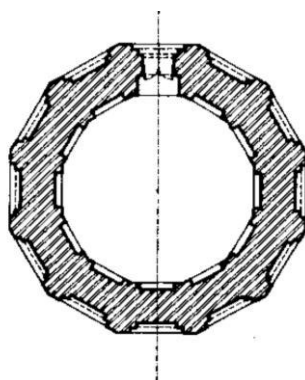
Image15. The present condition of the north doorway

Interior

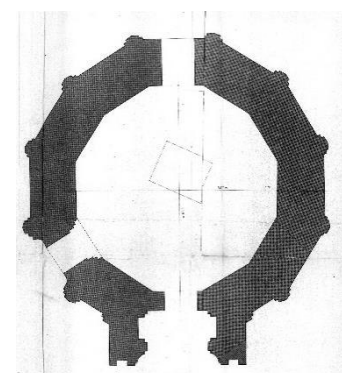
The interior is built on a regular, octagonal plan, 3 meters on each side, with a diameter of 7.90 meters. On each side, there are rectangular, recessed panels, 0.8-0.9 meter in depth, framed by inscription bands and enclosed in pointed arches; these are 2.3 meters wide and 5.3 meters high.¹ The walls are approximately 1.5 meters thick. The pillars between the sides on the inside do not correspond to those on the outside. Such asymmetry is unusual in this type of building. In none of the existing dodecagonal tombs, whose plans are provided in table 5 (chapter 2), no such disparity and asymmetry is seen between the internal and external walls in their plans. furthermore, the structural bed of the building is not uniform, which causes uneven weight distribution, resulting in damage and cracks.



Drawing 7. plan of the South Tomb, (source: *Ganġnāme*,2010:205)



Drawing 8. Plan of Borġ-e Qorbān 12-13th C, at Hamadan (Source: *Aṭar* n.38-39, pp. 337)

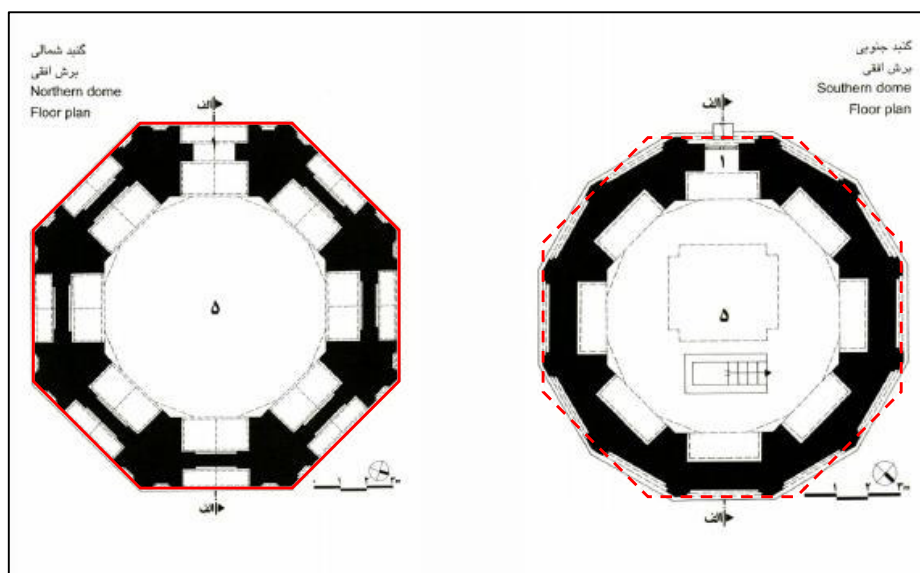


Drawing 9. plan of Pīr-e Morādābād at Farahan, 13-14th (Source: Archive of ICHTO)

¹ The dimensions are given according to the ICHTO maps.

According to the construction researcher, the cracks observed in the building's body in the pre-reconstruction photos from 1913, 1955), could attest to the unbalanced structural behavior and to the issues created after modifications and changes in the plan.

This issue has been given great attention, and the consensus is that, given this asymmetry and lack of bond between the bases of the twelve sides on the outside and eight on the inside, this building must have been constructed in two phases. It is not clear when the second phase began. A greater insight and exact dating requires vertical and horizontal sounding of the building's body and further archeological surveys. At any event the building's plan may have been built as an octagon both internally and externally during the first phase of the construction, much like the northern tomb close to this dome. What strikes most in the comparison of these two plans, is the thickness of the walls between the eight columns. They were not load bearing and instead the weight of the dome was mostly transferred to the columns. With the changes made in the columns of the southern tomb, there was a need to widen the walls between them, and as can be observed from the plan, their thickness is nearly half the columns' diameter (Draw.10). However, this change did not occur on the walls of the four main directions, which served as entrance. They become cracked at the top the openings (Img. 10-14-18). For this reason, in the next phase and to ensure greater strength, the entrances were closed by walls leaving the building with only a single entry.



Drawing 10. Plans of the Southern and Northern Domes of Bāg-e Sabz, (source: *Ganġnāme*, p. 203, with additions by the author)

Each of the panels is framed by an inscription frieze, 0.30 meter wide. These bands begin 1 meter above the floor level, rise vertically, then pass over the spandrels, decorating three sides of all the rectangular recessed panels. A horizontal, epigraphic frieze runs above each panel. It is 0.8-meter-high and it marks the point of transition from an octagonal plan to a hexadecagonal shape above.

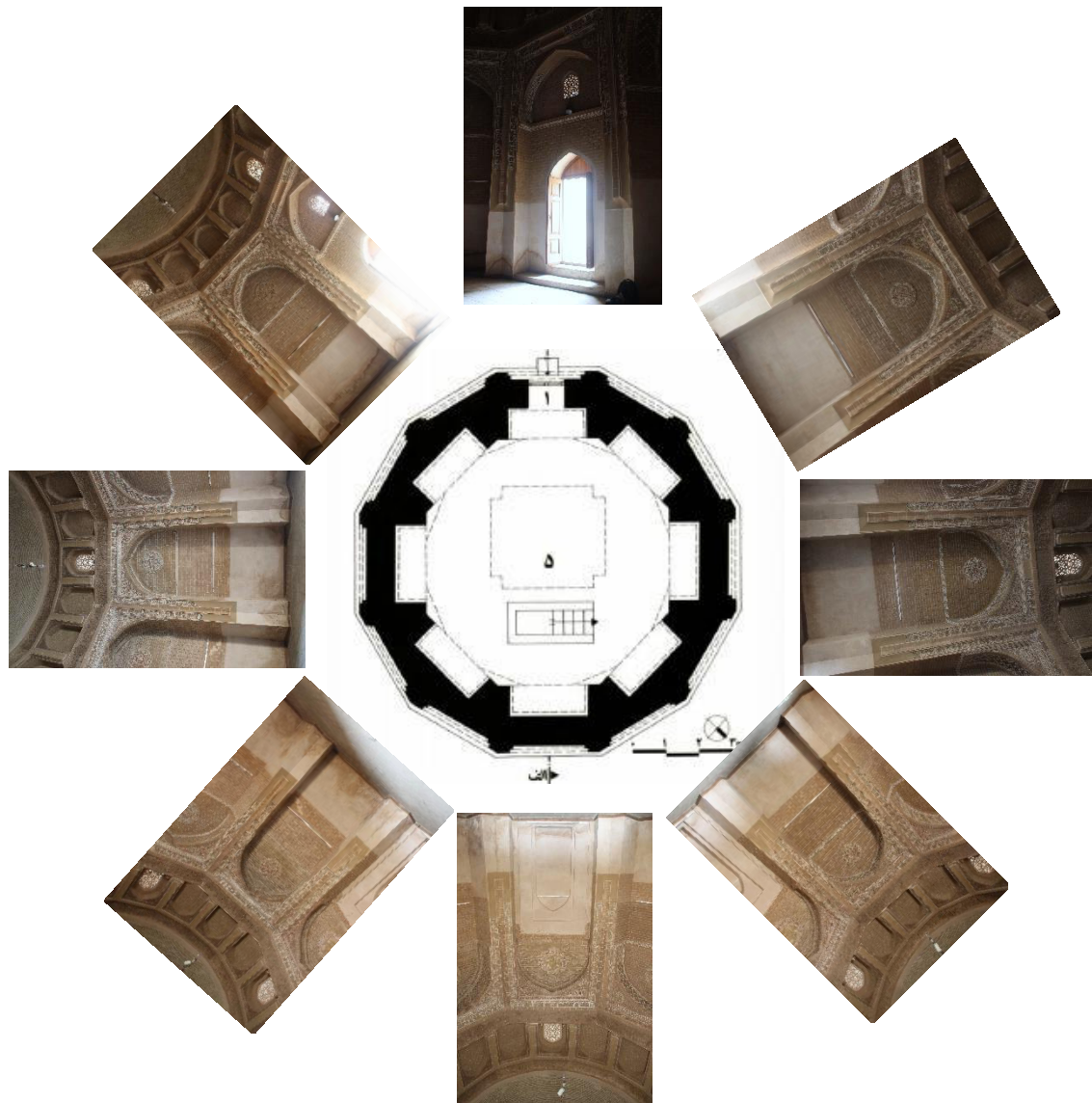


Image 16. Photo documentation of the eight sides of the interior of the south Tomb of Bāg-e Sabz
Drawing 8. Plan of the South Tomb of the Bāg-e Sabz (source: *Ganġnāme*, 2010, p. 203)

The sixteen-sided part includes blind, pointed arches, which provide support for the upper part of the dome, transferring the weight from the upper part to the lower. The height of the sixteen panels is approximately 1.70 meters. Four of these panels include skylights; originally these were decorated with plaster lattice work but this has now fallen off. Another epigraphic band separates this section from the circular part of the dome. This second inscription is nearly 0.60 meter-wide and runs around the collar of the dome. The overall height of the structure from the floor to the apex of the dome is 11.87 meters.²

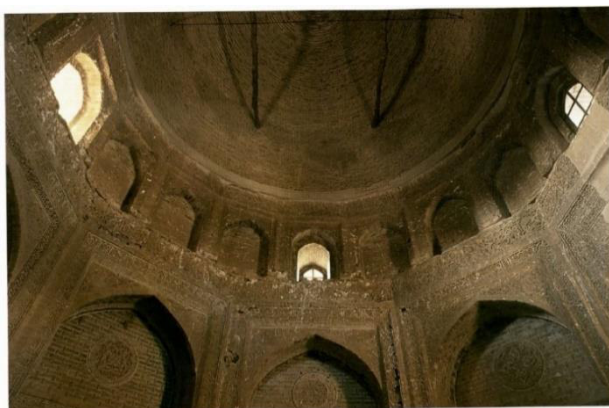


Image 17. the inner space of the Tomb tower, (source: Archive of ICHTO)

Mihrāb

There was once a magnificent *mihrāb*, decorated with exquisite plaster work, on the southern side of the building. This was demolished and levelled to the ground in the course of restoration. Some parts of it were still in place in the Qajar era, as seen on Sarre's photograph from 1895-1900, which clearly shows the stucco decorations.

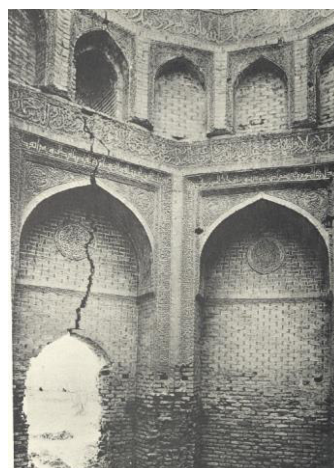


Image 18. the interior of the Tomb tower, Wilber, 1955 (source: *The Architecture of Islamic Iran*, Fig. 200)



Image 19. the present condition of the south side and the *mihrab*

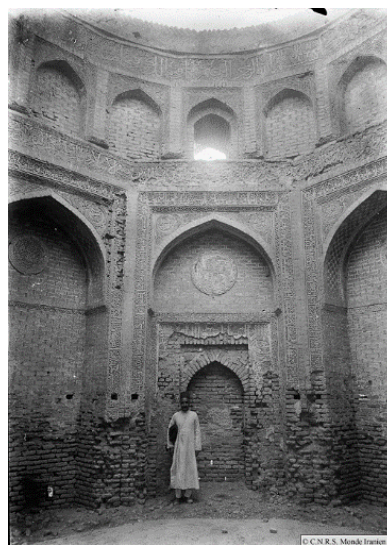


Image 20. southern side of the dome chamber before restoration, H. Viollet. (1911-1913) (Source: *C.N.R.S. Monde Iranien HV858*)

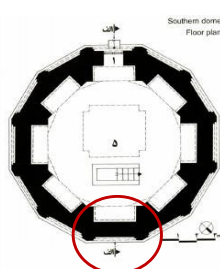
² The dimensions are given according to the ICHTO maps.

As evident in Sarre's photograph, the *mihrāb* was composed of three parts:

1. The central pointed arch niche with two spandrels
2. The band with inscription
3. The decorative outer border of the *mihrāb* (at the same level as the wall of chamber).

The historical photograph shows only the details of parts two and three and unfortunately the part one is damaged. The stucco inscription includes a verse inviting to prayer, from surah al-Isrā' (17:78), written in cursive (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 56: 1976). The blank space between the letters is covered with floral and arabesque motifs, which are partially visible in the old picture. Part three – the decorative outer border - is also decorated with stucco in semi-embossed, carved technique and includes floral motifs.

The framed form of the *mihrāb* is then enclosed in another band, decorated with exquisite plasterwork with floral motifs.



Drawing 9.
location of the
mihrab (source:
Ganġnāme, P. 203,
with additions by
the author)

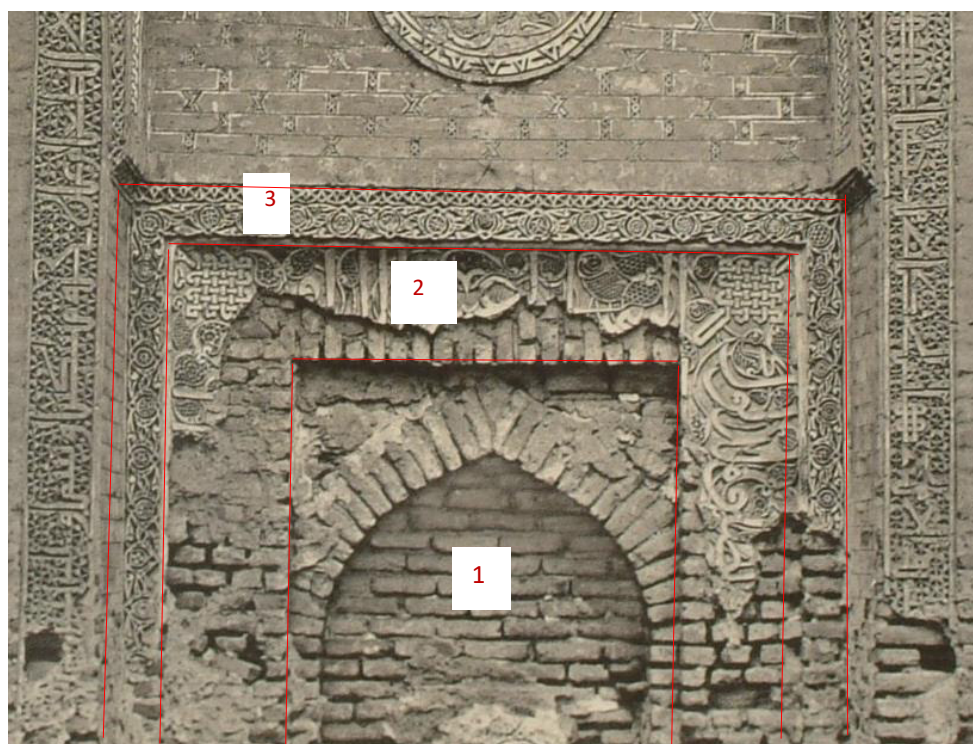


Image 21. The collapsed *mihrāb* before restoration, Sarre 1895-1900,
(source: *Denkmäler persischer Baukunst*)

Crypt

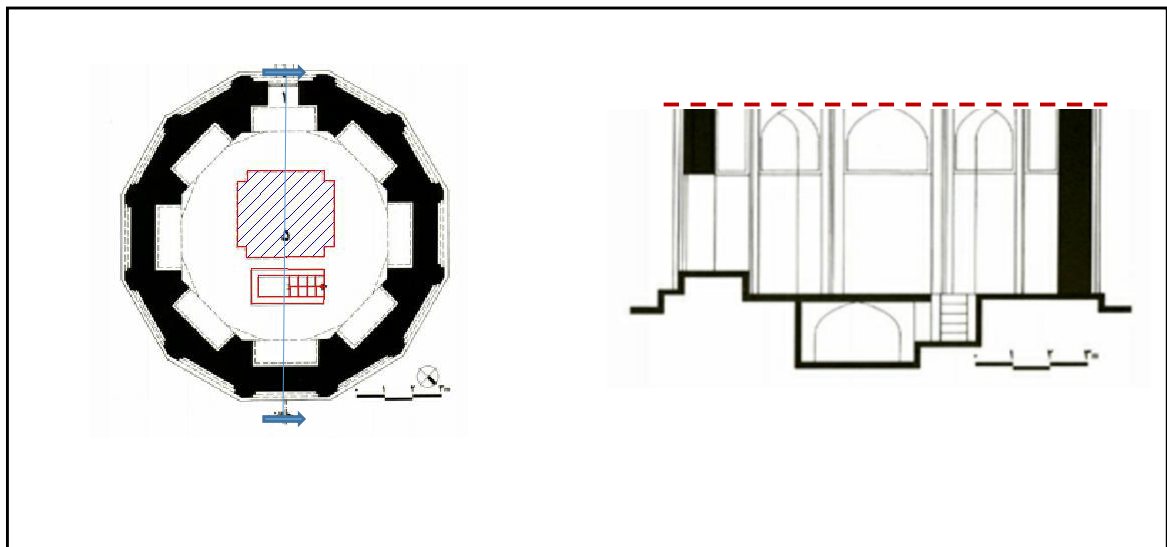
In the center of the octagon, near the south side, there is a staircase providing access to the crypt. It is square in plan, measuring 3x3.40 meters, with a 2-meters-tall vaulted ceiling. According to the archeological reports of Qom ICHTO, this was the burial site of the deceased interred in the mausoleum. However, presently, no traces of any graves or gravestones survive. The crypt was excavated in 1998 and subsequently restored (‘Arab, 2002: 154)



Image 22. the crypt in its present condition



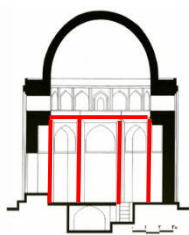
Image 23. present entrance to the crypt



Drawing 10. plan and section of the crypt of the Northern tomb of Bāg-e Sabz (source: *Ganġnāme*, 203, with additions by the author)

4-1-2 Epigraphic Material

There are three main inscription bands in the mausoleum, all in Arabic. The lowermost inscriptions are written over the eight panels of the lower octagon. This band is 35 cm wide and painted in bright colours, with a *Kufic* text set against a hatched background. This inscription includes surah al-Dahr (76) and surah al-Qadr (97). It begins in the NE corner, at the same spot where another, cursive inscription further up also starts. According to Feyz Qomī, it was written by the calligrapher Sayyed Ḥasan ‘Alavī (whose name also appears on it) (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 422).



Drawing 11. the location of inscription
(Source:

Ganġnāme, p. 202, with additions by the author)



Image 24. Parts of the kufic inscriptions along the 8 panels.

Unfortunately, the lower sections of the inscription are completely damaged, while in other parts, poor restoration attempts have rendered it illegible. Geometric patterns were used to fill the background of the inscription, improving its legibility – the latter can be deduced as the scale of these motifs varies depending on the height of the writing, which does make the letters look clearer.

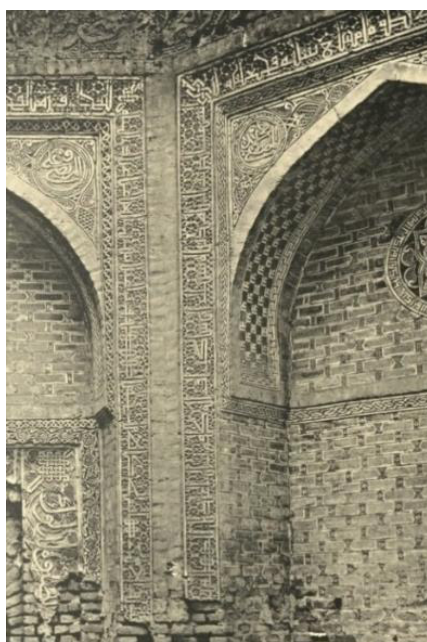


Image 25. Inscription on the octagonal panels -southern side prior to restorations; 1900(source: F. Sarre, *Denkmäler persischer Baukunst*1895)

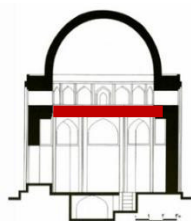


Image 26. A portion of the inscription on the octagonal panels - southern side after restorations

The second main inscription band of the mausoleum is located at the transit zone of the octagon to the hexadecagon. It contains important information about the patron of the building, the date of construction, and the deceased buried there. The text is transcribed below:

ذكر القديم اعلیٰ وبالتقدیم اولیٰ- امر باساس هذه البقعه الرفیعه والسیده المنیعہ المولیٰ الصاحب الاعظم اعدل العرب والعجم
الدنیاء الدین صفی الاسلام و المسلمین علی اعزالله انصاره و ضاعف اقتداره رسم مرقد عمه الصاحب اصیل الدوله و
الدین جمال الاسلام و المسلمین و ولده و فلذہ كبده الصاحب الشہید المغفور جمال الدوله و الدین اصیل الاسلام و المسلمین
علی بن ابی المعالی بن علی صفی بر دله مضجعہما و جعل الجنه مرجعہما فی شہور سنہ احدى و ستین و سبعمائه.

Translation: "The mention of the Eternal one is loftiest and is worthiest of memorial. There ordered the establishment of this lofty tomb and mighty seat the lord, the most exalted, just lord of the 'Arabs and non- 'Arabs al- Dunya wa al-Dīn Ṣafī al- Islam wa al-Muslimīn 'Alī, may God honour his companions and redouble his capacities. He designed the resting place of his uncle the lord, Aṣīl al- Dawla va al- Dīn, Ġamāl al-Islam wa al-Muslimīn wa his so, and the apple of his eyes (lit. 'part of his liver') the martyred, pardoned lord, Ġamāl al-Dawla wa al-Dīn, Aṣīl al-Islam wa al-Muslimīn, Alī b. Abī al-Ma'ālī b. 'Alī Ṣafī. May God make the resting place for the two of them cool and make paradise the place to which the two of the return. In the months of the year 761/1360" (Hillenbrand, 2005: 75).



drawing 12. the location of the middle inscription
(Source: Ganġnāme, p. 202, with addition by the author)

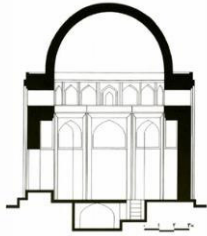


Image 27. Detail of the end of the middle inscription showing the construction date; Herzfeld, 1925 (source: *learninglab site* 21.12.2017)



Image 28. the part of the middle inscription on the west side, Herzfeld, 1925 (source: *learninglab site* 21.12.2017)

The third inscription is located at the zone of transition of the hexadecagon to the circle; this includes some Quranic verses from surah al-Fath (48: 1-4), rendered in stucco. The verses are about victory and conquest.



Drawing 13. the location of third inscription (Source: *Ganġnāme*, p. 202, with addition by the author)



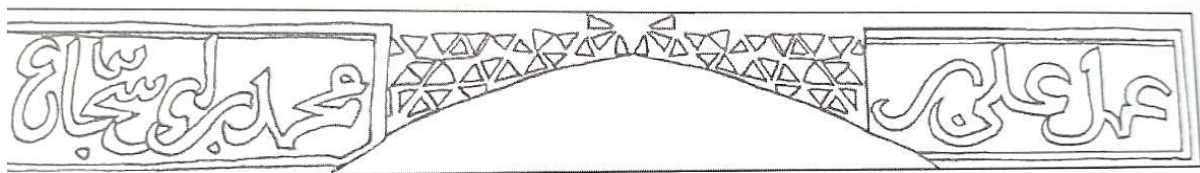
Image 29. Detail of plaster inscription band, that reads the second verse of Surah al-fath

Additionally, there is a two-part inscription in each spandrel above the entrance. This is written in the Naskh style and includes the name of the craftsman. The inscription reads:

“عمل علی بن محمد بن ابی شجاع ”

Translation: ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Abī Šuġā’, made it.

Image 30. detail of the inscription with the name of the craftsman, Herzfeld: 1925, (source: si.edu site, 21.12.207)



Drawing14. a sketching of a north-side inscription containing the name of the craftsman by Raḥmati (source: *Arāyeha-ye Gačī dar Āsār-e Tārīḫī –e Qom*, P. 5)

There is also a medallion-shaped inscription roundel over the entrance. It carries the name of the architect, rendered in raised plaster:

هذه العماره بعمل حسن بن علي... ؟ البنا و كتب فى رجب 761.

Translation: This building was built by Ḥassan, b. ‘Alī... in Rağab of 761 (May 1360).

Due to some careless restorations, this inscription is not fully legible. Feyz Qomī names Sayyed Ḥasan ‘Alavī as the calligrapher of the inscriptions and has read the third one as follows:

"هذه العماره بعمل حسن بن علي علوى و كتب الكتاب فى رجب 761". (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 423)



Image 31. inscription bearing the name of the architect or calligrapher of the building

Finally, sixteen inscribed roundels (medallions) are located in the spandrels of the octagonal panels. Collectively, they are known as Ṣalavāt- e kabīre [صلوات كبيره] :

"اللهم صلّ على /المُصطفى مُحَمَّد / المُرتضى على / البتول الفاطمه /السبطين الحسن و الحسين / صلّ على الزين العُباد /على و الباقر مُحَمَّد / الصادق جعفر / الكاظم موسى/ الرضا على / التقى مُحَمَّد / النقى على / الزكى العسگرى الحسن / المهدى صلوة الله /عليهم أجمعين"

This is a prayer praising the Prophet Moḥammad, his daughter, Fāṭeme, and the twelve Shia *imāms*. The text is written in relatively poor-quality thuluth, set in circles. A circular frieze of repeated geometrical forms runs around each medallion.



Image 32. details of the inscribed roundels



Image 33- inscribed roundels in the spandrels



Image 34. inscribed roundels in the spandrels above the *mihrab*

4-1-3 Decoration

The interior of the Tomb tower is covered with stucco, executed in various techniques such as carving, embossing, incised false joints, and carved brick-end plugs. They carry various geometric and vegetal designs. Each of the eight sides of the octagonal interior is divided into five sections, and each is covered with distinct stucco decorations, as described below:

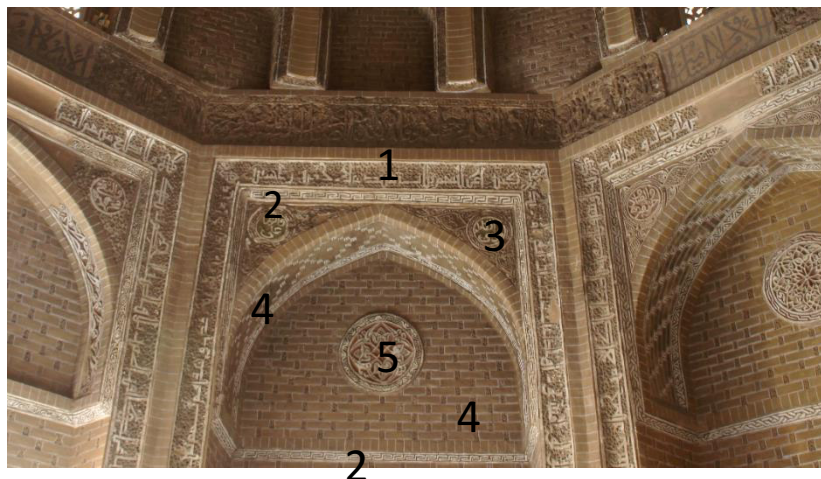


Image 35. Partitioning of decorated surface of the chamber

- 1- Inscription band in *Kufic* set against a hatched background, framing the panels of the lower octagon.



- 2- Decorative bands between the spandrels and the *kufic* inscription. These include a variety of floral and geometric motifs, among them cable molding, undulating motifs, and a thrice-repeated Greek key design. Some contain repeating bands of the name Moḥammad. These bands continue downwards and end one meter above the floor.



Image 36. some examples of the various motifs used in the carved frames

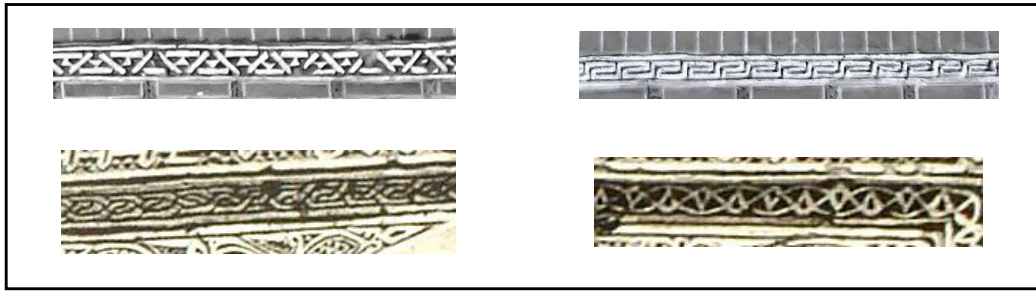


Image 37. some examples of borders with various motifs

Note how on the *qibla* side, the frieze is more elaborate, with distinct floral lines and volutes.



Image 38. detail of motifs used in the decoration of *mihrāb*

- 3- Spandrel with a medallion in the center, covered with floral and arabesque stucco carvings.

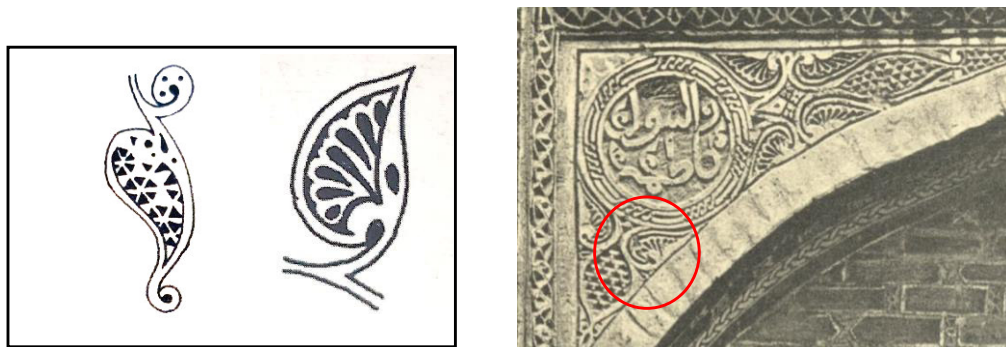


Image 39. examples of floral and arabesque motifs used in spandrels

- 4- The surface of the blind arches and of the inner frames and soffits is coated in plaster with incised joint and carved brick-end plugs. They mainly show the names of Allāh, Moḥammad and ‘Alī [على - محمد - الله] in *bannāiī* stucco.



Image 40. plaster decoration on soffits and inner frames of the chamber

- 5- The tympana of these arches contain roundels of geometric and floral designs, enclosed within decorative geometric or epigraphic bands; in some cases, the background is fully painted.



Image 41. some examples of various medallions used in the center of the tympana

In the transition zone of octagon to hexadecagon, there is less decoration, and the inner frames are covered with incised joint and carved break-end plugs.

The soffits of the blind arches in the upper zone have borders with floral and vegetal designs. The spandrels of the sixteen-niches are also decorated with geometric, floral, and arabesque motifs. However, a considerable part of these decorations are not clearly visible due to long-term damage and careless restoration.



Image 42. decorations on the surface of the sixteen panels in the upper zone

As the inner shell of the mausoleum has been restored, its original colors cannot be seen. The only colors now visible in the carved stucco are white and brownish red. However, in the late 19th century, Sarre noted blue and green in the inscription bands and in the medallions (Sarre, 1910:72).

4-1-1-4 History of the mausoleum and the deceased

The inscriptions in the building are among the most important documents providing information about the dates of the building and those buried in it. As evident in the cursive inscription described in the section on the epigraphic material, the monument was constructed in 1360 (761 AH), which places it during the period when the Şafī family ruled Qom (i.e. 1335-1446/AH 736-815). Based on Ṭabāṭabā'ī's work on the inscription, this mausoleum was most likely the burial site of the first Şafī ruler, Aşīl al-Dīn (though see below for more detailed discussion) (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1985: 15). This hypothesis is further reinforced by the fact that this inscription also names Ḥvāḡe 'Alī Şafī, the second Şafī ruler, as the one who ordered the construction of this building.

Another name on the inscription is that of the relatively well-known plaster craftsman 'Alī b. Moḡammad b. Abī Şoḡā'. Some scholars believe he was trained by Bahrām Qazbīnī, the architect and plaster craftsman responsible for the 'Alī b. Ğafar mausoleum, which was erected in 1339. These theories are based on when the buildings were constructed and their style (Raḡmatī, 2012: 60). In any case, the mausoleum now discussed may well be the first Tomb tower decorated by Abū Şoḡā'. Another architect (or perhaps calligrapher) mentioned in the medallion inscriptions is Seyyed Ḥasan 'Alavī or Ḥasan b. 'Alī Bannā [the builder], but we do not know anything else about him.

There is some disagreement regarding who was buried in the mausoleum. Ṭabāṭabā'ī and Feyz Qomī have mentioned two names: Ḥvāḡe Aşīl al-Dīn (son of 'Alī Şafī, the founder of the Şafī Dynasty), and his son, Ğamāl al-Dīn (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1976:53). Feyz Qomī says that Ḥvāḡe Aşīl was the judge of Iraq for 40 years, and Amīr Ğamal al-Dīn was his murdered son, who had been buried there prior to his father, and 'Alī Şafī ordered the construction of this dome over his grave. (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 420-421).

Conversely, *Qomnāme* states that Ḥvāḡe Taḡ ad-Dīn, the son of Ḥvāḡe Aşīl al-Dīn and grandson of 'Alī Şafī, was buried in the mausoleum. He was the first to rule Qom and its surroundings, taking over after the death of Abū Sa'īd Il-khan in 1335. No further details are available on his reign, though we do know that he was murdered while still in power, before 1358 (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1985: 20).

Finally, Hillenbrand dismisses entirely the idea that the person buried here was called Aşīl al-Dīn, believing that this was only the epithet of the deceased, and he was actually 'Alī b. Abū al-Ma'ālī. Hillenbrand posits that that the name 'Alī inscribed so frequently in the mausoleum suggests that the tomb was commissioned by one Şafī al-Islam va al-Muslimin 'Alī, whose

unnamed uncle is buried in the mausoleum along with one ‘Alī b. Abū al-Ma‘ālī (Hillenbrand, 2014:75-76).

Though an intriguing idea, Feyz Qomī’s Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s reasoning seems, on balance, more sound, considering the history and genealogy of the Ṣafī rulers. Qomī believes that the inscription is very clear on the two people buried in the mausoleum: one is Aṣīl al-Dīn, the other Ğamāl al-Dīn, who is called a martyr. The term Abū al-Ma‘ālī is used in place of the mentioned word, ”Aṣīl al-Daule” (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 424). Ṭabāṭabā’ī agrees with this theory, arguing that ”... the term ‘Abū al-Ma‘ālī’, which some thought to be the name of one of the deceased, is in fact used in place of Mo‘azzamollah [معظم له] (terms of respect for prominent figures), which are used in the conversations of the periods to come” (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1976: 54).

4-2 Bāg-e Sabz - Middle Tomb tower

Known as as Ḥvāḡe ‘Alī Ṣafī or Ḥvāḡe ‘Emād al-Dīn Maḥmūd Dome, this tower is located in the central dome in the Bāg-e Sabz, approximately 22 meters from either building. The structure’s architecture is similar to other domes at Bāg-e Sabz. The building has undergone several stages of restoration, and the differences can be seen clearly when comparing photographs from various points in history.

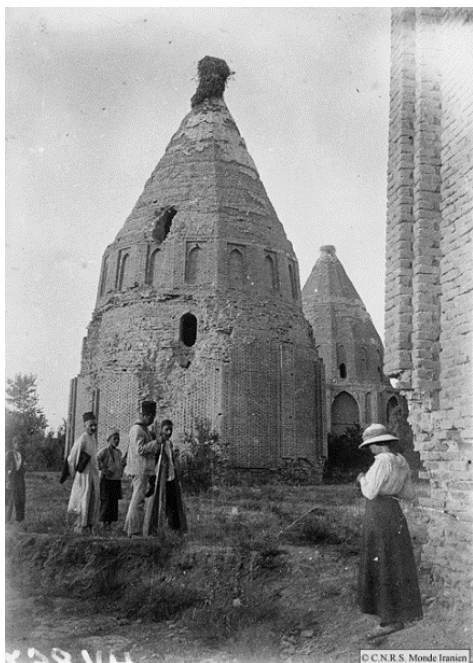


Image 1. the Middle and North Tomb towers before restoration 1911-1913 (Source: H. Viollet, *C.N.R.S. Monde Iranien*, HV867)



Image 2. Present condition, Middle Tomb of Bāg-e Sabz

4-2-1 Architectural specifications: present condition

Exterior

As reported by ‘Arab, the original foundations of the structure were uncovered in the course of restoration and excavation works, which revealed the running bonds of the brickworks upon which the twelve walls of the building are based (‘Arab, 1996: 596). On the outside, the plan is a regular dodecagon, on each side of which there is a recessed rectangular panel, 2.4 meters wide and approximately 7 meters high. Blind, pointed arches are used inside the panels. The size and depth of the vaults are the same as those of the South Dome of the Bāg-e Sabz. Brick piers are one-meter wide each and have been restored by the National Organization for Protection of Cultural Heritage. The height of the existing exterior walls from the ground is approximately 9 meters, above which there stands a cylindrical collar of the dome. As evident

in old photos by Henry Viollet, the original structure was a hexadecagon, but currently it is a polygon of twelve sides, built of bricks with a recession from the walls up to the height of 2.2 meters. Every side of the dome drum features a doubly stepped niche with a blind pointed arch on each side – these have been blocked and smoothed following the restoration process.

Pre-restoration images also show a window at the current base of the tent roof, which most likely belongs to an intramural winding staircase on the south side. Currently, the structure has four windows below the sixteen-sided niche along the four main axes. There is a sixteen-sided tent roof over the building, formed as a discontinuous double-shell dome. Currently, it is covered with plain turquoise tiles. The overall height of the structure from the base to the apex is nearly 20 meters.

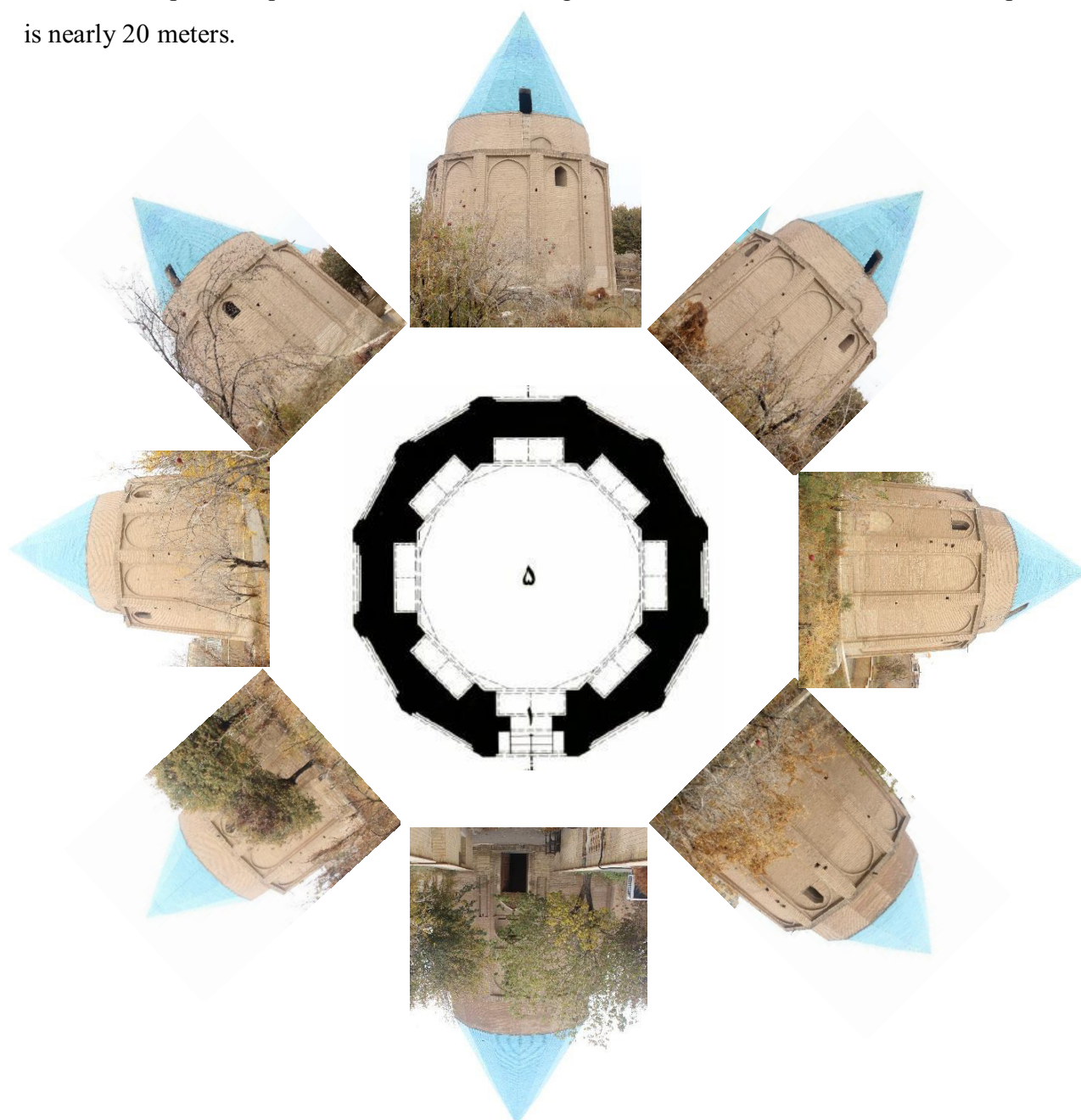


Image 3. Visualization of 8 facades of the Middle Tomb of Bāg-e Sabz

Drawing 1. plan of the Middle Tomb (source: *Ganġnāme*, p. 200)

Entrance

The main entrance of the building faces north and, with its two-storey layout, is clearly distinguishable from the other two sides. The outer angles of the entrance side are marked with two engaged columns, circa 3 meters high. Between them is the rectangular panel, comprising two arches in two levels, with a window in the upper arch and the entrance to the building in the lower arch.

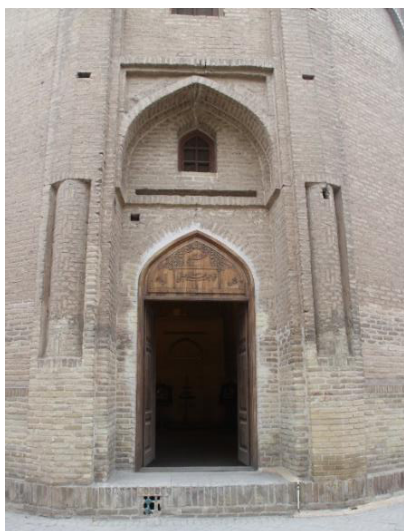


Image 4. Portal of the Middle Dome



Image 5. Entrance to the Middle Dome, interior view

Doorways along the other sides are blocked, as is also the case with the other towers of Bāg-e Sabz. Viollet's photographs from the early 20th century show that at least three doors were open at the time. 'Arab, an archaeologist who studied this complex, proposes that originally, the doorways functioned as ventilation ducts in the summer ('Arab, 1996: 593).

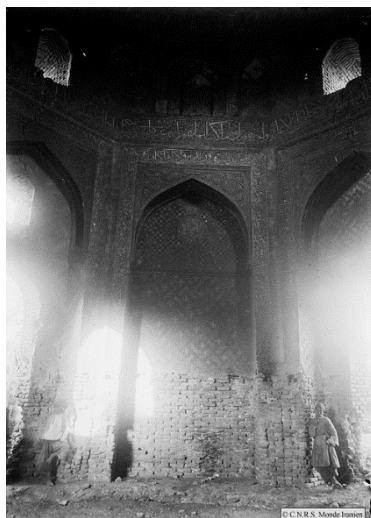


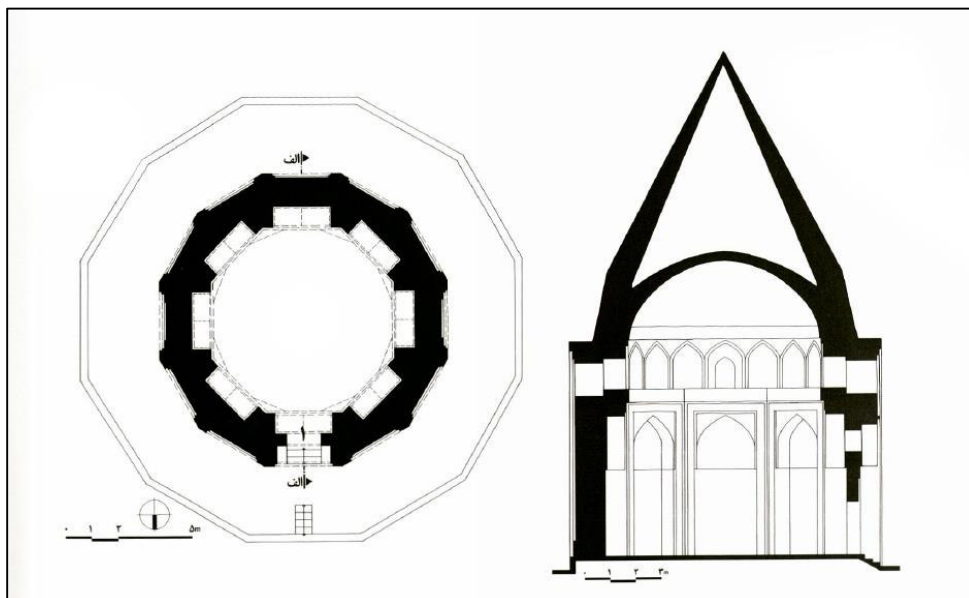
Image 6. Old photos by Viollet from interior of Middle Tomb of Bāg-e Sabz 1911-1913 (Source: *C.N.R.S. Monde Iranien*, HV867)

Interior

The interior plan is an octagon with a diameter of 9.7 meters and a rectangular panel with a deeply recessed arch along each side, 2.5 meters wide and 0.75 meter deep. The arches are c. 5.50-meters high, and their rectangular panels rise up to the lower side of the first inscription, at which point the plan transforms from an octagon to a hexadecagon. The area up to the top of the cursive inscription of the interior forms the main part of the structure, with a height of 6.8 meters.



Image 7. the Middle Dome, interior of tomb chamber



Drawing 2 -The plan and north- south section of the Middle Tomb tower (source: *Ganġnāme*, p. 200)

Like the South Dome, in this one the twelve sides on the outside and the eight sides of the inside do not correspond and are structurally detached, which suggests two different construction phases. Structural issues were discussed in detail in the part on the architectural specifications of the South Dome.



Image 8. photo documentation of the eight sides in the interior of the middle Tomb of Bāg-e Sabz

Drawing 3. plan of the Middle Tomb, (source: *Ganġnāme*, p. 200)

Over the eight rectangular frames, there is an inscribed frieze, above which follows the hexadecagonal part of the structure. The sixteen arches of this zone support the weight of the dome and transfer it to the walls, thus bringing some variety to the otherwise limited space of the Tomb tower.

Four of the axial arched niches contain windows, which are visible from the outside, and the rest contain recessed blind arches. The windows improve the fluidity of the rhythm and visual movement from the bottom to the top of the structure. The height from the present-day ground to the dome is approximately 15 meters.

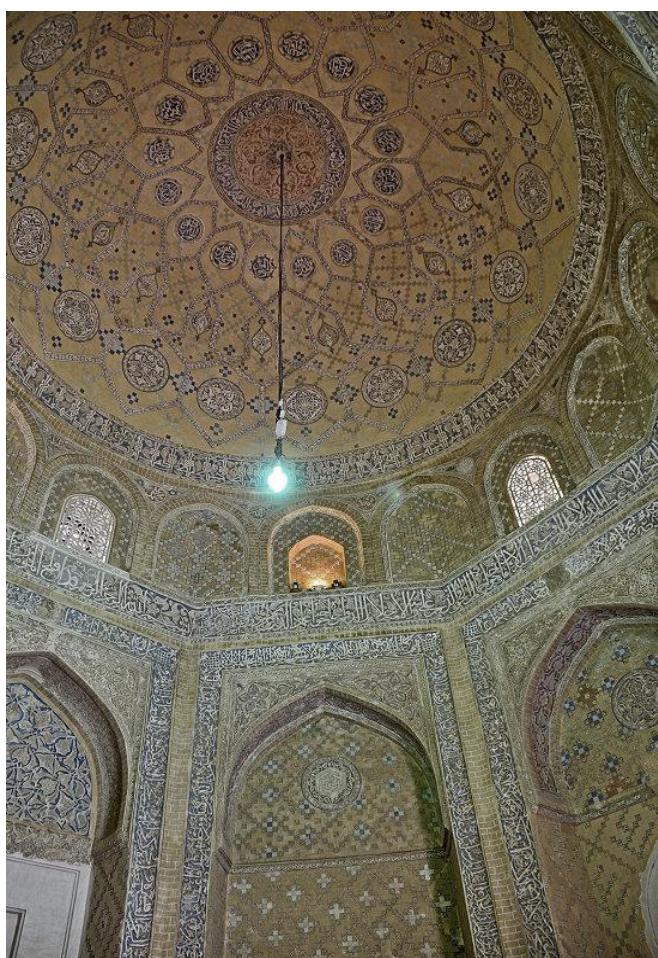


Image 9. the Middle Dome, interior view of the
SW side

Mihrāb

The *mihrāb* was placed along the southern side of the domed vault. Today, the only remaining trace of the *mihrāb* is its location: the decoration on this side is different from the others, as and the qībla arch is the only one where continuous stucco ornament fills the entire tympanum. The only evidence showing the form of the *mihrāb* is a photo by Viollet, which reflects only the frame of the *mihrāb* and outlines its form, as the decorated shell has all fallen off.

The picture also shows the disintegration in the layout of the *mihhrāb* walls and the absence of bonds between the bricks, which suggests that the wall in the center of the *mihhrāb* arch is an appendage and that this part has undergone multiple alterations through time. Further investigation is required in order to find out more about the existence of the *mihhrāb* and its development through time.



Image 10. *mihhrāb* before restoration, H. Viollet, 1911-2913 (Source: C.N.R.S. *Monde Iranien*, HV861)



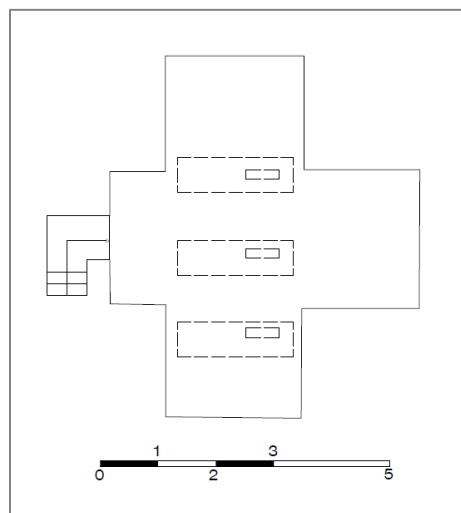
Image 11. current condition of *mihhrāb* 2014

The Crypt

Like the adjacent pair, this building too features an underground crypt, which can be accessed through the present-day floor. It consists of a cruciform space with a groin vault. As recorded in archeological reports, three graves were discovered in this area (‘Arab, 2002: 155). The crypt has been restored and altered and currently, there is no trace of the graves.



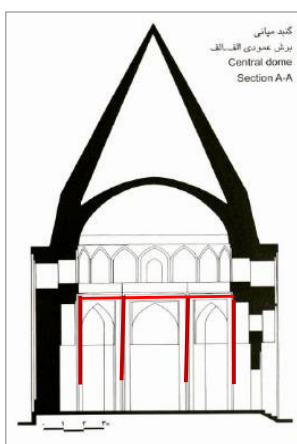
Image 12. interior of crypt



Drawing 4. The plan of crypt 103

4-2-2 Epigraphic Material

The lowermost inscription is a cursive inscription framing the arches of the octagon. It is 0.35-meter-wide and is written in white *thuluth* on a cobalt blue background. The background is filled with floral elements. The lower edge of the inscription is one meter above the ground level, and it runs parallel to the panels. This inscription contains verses from surah Yāsīn (36:1-45) (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1976: 58). The verses are about the Day of Judgement and the Resurrection Day, on which body parts are given the power to speak, and is thus closely connected to death and the concept of a tomb.



Drawing 5. the location of the inscription (Source: *Ganġnāme*, p.200, with addition by author)



Drawing 6. details from the *thuluth* inscription, (source: Raĥmatī, p.125, with addition by author)

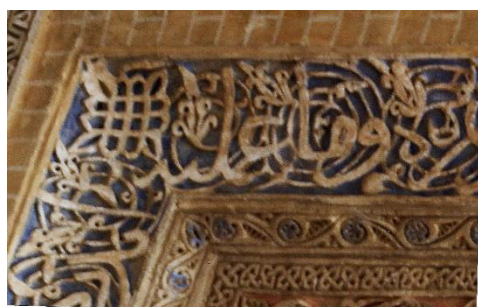


Image 13. details from the *thuluth* inscription

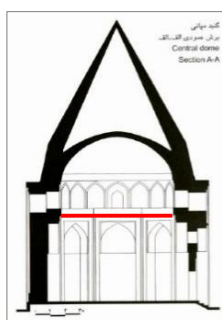


Image 14. the *thuluth* inscription of the NW side

Another inscription, also in cursive, begins above the south side of the octagon and runs along the whole structure. It is written in *thuluth*, on a cobalt blue background covered in fleshy, lobed vegetal elements. It carries verses of surah al-Mu'minūn (23:1-8), as well as the identity of those buried in the building and the construction date.

رب اغفر لساني المرقد اللطيف ذا:الصاحب الاعظم الدستور، الاعلم المشرف، قاطبه الالاقاب، خواجه جمال الحق و الدين على و ابنه الامير جلال الدين و اخاه خواجه عماد الدين محمود ابنا الخواجه صفي الدين و ادخلهم في رحمتك و انت ارحم الراحمين .في سننه 792.

Translation: God, forgive my words(interpretation) of the ‘pleasant tomb’ These are the Greatest lord, the most knowledgeable, all titles: Ḥvāḡa Ğamāl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Dīn ‘Alī and his son, Amir Ğalāl al-Dīn and his brother Ḥvāḡa ‘Emād al-Dīn Maḥmūd, the two sons of Ḥvāḡa Ṣafī al-Dīn And You are the most merciful of those who dispense mercy. in his (sc. God’s) year 792/1390.



Drawing 7. location of the inscription (Source: *Ganġnāme*, P.200, with addition by the author)



Image 15. a section of the inscription on the SW side with the names of the deceased and the construction date

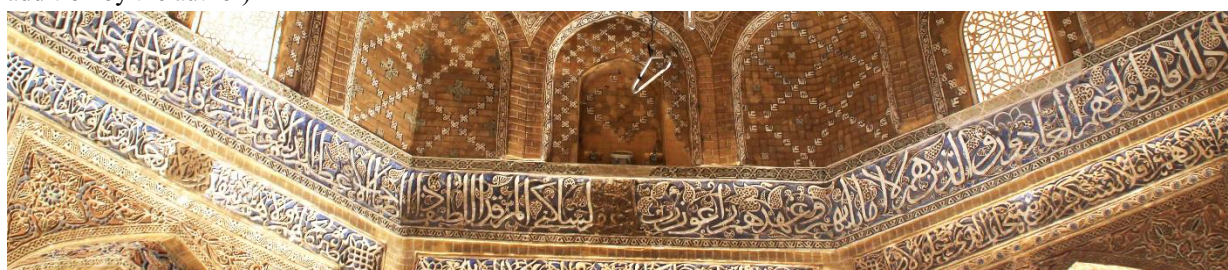


Image 16. the *thuluth* inscription band on the Collar of the internal dome

The lower inscription band is yet another exquisite frieze, situated along the transition zone of the hexadecagon to circle. It is written in kufic, also white on a cobalt blue background and decorated with ornamental foliage. Certain letters such as N ن are hardly legible on this inscription and ”where a series of letters without shafts occurs a redundant pair of plaited shafts is added above as a counterweight to fit the predetermined regular rhythm of the inscription” (Hillenbrand, 2014:81)

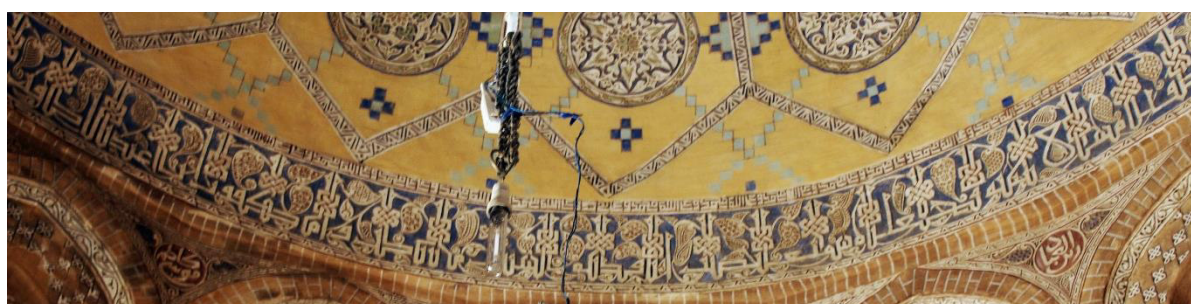
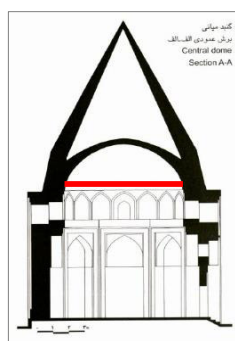


Image 17. cursive inscription in kufic on the base of dome

The inscription has two volute friezes, whose upper borders consist of a continuous repetition of the phrase: الملك لله الواحد القهار (translation: The ruler ship is due to god, the unique the avenger) in square Kufic.

The name of Moḥammad has been repeatedly written along the lower border. The inscription contains verses of surah al-Dahr (76:1-6) (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1976: 57). With its reference to the concept of free will and human freedom of choice in picking their path and destiny, as well as to the infidels' condition on the Dooms Day, it is eminently suitable for a mausoleum.

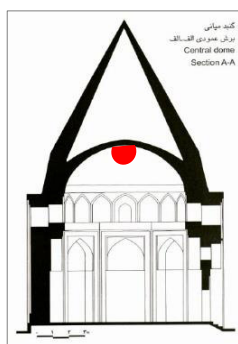


Drawing 8. the location of kufic inscription (Source: *Ganġnāme*, P.200, with addition by the author)



Image18. cursive inscription in *kufic*

There is another Quranic inscription, 0.25 meters wide and written in thuluth, placed in a circular band at the center point on the center of the dome. It contains verses of surah al ‘Imrān (3:16-17), whose content, with its references to angels, is visually appropriate to its location (Hillenbrand, 2014: 81). It is white on a cobalt blue background, with ornamental foliage covering the spaces between the letters, and it contains the name Moḥammad along the narrow friezes on either edge of the inscription.



Drawing 9. the location of round inscription (Source: *Ganġnāme*, p.200, with addition by the author)



Image 19. central inscription, underneath the dome

In addition to inscription bands, inscription medallions also appear in this structure. There are sixteen medallions in the central part of the inner dome; they each contain separately-written words, which together read:

{ لا اله الا الله/الملك/الحق المبين/محمد رسول الله صادق/الوعد الامين/على ولي الله/امير المومنين/وصى الرسول/رب العالمين/صدق الله العظيم و/صدق رسوله/الكريم و نحن/على ذلك من الشاهدين }

Translation: There is no god but God, the King, the clear truth. Muḥammad is the Messenger of God, he who keeps his promises. ‘Alī is the Friend of God, the Commander of the Faithful, the Heir of the Messenger, Lord of the Worlds, almighty God has spoken the truth, and his noble Messenger has spoken the truth, and we are amongst the witnesses to that.

This Shiite phrase determines the unity of God and the truth of Islam through the Prophet Moḥammad and then the *Imāmat* by ‘Alī.



Image 20. inscribed medallions in the central part of inner dome

Along with these medallions, there are other inscriptions in the spandrels between the sixteen smaller blind arches, which carry the names of Allāh and the fourteen immaculate Shia figures. The inscriptions are in *thuluth* and are placed in circular frames. The parts that are currently legible after the restoration are as follows – note that these are slightly different from what Feyz mentions in his book (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 419)

الله/ صمد/ على محمد/ فاطمه/ حسن و حسين/ زين العباد/ محمدباقر/ جعفر صادق/ موسى الكاظم/ على موسى الرضا/
محمد تقى/ على النقى/ محمد بن الحسن/ خلف الصالح.

Translation: Allāh/ Absolute/ ‘Alī Muḥammad/ Ḥasan and Ḥusain/ Zayn al-‘Abād/ Muḥammad Bāqīr/ Ğa‘far Šādīq/ Mūsā al-Kāzīm/ ‘Alī Mūsā al-Rīzā/ Muḥammad Taqī/ ‘Alī al-Naqī/ Muḥammad b. Ḥasan/ righteous successor (the title of 12. *imām* of shia)



Image 21. some of inscribed roundels with the Shia *Imams*' names

4-2-3 Decoration

The decorations of the building are reasonably well-preserved. They include some substantial stuccos and, due to extensive use of colors on almost all interior surfaces, as well as the variety of colors used, they are more impressive than the decorations of other tombs in Bāg-e Sabz. One might claim that this is the best- preserved example of an entirely polychrome medieval interior in all of Iran and its quality is superb (Hillenbrand, 2014: 80-81). The techniques used to decorate this building include semi-embossed, carved plaster (0.5 to 2.5 centimetres)¹, simulated incised brick joints and brick-end, false joint and carved plaster lattice. The *Aẓde kārī* or the solid and void plaster technique is among the common methods applied in this tomb on semi-embossed incised plaster.

Decorative elements mainly include geometrical motifs, arabesques, and friezes, are all carried out using plaster, and mostly painted. The colors used are ecru, light blue, green, red, ochre, and dark blue, and they can be seen on all spandrels and soffits of the main arches in the octagon.

¹ There are many classifications of plaster decorations, which are mainly based on shape and design. However, the classification of technology and techniques proposed by researchers such as Sālehī Kāḥkī, Ašlānī and Šekoḥte in recent years is more complete and relevant to the specimen or materials of this project. It is based on the level of embossment and technical skills (Šālehī Kāḥakī; Ašlānī, 2011:95).

Some motifs and inscriptions are quite plain, while others are deeper and more carefully executed, which altogether creates a pleasing sense of variety. Joint plugs are used on chamber walls up to the height of 3 meters, as well as on the tympana of some vaults up to the soffit.

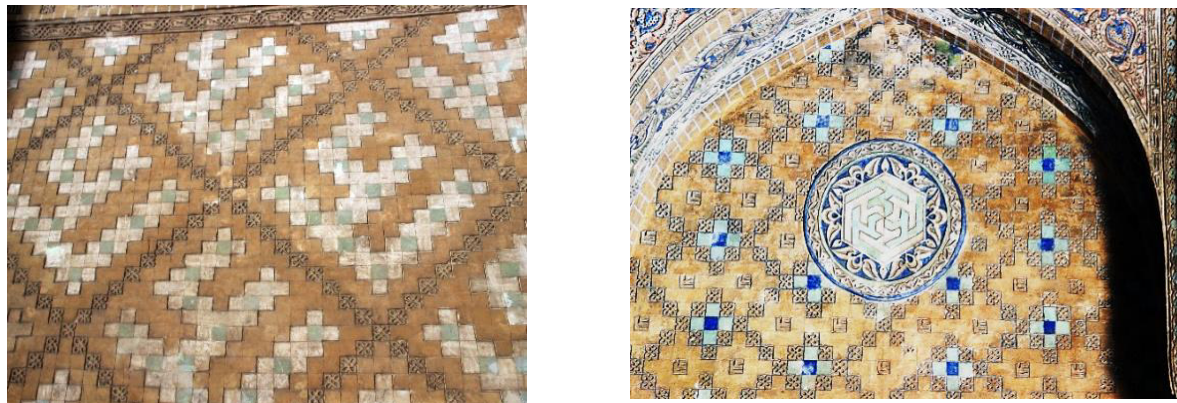


Image 22- 23. joint plugs decorations on the tympana of the chambers

Most backgrounds are yellow with white or other light colors used for stucco. Each vault has the same pattern as the one right across from it. Embossed bricks are all square, 5x5 cm, and are frequently used to create lozenge designs with a central cross. In the tympana of the east and west vaults, at the center of these lozenges, there are squares with the names Allāh, Moḥammad and ‘Alī in total, seventeen squares bear the name ‘Alī ‘, written in large *bannāii* style.

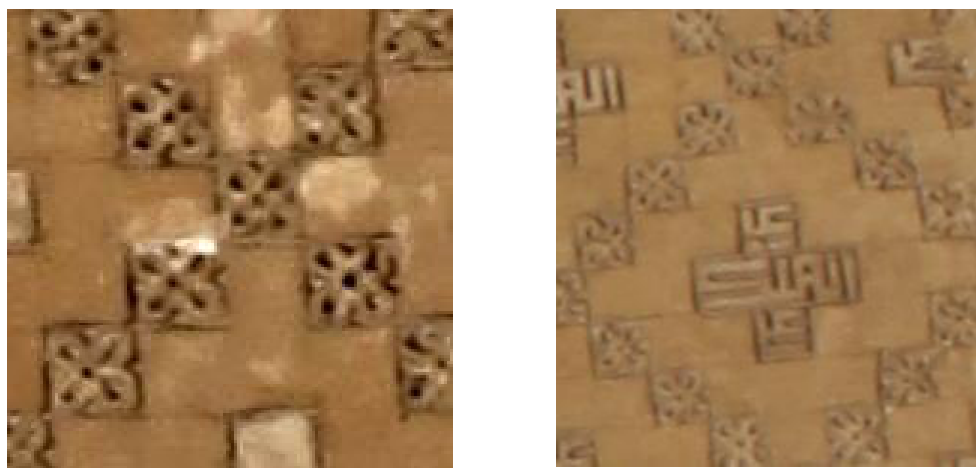


Image 24- 25. Some examples of joint plugs with a lozenge designs

Decorations of the joint plugs, with large, diamond-shaped patterns on the blind arches of the octagon, do not match the small ornamentation in other parts of the building. The interiors of the sixteen niches are decorated with joint plugs at a smaller scale. The simulated incised brick

joints are arranged in four-leaved flower designs, either with the word ‘Alī or a with combination of the names Allah, Moḥammad, and ‘Alī.



Image 26. simulated incised brick joints on the inner frames of blind niches in lower part

All the tympana of the arches of the octagon contain decorative medallions of carved stucco, with a diameter of 0.7 meter, surrounded by a carved frieze. With one exception, all their designs are floral. The northern and southern niches do not contain any such decorations. The southwestern and northeastern medallions show a symmetrical arrangement of the name ‘Alī, repeated three times, written in blue on an ecru background and encircled in a hexagon. The exception is when the name ‘Alī is repeated three times to form a circular pattern. The circular outer bands of the two medallions encircle the hexagon with floral motifs. There are four other medallions created using the carved stucco technique, each set in two concentric circles with floral motifs. The latter include billowing floral volutes around the medallions. The motifs are all painted on dark cobalt blue background.



Image 27. some of the carved medallions in tympanum of niches

The idea of medallions is presumably borrowed from those used in Soltānīye Dome (1312). The plaster skin meticulously imitates actual brickwork. (Hillenbrand, 2014: 81).

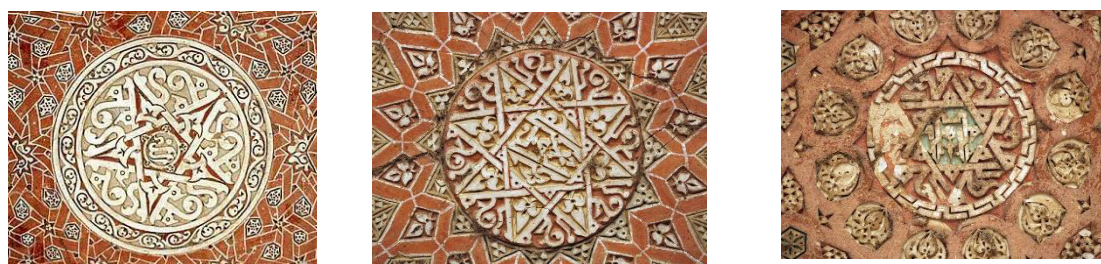


Image 28. Some of the carved medallions at Soltānīye Dome, (source: Sa‘īd Fallāhfār, personal album)

The soffits of all the arches in the hexadecagon and of their spandrels are also decorated with carved stuccos, often with geometrical and floral motifs, and each with flanking friezes. In most cases, the background is painted in dark cobalt blue or ochre in order to further emphasize the decorations. The motifs used in the soffits and spandrels differ from arch to arch. The soffit of the southern side has been decorated without paint and with more subtlety than those on the other sides, which emphasizes it as the qibla side. Repeated eight-pointed stars are used here, with volute borders on either side.



Image 29-30-31. carved stucco on soffits, middle image shows the soffit from *mihṛāb* side

The utmost artistic skill is manifest in the painted stucco underneath the dome, which displays interlocking geometrical patterns. A thirty two-sided star follows the central round inscription, which is laid across the dome to form triangular, pentagonal, and hexagonal shapes.

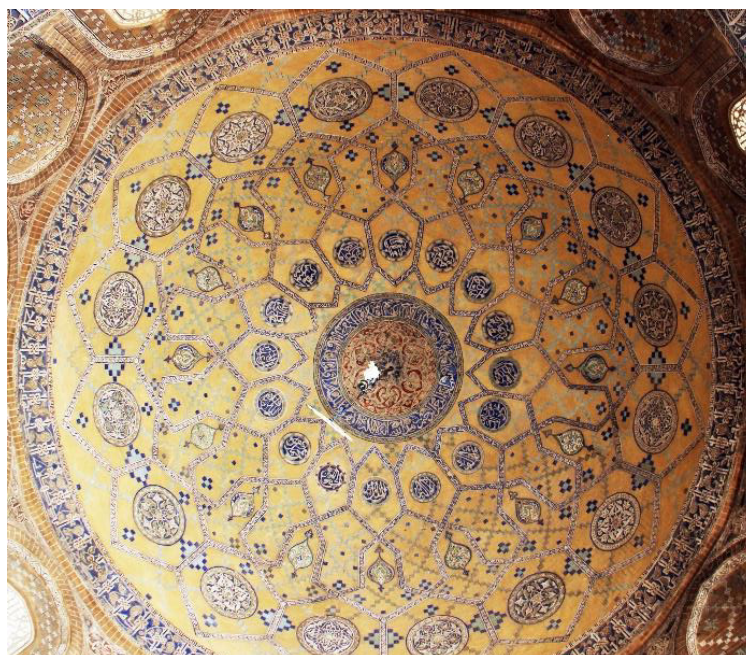


Image 32. the painted stucco underneath the dome

A total of forty-eight circular and oval stucco roundels are set in three regular rows inside these shapes. The lower and middle rows contain stuccos of floral motifs and the top row comprises an inscription, which was discussed earlier.

4-1-2-6 History of the mausoleum and of the deceased

As recorded in the cursive inscription above the hexagon, this building was constructed in 1389, and is attributed to the Şafi family, who were then the rulers of Qom. Various names have been given to this building based on the names used in the inscriptions. Wilber refers to it as Emānzāde Ḥvāḡe ‘Emād al-Dīn and as the tomb of Three Brothers, (Wilber,1955:188). Feyz Qomī names it Ḥvāḡe ‘Emād al-Dīn Maḡmūd Vazir Dome too but believes that 4 people are buried there: Ḥvāḡe Ğamāl al-Dān ‘Alī; Amār Ğalāl al-Dān; Ḥvāḡe ‘Emād al-Dīn Maḡmūd; Ḥvāḡe ‘Alī Şafi (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 413-416). Hillenbrand argues that it is the burial site of three members of the same family: Ḥvāḡe Ğamāl al-Dīn ‘Alī, his son al-Amīr Ğalāl al-Dīn and his brother Ḥvāḡe ‘Emād al-Dīn Maḡmūd, the two sons of Ḥvāḡe Şafi al-Dīn (Hillenbrand,2014: 82). ‘Arab agrees with Hillenbrand, saying: “this one was the tomb of Ḥvāḡe ‘Emād al-Dīn Maḡmūd Qomī, one of the sons of ‘Alī Şafi I, who was discussed earlier as a Şafi ruler (‘Arab, 2005: 599).

What is quite clear from these theories is that this tomb is the burial place of a number of Safi family elders who ruled Qom in the 14th century. The first of the people mentioned in the inscription was known as Ḥvāḡe ‘Alī Şafi, also known as Ḥvāḡe Ğamāl al-Dīn ‘Alī. He was the second ruler of the ‘Alī Şafi dynasty (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1976: 56). The second is ‘Emād al-Dīn Maḡmūd, a man of high scholarly, political, and social standing, and the ruler of Qom until 1389 (‘Arab, 1995: 599). He passed away in 1389 and his body was buried in this mausoleum. On a coin dated to 1389, he is referred to as Solṭan Maḡmūd the Fair Sultan, and on some other coins whose dates are not known as Solṭān Maḡmūd Ḥān. (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1985: 23) Ḥvāḡe ‘Alī Şafi’s two sons were known as Ğīyāṭ al-Dīn Amīr Moḡammad and Amīr Ğalāl al-Dīn, and the name of the latter was mentioned in one of the inscriptions. (table 1. Ch. 3)

No further information is available on the builders, architects, and artists who created this structure, although the structural similarities between the three Tomb towers suggest that they may have been built by the same team. What we do know with certainty is that it belongs to the Şafi family, and that the construction date is 1389.

4-3 Bāg-e Sabz - The North Tomb tower

Located to the north of the Bāg-e Sabz site, the North Mausoleum is referred to as the Sa‘d, Sa‘īd Mas‘ūd Dome, and is also called Gonbad-e Sabz (the Green Dome) by Wilber (Wilber, 1955:178). Since the identities of those buried under the North Dome are unknown, it is likewise known as the nameless dome (Gonbad-e Bīnām). The measurements and height of this mausoleum are similar to those of other mausoleums of the Bāg-e Sabz, and yet the plan and facades are slightly different from the other two.

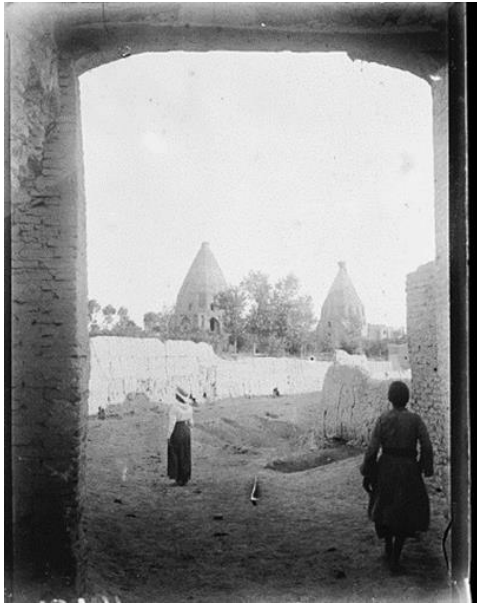


Image 1. Landscape view of the Bāg-e Sabz and mausoleums in the historic district, Viollet: 1911-13 (Source: *C.N.R.S. Monde Iranian* HV870)

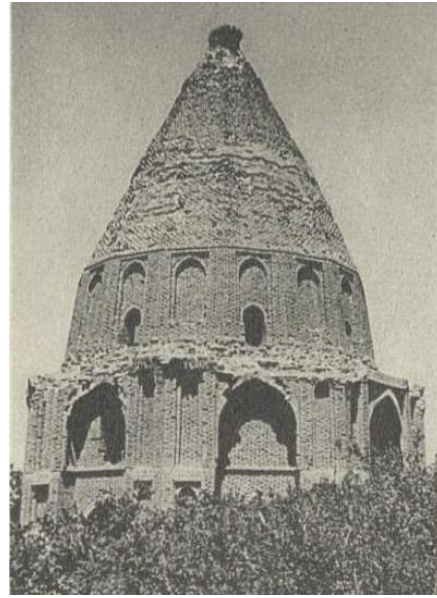


Image 2. Historical photo of the North Dome, Wilber (source: *The Architecture of Islamic Iran the Il-Khanid period*, 1955, Fig.182)

4-3-1 Architectural specifications

Exterior

The platform on which the tomb stands has an octagonal plan on the exterior, with each side measuring 5.60 meters. Each side has one deep, double-stepped niche of 0.7 meter in width and 2.6 meters in height, flanked by two much smaller ones of identical plan, which renders it different from the other two domes. Featuring a height of 3.90 meters the drum, set well back from the octagon below, and with a distinct batter, sets up a different but complementary rhythm, with its sixteen recessed blind arches, half of which enclose small arched openings on the chord of the eight much larger niches directly below them (Hillenbrand, 2014:76). In the sixteen recessed blind arches, there are four windows marking the four directions. The four windows let in the daylight

together with the opening of the main entrance along the north side. According to historical photos (image 4) it is assumed that the walls on the sides of the octagon's arches once included openings, which were blocked, perhaps for conservation reasons. The type of brick used in these surfaces is different from the surrounding walls. The wall zone is 7.80 meters high and the overall height of the tomb tower is 22.60 meters from the extant floor. Historical images indicate that the entire zone of transition has been restored in a way different to how it was originally, with a smooth surface with no niches and windows., The sixteen-sided tent roof, which stands at nearly 10.8 meters high, was also blocked up and retiled using turquoise tiles.



Image 3. Visualization of eight facades of the North Tomb tower

Drawing 1. plan of the North Tomb tower of the Bāg-e Sabz, drawing by M. Biglarī

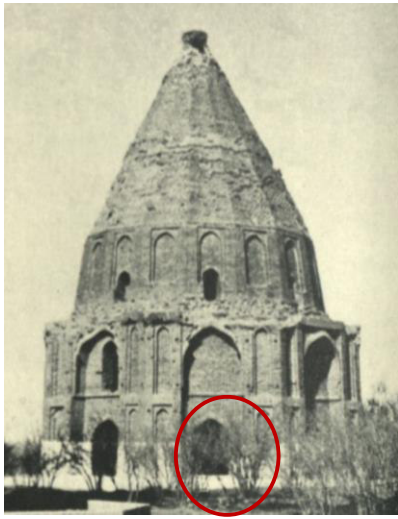


Image 4. North Mausoleum, A. Godard, 1937 (source: *Athār- E Iran*, P:312)

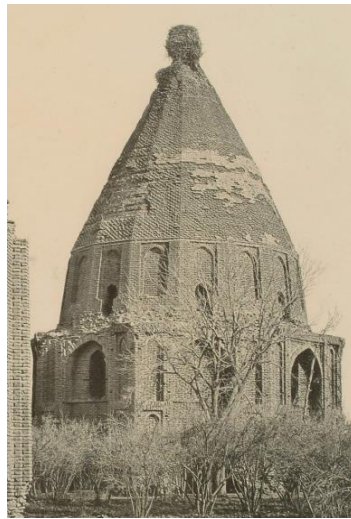


Image 5. North Mausoleum, Sarre, 1897 (source: *Denkmäler persischer Baukuns*, P:60)

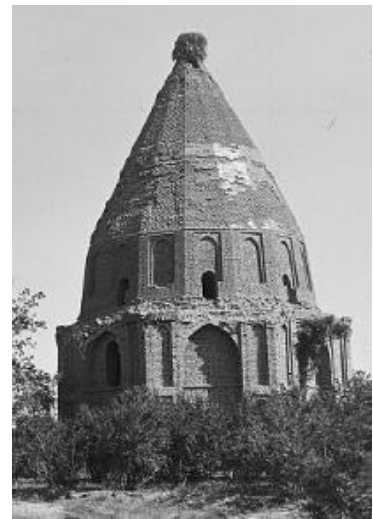


Image 6. old photo of the North Mausoleum, Herzfeld, 1925 (source: *learninglab site*: 20.4.2014)

Entrance

The entrance is currently located on the southwest side and is 3.17 meters high. It is not structurally distinct from other sides, however, the inscription frieze of the portal indicates that it has always served as the entrance to the building. As evident in Godard's and Viollet's photographs, there were more access ways to the interior on the other sides of the octagon, but today all but the above mentioned are blocked. The difference between the type of bricks and the brickwork of the portals before and after the recent restoration works, which included plastering the eight sides of the arches, are apparent. As reported by Feyz, all the front openings except one have been blocked by walls of brick (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 409). The difference between the brick layout in the blocked walls and the original ones is evident.

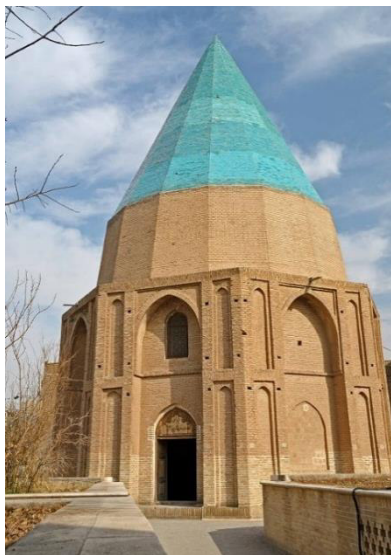


Image 7. the north view of the North Mausoleum.

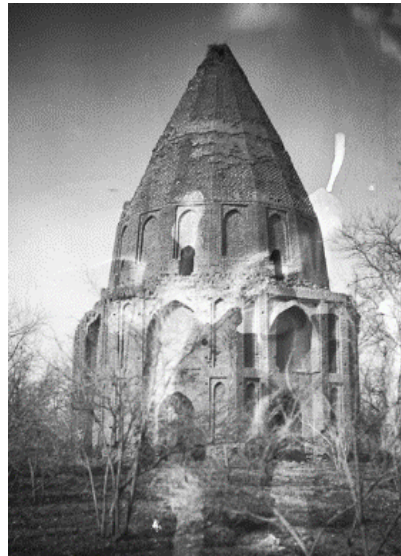


Image 8. historical photo of the North Mausoleum, Herzfeld, 1925 (source: *learninglab site*: 20.4.2014)

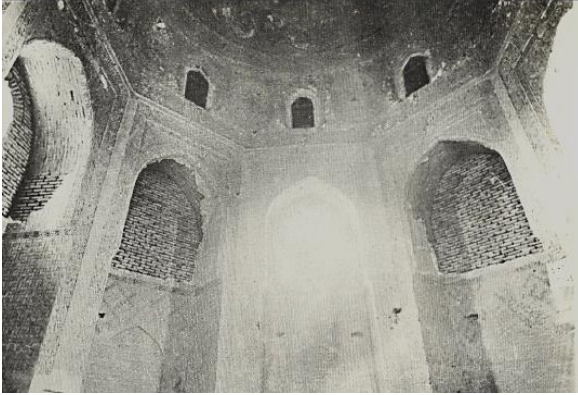


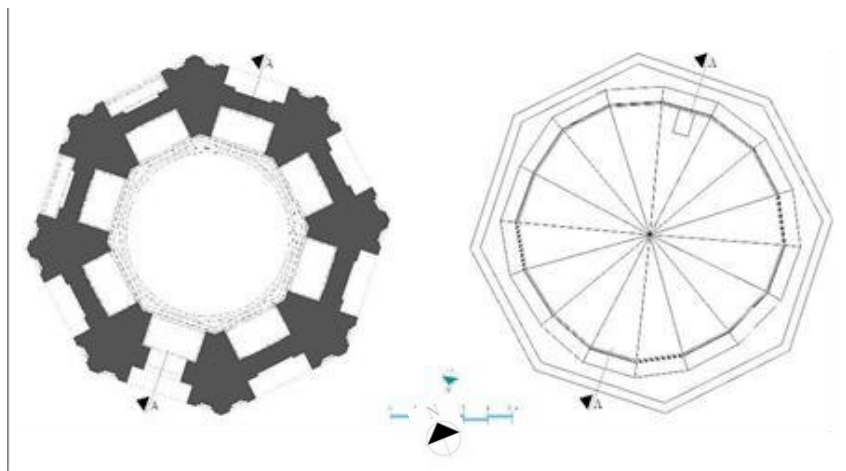
Image 9. the interior of the North Mausoleum prior to restoration 1976
(source: *TP*, fig. 83)



Image 10. the entrance, North Mausoleum, Viollet: 1911-1913 (Source: *C.N.R.S. Monde Iranien HV862*)

Interior

The Tomb tower is a regular octagon, about 8 meters in diameter. The interior floor is 0.20 meter lower than the entrance floor. Unlike in the other two mausoleums, the interior and exterior walls are structurally fastened together. Considering the available historical photographs, if it is assumed that there was an entrance on each side of the structure, then the vault would be comprised of eight trapezoid bases, each with an area of approximately 5.7 square meters. One can infer that the vault stands on eight bases, which indicates that the external walls of the mausoleum have not changed, and the plan is perfectly proportionate and symmetrical. Each of the interior sides consists of a deeply recessed, pointed arch, 7 meters high and 1.4 meter deep, framed by a rectangular panel.



Drawing 2. plan of the North Mausoleum of the Bāg-e Sabz, (source: M. Bīglarī, 2016, unpublished)

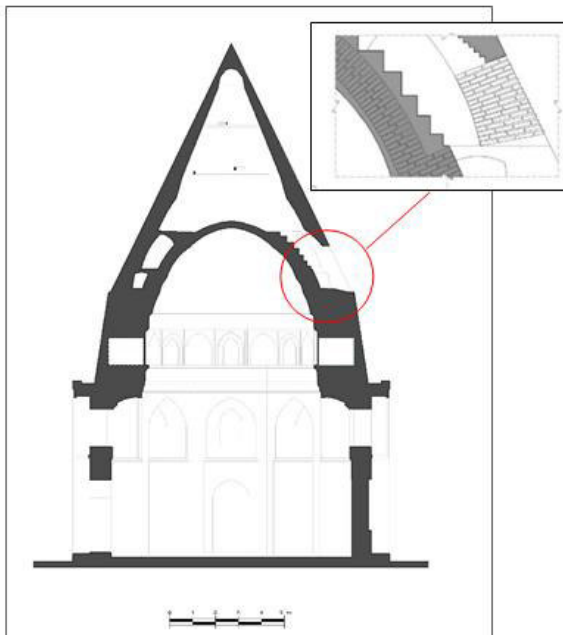


Image 11. photo documentation of the eight portals in the interior of the North Mausoleum.

Drawing 3. plan of the North Tomb tower of the Bāg-e Sabz, (source: M. Bīglarī, 2016, unpublished)

All eight panels are covered with stucco *muqarnas*, most of which seem to have collapsed before being restored. The *muqarnas* appear to have been added to the structure in the later periods (e.g. under the Qajar dynasty). Hillenbrand also believes: “it is likely that the tower as originally designed, had no such arches, for the carved plaster surface of the lower part of the niches is broken by the lower arches. At least three building campaigns can thus be distinguished –the last perhaps quite recent” (Hillenbrand, 2014: 77). The four niches of eight panels within the *muqarnas* zone

are openings set along the four cardinal directions, each featuring a carved latticed plaster window letting in the daylight. Above the eight chambers, at the height of 8 meters, there is an inscription band, 0.60-meter wide, defining the zone of transition of the dome chamber. The structure changes shape from an octagon to a hexadecagon above the inscriptions; this includes sixteen blind arches, each at a height of 1.50 meters and set in a rectangular panel. All surfaces are covered with stucco.



Drawing 4. the NS section and the details of the entrance vent of the double-shell dome (source: Bīglarī, 2016, with addition by the author)

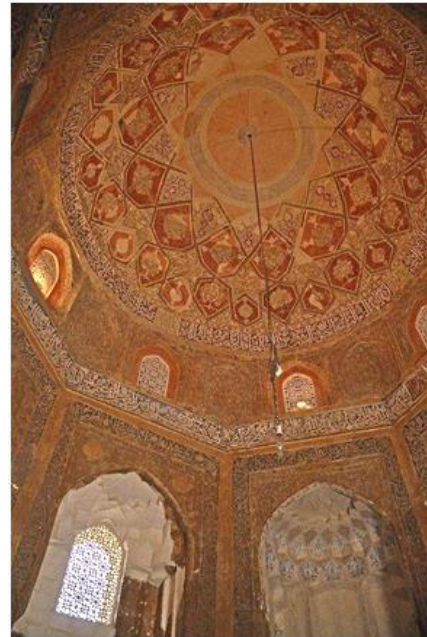


Image 12. the interior of the North tower of Bāg-e Sabz

On the south side of the dome, in the space between the two shells, there is a staircase accessed through one side of the dome. The two shells connected with the use a small vaulting. The external shell grows thinner towards the top and is about 0.30 meter thick in the upper part. The weight from the tent roof and the inner shell is all transferred to the collar of the dome, which is calculated to be at most around 2 meters thick. The architect has successfully used the second shell to harness the first one. The propulsive force on the internal impost is partially neutralized by the force from the weight of the dome. It is assumed that there were eight windows in the sixteen niches at the collar of the dome, each 1.20 meters high. These were blocked from the outside and are no longer used to let the daylight in. There is yet another frieze over this part, above which the structure turns into a circular one – this is where the dome begins. The dome is 6.90 meters in diameter, and the

total structure is 14.4 meters high from the floor to the apex of the dome. The inside of the dome is covered in colored stucco.



Image 13- 14. the zone of transition of the dome in the North Tomb tower of Bāg-e Sabz

Mihrāb

Presently, there is no trace of the old *mihrāb* and the southern side as, like all the other surfaces on this level, it has been restored and whitewashed with plaster. However, some differences in the decoration as compares with the other eight sides of the building suggest this side may have been special in some way. These include the fact that the Qur’anic verse on the inscription band begins here; there are also some signs in the spandrels on both sides of this niche, which do not appear on the other sides.

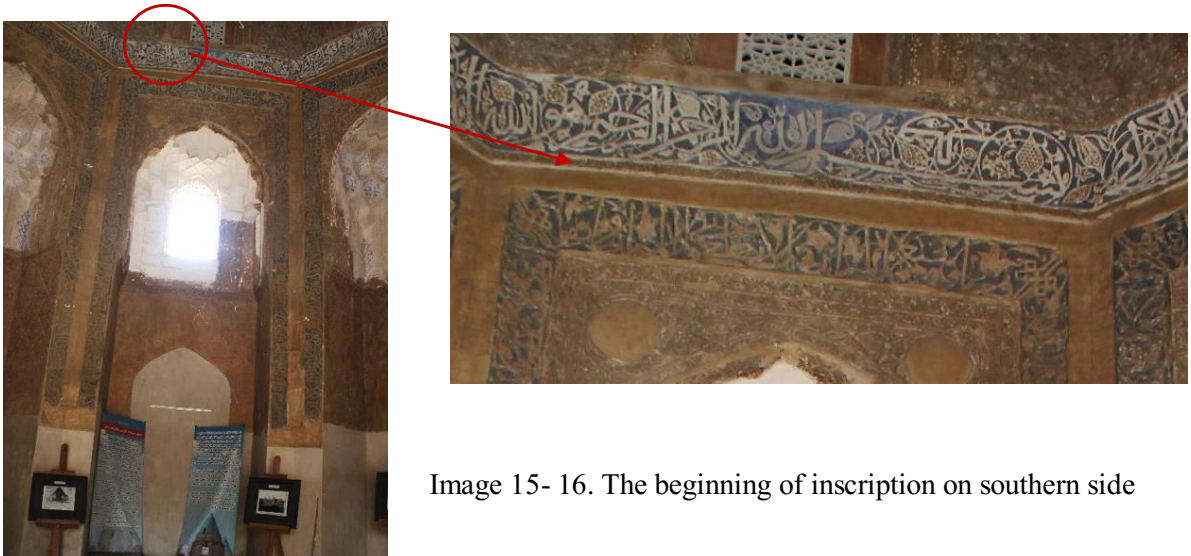


Image 15- 16. The beginning of inscription on southern side

The crypt

Just like the other tomb tower of the Bāg-e Sabz, this one features a crypt, which is accessed through a brick staircase from the main floor and comprises a groin vault. It includes a window to improve the air circulation. Currently, there are no traces of graves inside this space. However, during the 2000, ICHTO excavations supervised by ‘Arab, a number of densely packed graves and four separate ones were discovered (‘Arab, 2002:156). However, these were sealed underneath the new floors installed after the most recent restorations.



Image 17. western side of the crypt

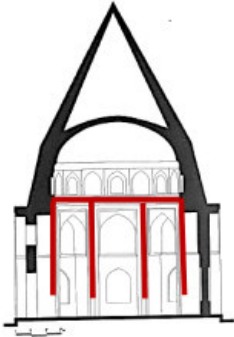


Image 18. eastern side of the crypt

4-3-2 Epigraphic Material

Inscriptions used to decorate this structure mainly display verses from the Quran and holy names. A few of these stand out and will be described in more detail. First of these is a cursive inscription framing the arches of the octagon. It is 0.30 meter- wide in *thuluth* on a cobalt blue background and runs along the panels. This inscription includes the two Surahs of Tabārak (Surah 67), and al-Raḥmān (Surah 55). The former is about genesis and death, and the latter refers to God's blessings in the mundane world and in the afterlife. Both also describe the Dooms Day and the manner everyone's acts would be judged on that day. Both are recited over the grave of a deceased.

The inscription is in ochre, on a dark blue background. The text is decorated with arabesque motifs.



Drawing 5. the location of the inscription (Source: *Ganġnāme*, P.202, with addition by author)

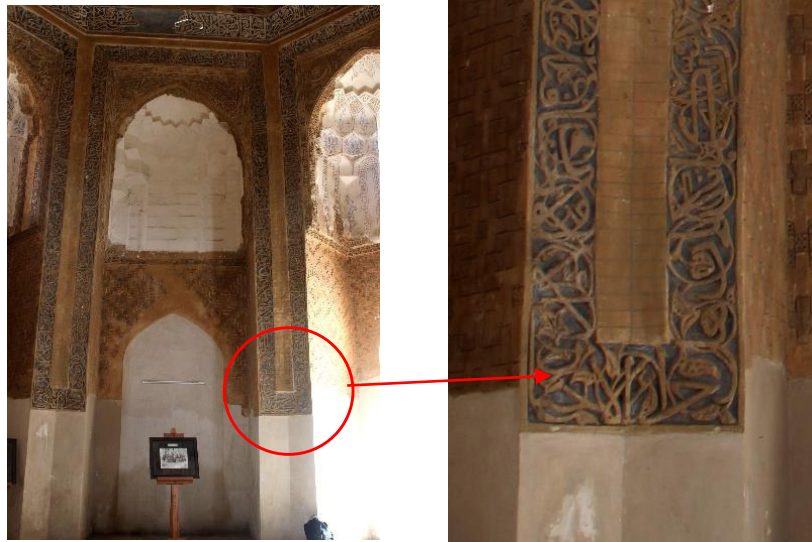
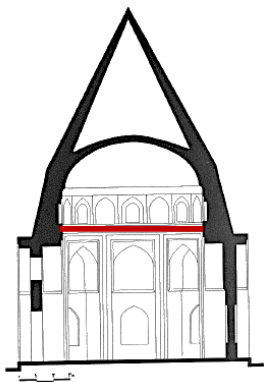


Image 19-20. Quranic inscription running along the chambers

Another notable inscription is the band along the zone of the octagonal-to-hexadecagonal transition. 0.60 meter wide, it comprises the two Surahs of al-Ḥaṣr (59:22-24) and al-Faṭḥ (48:1-4). The first is about the defeat of the enemies, and the second one about the Muslims' victory. It can be assumed that the inclusion of these particular Surahs might have been indicative of the political influence of those buried in the mausoleum. The inscription is written in *Thuluth* using stucco on a dark blue background, and the spaces between the words are decorated with floral motifs. A geometrical frieze runs along the inscription.



Drawing 6. the location of the inscription (Source: *Ganġnāme*, p. 202, with addition by author)

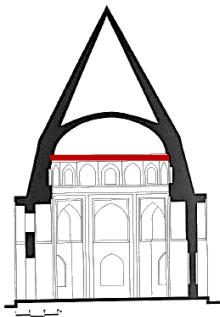


Image 21. *Thuluth* Quranic inscription band in internal intermediate zone

Image 22. the condition of inscription band after restoration



The upper inscription band worth mentioning is one a *Kufic* one, placed along the transition zone of the sixteen-sided part to the circular part, right over the blind arches. It includes four sections, with one square-shaped panel placed between each two. These panels include the words Moḥammad and ‘Alī, written in square Kufic and repeated four times.



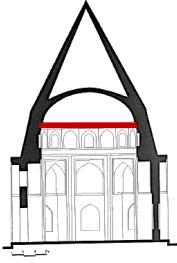
Drawing 7. the location of the upper inscription band (Source: *Ganḡnāme*, p. 202, with addition by the author)



Image 23. the *Kufic* inscription on the base of the dome and four plates through it in *Banna’i*

The inscription itself was initially deciphered by Modarrasī Ṭabāṭabā’ī. The plate between the west and east frames reads: على ولي الله - محمد رسول الله الصادق الامين - لا اله الا الله الملك الحق المبين which translate to “there is no god but God, the King, the gospel truth”, “Muḥammad is sent by God, true to his word and trustworthy”, and ‘Alī is the friend (*walī*) of Allāh”.

The inscription then continues with Surah al-Qadr (Surah 97). To the Shiites, the content of this Surah indicates the necessity of the presence of the Immaculate *Imams* on the Earth up to the Dooms Day. The inscription is fully restored but its words are not easily legible. It is of hybrid style, with more *Kufic* than cursive (Hillenbrand, 2014: 79). It is written in white on a dark blue background with stucco arabesque decoration.



Drawing 8. the location of inscription band
(Source: *Ganġnāme*, p. 202, with addition by the author)



Image 24. a fragment of the Kufic inscription below the dome.

4-3-3 Decorations

Generally, semi-embossed carved plaster, simulated incised brick joints or false joint, carved plaster lattice and *Muqarnas* are used to decorate most surfaces the building. Most are painted. The eight-sided niches are decorated with simulated false joints on three surfaces. From the height of one meter above, all surfaces are ornamented. This ornamentation comprises false joints with joint plugs spelling out sacred names and combining to spell ‘Alī or to form larger geometric patterns in *bannāiī*. All of the plugs are squares measuring 0.05 meters. with four-petal flowers, or the name ‘Alī and Moḥammad (علي- محمد) in chequerboard pattern. The large name ‘Alī consists of a combination of seventeen such squares.



Image 25-26-27. Simulated incised brick joints and brick-end patterns displaying the name ‘Alī

Chapter 4

The soffits of chambers bordered with a band in geometrical patterns, arabesque motifs or floral scroll works. These ornamental bands continue to the point where *muqarnas* appear above the pointed arch. Moreover, they run along the vault and are meant to separate various surfaces highlighting each of them.



Image 28. Stucco decoration on *muqarnas*



Image 29. The detail of carved plaster on border

The eight spandrels of chambers and the blind arches of the hexadecagon are all covered with plaster carved in floral motifs. The stucco patterns are varied.



Image 30-31-32. Diverse stucco pattern of the sixteen-niches below the dome

There are stucco medallions of geometric and floral motifs on the spandrels of eight chambers.



Image 33-34. Incised plaster decoration on the spandrels



Image 35-36. Incised plaster decoration on the spandrels

Among other significant decorative elements of this building are the colorful stucco works underneath the dome. The surface beneath the dome is painted with star-like geometric designs (Šamse). The end part of the dome features a circular central medallion, which has mostly been destroyed. However, comparisons with the two other mausoleums of Bāġ-e Sabz suggest it probably had a frieze along the central motif. The only traces left of this original decorations are two central circles, encircling a twelve-sided star, with floral stucco in each of them.

There is a total of twelve five- pointed- stars located in middle of the dome with varied floral patterns. The plaster is painted in deep red, and the background contrasts beautifully with the carved stucco. Feyż believes that the artisan who created the stucco was called ‘Moħammad’, and this name is included in the inner inscription of the soffit of the entrance to the mausoleum (Feyż Qomī, 1971: 11)



Image 37. polychrome stucco under the dome of the North Tower of the Bāġ-e Sabz



Image 38. details of the ornaments below the dome

4-3-4 History of the mausoleum and the deceased

Unfortunately, there is no record of a date or of the names of those buried in the building. Donald Wilber believes that the building was constructed between 1315 to 1359, and most probably in 1330 (Wilber, 1955:178). Yet, Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī sees this one as older than the other two, and sets the date at around the 13th century (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1976: 698) while Hillenbrand says it was built in the 14th century, arguing that its close similarities to the neighboring pair of buildings suggests that it dates from the second half of that century (Hillenbrand, 2014: 79).

In his excavations in 2000, 'Arab found a coin in the crypt, which dates back to the 810 /1408, along with the skeletons of some individuals buried there, which he assumes might be of the Ṣafī royal family. However, considering the architectural characteristics and decoration similarities to the two adjacent buildings, it can be deduced that this one also dates back to the 14th century, to the golden era of the Ṣafī rule. The precedence of construction over two adjacent buildings is uncertain.

Four graves were found in the excavation of the crypt but the buried individuals have not been identified ('Arab, 2002:156). There are also no traces of who built the structure or who was buried there in the inscriptions. The surviving local names, such as the Sa'd, Sa'īd or Mas'ūd dome are very generic, and in any case, the people of Qom used the name to collectively refer to the mausoleums of Bāḡ-e Sabz, rather than to the north dome alone.

Some believe that the three people buried there have been prominent Aš'arī 'Arabs who revived Qom in the Islamic era (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1976: 53). On the other hand, Feyż Qomī believes that the dome is the burial site or resort of Maḡd al-Molk Abolfāẓl Sa'd b. Mūsā Barāvestānī Qomī, the murdered minister of Sultan Berkyāruq¹, who had asked in his will to have his corpse buried in Karbala. His body was taken to Qom and temporarily buried there, and the site was marked with a dome (Feyż Qomī, 1971: 405). In his book, Feyż narrates that in 1469, Ḥvāḡe Borhān ad- Dīn, the prime minister of Solṭān Ḥasan Beyk Āq Qoyūlūn, was stabbed to death by Ḥvāḡe Ebrāhīm Badlīssī. The bodies of the Vezīr and his murderer, who had been killed by his servants, were both buried at this site, and the dome was reconstructed. According to Feyż, the reason why there is no record of any names on the inscriptions is that there have been too many people buried there (Feyż Qomī, 1971: 407).

¹ He was the sultan of the Seljuk Empire from 1094 to 1105.

Chapter 4

Finally, according to field research, the exact date of the building is not clear. Only the architectural and adjacent evidence of two similarly dated buildings, as well as some numismatic evidence, confirm the construction during the “Golden Age” of the Şafî rulers in the 14th century. In any case, there is still no evidence identifying those buried in the tomb.

The three mausoleums at Bāg-e Sabz were registered on the National Heritage list in 1932 (nr. 129). Given the contents of their registration documents, in 1936- 1937, a budget was allocated to the restoration of the complex, and the buildings were restored and buttressed, but unfortunately there are no reports or details about their restoration in the archives of the Cultural Heritage. Later on in the years 1999 and 2001 a number of surveys and boreholes were carried out in the cellar, but except for a few photos, there are no reports or details of the works (‘Arab, 2002: 153-156). The mausolea and their buffer zone were mapped in 1975 by the Organization for Protection of Cultural Heritage.

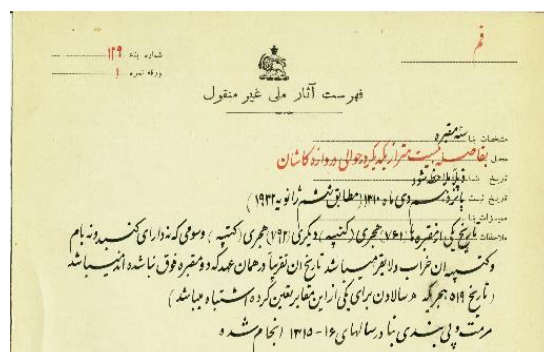
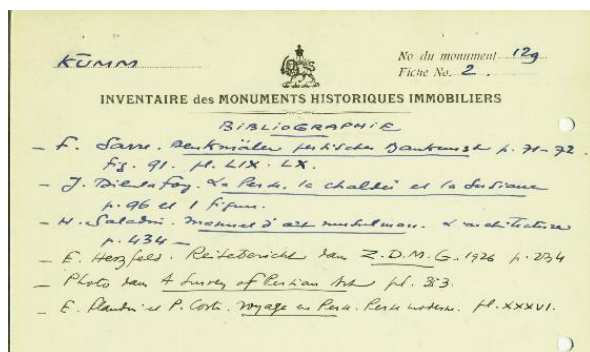


Image 39-40. Registration documents of the three mausoleums of Bāg-e Sabz in Qom (source: Archive of ICHTO)

4-4. Mausoleum of Emānzāde Ebrāhīm

4-4-1 location

The tomb of Emānzāde Ebrāhīm or Šāhzāde Ebrāhīm is located on the eastern side of Qom and outside of the old gate of Kāšān, near other four Tomb towers. Today, it is surrounded by a small urban cemetery and is located at the corner of Šahīd Ruhānī, 90 meters from the Bāg-e Sābz tombs and about 180 meters from the ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far’s tomb, which are collectively known as the Tomb towers of Darvāze-ye Kāšān.

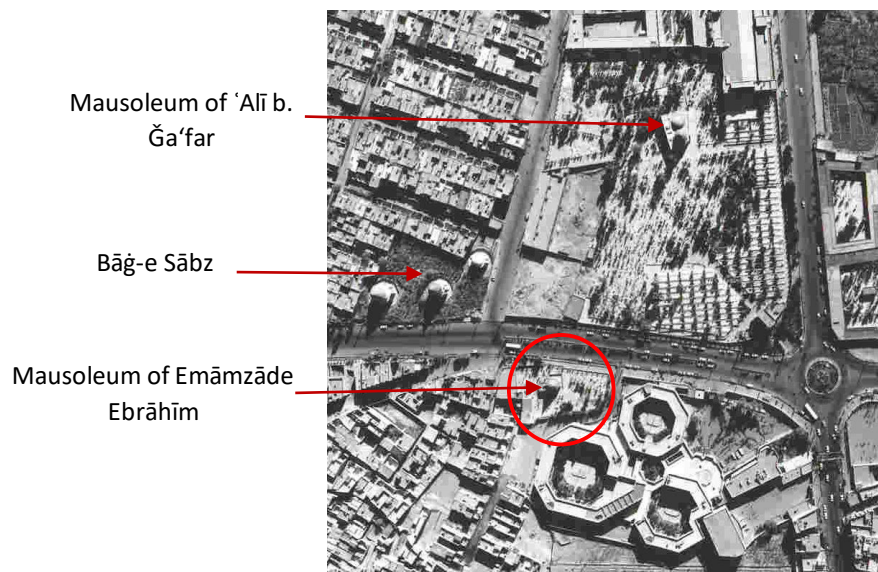


Image 1. location of monument of Šāhzāde Ebrāhīm alongside other tombs Kāšān Gate –1956
(source: National mapping agency –Tehran)

In the *Tārīḫ-e Mazhabī-ye Qom*, it is written that near the monument of ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far and opposite the three monuments at the green garden, there is another building named Šāhzāde Ebrāhīm, which is considered one of the precious and historical buildings due to its elaborate inscription and carved stucco decoration. and Formerly, the route from Kāšān to Qom passed through this garden and by these monuments. (Faḳīhī, 2012:27)



Image 2. Emānzāde Ebrāhīm alongside other tombs Kāšān Gate, view from the west, Sevruguin 1870-1930 (source: Old Qom, p.156)

In many itineraries, this place is collectively described as “the Shaykhs’ mausoleums of Bāg-e Sabz and two adjacent tombs, called mausoleum of ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far and Šāhzāde Ebrāhīm”.



Image 3. Current condition of Emāmzāde Ebrāhīm near the Tomb towers of Bāg-e Sabz

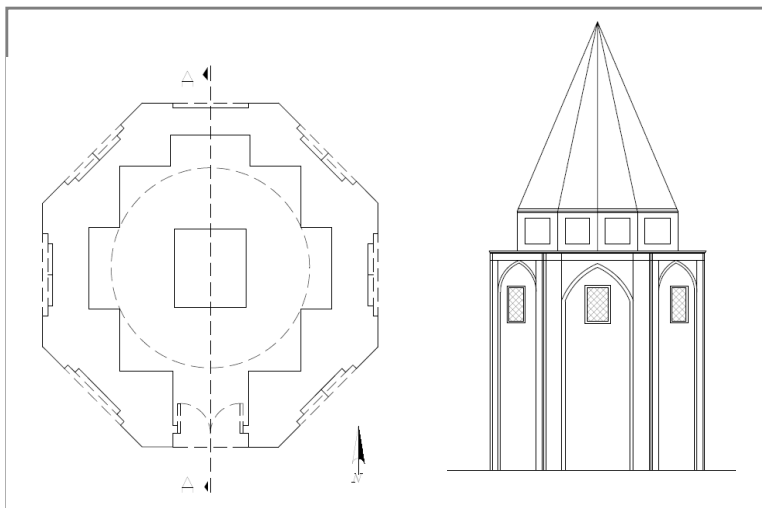


Image 4. Emāmzāde Ebrāhīm neighbouring the Tomb towers of Bāg-e Sabz and other buildings, by Sarre:1910, (source: *Denkmäler persischer Baukunst* p.72)

4-4-2 Architectural specifications

Exterior

Like the other tomb towers near the Kāšān gate, the tomb of Šāhzāde Ebrāhīm is a single, independent building, built on a centrally symmetrical plan. The tower is octagonal, up to 3.5 meters in diameter and approximately 6 meters tall. There are shallow, recessed rectangular panels on the eight sides, each containing a blind arch, 0.20 meter deep and about 2 meters wide, with a window placed above each. The drum of the dome is placed immediately on top of the body of the octagon. Its height is about 1.10 meters and approximately one meter is recessed from the main body of building.



Drawing 1. Plan and South elevation of Emāmzāde Ebrāhīm (source: Archive of ICHTO with addition by the author)

The drum is in the shape of a regular hexadecagon, with rectangular panels on each side.

In old photographs, such as those by A. Godard, it can be seen that pointed, blind arches used to line the rectangular panels of the drum, similar to the design in the lower part of the building. These blind arches were replaced by simple rectangular niches during later restorations. On top of the drum rises a sixteen-sided, tent pyramidal roof, which has been tiled recently. The tilework of the dome is predominantly turquoise in colour and each segment is adorned with calligraphic panels. In the uppermost panel, the sacred name of Allāh is written, with the names of Moḥammad and ‘Alī in the lower parts. The height of the roof above the drum is circa 7.30 m, and its apex is about 12.50 meters above ground. At some point, a porch with flat covering has been added to building on its northern front. It was taken down in the course of the restorations in 2001, so that the original form was restored.

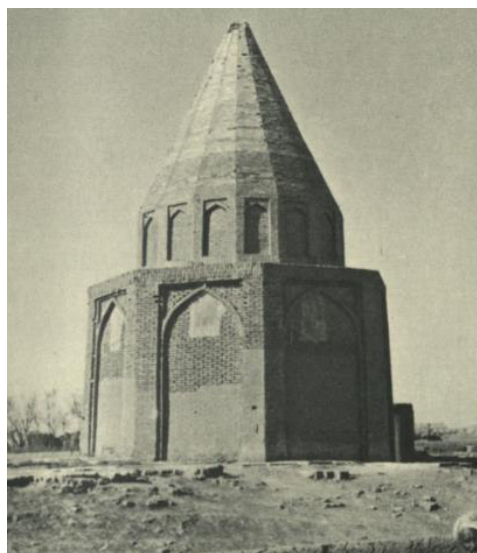


Image 5. Exterior view of the mausoleum, Godard-1937 (source: *Athār- E Irān*, p. 311)

Entrance

The entrance is located in the middle of the northern front. In the reports by Ṭabāṭabā’ī and Feyz Qomī (1971), it appears that the portal had been decorated with tiling during the Qajar era, but nothing of this remains now (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 364, Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1976: 74). Presently, a single tile is installed, with “Holy Shrine of Ebrāhīm and Aḥmad” written on it. All surfaces of the facade and the windows have been restored and rejoined with new bricks.



Image 6. Adjacent building on the entrance on the northern side, 2000 (source: Archive of OOQ)

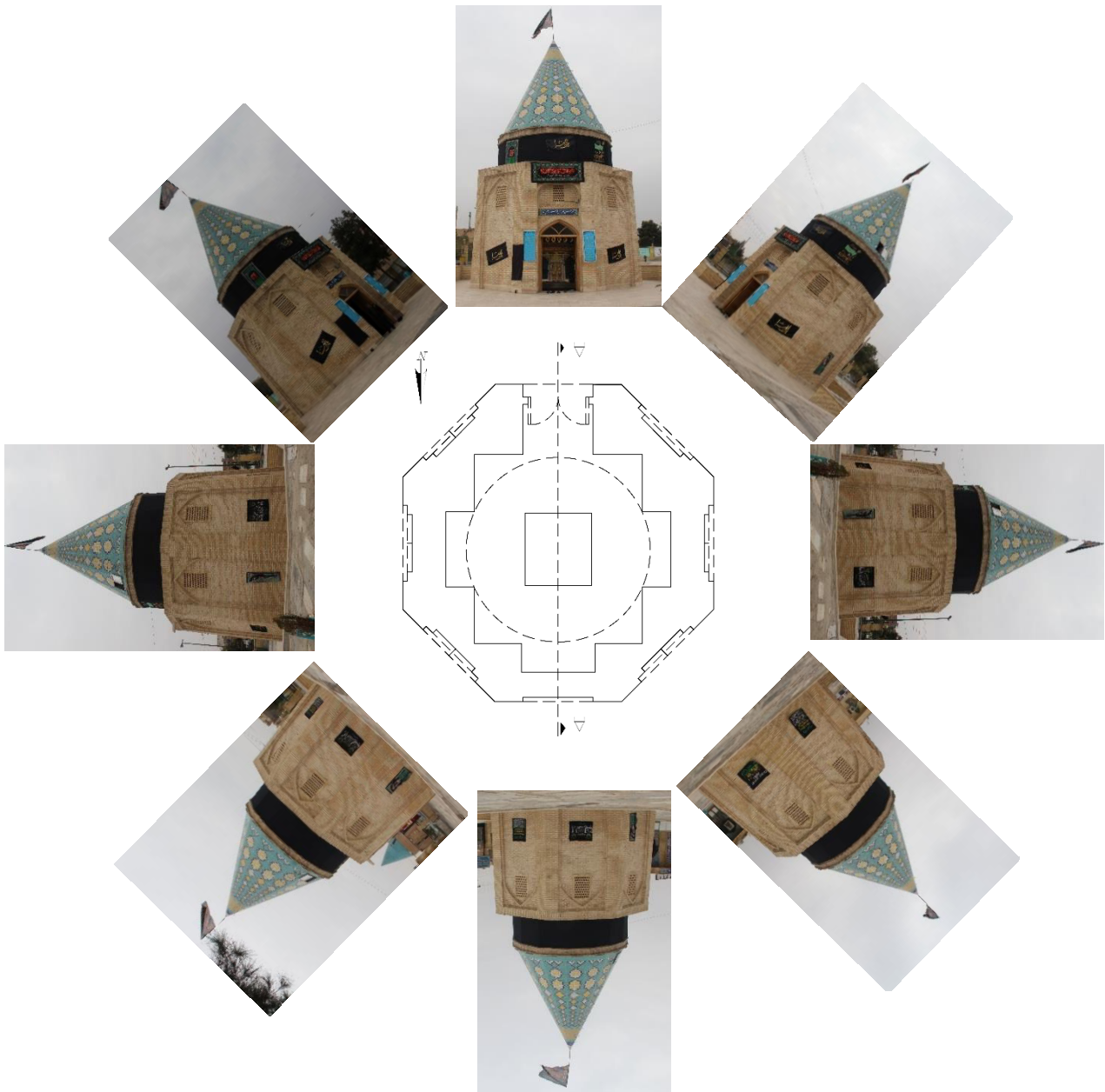
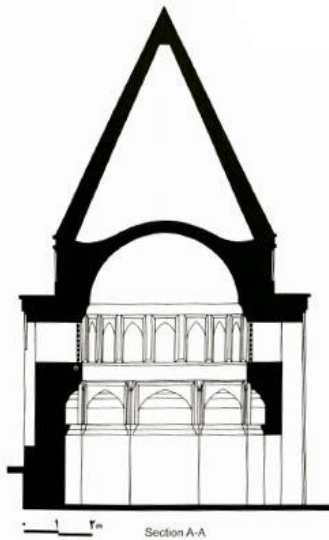


Image 7. visualization of the 8 facades of the Emāmzāde Ebrāhīm's tomb
 Drawing 2. plan of the mausoleum (source: Archive ICHTO in Qom, with addition by the author)

Interior

The plan of the domed interior is based on a 5-meter square, with deeply recessed niches measuring 0.75x1.80 meters on all four sides. The lower zone of the walls has been designed as a dado, with new panels, about 1 meter high, made of polygonal, glazed tiles. The niches in the main axes and the corners are covered with pointed arches in a rectangular frame. All eight arches are filled with stucco *muqarnas*, while the spandrels are decorated with stucco relief. Between the panels, half-columns based on a corbel above the dado are placed in the corners. The total height of the interior is about 7.30 meters.



Drawing 3. NS section of Emāmzāde Ebrāhīm (source: *Ganġnāme*, p. 188)

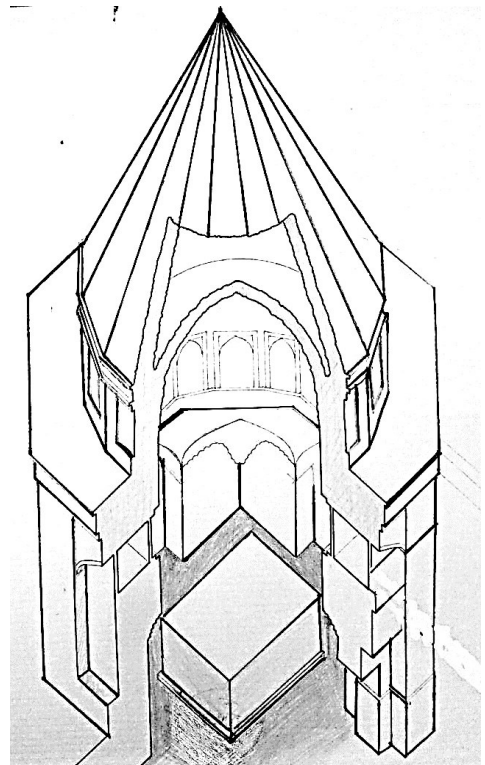


Image 8. Interior, before the installation of the new shrine, 2000 (source: Archive of OOQ.)

Above chambers at height 3.5 meters, there is the inscription band, 0.60 meter wide, with sixteen niches set above, marking the structural transition from an octagon to a hexadecagon. Each niche contains a pointed arch, half of which include an opening. The interior chamber is covered by a hemispherical dome. In a photograph from 1937, all the outward windows of the drum zone are closed, and the openings have been placed in eight-arched niches. However, now all of them are closed and filled from the inside (image 4-5).



Image 16. Rectangular panels with pointed arch on collar of the dome zone (source: Archive of OOQ)



Drawing 4. Construction in 3 dimensions of the dome chamber

Cenotaph

There is a cenotaph at the center of the building. It is placed in a rectangular stone enclosure with heavily ornamented metal grills, resembling other recent shrines in Iranian *emānzādes*. This space provides access around the cenotaph for the pilgrims and is also used as a place for gathering votive money to the *emānzāde*. Previously, this shrine was made of wood, and the cenotaph was covered with turquoise, unfired brick tiles (Feyz Qomī, 1971:369).



Image 17. Existing metal shrine in the building



Image 18. Cenotaph before installation of new shrine (source: Archive of OOQ)

Crypt

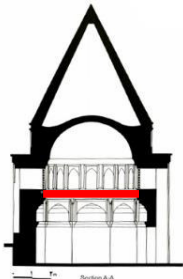
No basement or crypt is presently visible in the building, but the caretaker believes that there is a crypt, the entrance of which has been closed and obliterated; in other words, the existence of the crypt is a matter of speculation.

4-4-3 Epigraphic Material

Presently, the only remaining inscription in the building is located in the band at the zone of transition from the octagon to the hexadecagon. The band is 0.60-meter high and includes two 0.10-meter margins with chain patterns. The inscription has been heavily restored, and its background is painted in a cream. The words are Arabic, though with a Persian twist in the signature, written in the *thuluth* style. The inscription mentions the name of deceased person, the founder of this work, the date of construction and the name of the constructor (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 368).

"قد امرت بعمارة هذه الروضة الرفيعة و المرقد المنيعه، المشهد المنور المقدس المعطر للامام المعصوم الطاهر المطهر
ابى القاسم ابراهيم بن احمد بن موسى بن جعفر بن محمد بن على بن الحسين بن الامام المقترض الطاعة اسدالله الغالب
ابى الحسن اميرالمومنين على بن ابيطالب صلوات الله و سلامه عليه و عليهم اجمعين. بمنة الخاتون العظمى و البانوى

الكبرى بلقيس العهد و الاوان, خديجه العصر، رابعه الدهر عصمة الدنيا و الدين صفوة الاسلام و المسلمين، زيدت عصمتها و خلدت عظمتها فى شهر شوال سنة خمس و ثمانمائه نمقه العبد حسن بن على طوسى" (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 368)
 Translation: It was ordered to build this elevated garden, the sturdy shrine, the luminous, sacred and fragrant tomb, of the *imām* innocent, pure, virtuous Abū al-Qāsim, Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad b. Mūsā b. Ġa'far b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusain, son of the *imām* who has to be obeyed, the victorious lion of god, the father of al-Ḥasan, commander of the faithful, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, the mercy of God on him and on all (*imāms*), by the kindness of the Great Ḥātūn, the Great Dame, Bilqīs of this age and period, Ḥadīġa of this era. The Rābi'a of this age, the chastity of the world and religion, Purity of Islam and the Muslims, may her chastity be adorned and her greatness perpetuated, in the month of Šawwāl of the year eight hundred and five. provender by the servant Ḥasan b. 'Alī-ye Ṭūsī.



Drawing 5. location of inscription (source: *Ganġnāme*, 188)



Image 19. *Thuluth* inscription band

The *thuluth* letters are written quite closely together and decorated with lobed, vegetal elements in between. The words are given more prominence than the background decoration, which is quite simple by contrast. Unfortunately, the inscription has lost some of its quality during restoration, and old photographs show that the clarity of the lettering in particular used to be higher. The inscription is very similar to an analogously-placed inscription in the middle Tomb tower of Bāġ-e Sabz.

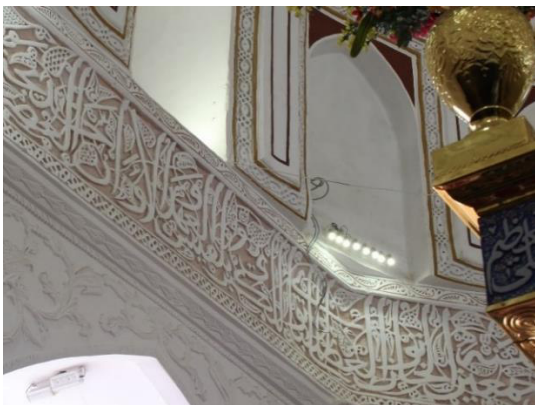


Image 20. *Thuluth* inscription band after restoration



Image 21. *Thuluth* inscription band before restoration (source: Archive of ICHTO)

Modarresī reported the existence of some tiled inscriptions on the entrance, dated to the Qajar era; these no longer exist. He said: “The inscriptions consisted of three panels of tiles, with *Thuluth* and *Nast‘alīq* writing on turquoise and azure background. They were dated and mentioned the name of master Ṭāher, in addition to a poem written in *Nasta‘līq*” (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, 1976: 74-75).

4-4-4 Decoration

The building is decorated with tilework, stucco and painting, all repaired in 2000. The tilework dates to the Qajar and modern eras. As mentioned above, nothing remains of the Qajar tiles on the portal, while the tiles on the dome’s exterior are modern. On the other hand, the substantial plasterwork on the interior, especially the magnificent inscription band, date to the 14th century. The spandrel surfaces of the eight-sided panels are all decorated with plaster. The design consists of floral and bird-like motifs, which are executed very delicately and are quite different from the other mausoleums of the same era. The motifs are repeated in between the spandrels and include birds and animals jumping out of arabesques, hunting and swallowing each other. The date of these stucco decorations is not clear, although their design resembles similar ornaments of the Pahlavī era. Other designs, such as flower vases and fruits, are similar to those of the nearby mausoleum of ‘Alī b. Ḡa‘far. It seems possible these were made by the same artist, in which case they would date to about 1264/1848 (Raḥmatī, 2011: 87).

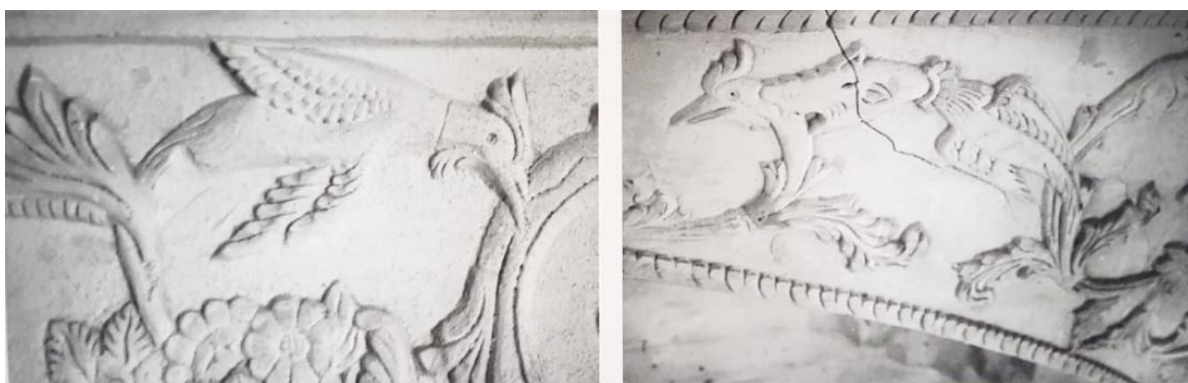


Image 22. stucco arrays with flower and bird designs of Emānzāde Ebrāhīm
(source: *Ārāyehā-ye Gačī dar Aṭār-e Tārīḥī-e Qom*, 2011, p. 88)



Drawing 6. design of the Stucco decorations on the spandrels of the eight chambers
(source: *Ārāyehā-ye Gačī dar Aṭār-e Tārīhī-e Qom*, 2011, p. 88)

Half columns have been set between each wall of the octagon. The walls are decorated with stucco, and the column capitals are carved with three leaves, this style of palmette did not follow its historical antecedents and comes from a non-binding repertoire of historicism. These seem to have been added recently.



Image 23. *muqarnas* and Stucco decorations on chambers



Image 24. stucco decorations on spandrel and Corinthian column capitals

Beneath the impostes of the eight-sided arches, two rows of *muqarnas* are executed in serial row form. The niche ceilings are also covered with plaster *muqarnas*, that were added during the Qajar or Pahlavi period. Additionally, the margin around the sixteen rectangular panels of the hexadecagon are decorated with repeated geometric forms in stucco. The remaining surfaces of the sixteen-sided niches have no decoration, with just a simple vase painted between each, set within a rectangular frame. These decorations seem to have been heavily restored, and unfortunately it is not possible to identify the original parts.



Image 25. Stucco and painting decorations on sixteen panels

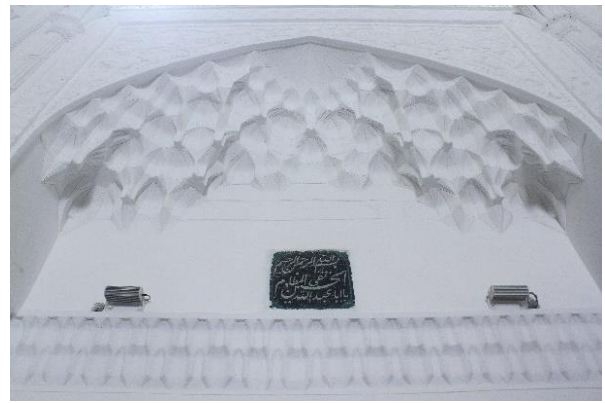
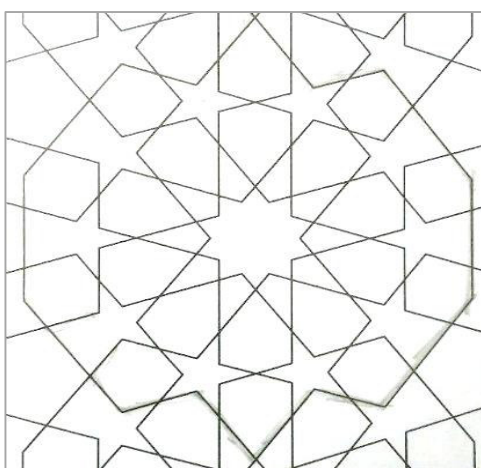


Image 26. *muqarnas* decorations on S chamber

Above the sixteen panels, there is a row of small blind arches, connected to each other on white plaster-work ground painted in brown color. It seems that after restoration, the stucco on these parts was removed, with the old motifs rendered in paint instead.

The surface beneath the dome is painted with star-like geometric designs. A ten-pointed star is located in middle of the dome and two rows of stars are derived from it in branches. The first row consists of ten five-pointed stars and the second row has ten four-pointed stars encircling the dome. Presently, these geometric designs are painted in reddish brown, creating a drastic contrast with the white background.



Drawing 7. Star design decoration under the dome

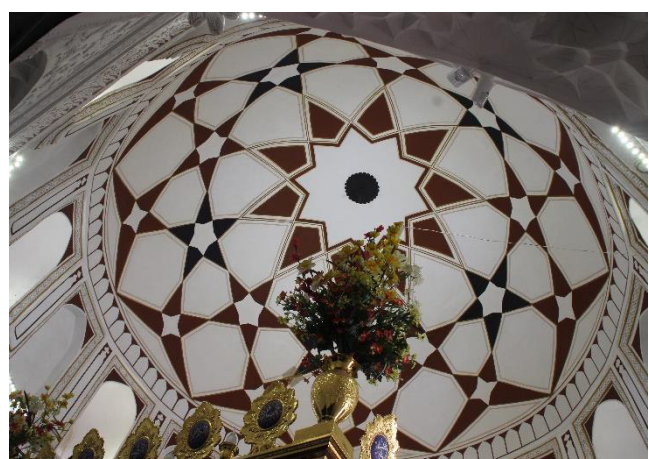
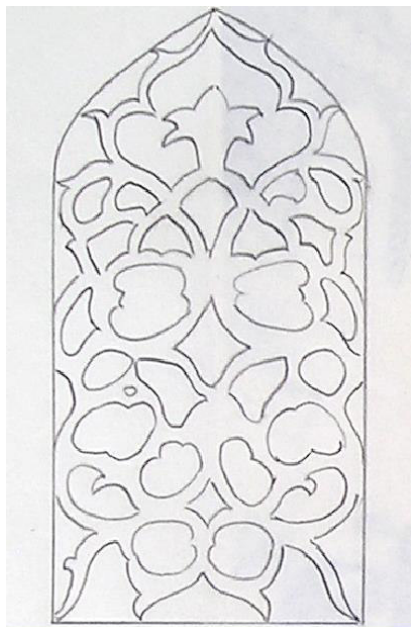


Image 27. Display a star pattern with polychrome painted on the dome

The carved plaster or open work stucco was used to decorate the windows located in the tympana of the sixteen niches. Unfortunately, these have all been demolished and can only be seen in old photographs.



Drawing 8. design of old windows facing



Image 28. old photo of carved plastic lattice covering a window (source: Achieve center of SBU)

4-4-5 History of the mausoleum and the deceased

The inscription band clearly states that the building is the tomb of Abolqāsem Ebrāhīm, son of Moūsā b. Ğa‘far (the seventh imam of Shia), and it has thus been known as the mausoleum of Šāhzāde Ebrāhīm. In the book titled *Anvār-e Parākande*, i.e. biography of Emāmzāde, Emāmzāde Ebrāhīm’s father is Aḥmad b. Mūsā, known as "Šāh Čerāg", and his tomb is constructed in Šīrāz (Faḡīh Ğalālī, 1997: 274). According to *TQ*, Eshāq son of Ebrāhīm son of Mūsā b. Ebrahām b. Mūsā b. Ğa‘far migrated to Qom, and Feyż Qomī believed that he is the same Ebrāhām (Feyż Qomī, 1971: 363).

However, he mentions several “Ebrāhīms” as descendants of Imām Mūsā, and it is not clear which person this Ebrāhīm is. Also in *TQ*, ‘omdat al-Ṭāleb stated that just one of the descendants of Imām Mūsā b. Ğa‘far was a distinguished *emāmzāde*, who was buried next to the shrine of Imām Hosain in Karbala. (Qomī, 2006: 601)

The inscription gives the date of the mausoleum’s construction as 805/1402 – this is likely when the stucco was finished, while the building itself was constructed earlier. Donald Wilber dates the building to 721/1321, and interprets the date mentioned on the inscription as the date of

repair, rather than construction (Wilber, 1955: 157). It is probable that Wilber's date is based on the inscription on the Qajar tiles (which, as mentioned above, do not exist anymore). This inscription mentioned three dates: 1270/1854, in addition to two dates at the beginning and the end of the inscription, 721 and 127. According to Feyz, there is a mistake in the writing and all these actually refer to 1270 (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 365-7). This date (1270) coincides with the date of the Qajar decorations in the mausoleum of 'Alī b. Ğa'far standing nearby. Wilber, however, seems to have read it as 721, which is presumably a mistake. The date on the inscription band (801/1402) seems much more credible.

In the stucco frieze, the name of the patron – a lady by the title of 'Eṣmat al-Dīn appears in the text of the inscription. These, as well as other epithets mentioned later, are all honorific titles and not her actual name. However, Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī suggests that, considering the title "Ṣafat al-Islam va al-Muslimin", she was probably a lady from the Ṣafī dynasty, likely the wife Ḥvāḡe Ebrāhīm Ṣafī, who was the ruler of Qom and its surroundings suburbs at the time (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1985: 36).

Despite the existence of some historical research, no dedicated archaeological studies have ever been carried out into the mausoleum. In 1937, the building was registered as a national monument No. 198 of Iranian Cultural Heritage. In the registration file, the date of construction was defined as 721/1321, and the year inserted in the inscription as 1402/805 was registered as the year of the reconstruction.

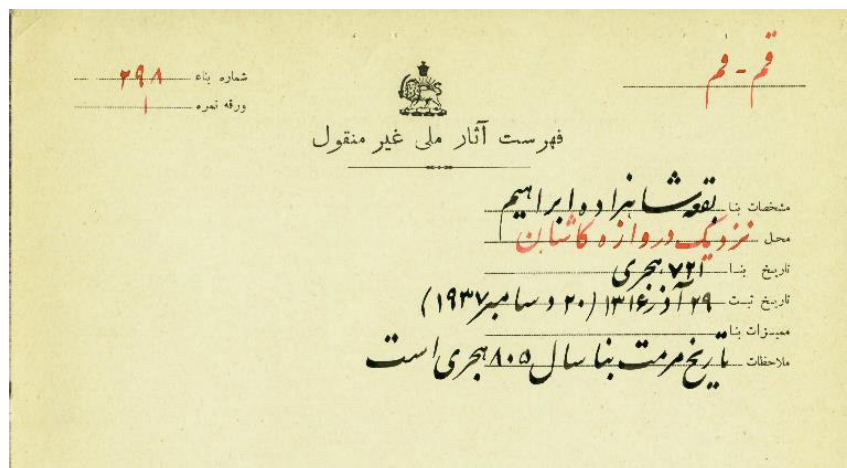


Image 29. Registration file of the monument of Šāhzāde Ebrāhīm (source: Archive of ICHTO)

The building has been restored several times before and after the Revolution, both by the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization and Qom Endowment Department. During the latest restorations between 1990-2010, all construction attachments were dismantled, and the

form of the single building of the mausoleum was rehabilitated. Internal decorations were also cleaned, with some parts also re-painted. This is when the external tiles of the dome were repaired and replaced with contemporary designs. Presently, the mausoleum receives a number of Shia pilgrims from Iran and abroad on a daily basis.

4-5 Mausoleum of ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far

4-5-1 location

This monument is another of the Kāšān gate Tomb towers. Located on the eastern side of the city on Šahīd Ruḡānī street, it is an independent construction within an expanded graveyard, which today is part of the cemetery of martyrs in Qom. The tomb is located 150 meters from the Bāġ-e Sabz Tomb towers and 180 meters from the mausoleum of Šāh Ebrāhīm outside of the old gate of Kāšān, also known as “Darb-e Behešt” (Heaven’s Door).¹ According to the citizens of Qom, this building is usually visited by many pilgrims after the Fāṭeme Ma‘šūme’s shrine.



Image 1. Aerial photo of Tomb towers of the Kāšān gate, 1976 (Source: Archive of ICHTO, addition by the author)

Since this building is located near an important city gate and next to four other important Tomb towers, it has been mentioned in many accounts and travelogues. Upon his departure to Kāšān, Henry René (1863-1950) regarded it by mistake as a mosque, writing: “... on right side, there is a picturesque mosque whose portal and surrounding are decorated with nice tiles and inscription panels, and it seems it has been constructed at the beginning of 19th century.” (René, 1957:858-59). It seems that the various parts are added to the building in the Qajar era particularly attracted René’s attention.

¹ We do not know the origins of this alternative name.

A 19th century drawing by Pascal Coste shows this tomb as freestanding and free-standing, and also portrays another structure nearby: this is probably a crypt or mortuary (Img. 2). However, currently the mausoleum is abutted by an entire complex, including an entrance porch, a mosque with a portal, and some family tombs.

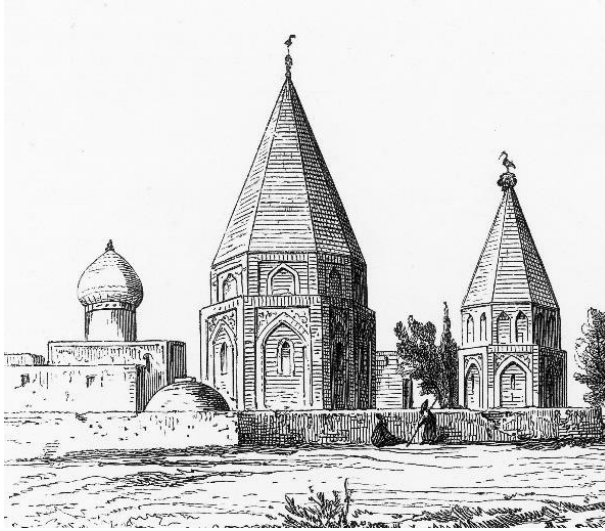


Image 2. Mausoleum of 'Alī b. Ğa'far near other tomb tower of Kāšān gat, P.Coste (source: *Monuments Modernes de la Perse*, 1867)



Image 3. Mausoleum of 'Alī b. Ğa'far, A. Godard (source: *Athār-é Īrān*, 1937, p. 310)

4-5-2 Architectural specifications

Exterior

Like other neighboring tombs, this one was also built on an independent plan. The tower rests on an octagonal foundation, which extends to 4 meters, with brick walls forming the main body of the domed tower. Each side of the octagon is about 7.20 meters high and they all include shallow, recessed rectangular panels with blind arches.

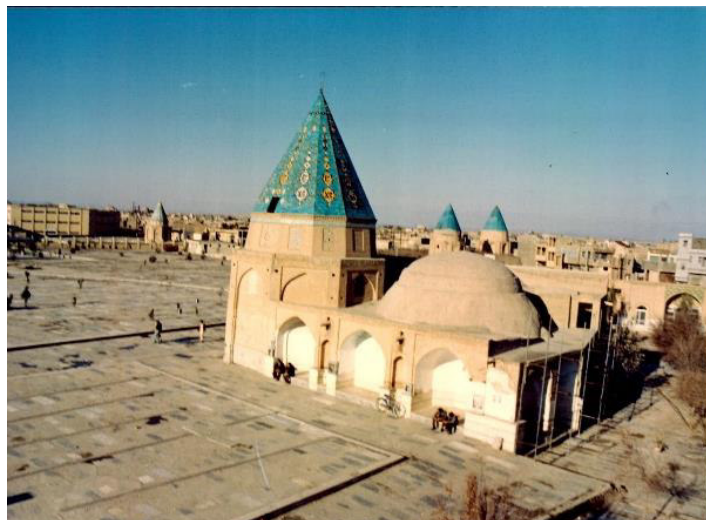
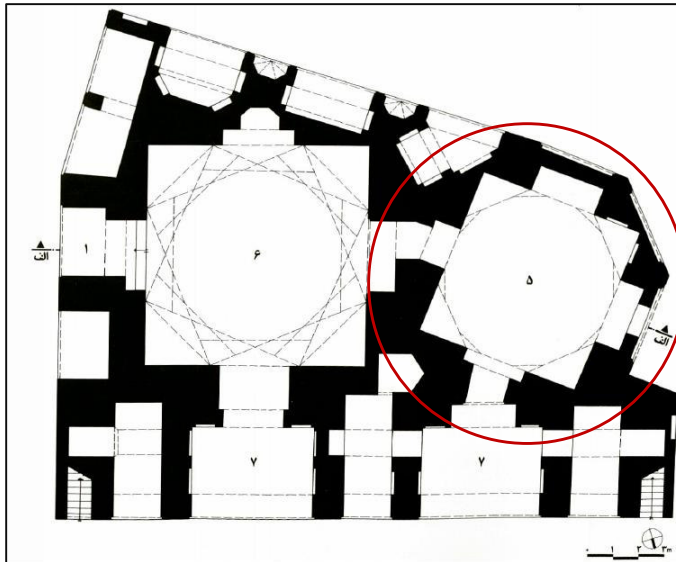


Image 4. General view of the Mausoleum of 'Alī b. Ğa'far and the surrounding cemetery, 1990 (source: Archive of OOQ.)

A dodecagonal drum, approximately 2.20 meters² tall, rests on top of the octagonal body. This part, as well as the dome, have been extensively repaired. The external façades of the tomb are clearly visible from the southern and western sides, while on the other sides, the adjacent structures have hindered their visibility. Historical photographs (see image 5) show how the dodecagonal zone is divided into rectangular panels with smaller blind-pointed arches; these were completely smoothed over during restoration, so that only their frames remain visible now. The dome is tent-shaped, 6.30 meters tall from the transition between the dodecagon and the dome to the apex. The total height of the building, from the existing, external floor up to the peak of the dome, is about 16 meters. Historically, the surface of the dome was covered with single-color, turquoise tiles, and it has been recently re-tiled in the same manner (‘Arab, 148:2002).



Drawing 1. Plan of the tomb complex of ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far (Source: *Ganġnāme*, vol. 12, p. 193, Addition by the author)

Image 5. Shrine complex of ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far, Sevruguin, 1900 (Source: *Qom-e Qadīm az Safavīye tā Qāġār* p. 161)



² Based on the plan from *Ganġnāme*, 2010.

Entrance

The entrance to the interior of the mausoleum leads through the northern portal and is built on a 45 degree bent axis. The porch, or *iwān*, is a part of the addition to the building constructed in the Qajar era, and comprises:

1. A rectangular part, 12 meters tall and 4.80 meters wide, accessed from the south.
2. Two rectangular rooms on both sides; one was probably a cloakroom for shoes, one an information desk. These were added during the Qajar era.

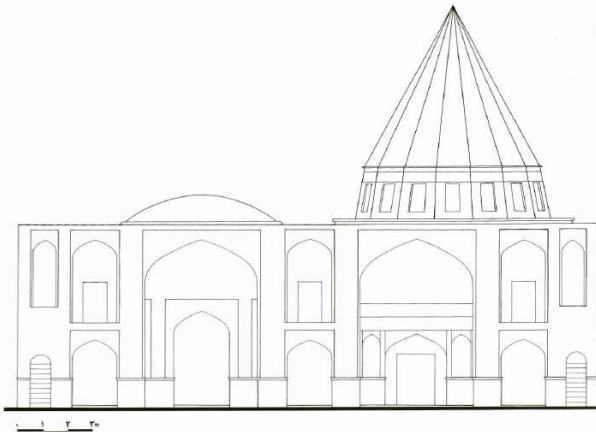
The porch is decorated with brick tiles, carved stone and *muqarnas*.³ Based on the date on inscription, the tiling of this part has been completed in the era of Nāṣer al-Dīn Šāh Qajar.



Image 6. 'Alī b. Ğa'far complex from E
(Source: Archive of OOO.)



Image 7. Adjacent porch



Drawing 2. Elevation of the northern façade of the shrine complex of 'Alī b. Ğa'far (source: *Ganġnāme*, Vol. 12, p. 193)

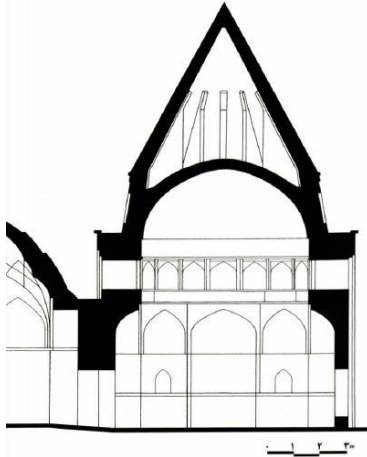


Image 8. Emānzāde 'Alī b. Ğa'far, view from S (Source: Achieve of Golestān Palace in Tehran)

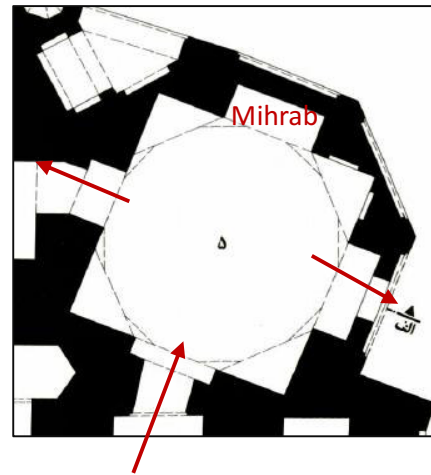
³ The date of 1268/1852 could be seen on the inscriptions, signed by Master Moḥammad Ṭāher Qomī. This master is also responsible for the tiling on Emānzāde Ebrāhīm and on some other buildings in Qom.

Interior

The interior of the mausoleum is built on a 6.50 meters-square plan. In the center, each side includes a niche, one meter deep and 2.50-3 meters wide. The south, *qibla* side includes the *mihrab*. Access is possible through entrances on the north and west sides, and through the attached prayer hall on the eastern side.



Drawing 3. EW section of the dome chamber (Source: *Ganġnāme*, vol. 12, p. 193)



Drawing 4. Access ways to the contemporary building (Source: *Ganġnāme*, vol. 12, p. 193, addition by the author)

The socle zone has been covered with tiles up to the height of 1.20 meter. Above, the wall is plastered over a further 0.77 meter and then restored with new joint plugs decorations. The first inscription band then follows and, further up, squinches covering the four corners of the chamber bring the plan to an octagon. Another inscription band is located at 4.60 meters, signaling the beginning of the transition from an octagon to a hexadecagon. The latter, approximately one meter high, includes twelve blind, pointed arches and four windows. Above it, three rows of shallow *muqarnas* cells form a continuous band from which the hemispherical dome springs. From the current floor level to the apex of the dome, the dome chamber measures about 9.65 meters.

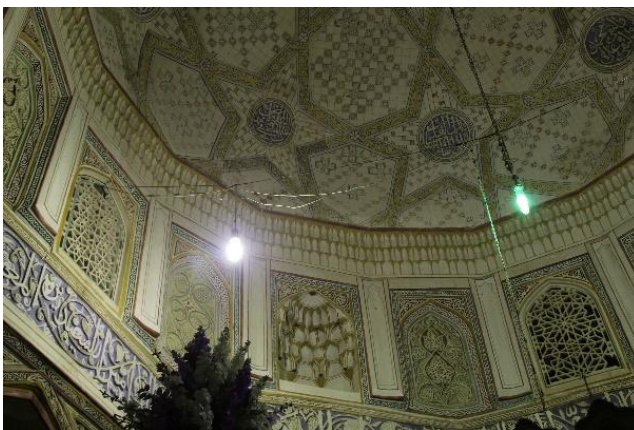


Image 9. The blind, pointed niches and the base of the dome

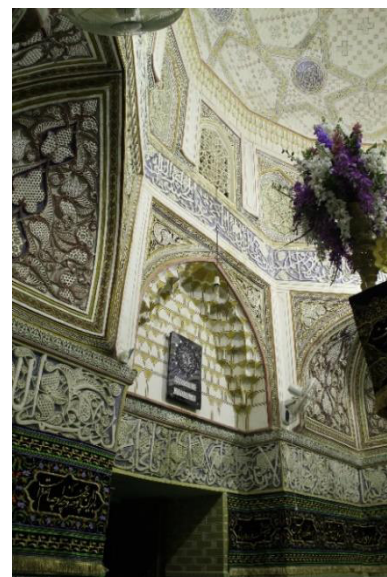
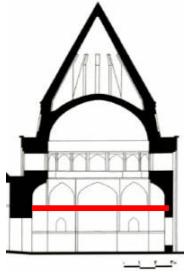


Image 10. Interior of the dome chamber, looking north

4-5-3 Epigraphic material

The lower inscription band is executed in stucco relief and composed of cursive (*thuluth*) letters in white. These are accompanied by tendrils with elaborate leaves, also in white, on a blue background. The height of the inscription band is about 0.60 m. It comprises a Quranic quote from the Surah al-Insān (74:1-9) (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1956: 44). The inscription begins on the right by the northern entrance of the building, encircling the whole chamber and terminating on the other side of that same entrance.



Drawing 5. Location of the first inscription in *thuluth* (Source: *Ganġnāme*, p.193, Addition by the author)



Image 11. Inscription band in *thuluth*

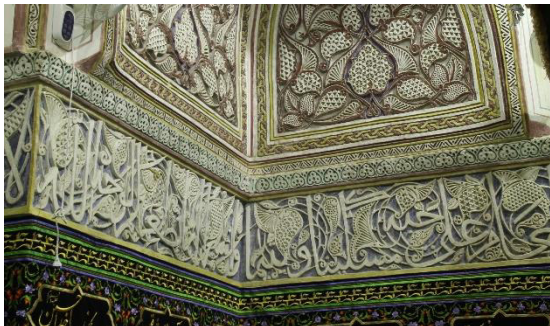
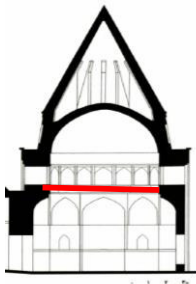


Image 12. Inscription band – northeastern



Image 13. Inscription band – northeastern

The second epigraphic frieze is located in the zone of transition between the octagon and the hexadecagon. It contains the names of those buried in the mausoleum, as well as the name of the patron of the construction.



Drawing 6. Location of the middle inscription in *thuluth* (Source: *Ganġnāme*, p.193, Addition by the author)



Image 14. The middle inscription band before restoration, Hillenbrand (source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt OFU Bamberg)

In comparison with the lower band, this inscription is written with larger letters (although also in *thuluth*): this is crucial for the legibility, as not only is this inscription located higher up, the band itself is also smaller, at only 0.45 meter tall. The letters are decorated with ornamental branches and leaves and the background is painted blue, with the letters and the decorative designs kept light in color, again to make them easier to read.

The inscription reads:

” امر بتجديد عمارة المشهد المقدس مضجع الامامين السيدين المعصومين المظلومين الطاهرين ابى الحسن على بن جعفر الصادق و ابى جعفر محمد بن موسى الكاظم صلوات الله عليهما المولى المرتضى الاعظم صاحب الاعدل الاحسب الا نسب علاء الحق و الدنيا و الدين جلال الاسلام و المسلمين عطاء الملك المير محمد الحسنى اعز الله فى الدارين.⁴

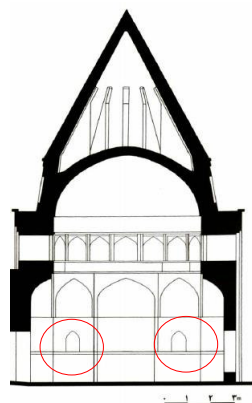
Translation: Has ordered the renewal of the sanctified mausoleum, tomb of the two *imāms*, the innocent, oppressed and pure *sayyids*. Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Ḡa‘far al-Ṣādiq and Abū Ḡa‘far Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Kāzīm, God bless them, the greatest approved master (*maulā*), the most just lord, the most appreciated of noblest decent, the highest in rightness in the world and in religion, who is eminent in Islam and among the believers, ‘Aṭā’ al-Mulk al-Mīr Muḥammad al-Ḥasanī, may God make him great in the two abodes [sc. in the here and the hereafter].



Image 15. The middle inscription band

In addition to these two main inscription bands, there are also various smaller inscriptions in the mausoleum. Some are placed on the eight blind arched niches, located underneath the lower inscription band. The height of these niches is about 0.85 meters and they are approximately 0.15 meter deep. The bodies of the niches are covered with vegetal designs, and each, except one, contains an inscription margin.

⁴ Inscriptions deciphered and transcribed by Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā’ī.



Drawing 7. Location of inscribed niches (Source: *Ganġnāme*, p. 193, Addition by the author)



Image 16. Inscription on the niche upper socle

According to Ṭabāṭabā'ī and Feyż, this one inscription-less niche is a result of the restorations, when it has been removed and smoothed over. The other inscriptions are written in *thuluth*. Some of their content was changed after the restorations (Feyż Qomī, 1971: 329-332; Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1976: 45). However, in general, they all speak of people who have somehow served the mausoleum, either having donated money, financed some repairs or contributed to the decorations. The transcriptions and translations of these inscriptions are summarized below:

- The western niche on the southern side:

"بنده علی مسعود دوازده من روغن چراغ نذر کرده که هر ساله برساند و اخوه عماد سی من عاقبتشان محمود باد"

Translation: The Servant of 'Alī (sc. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb or 'Alī b. Ġa'far), Mas'ūd has donated 12 mann⁵ of light oil per year to be delivered annually and his brother 'Emād [has donated] their destiny be good.

- the northern niche on the eastern side:

"دعاگوی مردان بهرام قزبینی"

Translation: Bahrām Qazbīnī as a prayer for men (sc. two people buried in this tomb).

In some sources, Bahrām Qazbīnī is mentioned as a stucco master who has worked on this building (Feyż Qomī, 1971:336; Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1976: 45, Raḥmatī, 2011: 50).

The southern niche on the western side:

"ائمة هذا الخلق بعد محمد، مودتهم فرض و اقوالهم حجه، فى سلخ ربيع الاخر سنة اربعين و سبعمائه"

Translation: The *imāms* of this [mausoleum] belong to the [chosen] people after Muḥammad. It is a duty to love them and their sayings are an argument [for the existence of God] At the closing of Rabī' al-Āḥar of the year seven hundred and forty (740 H).

⁵ One Mann = 3 kg.) equal to 36 kg

The inscription on another niche include the hymns of praise, which are attributed to Shiite *imāms* and mentioned in *al-Manāqeb Āl-e Abī Ṭāleb*. It underlines the virtues of the Shiite *imāms* and was written in the year 1163. It contains the following text:⁶

بخدمتكم تشرف جبریل (لا) علی و ابناه و بحران و الحجه و موسى و طهراه و بران و الحجه.

Translation: By serving you, Ġibrā'īl (Ġibrīl), was honored, 'Alī and his sons [Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusain], the two seas [Imām Saġġād and Imām Muḥammad Bāqir] and al-Ḥuġġa [i.e Imām Mahdī], and Mūsā (Imām Ġ'far al-Šādiq, Imām Mūsā al-Kāzim), and the two pure ones [Imām Riẓa and Imām Ġavād] and the two pious ones (Imām Hādī and Imām 'Askarī] and al-Ḥuġġa [i.e Imām Mahdī].



Image 17. S niche on the western side, (Source: *TP*, Fig. 27)



Image 18. N niche on the eastern side, photo by R.Hillenbrand (Source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt of OFU Bamberg)



Image 19. S niche on the eastern side, including date of 740 (Source: *TP*, Fig. 30)

Another inscription is also located in a circular band surrounding the central part of the dome. Written on azure blue background, it reads:

لا اله الا الله الملك الحق العدل المبين محمد رسول الله صادق الوعد الامين على ولى الله امير المومنين.

Translation: There is no God except the God who is kind of right and justice, Muḥammad is God's messenger, honest and trustee in his promises, 'Alī is God's fellow, commander of the believers.

Image 20. Inscription on the center of the dome, R. Hillenbrand (Source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt of OFU Bamberg)



⁶Ṭabāṭabā'ī has attempted it once, reading Ġibrā'īl as Ġibrīl and completely ignoring the letters between 'Alī and Ġibrīl, which resemble to Lā لا. They could of course be just a decorative element between words. Also he has read Faḥrān instead of Baḥrān (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1976: 46).

The surface of the *iwān* is decorated with Qajar era tiles on all sides. These include some verses in *nasta'liq* script, added in 1269/1853 by master Ṭāher-e Qomī, who was the tiling master at that time.⁷ Furthermore, an inscription band made of glazed tiles has been mounted inside the *iwān*, with white letters on azure blue background, consisting of surah al-Ġum'a (62) and, at the end, this addition: ... کتبه محمد بن حسین الحسینی فی سنه 1268، عمل استاد محمد طاهر قمی.

Translation: Written by Muḥammad b. Ḥusain Ḥusainī in 1268 (1852) works of master Muḥammad Ṭāher Qomī.



Image 21. Inscriptions on entrance (Source: Archive of OOQ)

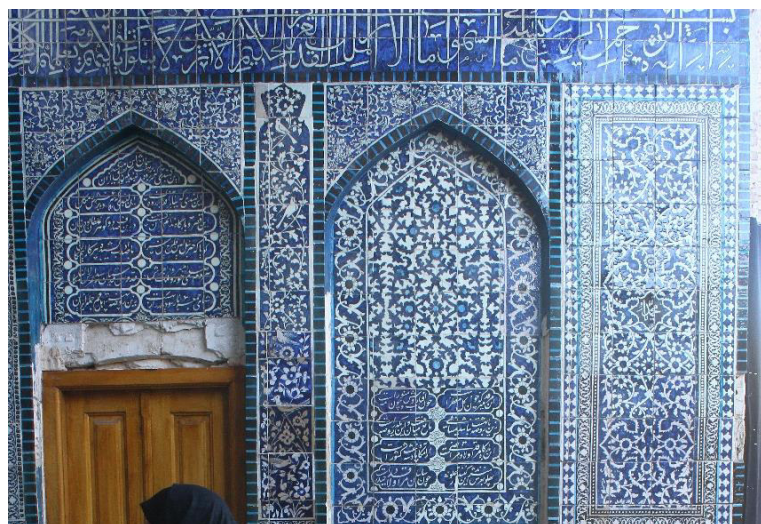


Image 22. Inscriptions on the W site of *iwān* (Source: Archive of OOQ)

⁷ Details of this inscription and other inscriptions added after the primary construction date of this building are not described here; for more information, refer to *TP* by Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī.

Feyz suggests that the second and third row of eight-pointed star on the socle would have included the date of 738/1337 and the names of two tile-workers associated with the factory of Master Rokn al-Dīn. Currently, these tiles are kept at the Āstāne Museum in Qom.

The latter are included in the two phrases of: عمل استاد نعمت الله جوشقانی (translation: performed by Master Ne‘mat Allāh Ğušqānī) and عمل استاد جمال نقاش (translation: performed by Master Ğamāl Naqqāš) (Feyz Qomī, 1971:336-7)



Image 23-24. Two pieces of eight-pointed star tiles with signature and date, in AMQ.

4-5-4 Decoration

As far as interior decorations go, the ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far Mausoleum is among the most important buildings of the 14th century, with more voluminous and diverse decorations than in any other *emāmzāde* in Qom. Until the early 20th century, the building contained luster tiles in the *mihṛāb*, the shrine and on the plinths, as well as stucco decorations and polychrome tiles dating to the Qajar period. Currently, only the latter remain in the building, as the luster tiles are dispersed in museums across the world.

4-5-4-1 Stucco decorations

Currently, there are only a few monuments in Iran with stuccos covering their entire interior surface (Raḥmatī, 2011: 150), which makes the ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far Mausoleum quite unique. Most of the stuccos there owe their survival to the high quality of plaster and the workmanship, and they were applied in various techniques. The semi-embossed, carved and incised plaster technique, with reliefs between 0.5 to 2.5 centimeters, was used to decorate the different

surfaces of the chamber, such as squinches, spandrels, inscription bands and the dome. Flat stucco in false joint and simulated incised brick joints and brick-end technique is another method used in almost all the tombs of this period. The grid pattern, or *Ažde kārī*, is as an additional technique applied on carved plaster, which consists of cross-hatched forms of leaves, arabesques and scrollwork patterns, set within a grid.

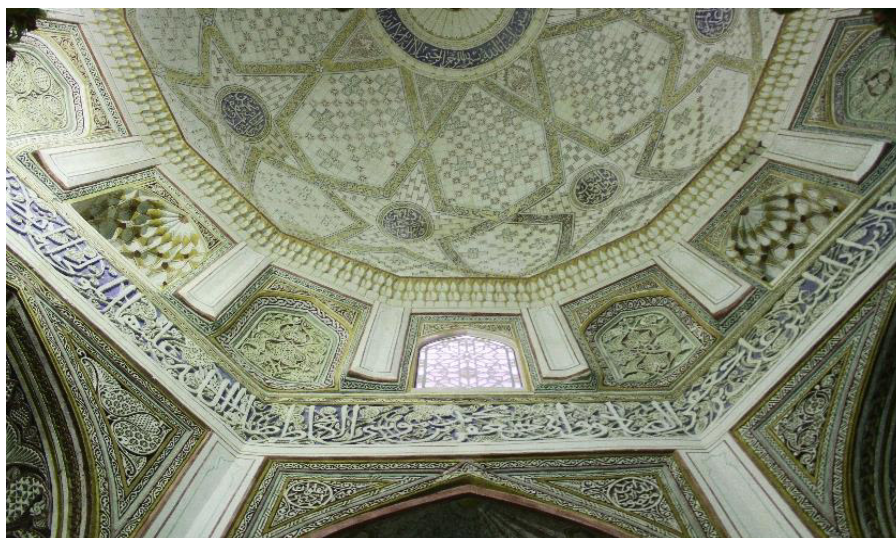


Image 25. polychrome plaster on the interior

The other important feature of the stuccos in the the ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far Mausoleum is the amount of color used. Vivid colors have helped the artist to highlight the luster and sheen of the patterns and to underline their volume and contrast. However, it should be noted that due to extensive restorations, new colors have replaced those used originally. Pope’s report from the 1930s mentions ochre, yellow, brown, red and white as the primary colors used in the mausoleum (Pope, 1931: 35), yet currently, green and blue dominate the background of patterns and inscriptions.

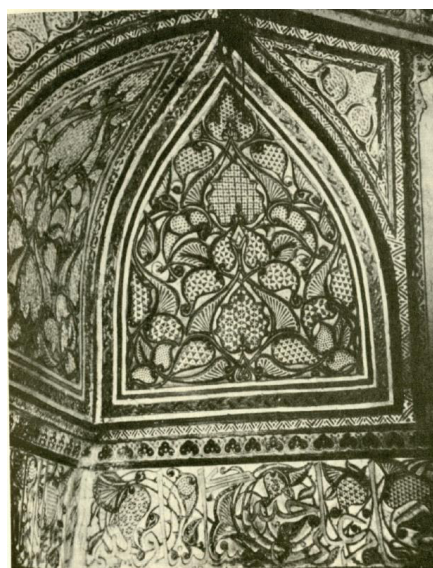


Image 26. polychrome plaster on a squinch
photo by Bazl (source: *Bulletin of the
American Institute for Persian Art and
Archaeology*, 1931, p. 35)

Chapter 4

The squinches in the four corners of the building and the spandrels of vaults are covered with polychrome stucco in semi embossed, carved technique, and include scrollwork and floral patterns. Large designs of flowers and leaves are popular, and entire stucco surfaces are covered with hatched forms. The composition is slightly different for each squinch. The decorative flowers and leaves are painted with light colors and contoured in brown. The background is also painted in a darker shade – this adds visual depth to the stuccos. Each corner-panel is bordered with an ornamental band.



Image 27. polychrome plaster on a squinch on the SE side

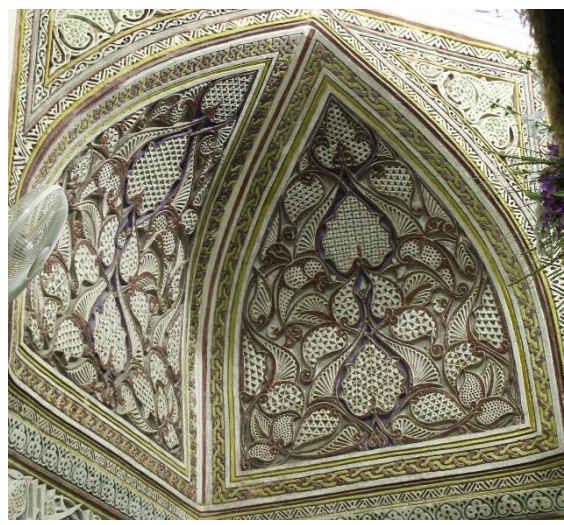


Image 28. polychrome plaster on a squinch on the NE side

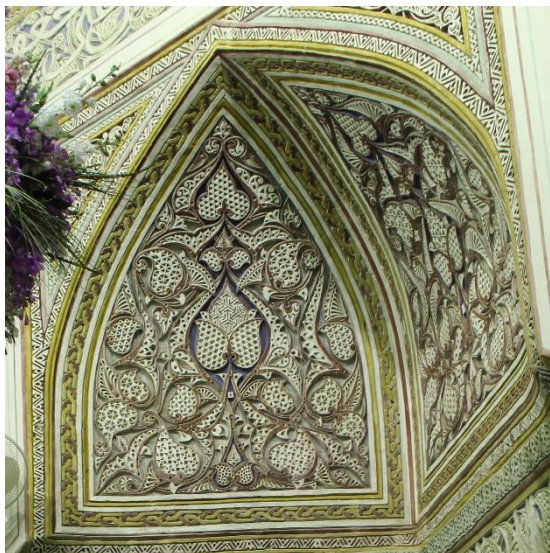


Image 29. polychrome plaster on a squinch on the NW side

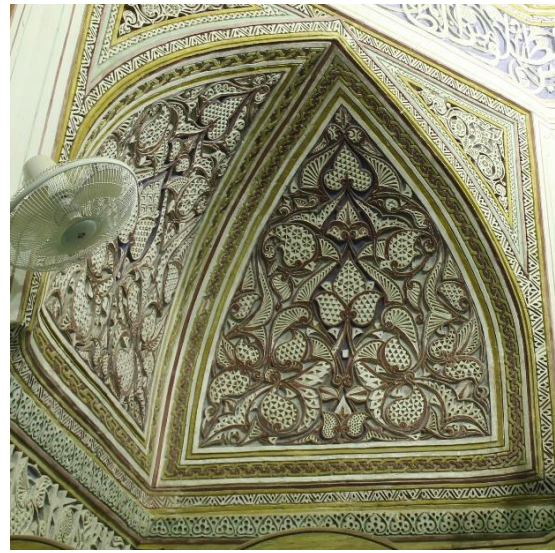
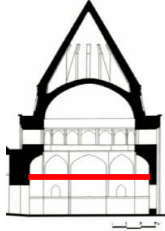


Image 30. polychrome plaster on a squinch on the SW side

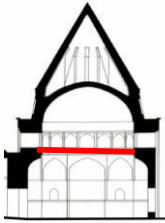
In the two inscription bands, the same technique of carved stucco has been applied. In some places, the amount of decorative designs actually surpasses the writing itself. The background of the inscriptions and the ends of the shaft letters have been filled with decorative motifs, including multiple twists and dense spirals. Most of the decorative leaves on the upper inscription band have fallen off and have been replaced with painted leaves during renovations.



Drawing 8- Location of the lower inscription (Source: *Gangnāme*, p. 193, with additions by the author)



Image 31. Lower inscription band section



Drawing 9- Location of the upper inscription (Source: *Gangnāme*, p.193, with additions by the author)



Image 32. Upper Inscription band

The simulated incised brick joints decoration, which was common in this era, is used on the walls above the socles and on the inner surface of the dome. The upper part of the plinth area is completely new; it has been extensively restored and painted. There is no documentation of its original condition prior to restoration.



Image 33. Simulated incised brick joints above the plinth area



Image 34. New simulated incised bricks on the eastern side

The soffits of the four vaults are made of plaster *muqarnas*, which probably was added during the Qajar era. They are painted in ochre and, on the southern side, the middle part includes some floral designs and also some inscription about the attributes of God.



Image 35. Muqarnas zone on the N side



Image 36. Muqarnas zone on the S side

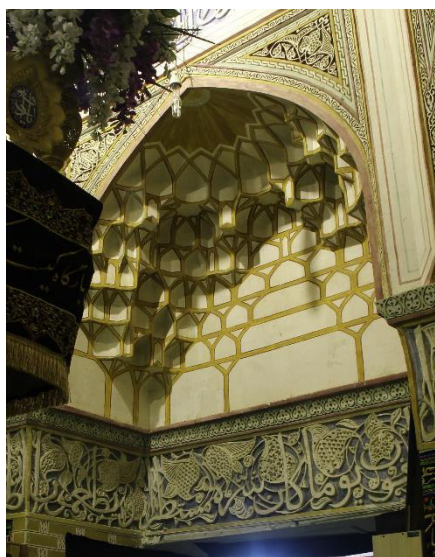


Image 37. Muqarnas zone on the E side



Image 38. Muqarnas zone on the W side

Four out of the sixteen niches above the second inscription band are covered with *muqarnas* too. These also include windows covered with plaster latticework, executed with geometric joints. The other niches are all blind, pointed arches, decorated with colored stucco. The technique and designs of these stuccos are similar to the stucco on the four-sided squinches and

on the niches in the lower part, though with more delicate plaster work. Above these niches, there are three rows of *muqarnas* contoured in gold.



Image 39. Decoration of the sixteen-sided niches below the dome

The whole surface below the dome comprises a sixteen-sided, polygonal construction. Its star shape is achieved through the omission of one or more of the middle segments on all sides of the star polygon, whose geometric decoration ends with the shapes of eight stars. This star shape is filled with hexagonal patterns and triangular patterns covered with stucco joint designs and painted. The decoration includes various geometrical motifs in cruciate and wicker cross design. The outermost band of ochre stars is filled with floral motifs. Wilber mentions that the design elements and the type of carving are similar to the work in the upper gallery of the mausoleum of Ulğaito at Soltāniye (Wilber, 1955: 132). The center of each star is occupied by a medallion with an inscription on a blue background. The text names the fourteen Shi'i saints in an enumeration known as “the Great Salutation” (Şalavāt al-Kabire).



Image 40. Some medallions below the dome



Image 41. Stucco decorations below the dome, R. Hillenbrand (source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt of OFU Bamberg)

As we do have historical photographs of this central part of the dome, we know that it has been renovated in a markedly different style (as visible on a photograph from 1974 – see image 40). Currently, there is no sign of the vegetal design inside the central circle, and the bands are decorated with geometric designs different from the main form. The inscription band, though cursive as it had been originally, has been repaired in a different style of *thuluth* script, with a few minor modifications in the wording as well: it started with "Basmallāh", and ended with "Āmannā bi-Llāh".

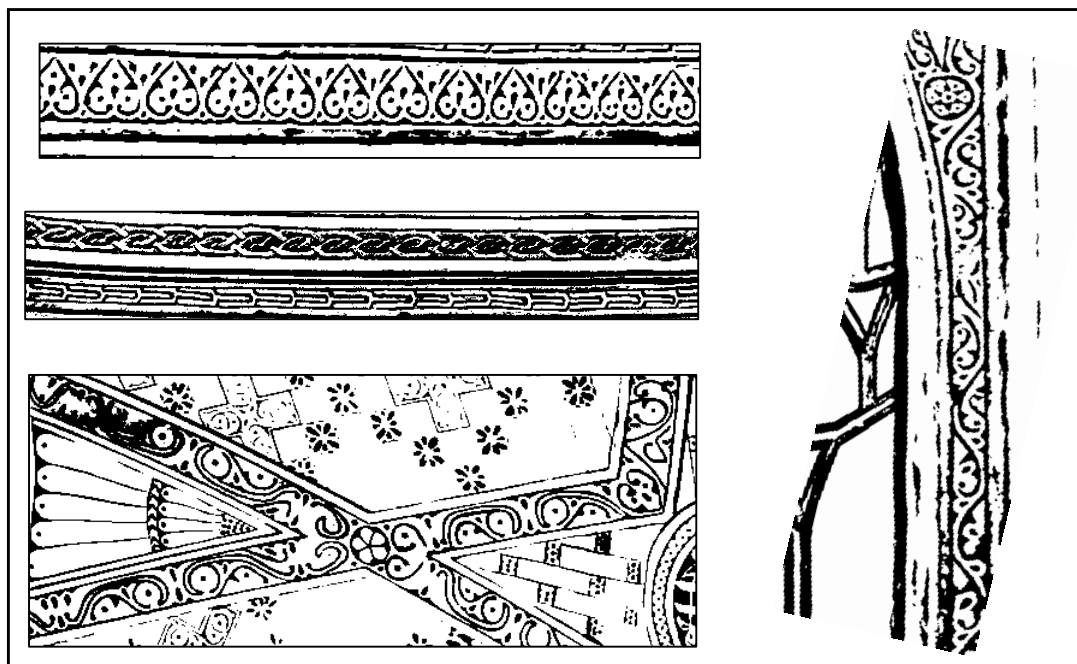


Image 42. Central circle below the dome after the restorations



Image 43. Stucco decoration on the central part below the dome before restorations, R. Hillenbrand (source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt of OFU Bamberg)

Other stucco decorations in the building include the very varied decorative borders with geometric and vegetal designs, in various sizes, which were used to divide the decorated surfaces into panels and consequently are present on all the decorated parts of the interior.



Drawing 8. Some samples of border and margin designs

4-5-4-2 Glazed tilework

The Mausoleum of ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far is one of the most important 14th century buildings in terms of luster-painted tilework. This has contributed to the many art historical studies completed on the building. Due to their luxurious nature, fineness, diversity of color and design in painting, workmanship and number as well as the possibility of access to many of these tiles, most of which have date and signature bearing inscriptions, the luster tiles and luster pottery have been the focus of attention in recent centuries and have become the subject of many bibliographical works⁸ (Watson, 1985:19).

Luster-painted tiles were a very common type of decoration in Il-khanid Iran and they were also known as “Kāšān Ceramics”, after their main center of production. “Kāšān was an outstanding center of such production during its highly productive period in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is known to have turned out several different types of glazed material. One specialty was the manufacturing of glazed and lustered *mihṛābs* which were built up of a number of fired tiles bearing inscriptions or decoration in high relief” (Wilber, 1939:26).

Kāšān ceramics are usually dated. The earliest tile in the typical Kāšān style found to date comes from very early 13th century. Kāšān tiles have been used in many mausoleums of *emāmzādes* and in other Shia holy places, such as the mausoleum of Emāmzāde Yaḥyā in Varāmīn (660/1262), the tomb of ‘Abd al-Šamād Naṭanz (707/1308), Masḡed-e Meydān in Kāšān (623/1226), Emāmzāde Ğa‘far in Dāmḡān (665-67/1266) and the tomb chamber of Emām Rezā in Mašhad (1215), as well as in several shrines in the Qom region.

Unfortunately, currently there are no traces of the original tilework in the Mausoleum of ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far, and the only remaining tiles date to the Qajar era. This is because some of the Il-Khanid tiles were stolen and the rest were transported to various museums for security reasons (Feyż Qomī, 1971: 336). Nevertheless, we do know what tiles were used in this particular building, and they were predominantly luster-painted⁹ or over-glaze painted¹⁰, in the forms of

⁸ For more information about luster tile attributed to Kāšān, refer to:

- *The Development of Mosaic Faiënce in Islamic Architecture in Iran*, D.Wilber, in: *Ars Islamica*, 1939.

- *Persian Lustre Ware*, by Watson, 1985.

- *Eine keramische Werkstatt von Kaschan im 13.-14 Jahrhundert*, F. Sarre, in: *Istanbuler Mitteilungen* 3, 1935

- *Datées de céramique de Kāšānshān à décor lustré*, by Godard, in *Athār-é Īrān* 2, 1937.

- *Persian Tiles on European Walls: Collecting Ilkhanid Tiles in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, by T. Masuya in: *Ars Orientalis* 30, 2000

⁹ The technique of luster painting, in which compounds of metal oxides were applied over a previously fired glaze and then re-fired, producing a glittery, metallic surface (T. Masuya, 2000:41)

¹⁰ The technique known as *lāḡavardina* (characteristically deep blue or turquoise tiles, decorated with gold colour).

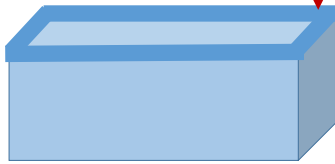
panels, eight-pointed stars, and cross-shaped tiles. The luster tiles used in this building are divided into three groups:

1. Frieze tiles, covering the surface of the cenotaph
2. eight-pointed star- and cross-shaped tiles, used in the plinth area all around the building
3. Luster tiles of the *mihrāb*

I. Frieze tiles on the surface of the cenotaph

The old tomb of this mausoleum was covered with luster-painted frieze tiles, whose size can be estimated to have covered about 1.80*2.65 meters of the cenotaph. The original tiles from the cenotaph are currently kept in the Āstāne Museum in Qom. These tiles used to cover all four sides of the cenotaph, as well as the top, where they were placed in two rows around the margin and also in the middle. This margin was about 0.20*0.20 m, and the tiles includes the *Ṣalavāt al-Kabīre* (great salutation), written in *thuluth* script.

The frieze tiles were painted in cobalt blue and included a design of arabesques, flowers and leaves in relief.



Drawing 9. location of luster tile inscription around the panel on the cenotaph



Image 44. Inscription around the panel on the cenotaph in AMQ

The middle part of the cenotaph included luster tiles of 0.70*0.75 meters, arranged in the shape of a *mihrāb*. Their inscription names those buried in the building:

” هذا المرقد و المزار المنير للامام المعصوم المظلوم الراوى على العريضى ابن المولانا و السيدنا الامام المعصوم جعفر الصادق ابن الامام المعصوم محمد الباقر ابن الامام المعصوم السجاد على زين العابدين ابن الامام المعصوم الشهيد المظلوم ابا عبدالله الحسين بن الامام المعصوم الشهيد الامير المومنين على بن ابيطالب صلوات الله عليهم اجمعين“

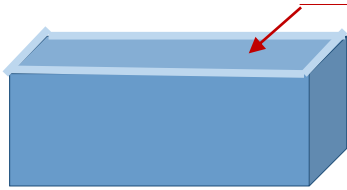
Translation: This cenotaph and illuminated tomb is the burial place of the innocent, the oppressed, the narrator [sc. of traditions], ‘Alī al-‘Arīzī, son of our master and our *sayyid*, the innocent *imām*, Ġa‘far al-Ṣādiq, son of the innocent *imām*, Muḥammad al-Bāqir, son of the innocent *imām*, al-Saġġad Zayn al-‘Ābidīn, son of the innocent, the martyred, the oppressed *imam*, Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Ḥusain, son of the commander of the faithful, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, Peace Be Upon Them.

The left side of the tomb also includes this phrase:

”هذا الضريح الشريف و المرقد المنيف الامام طاهر محمد ابن امام المعصوم موسى الكاظم ابن الامام المعصوم جعفر الصادق ابن الامام المعصوم محمد الباقر ابن الامام المعصوم على سجاد زين العابدين ابن الامام المعصوم الشهيد المظلوم ابا عبدالله الحسين بن الامام المعصوم الشهيد الامير المومنين على بن ابيطالب صلوات الله عليهم اجمعين.“

Translation: This is the holy shrine and dignified tomb of innocent *imām*, Muḥammad son of innocent *imām*, Mūsā Kāzīm, son of innocent *imām*, Ġa‘far Ṣādiq son of innocent *imām*, Muḥammad Bāqir son of innocent *imām*, Saġġād Zayn al-‘Ābidīn, who is son of innocent martyred *imām*, Abū ‘Abadallāh Ḥusain, who is son of the commander of the faithful, ‘Alī son of Abī Tālib, Peace Be Upon Them.

An inscription band at the top of the cenotaph included tiles painted in dark, yellowish brown, with flower and vegetal decorations in the background. The tiles on the lower part of the cenotaph were lighter. The inscription band was 0.8 meter wide and included the “Throne Verse” from the Qur’an (2: 255-57).



Drawing 10. location of luster tile inscription panel on cenotaph



Image 45. Details of luster tile inscription on the cenotaph



Image 46. luster painted tiles on the cenotaph in AMQ.

The luster-painted tiles on the four sides of the cenotaph also included Quranic inscriptions and were divided into four rows. The highest row includes fragments from the chapter of Yāsīn (36:1-10), written in high relief in *thuluth* script, blue on brown background. This inscription also includes a border above, written with smaller, dark letters on white background. These two parts of the inscription are not displayed together in the museum, and some fragments are lost.



Image 47- Tiles on first row of on lateral sides of cenotaph, in AMQ.

The three lower rows also include fragments of Yāsīn (36), written in gold, high relief letters on azure background and decorated with arabesques. 71 pieces of this set are kept in the Qom Museum, while another three pieces are currently in the Pergamon museum in Berlin.¹¹



Place of luster-painted frieze on the lateral sides of cenotaph



Image 48. Parts of the luster-painted frieze of the cenotaph, in AMQ.



Image 49. Three pieces of the luster-painted frieze tiles from the cenotaph, Pergamon Museum in Berlin

¹¹ These three pieces of luster-painted tile frieze were discovered by the author at the Pergamon Museum. They fit perfectly with the tile fragments at the Āstāne Museum of Qom.

II- Tiles used in the plinth area (Socle)

The plinth area, 1.20 meters tall, has been repaired with new, turquoise tiles. The original decorations of this space consisted of large, eight-pointed star- and cross-shaped tiles, which formed a rich, shimmering surface. Currently, some of these tiles are kept at the Āstāne Museum in Qom, where they are installed directly on the wall. A number of tiles were illegally removed and are currently kept in both private collections and in public museums.

The cross-shaped tiles are turquoise, decorated with animal and vegetal designs in high relief, and are placed between the star-shaped tiles. The latter are more varied. Most are bordered by Qur'anic inscriptions in *naskhi* script and are about 0.23x0.23 meter in size. The only evidence we have for their original setting within the mausoleum is a report by Feyż Qomī, who described them as arranged in five rows. Coupled with what we know of the length and height of the plinths and the dimensions of the three gates and the southern chamber, which would not have been tiled, we can estimate the number of original tiles at 904 eight-pointed star and 904 cross-shaped pieces (Feyż Qomī, 1971: 336- 37).



Image 50. Combination of eight-pointed star tiles with cross-shaped tiles of Emāmzāde ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far in AMQ.



Image 51. Part of eight-pointed star tiles of Emāmzāde ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far in AMQ.

Almost all eight-pointed star tiles can be divided into two parts: marginal and central. The luster painting in the main field shows stylized vegetal, inscriptional, bird, human and animal decorations, while the margins are always decorated with inscriptions. Vegetal designs include a central plant motif, combined with other leaf and flower decorations, as well as geometric and arabesque designs. On some tiles, the patterns are painted in white on brown or azure blue background, while on others, the background is white with colorful designs. Other, less frequently used colors include cream, turquoise and orange.



Image 52. A number of luster-painted star tiles of Emāmzāde ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far with vegetal designs, currently in AMQ.

Animal designs include storks, rabbits, deer, small birds, lions or tigers, ducks, gazelles, dragons and phoenixes Feyz notes that these designs mostly appear in the first row of tiles on the plinth (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 336-37).



Image 53. A number of luster painted star tiles of Emāmzāde ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far with animal designs in AMQ.

A few tiles decorated with human figures and with geometric designs can also be found in the Qom Museum. Epigraphic designs include typically Quranic words such as al-Ḥamd الحمد , Al'izz lillāh العزله and Innā Fataḥnā انا فتحنا , as well as the name of *Imam* 'Alī. The spaces between the letters are filled with vegetal designs.



Image 54. A number of eight-pointed star tiles of Emānzāde 'Alī b. Ğa'far with inscription designs in AMQ.

If we agree with Feyz Qomī's report of five rows of tiles in the plinth area and take into account the octagonal plan and the measurements of the building, the height of the plinth (1.20 meter), and the tile measurements (23*23 cm), then deduct the entrance door and *mihrāb* areas (which were not decorated with the same tiles as the plinth area), we are left with an estimate of approximately 625 tiles originally used to decorate plinth of this mausoleum. Out of these, 400 are located in the Qom Museum and the rest are removed illegally.

The great variety of tiles used in the mausoleum, coupled with the fact that none mention the names of those buried in the building, suggest that they were all purchased directly from a workshop in Kāšān, rather than ordered specifically for this mausoleum.

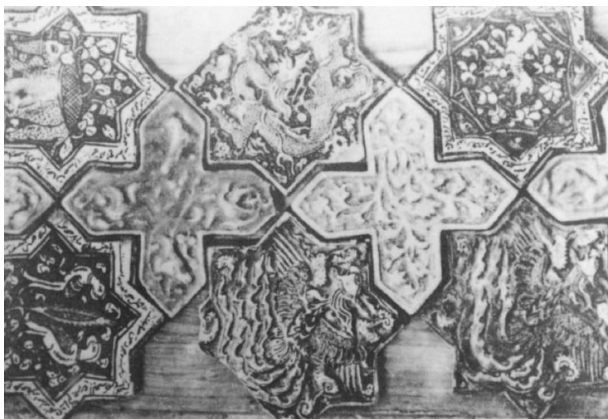


Image 55. A number of eight-pointed tiles in Emānzāde 'Alī b. Ğa'far, with vegetal and animal designs, Āstāne Museum of Qom (Source: *Ar: Orientalis*, Vol. 30, p.49)

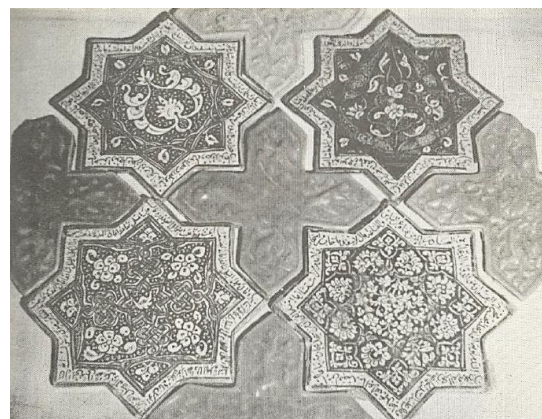


Image 56. A number of eight-pointed tiles from the plinth Emānzāde 'Alī b. Ğa'far, with vegetal designs, Āstāne Museum of Qom (source: *TP*, Vol.2)

III-Luster tiles of the Mihrāb

The current site of the *qibla* (i.e. the southern wall) has been fully renovated with new tiles. The original, luster-tile Mihrāb from this mausoleum has been transferred to the Islamic Museum of Tehran, deemed of national significance as it is one of the very few surviving luster *mihirābs* from the Il-khanid era. The Mihrāb was made by Yūsof b. Moḥammad, member of a well-known family of tile producers from Kāšān. A number of *mihirāb* bearing this family's signature are available. They were made in different sizes and qualities, but they have many similarities from the aspects of overall design, arabesque patterns and coloration. Among these we can mention: The large *mihirāb* from Meydān mosque at Kāšān (623/1226), the large *mihirāb* from Emāmzāde Yaḥyā (663 /1264), a section of *mihirāb* in 'Abdoṣṣamad at Naṭanz (707 /1308), the three *mihirābs* of Emām Rezā mausoleum at Mašhad, two of which bear the date of 612 / 1215. The Luster Mihrāb of 'Alī b. Ğa'far is among the oldest examples produced at Kāšān workshop. Compared with other *mihirābs* of this clan, it does not have a high quality and some tile pieces placed next to each other are not compatible. Some researchers suggest that the part with the earlier date is lighter and more delicate, and may have been prepared before all the others, then kept in the workshop before being applied to the slightly later *mihirāb* (Godard, 1937:317; Watson, 1985:142). Two dates are visible on the Mihrāb of Emāmzāde 'Alī b. Ğa'far: 713 /1313 and 734/1334.



Image 57. luster painted tile *mihirab* from Meydān mosque in Kāšān, in Pergamon museum, Berlin

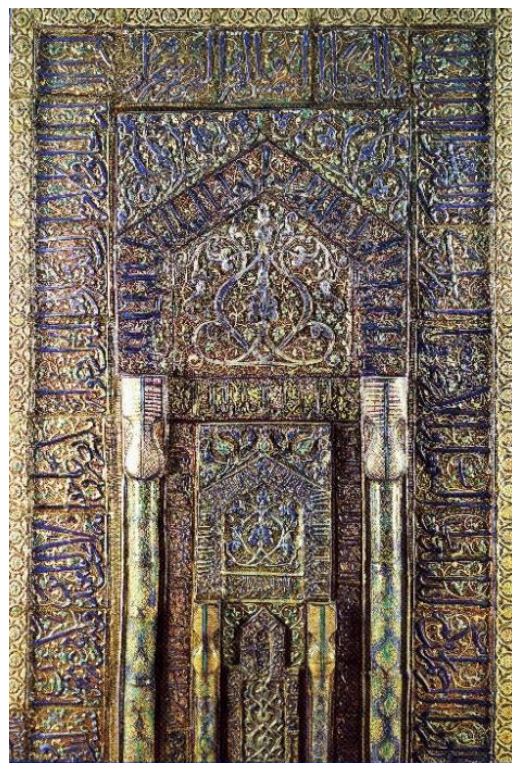


Image 58. luster painted tile *mihirab* from Emāmzāde 'Alī b. Ğa'far in National museum of Tehran

Some researchers suggest that the part with the earlier date is lighter and more delicate, and may have been prepared before all the others, then kept in the workshop before being applied to the slightly later Mihrāb (Godard, 1937:317).

The Mihrāb comprises a large, flat panel, measuring 2.83*1.22 meters. It consists of 45 individual tiles with decoration in relief, painted in turquoise blue and luster on white background. The tiles are arranged into three separate slabs, framed by inscription bands, with three successively smaller, keel-arched arcades, each set into the previous.

The whole Mihrāb is surrounded with a thin band of repeated floral designs. The first wide, rectangular frame includes a Qur'anic inscription from the chapter of al-'Arāf (7:54-55). It also contains the of writing at the end: "كتب في غره رمضان سنه اربع و ثلثين و سبعمائنه".

Translation: This is written in Ramadān 734 /1334

Alongside the margin of this inscription band margin, the name of the tilework craftsman is also written: عمل العبد يوسف بن على بن محمد بن ابي طاهر.

Translation: It has made by servant al-'Abd Yūsuf b, 'Alī b. Moḥammad b. Abī Ṭāher.



Image59. Decoration band surrounding the Mihrāb



Image 60. Part of the Mihrāb of Emāmzāde 'Alī b. Ğa'far, Tehran National Museum



Image 61. Date and name of the craftsman on the margin of the first wide rectangular frame of the Mihrāb

The overall arrangement of the Mihrāb creates the illusion of three arcades receding in depth. The two outer arcades are emphasized by half-round columns with capitals. The inner arcade includes another Qur'anic inscription, this time written in *Kufic* script, in azure high relief. This contains a single verse from the chapter of Isrā (17:78).

Two spandrels and tympana are covered with large, vegetal patterns in blue and small, vegetal patterns in white on a shimmering, golden and brown background.



Image 62. Detail of the decoration on the luster tile Mihrāb of Emāmzāde 'Alī b. Ğa'far

The second or middle arcade is surrounded by a rectangular frame, above which the *shahada* is written: لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله

Translation: There is no god except Allāh and Muḥammad is His messenger.

In a band around this arcade, the Quranic surah al-Ḥamd (1:1-7) is written in *Thuluth* script. This inscription is written in blue, on a background of vegetal motifs in golden and brown. This is the panel dated to 713/1313; as mentioned before, it appears to be of slightly higher quality than the surrounding tiles and may have been made a little earlier. The band of the second arcade also includes the Ṣalāvāt al-Kabīre صلوات كبيره (means: great salutation)

The Mihrāb is framed by two high relief columns on both sides. The central, small blind arch is decorated with an inscription of a section of Surah al-Naṣr (110:1-3). The text mentions the “triumph of Mecca with great victory and final dominance of Islam”, “turning people’s beliefs to Islam in Mecca and its surroundings and their swear allegiance with God’s messenger” and “decease of Prophet”. The spandrels of this part of the Mihrāb are decorated with high relief arabesque and vegetal designs.

In the rectangular margin below the third arcade, between the aforementioned two small half-columns, the following phrase is written in Kufic: “صل على محمد و آل محمد”. Translation: Salutation and praise to Muḥammad and Muḥammad’s family.

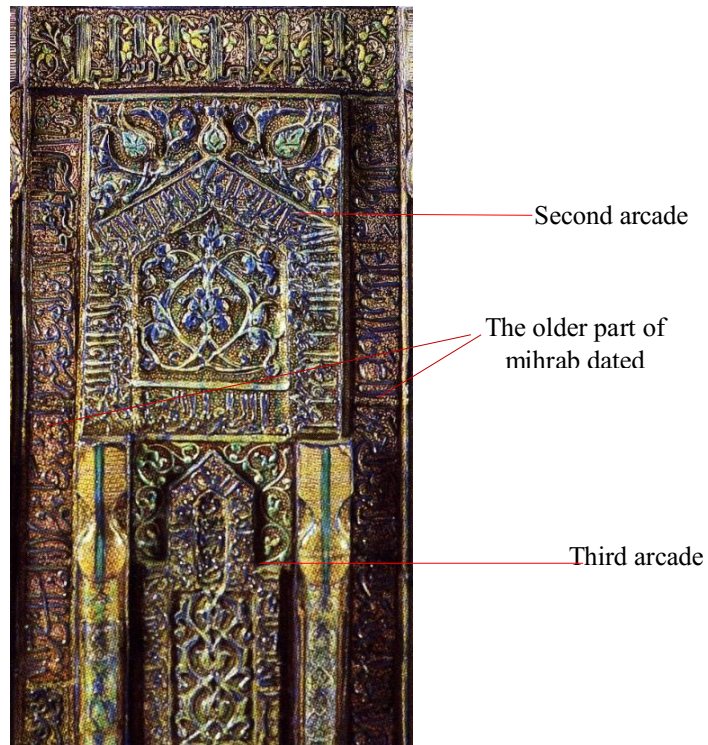


Image 63. Details of middle part of Mihrāb

Given the large number of exquisite tiles used in this building, one may realize the high status of the owner during the monument’s construction. The application of this amount of tiles in the plinths, cenotaph and in particular the selection of luster tile Mihrāb for this monument are not seen in any other tombs of this period in Qom; and it may be due to the great respect of the patron or the people for the tomb’s owner that a considerable sum was paid for them. However, the important point is the shape, design and the technique of these tiles, which are not different from the luster tiles produced by Kāšān workshop and found in a number of tombs of the period, and in fact no particular tile design was ordered for this tomb. This tomb’s Mihrāb, which is considered as the last work of this family, was executed hastily and does not have the quality or the high technical workmanship of its counterparts in Kāšān Mosque (Watson, 1985: 142). However, apart from decoration, the underlying objective of using such tiles was perhaps to convey the religious verses, traditions and social themes, which were reflected on a solid object such as tile for a greater outreach to the general public (Kolbādī Nežād; Āyīne vand, 2016:54), while at the same time bestowing a visual and mystical beauty on the interior space of the building.

4-5-5 History of the mausoleum and the deceased

It is not altogether clear who is buried in this mausoleum. The panels on the cenotaph mention two children of the Shia *imāms*, ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far ‘Arīzī and Moḥammad son of Moūsā Kāzem. Feyż Qomī believes that there is much doubt on whether these two *emānzādes* are immediate children of these *imāms*. In fact, the panels on the cenotaph were constructed four centuries after their death; thus, the names of the deceased may be written incorrectly and overall, the panels do not constitute a sound historical source (Feyż Qomī, 1971:322-23).

‘Alī b. Ğa‘far ‘Arīzī was one of the younger children of Imām Şādiq, the sixth Shia *imām*, and his personality and virtues are emphasized by all Ulamā. As mentioned in his various books, he lived a long life, witnessing the presence of five *imāms*. Lots of narratives are cited by him and compiled into a book titled *Masā‘el-e ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far*. Feyż Qomī notes that it seems impossible for such a virtuous person to have come to Qom with no written or oral account of his presence preserved. He posits that ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far ‘Arīzī’s tomb is probably located in ‘Arīz of Medina, not in Qom (Ibid). Traditionally, historians have suggested three places as possible locations of his tomb: Qom, Semnān, and ‘Arīz of Medina. Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā‘ī believes that ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far had never been to Qom at all, and that this is, in fact, the tomb of his grandson, ‘Alī b. Ḥasan b. ‘Isā ‘Alavī, of whose arrival from Medina into Qom we do have documentary evidence. In *TQ*, Ṭabāṭabā‘ī says that “One of the city’s gates was in his name through which people went for pilgrimage of his tomb. But the said gate was near Sa‘d river and previously path of this river was on northern side of the city, hence his tomb should be detected within the same area.” (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, 1976:42). On the other hand, Mağlesī insists that this mausoleum is the resting place of ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far himself, which Feyż Qomī at least regards as very unlikely (Feyż Qomī, 1971:323).

There is a dated inscription in this building on the stucco of the niche mentioning the date of 740/ 1339, which according to researchers is the date of the decorations ‘completion (Feyż Qomī, 1971: 326, Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, 1976: 43, ‘Arab, 2002:152). However, there are other dates observed on the tile pieces of the Mihrāb and on the star shaped tiles. The oldest belongs to the Mihrāb ‘s inscription, bearing the date 734/ 1334 and demonstrating that the Mihrāb was built six years before the completion of the decorations. It is not clear whether they were tailor made for this building or were available in the tilemaker’s store and purchased later on. Therefore, the Mihrāb’s date cannot reflect the exact date of the building’s construction. There is another date (739/1337) mentioned on the star-shaped tiles as read by Feyż Qomī.

As mentioned, these tiles were quite commonly used in the shrines of this period, and since there are no names of ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far mentioned on their inscriptions, they could have been

purchased in adequate number from the tile makers. But, when was the first building constructed? At the beginning of the middle inscription band, which bears the name of ‘Aṭā al-Molk Mīr Moḥammad, one observes the expression of renewal (امر به تجدید بنا translation: commanded the building’s), demonstrating that there was a building prior to this and that ‘Aṭā al-Molk reconstructed it. Unfortunately, there are no mentions of ‘Aṭā al-Molk Mīr Moḥammad in the historical books of the 13th and 14th centuries, and based on the titles (such as: the most just lord, the most appreciated of noblest decent, the highest in rightness in the world and in religion), Fayz Qomi has guessed that he held a high position such as Head of Justice, during the Il-khanid period and the reigns of Ölgaitü and Abū Sa‘id (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 333); but there are no valid references to sustain this claim.

However, according to a date on one the building’s niches 740/1339, it can be deduced that the renovation works were carried out in the decades before 1339 and probably during the reign of the last Il-khanid ruler (Sultan Abu Sa‘id 1316 – 1335), but there is no information available on the shape of the previous building. Probably, like other religious shrines (Fāṭeme Ma‘šume or Emāmzade Aḥmad Qāsem), it was initially just a provisional shelter or a simple domed chamber, and by the rule of local dynasty of Ṣaḥfī and the trend of shrine construction for religious personalities and *emāmzādes*, this tomb was rebuilt or decorated as the case with other *emāmzādes* (Aḥmad Qāsem, Mūsā Mobarga‘), a question that may be clarified through further archeological surveys and excavation.

Many parts of the current structure were added in the Qajar era, and various dates mentioned on the building refer to these additions. The tiled portal on the northern side is attributed to this time, with an inscription dating it to the reign of Nāṣer al-Dīn Šāh (1296/1853). On the two sides of this portal, the date of 1268/1852 can also be seen.

This building had been registered on the list of national buildings (Nr. 240) in 1935, before the Islamic revolution. It was restored multiple times by the Cultural Heritage Organization and the Ouqāf Department. The building is now owned on an endowment basis and used as a pilgrimage site and a mosque.

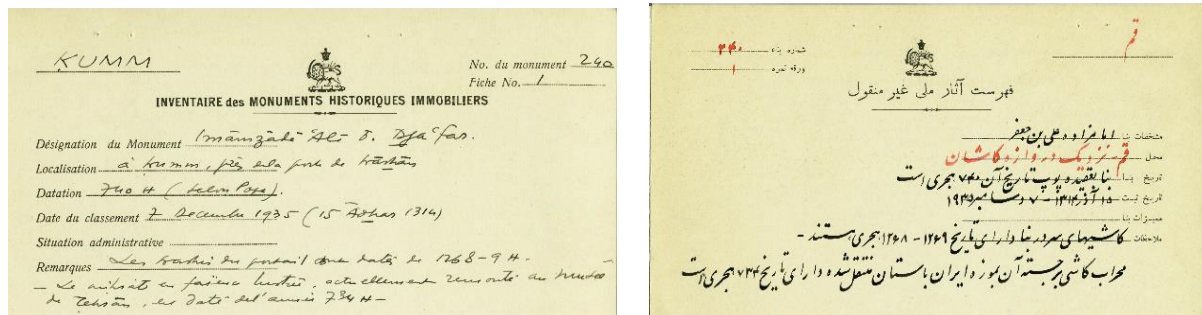


Image 64. Registration documents of the ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far’s Mausoleum in 1935 (Source: Archive of ICHTO)

4-6 Mausoleum of Šāh Aḥmad-e Qāsem

4-6-1 Location

This building is located on southeastern side of Qom, in the old cemetery of Mālūn, next to Mo'alem square (intersection of Mo'alem and Somayye streets), within one kilometer from the shrine of Fāteme Ma'sūme. The open area of the cemetery and the tomb structure is now enclosed with a wall and the entrance of the cemetery is on the northwestern side.



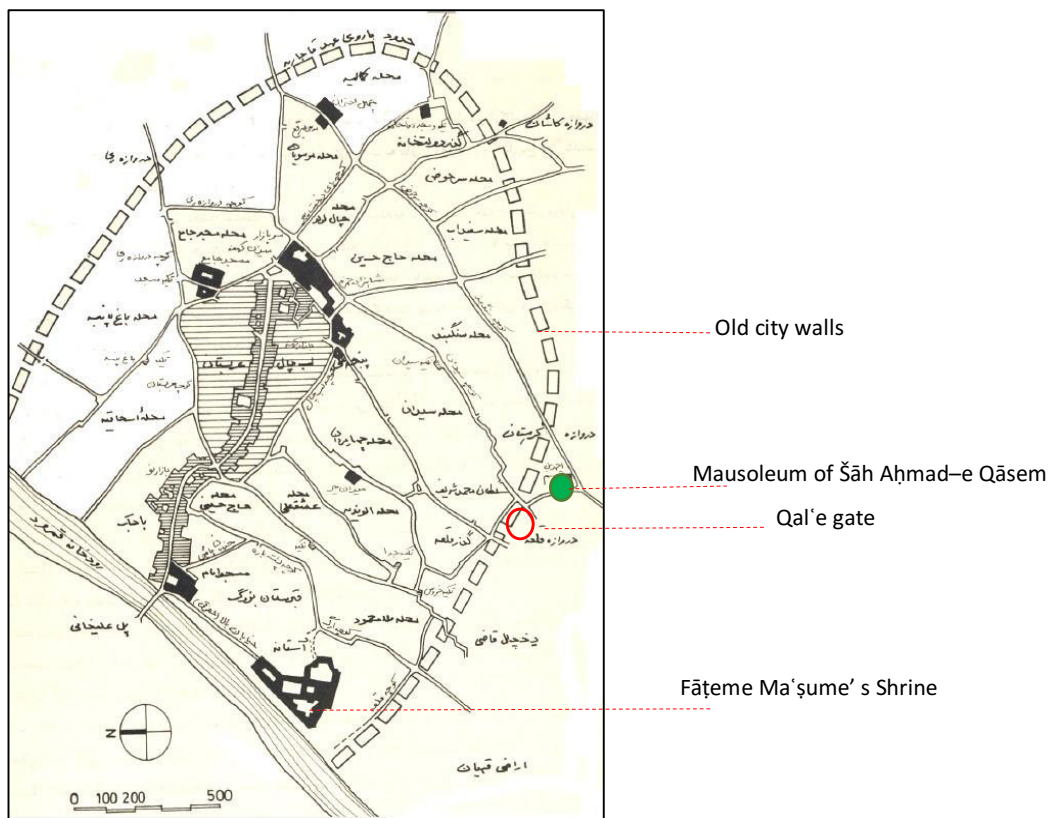
Image 1. The current location of Šāh Aḥmad-e Qāsem monument. (Source: *Google Earth* 11.02.2016)

Prior to the urban extension of Qom, the mausoleum used to stand outside the historic townscape, near one of the old city gates (Darvāze-ye Qal'e) to the south-east and next to the moat. On Ḥandaq Square (present Šāh Aḥmad-e Qāsem square), dozens of meters away from the building, there are some signs of a Qajar era moat. Ṭabāṭabā'ī proposes that the reason for the name of the Qal'e gate was the existence of a fort (Qal'e) beside this building, as mentioned in historical sources such as *Ḥolāse al-Tāvārīḥ* (related to the events of 1586/994), where it is the seat of the incoming Afghans. (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1976:22).



Image 2. Location of the monument of Šāh Aḥmad-e Qāsem and its surroundings, 1990 (Source: Archive of OOQ.)

Ḥolāse al-Boldān then mentions it again, this time in conjunction with the Noābād gate (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā’ī 1976:22). The district of Mālūn is mentioned repeatedly in TQ. The Mālūn cemetery was within its walls and the Ğebāl road passed by this village. The Malūn cemetery was built well before the establishment of Qom, at the time when the area was divided into seven villages (see Chapter 3). The cemetery extends up to the tomb ‘Alī b. Ğa’far’s. Tārīḥ-e Qom mentions that Šāh Aḥmad-e Qāsem and his sister are buried at the Mālūn cemetery (Qomī, 2006 :606;614-615).



Drawing 1– Location of Šāh Aḥmad-e Qāsem Mausoleum in the city in relation to the city gate and wall. Extracted from a Qajar era map (source: Sa’īdnīya, *Šahrhā-ye Irān*, p. with addition by the author)

As for the space surrounding the monument, Feyż mentions a gate in the vicinity of ‘a tree’, which has now vanished completely. He also notes a tiled drinking basin on one side, which is now demolished. A river channel ran to the tomb’s west, alongside a water-filled moat, both remnants of an old river to the south (Feyż -e Qomī, 1971:382). This moat was excavated during the Qajar era.

4-6-2 Architectural specifications

Exterior

The mausoleum of Šāh Aḥmad-e Qāsem is constructed in the typical style of Il-khanid tomb structurers in Qom, i.e. it is an individual monument in an open area, visible from all sides. The current ground level around the monument is one meter above the original floorplan of the tower – this is due to the past burials in the surrounding cemetery. Today, the southern and western sides of the building are open, while the northern and eastern facades are no longer visible, following some later additions. Due to improper repairs, this building now has the appearance of a newly constructed monument and much of its historical identity has been lost.



Image 3- monument of Šāh Aḥmad-e Qāsem in Mālūn cemetery view from SW



Image 4- Emāmzāde Šāh Aḥmad-e Qāsem, 1970 (source: Archive of SBU)

The building comprises three external parts: the main body, the collar of the dome (or the “drum”), and the dome. The external plan of the building consists of an octagon with slightly battered exterior walls. The southern and northern sides are a little wider than the eastern and western sides – 4.60 meters and 4.25 meters, respectively. Based on previous reports (i.e. before restoration), there were shallow, recessed rectangular panels on all eight sides, each containing a blind arch with a deep niche. The current height from the present ground level to the drum is 7.40 meters. All facades have been restored with new bricks; stone plinths are used up to one meter on lower part of the walls.



Image 5- The new stone plinth

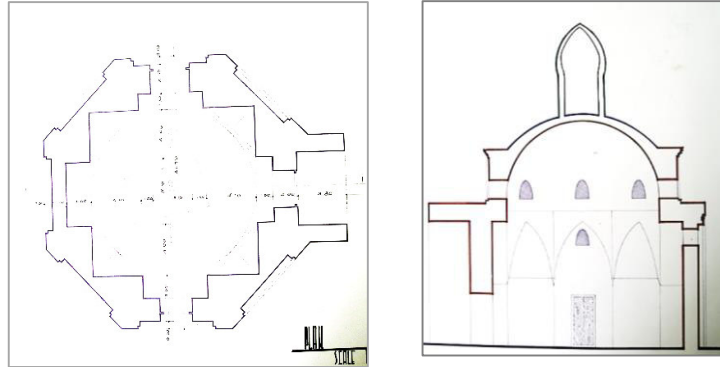


Image 6- External facade of the building

The main entrance is now located on the northern side, and there is an additional entrance and a window-light on the western side. Unfortunately, there are no old images or documents showing the past position of the windows on the lower part of the dome square. However, a map from 1970 shows the presence of windows and doorways on three sides (eastern, western and northern).



Image 7- Exterior of the mausoleum in 1970, (Source: Archive of ICHTO)

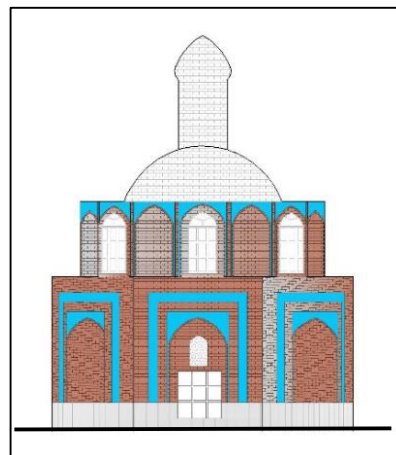


Drawing 2-3- Openings and entrances of the building in plan and section (Source: Archive of SBU, 1970, with additions by the author)

The drum of the dome is a sixteen-sided structure, set back from the face of the exterior walls at a height of 2.5 meters. Each side of the drum features a doubly stepped niche with a blind, pointed arch on each side. Eight out of the sixteen sides of the drum have small (0.80 m high), pointed-arch-headed windows. These were previously decorated with openwork stucco (as shown on a photograph from 1970), but they have been restored as metal-face windows. In the course of the recent repairs, the spandrels, as well as parts of the octagonal façade, were decorated with tiles.



Image 8- Monument of Šāh Aḥmad-e Qāsem view from w



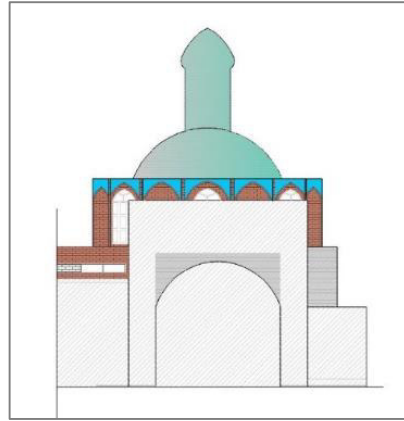
Drawing 4. W elevation (Source: Archive of ICHTO, with additions by the author)

The original outer dome of this mausoleum is missing. However, we can safely assume that it was of the polyhedral tent type. Currently, it is spherical in shape, with a 4 meter-high shaft

placed on top. The cover of dome was repaired in 1974 and decorated with tiles with geometric and square Kufic designs (Kāvūsī, 2005:63). The overall height of the structure from the base to the apex is nearly 12.50 meters.



Image 9- A view from present dome



Drawing 5. N elevation of Emāmzāde Šāh Aḥmad-e Qāsem, (Source: Archive of ICHTO, with addition by the author)

Entrance

The current entrance is on the northern side. Old maps and photographs from the 1970s show a small portal with an opening of 2.5 meters, width of 1.5 meters and height of 5.5 meters, covered with a honeycomb pattern (Feyż-e-Qomī, 1971: 381). Subsequently, this has been changed and expanded, and the current entrance is not the original, as demonstrated by the fact that it cuts through part of an inscription on the inside of the building. The western doorway is higher and the aforementioned inscription starts at this side of the building – it seems probable that the main entrance had been on the western side before, but now it is closed.



Image 10- the cutting in inscription on northern side

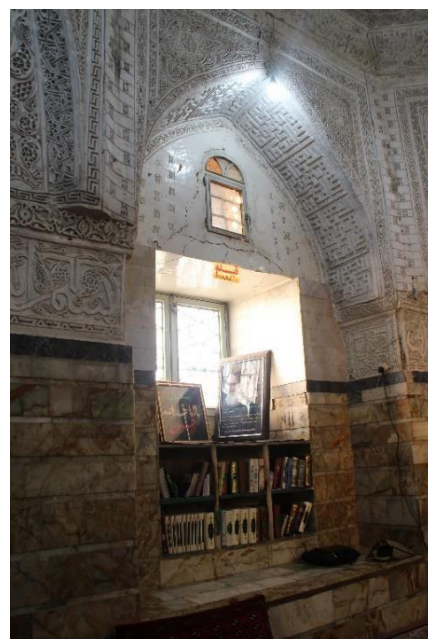


Image 11- West doorway

In addition to the entrance portal, other structures were added after the original tomb was built, which to some extent undermines its historical identity. These structures include the prayer hall, several family tombs, the guard's room, and the ablution chamber, among others.



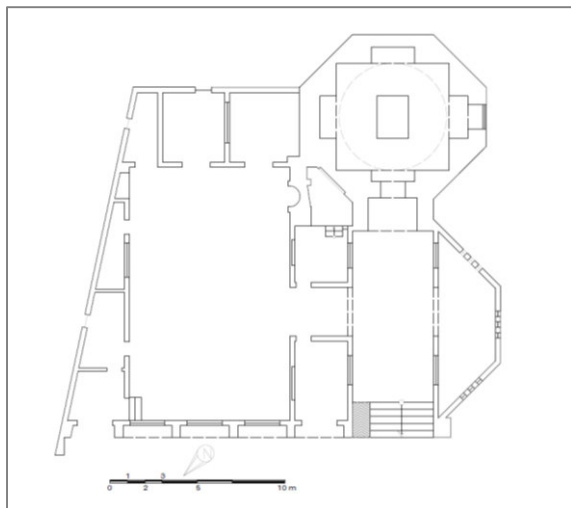
Image 11- Façade of the present entrance, N side, 2016 (source: Archive of OOQ.)



Image 12- Entrance facade of the N doorway, 1990 (source: Archive of OOQ.)



Image 13- N entrance, 1970 (source: Archive of SBU.)



Drawing 6- Plan of Emāmzāde of Šāh Aḥmad-e Qāsem and adjacent structures (Source: ICHTO in Qom, with additions by the author)



Image 14- Internal space of a family tomb beside the monument, 1990 (source: Archive of OOQ)

Image 15 -Interior space of a prayer room beside the monument, 1990 (Source: Archive of OOQ.)

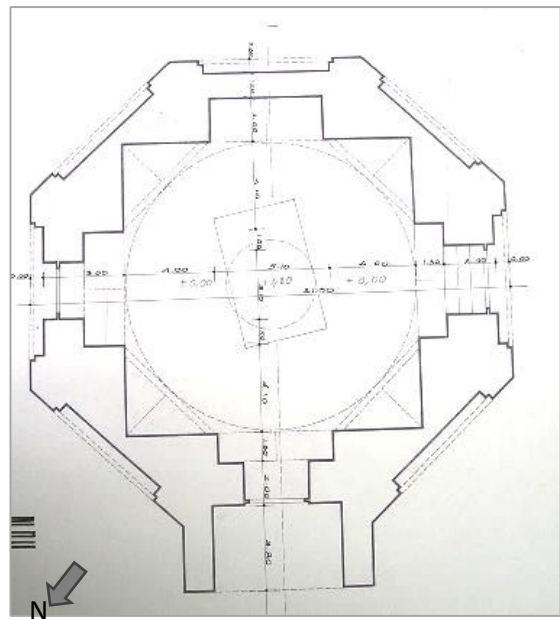


Interior

The interior is much better preserved than the exterior. It is built on a square plan, with a diameter of 9 meters. Each side consists of a deeply recessed, pointed arch niche, 5 meters in height, 1 meter in depth, framed by a rectangular panel. Presently, the walls are covered with new stones up to 2 meters in height – this is where the first inscription band of the chamber starts.



Image 16- Interior of the dome chamber
(Source: Archive of OOQ.)

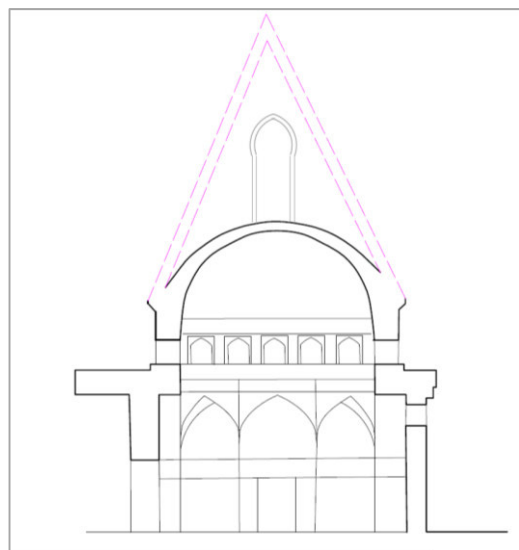


Drawing 7- Plan of the mausoleum of Šāh Aḥmad-e Qāsem, (Source: Archive of SBU, with addition by the author)

The first inscription band is located above the socle area. Further above, there is another inscription in the transition zone, where the building plan changes from the square chamber to an octagon, by the squinches in the four corners of the dome chamber.



Image 17- view of squinch area in dome chamber



Drawing 8. Section of Emāmzāde Šāh Aḥmad-e Qāsem, (Source: Archive of SBU, with addition by the author)

Another inscription band is set in the octagonal zone above the squinches. Above this inscription, the structure changes from an octagon to a hexadecagon, with sixteen blind arches, each resting on a rectangular panel, 0.90 meter tall. There are windows set on four sides, and the rest of the arches are closed. This part is topped with another frieze, above which the structure becomes circular and the dome begins. This dome is hemispherical, coated with white-washed, undecorated plaster. The dome originally consisted of two shells, however, the inner one was damaged after demolition of the external one, and the decorations in this part have been removed completely.



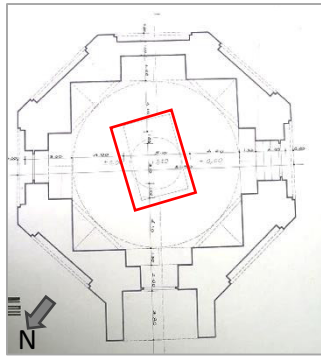
Image 18- Panorama photo from the interior (Source: Archive of OOQ.)

Shrine and cenotaph

In the middle of the mausoleum, there is a rectangular, gilded steel shrine, which was made in 1905 by craftsmen from Esfahān. The direction of the shrine is not parallel with the mausoleum's walls, as they deviate by 20 degrees eastwards. The cenotaph is at the center of the shrine. Though the contemporary cenotaph is made of marble, Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī reports that it was originally covered with luster tiles, which were similar to those of the mausoleum of 'Alī b. Ğa'far. He also mentions a particular type of luster tile, which were lost from the mausoleum, though it is not clear whether he means the tiles from the cenotaph or from the walls. Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī believes that a tomb panel currently displayed at the Berlin Museum as the "Qom *mihrab*", made by Moḥammad b. Abī Tāher in 663/1265, may have belonged to this building (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1976:68), though his reasoning for this claim is not clear.

Crypt

Most probably, a crypt below the dome chamber was the main location of this mausoleum’s grave. However, the crypt is now filled, with just a narrow, rectangular space, accessed from a small opening in the east of the chamber, remaining; this is now used as a warehouse. Further archeological investigations are required to obtain more information about this crypt.



Drawing 9- Location of the shrine (Source: Archive of SBU. with addition by the author)

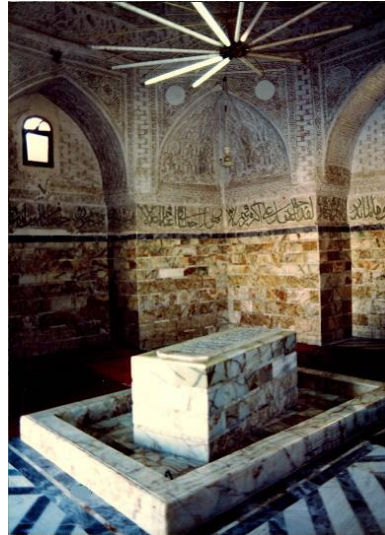


Image 19- cenotaph prior to the installation of the shrine, 1990 (Source: Archive of OOQ.)



Image 20- Current state of the crypt

4-6-3 Epigraphic material

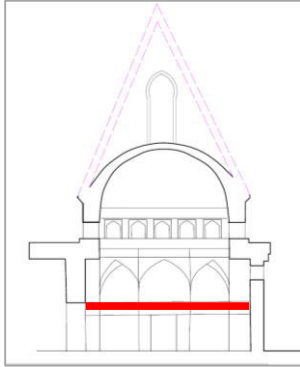
There are three main inscription bands inside the mausoleum. The first starts above the stone socle, which runs around the building, and is approximately 0.60 meter wide. The inscription is written in the *thuluth* script, on a background of flowers and leaves, and includes the beginning of surah Yāsīn (36: 1-12). It starts on the western side of the chamber and ends on the northern side. There, a part of the inscription was demolished, with some words cut out to make way for the present entrance. The inscription has two narrow bands at the top and the bottom. The former is filled with floral designs and the latter contains the repeating word “Moḥammad”, written in square Kufic.



Image 21- Beginning of inscription band, w side



Image 22- The inscription band on the northern side and the demolished part on the present entrance



Drawing 10- Location of the inscription
(Source: Archive of SBU. with addition by the author)



Image 23- Part of the inscription band on the eastern side

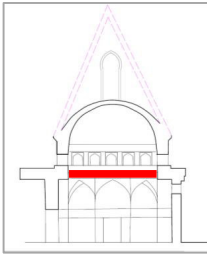
The second significant inscription in the building is 0.5 meter wide, located in the middle of the building, in the transition zone between the square chamber and the octagon. The inscription has two borders: the upper consists of floral and vegetal designs, the lower, unfortunately partially demolished, of a square *kufic* continuous but uneven repetition of the phrase:

الملك لله القهار محمد و علي خير البشر

translation: The rulership is due to God, the Avenger, Muḥammad and ‘Alī are the best of humankind). This phrase is repeated on the borders of a few other inscriptions in the mausoleum, as will be demonstrated below.



Image 24 - Part of the inscription in the middle



Drawing 11- Location of the inscription band
(Source: Archive of SBU. with addition by the author)



Image 25- Beginning of the inscription in the middle, from SW side

Like the lower inscription band, this inscription starts in the southwestern corner and ends in the same place. It contains some significant information about the name of the buried deceased (Šāh Aḥmad-e Qāsem), the patron of the mausoleum (Eshāq son of ‘Alī ṣafi Māzī), and the architect or craftsman (Moḥammad Abū Šoḡa’).



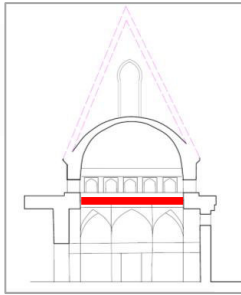
Image 26- Part of inscription band refer to Šāh Aḥmad-e Qāsem

The text, as given by, Ṭabāṭabā’ī reads:

” الله الاعانه و الاغائه. امر ببناء هذه العماره الرفيعه و روضه الشريفه مرقد معصوم المظلوم احمد بن قاسم بن موسى بن جعفر بن محمد بن علي بن الحسين بن علي بن ابي طالب عليهم السلام، صاحب العظم العدل الاعلم ملاذ طوايف الامم مستعبد ارباب السيف و اصحاب القلم صاحب ديوان الممالك، ملجاء العظماء العالم موئل صناديد بني آدم عميم المواهب و النعم عضد الخواقين المنصور بنصره خير الناصرين، قوام الحق و الدنيا و الدين مغيث الخلائق اجمعين، علي بن صاحب الاعظم السعيد عز الحق و دنيا و الدين اسحق بن علي صفي ماضي عظم الله تعالى جلال قدره بعمل بن محمد علي ابو شجاع البناء. “

Translation: God is assistance and support. The order for construction of this high building and holy mausoleum, the tomb of the innocent and victimized Aḥmad b. Qāsim b. Mūsā, b. Ġa’far, b. Muḥammad, b. ‘Alī, b. Ḥusain b. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon them, was issued by the owner of magnificence, justice and knowledge, the refuge of the [different] nations [of mankind], who is worshiped by (or: is in the command of) the masters of the sword and the masters of the pen, the chief Justice of the provinces the greatest shelter of the world, the resort of the elite leaders of mankind, who distributes gifts and benefactions, the pillar of the great Khans, who is victorious by the help of the best of all supporters, Qawām al-Haqq wa al-Dunyā

wa al-Dīn (the support of truth/god, of the world and of religion), the savior of all creatures, ‘Alī, the son of the greatest and blissful lord, ‘Izz al-Ḥaqq wa al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn (the glory of truth/god and the world, Ishāq, son of the late ‘Alī Ṣafī, may God Almighty enhance the glory of his rank. b. Muḥammad Alī Abū Ṣuġā‘ Bannā, made it.



Drawing 12- Location of the inscription (Source: Archive of SBU. with addition by

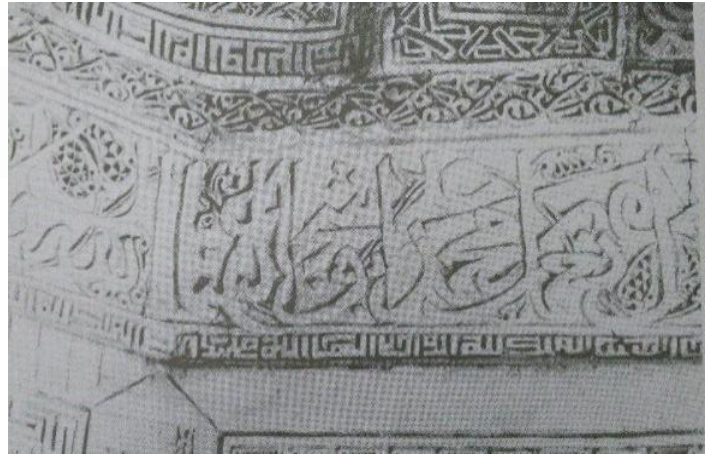
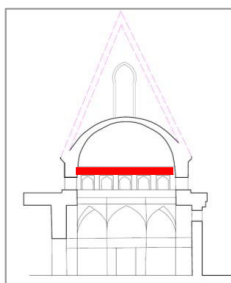


Image 27- The name of the craft man at the end of the inscription (Source: TP, p.113)

Another inscription band in *Kufic* has been placed at the base of the dome. It is about 0.60 meter wide and the content is purely Quranic: it contains surahs al-Ḥamd and al-Iḥlās (12-1), which were read wrongly by Feyz as a chapter of Dahr (Feyz Qomī, 1971:381). The inscription includes an upper and lower border; the former consists of a repeated chain design, and the latter contains the same square kufic phrase as we saw on the analogous border of the middle inscription: الملك الله الواحد القهار محمد و على خير البشر (translation: The rulership is due to God, the Avenger, Muḥammad and ‘Alī are the best of humankind). This phrase emphasizes the principle of monotheism, the prophethood of Mohammad, and the leadership of ‘Alī for the Shia.



Drawing 13- Location of the upper inscription (Source: Archive of SBU. with addition by the author)



Image 28 - Part of the Kufic inscription

The other inscriptions of this mausoleum include square *kufic* inscriptions in the hexadecagonal zone, where the framed vaults bear the familiar phrase: ¹ الملك الله القهار محمد و على خير البشر. Others in this area, also in square *kufic*, are set under the arches or against the lattice widows. One of these bears the phrase: الملك الله و الحمد لله (translation: The rulership is due to God and adoration be to Allāh).



Image 29- Kufic inscription under a window



Image 30- square kufic inscription around an arch

Beneath the window on the southern side of the building, there is a *thuluth* inscription mentioning the construction date. It is now hardly legible, but according to Ṭabāṭabā'ī it reads: في محرم سنة ثمانين و سبعمائه (translation: In Muḥarram/May, 780/1378). This date seems to be the completion date of the building's plasterwork and the artisan has considered this place to record it.



Image 31- present condition of the inscription with the construction date



Image 32- Inscription on the construction date on the side (Source: *TP.*, p.112)

As mentioned before, the original main entrance to the mausoleum was probably on the western side. Fittingly, on either side of the western chamber of the building, there are two rectangular

¹ Again: The rulership is due to God, the Avenger, Muḥammad and 'Alī are the best of humankind.

frames with the following phrase written in square Kufic in the margin: الملك لله الواحد القهار محمد و على خير البشر (the same phrase as we already saw recurring multiple times throughout the building). On the inner side of these frames, one can read هو الملك (translation: He (God) is ruler/ship). The part of this inscription on the other side of the chamber is unreadable, with only the letters *Alif* and *Lam* recognizable, forming a decorative knot together.

Image 33- Kufic inscription
on the W chamber



4-6-4 Decoration

The architectural decorations of the 14th century can be divided into two groups: Stucco decorations and glazed tilework, which are discussed below.

4-6-4-1 Stucco decorations

Much of the internal space of this mausoleum is decorated with white plasterwork. Like in other tomb structures, this is applied in the semi-embossed carved (1-2.5 cm) and incised plaster techniques, in addition to flat stucco in simulated incised brick joints and brick-end technique. All of the squinch surfaces are coated with stucco containing roundels of various vegetal designs, each worked within a grid pattern or *Āzde Kārī*. Each decorative grid panel is bordered with a tiny geometric or epigraphic band.



Image 34-35. Stucco decorations on the squinches

All the spandrel surfaces are decorated with the same stucco technique of *Āẓde Kārī*, which includes various vegetal and geometric patterns bordered by decorative geometric bands. Most spandrels carry inscribed roundels or medallions, which mention the names of Moḥammad and ‘Alī, written in *Kufic* script. Some have been destroyed and subsequently restored in a much simpler style.



Image 36-37-38. Stucco decorations on the spandrels

The blind arches in the upper zone are also covered with various geometric and vegetal designs. All of them are bordered with simple bands of geometric designs, such as a repeated Greek key design.

Of course, a significant part of these decorations were repaired, and consequently much of the delicacy of the original ornaments is lost. However, the decorations in the upper levels are generally less intricate, with simpler borders, which suggests a somewhat hasty execution. A decorative band with a single, zigzag patterns runs all around the sixteen-sided panels. This creates some rhythm and movement in the collar of the dome.



Image 39- Stucco decorations on sixteen-sided panels

The surfaces between the sixteen-sided niches in the upper zone are coated with simulated incised brick joints, which were cut in vertical segments between the bricks. This technique is also used to cover the surfaces of the tympana of the eight-sided niches. These joint plugs are not very varied, and are mostly in a bow tie form. The decorations of the inner chambers spell out the sacred name of ‘Alī, however, most are demolished and their former pattern is not clear.



Image 40-41. Some samples of simulated joint plugs decorations

All inscription bands were executed in carved stucco. The design of each of the three major inscriptions has its own specific rhythm and composition.

In the first inscription from the bottom, which is written in *thuluth*, the letters are juxtaposed with a particular style, underlining a calligraphic attempt to gain visual rhythm in writing. All letters are of equal thickness, which suggests that much of the original (presumably more intricate) designs were demolished during the restorations. The background of this inscription is filled with vegetal motifs in the solid and void technique. The background and the letters occupy almost the same amount of space within the inscription band.



Image 42. The lower inscription band

Compared with the lower inscription, the quality of calligraphy in the middle inscription (also in *thuluth* script) is much lower. The stucco seems to lack the professional workmanship of the former. The space between the letters is decorated with vegetal patterns made in the *Āẓde Kārī* technique.



Image 43- The inscription band in the middle

The inscription band at the base of the dome is different from the other inscriptions, as it was executed in decorative *Kufic* script. The geometric coherence of the design suggests that this inscription was executed and repaired relatively better than the others. The background is filled with decorative leaves.



Image 44- Inscription band below the dome

4-6-4-2 Glazed tilework

Today, there is no sign of any tilework inside the mausoleum. However, some reports mention that, similar to the ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far shrine, the plinth zone of this mausoleum was covered with eight-pointed star- and cross-shaped tiles, which were a common feature of the era in religious mausoleums. However, as mentioned earlier, this space is now covered with marble. According to *Tabṣarat al-Mosāferīn* (1270/1854), the mausoleum was covered with high-quality tiles bearing the holy verses and phrases from the *Hadith*, as well as the signature of ‘Alī b. Moḥammad, dated to 663/1269 (Faḳīh Ğalālī, 1997: 299). Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā’ī also mentions that the socle around the building was most probably covered with star- and cross-shaped tiles. (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1976:68), but unfortunately, there is no documentation available to substantiate this claim.

4-6-5 History of the mausoleum and of the deceased

As mentioned for inscriptions, the most valid document concerning the date of this building is an inscription inside, which mentions 780/1378. It was read about 65 years ago by Ṭabāṭabā'ī and subsequently by Feyz Qomī and was registered accordingly in the relevant records. Today this date is distorted and unreadable. The photo by Ṭabāṭabā'ī shows greater details of the inscriptions (Image 32). The date is probably when the decorations were completed.

However, this date has been questioned and reviewed by many researchers and art historians. Some have read the seven hundred (سبعمانه) as six hundred (ستمائه), consequently putting the construction date in the 7th/13th century. However, by comparing this building with the other Tomb structures in Qom, which have the same form and architectural style, as well based on master Abū Šoḡā' 's signature, which also appears in other mausoleums², it seems obvious that this building could not have been constructed in the 13th century but rather must have been made a century later. Feyz believes the correct numeral to be seven hundred (سبعمانه), but the inscription itself is incomplete, as the upper part of the of 'Eyn ع collapsed during restorations (Feyz Qomī, 1971:380). He thus considers the date of 780/1378 to be correct. The rest of this inscription names the patron of the construction as Eshāq b. 'Alī Ṣafī Maẓī, who was a Safī governor of Qom. According to the inscription, the person buried in the mausoleum is Aḥmad b. Qāsem son of Mūsā b. Ğā'far. Historical sources, on the other hand, suggest that two Emānzadehs, a brother and a sister: Abū al- Ḥosain Aḥmad b. Qāsem b. Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Ğā'far 'Arīẓī and Fāṭeme Ḥātūn, are buried in this building (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 374). In *Tārīḥ-e Qom*, which is the oldest and most reliable document available on the old form and the history of the mausoleum, it is mentioned that: "... another son is Abū al- Ḥosain Aḥmad b. Qāsem b. Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Ğā'far. I do not know whether he had come to Qom with his father; and I have been so informed that he was disabled and impotent, and that he was afflicted by smallpox in his eyes, which he lost. When he died, he was buried in the old Mālūn monument and people visited his tomb and there was a shelter above his tomb. When the associates of Ḥāqān Moflehī reached Qom in 295 AH, they demolished that shelter. For a while, no one went to his tomb for pilgrimage until 371 AH, when a number of righteous individuals in Qom saw in their dreams that this tomb belonged to a virtuous person whose pilgrimage had great requitals, hence his tomb was restored in wood and people resumed its pilgrimage" (Qomī, 20016: 614-5). In *Anvār al- Moša' ša' in*, this is verified, and Aḥmad b. Qāsem's sister Fāṭeme is also mentioned, further

² Mausoleum of Ḥadīḡe Ḥātūn, 770 AH, mausoleum of Sayyed Ṣarbaḡš, 774 AH, mausoleum of Ḥāḡe 'Emād in Bāq-e sabz, 792 AH whose inscriptions are in the name of Abū Šoḡā'.

identified as Moḥammad ‘Azīzī’s mother, and is said to have been buried in Mālūn in this mausoleum, where she is visited by pilgrims (Faḳīh Ğalālī, 1997: 295).

That being said, it is clear that the tomb was but a simple structure before the Şafī dynasty and that it was reconstructed in the 14th century. In *Ganġīne-ye Ātār-e Qom*, it is mentioned that in 258/872, after Amīr Mūsā b. Buqārī and Ḥāqān b. Mofleḥ attacked Qom to crush the anti-taxation riots, the shelter above this tomb (where the Qomi people gathered) was demolished. After the invaders left, the citizens of Qom built a domed square on this tomb. The mausoleum was further gradually destroyed until 780 / 1378, when the present dome was erected (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 375). The mausoleum was repaired many times, with multiple new additions erected. As mentioned before, the current dome probably bears little resemblance to the original, but sadly we have no documentary or photographic sources on what this original looked like. However, an old photograph (Img. 44) from a book titled *Torbat-e Pākān*, titled “Maqām-e Şāh Aḥmad” (sanctuary of King Aḥmad) is thought to show this building. If this is true, then the original dome was conical on square basis- this is in contradiction with the arrangement of the present building. Ṭabāṭabā’ī mentioned, that the photo belonged to Emāmzāde Aḥmad b. Qāsem before the collapse of its dome. However, the comparison between the structure of this tomb with Emāmzāde Aḥmad, makes it quite clear that the image was erroneously attributed to the latter. The structure of the building seen in the image is quite similar to a number of tomb towers built in Mazandaran during the 15th century (e.g. Borġe Heştal, Darvīš ‘Alambāzī or Gonbad-e Saraḥs at Bābol) and greatly resembles the tomb of Darvīš ‘Alambāzī.

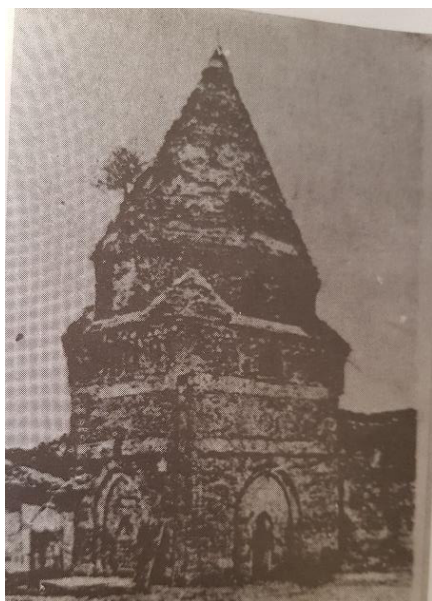


Image 44. An unknown mausoleum attributed to Emāmzāde Aḥmad b. Qāsem photo by al- Manġad (Source: *TP*, fig.100)



Image 45. Gonbad-e Sarest at Bābol, 15th century (source: S. Soleymānī, personal album)

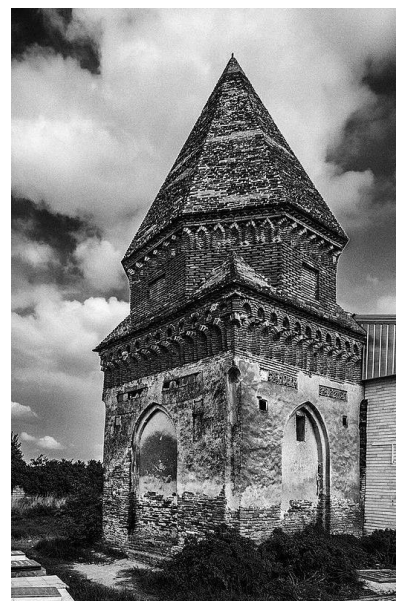


Image 46. Mausoleum of Darvīš ‘Alambāzī at Bābol, 15th century (source: fa.wikipedia site, date: 25.11.2019)

Based on documents available of ICHTO, the dome of this building was restored in 1947. This is also when the external façade was remade with new construction materials, and when the portal and the prayer hall sections were added. All stucco works inside the building used to be painted but were partially removed during the recent restorations and the colors on the stucco were erased.³ Unfortunately, no scientific, archeological studies were conducted about this building. The mausoleum was registered as a national monument by the ICHTO in 1988, under No. 2169, and its ownership is on an endowment basis.

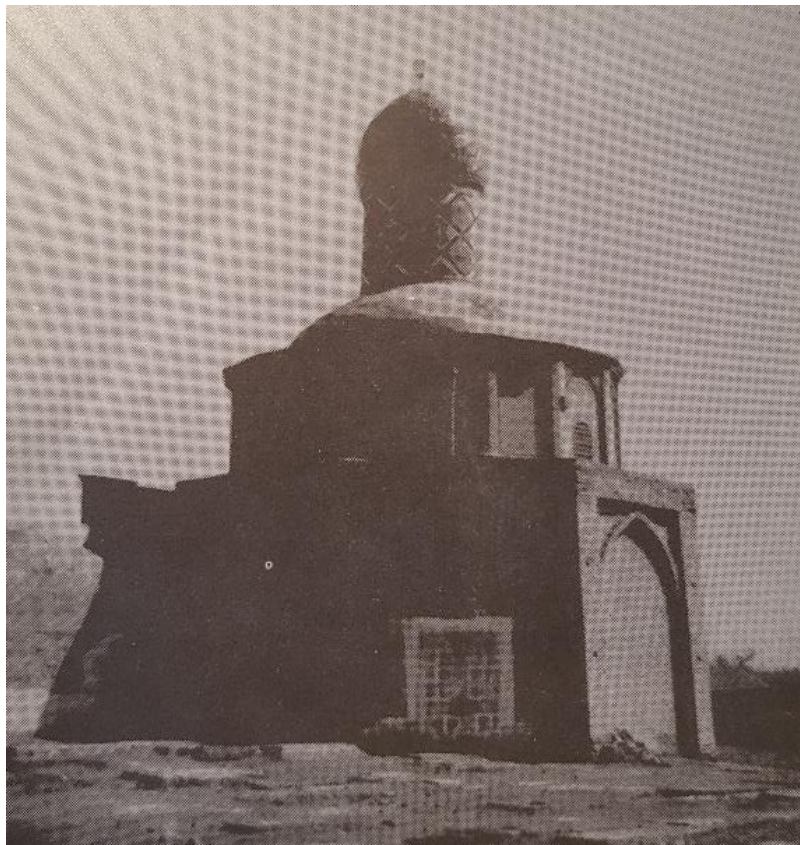


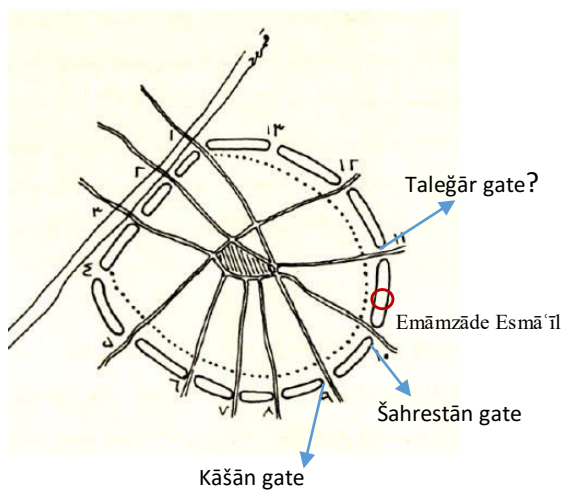
Image 47. General view of Emāmzāde Aḥmad
b. Qāsem, 1976 (Source: *TP*, fig. 101)

³ Regarding the comments of experts of ICHTO in Qom.

4-7 Mausoleum of Šāh Esmā‘īl Sarbaḡš

4-7-1 Location

The mausoleum of Šāh Esmā‘īl, or Emāmzāde Esmā‘īl Sarbaḡš, is now located on Azar street, on the eastern side of Qom, in the Sarbaḡš district. On the oldest existing map (1949) of Qom, the building is shown to have been located on the outskirts of the city, between the urban construction and the surrounding farms and gardens, near the Čehel Aḡtarān complex. Based on the 14th century urban plan of Qom drawn by Sa‘īd nīyā, it can be estimated that the monument was located near the city wall, between the ancient gateways of Taleḡār and Šahrestān, of which nothing remains (Sa‘īd nīyā, 1987:143).



Drawing 1- Schematic plan of Qom in the 14th century, including the location of the gateways of the city (Source: Sa‘īd nīyā, p.158, with additions by the author)

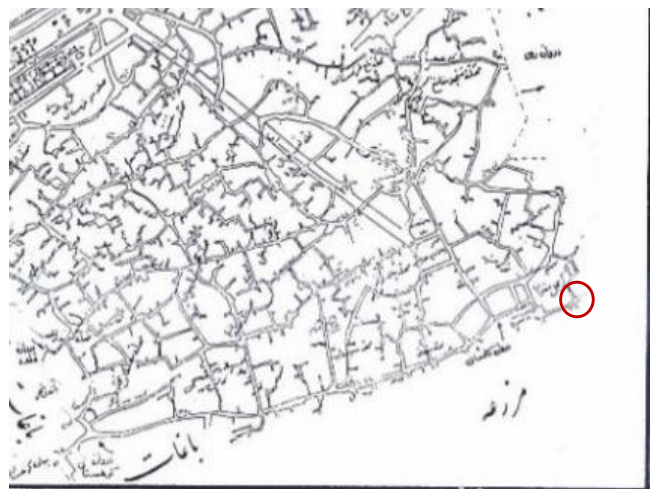


Image 1- Location of Emāmzāde Esmā‘īl to the east of Qom, H. Karīmān 1949 (source: *qomshenasi* site 22.08.2018)

Comparing the 1949 map with the existing one, and taking into consideration first the location of the Kāšān gate mausoleums, and second the current streets (which now cover the old main road and end in the gateways), one can confirm that the Emāmzāde Esmā‘īl must have indeed been located near the city gate.

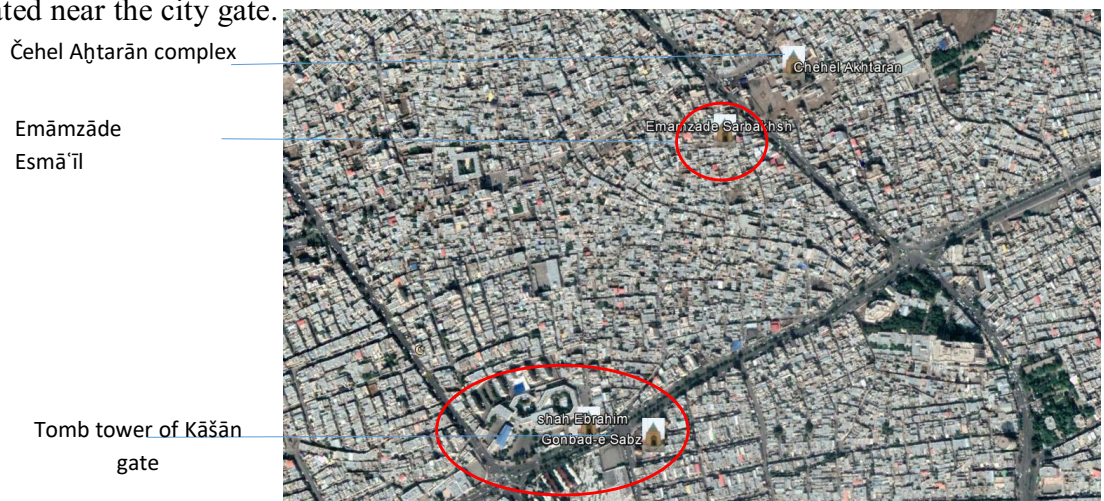


Image 2- Location of Emāmzāde Esmā‘īl in Qom (Source: *Google Earth* 20.05.2016. with additions by the author)

4-7-2 Architectural specifications

Exterior

Like other tomb structures in Qom, this mausoleum was constructed in the form of a single structure, which then gradually evolved through restorations and additions, in parallel to the development of the city itself. The building includes a courtyard on the northern side and around it, various service buildings, as well as family tombs were constructed. The entrance to the north courtyard was added in the Qajar period.



Image 3- Entrance corridor to courtyard



Image 4- Current entrance to complex of Emāmzāde Esmā'īl

The main, octagonal structure includes additions – caretaker's quarters and a mosque – on the eastern, southern and southwestern sides. The ground level around the monument was raised gradually through time; currently, there is a difference of about one meter in height between the internal floor of the monument and the surrounding ground. According to reports by Feyz and the images of this building from ICHO, a small porch decorated with *muqarnas* was added on the northern side during the Qajar era but was then removed during the recent restorations. Feyz pointed out to the singularity of this building, reporting the existence of a garden planted on the western side of the courtyard and extending to the southern and eastern sides. He suggests that formerly, all four sides were surrounded by garden and cemetery, and the dampness from the surrounding ground, particularly on the south side, has demolished the southern wall (Feyz Qomī, 1971:401).



Image 5- Adjacent structures on the southern side of the courtyard

The external plan of the building is an irregular octagon, with sides varying between 3 to 4 meters in length. Each side includes shallow, recessed rectangular panels with blind, denticulate arches of simple brickwork. The width of each blind arch is about 2 meters, and they are about 6 meters tall from the bottom up to the starting point of dome cylinder. Each arch includes a window covered with carved plaster lattice, which supplies light to the building. The collar of the dome (drum) has twelve sides, 1.80 meters tall, and is set back from the face of the exterior walls. Each side of the drum includes a rectangular frame decorated with brickwork and turquoise tiles. Like in most other tomb structures in Qom, the twelve-sided tent dome is raised from the 6-meter drum and covered with turquoise tiles. These tiles were added in the course of the most recent restorations and there is no evidence demonstrating whether such decorative tiles were used in the primary construction of the building. The overall height of the structure from the base to the apex is nearly 13 meters.



Image 6- Emānzāde Esmā'īl, view from W, 1998 (Source: Archive of ICHTO)



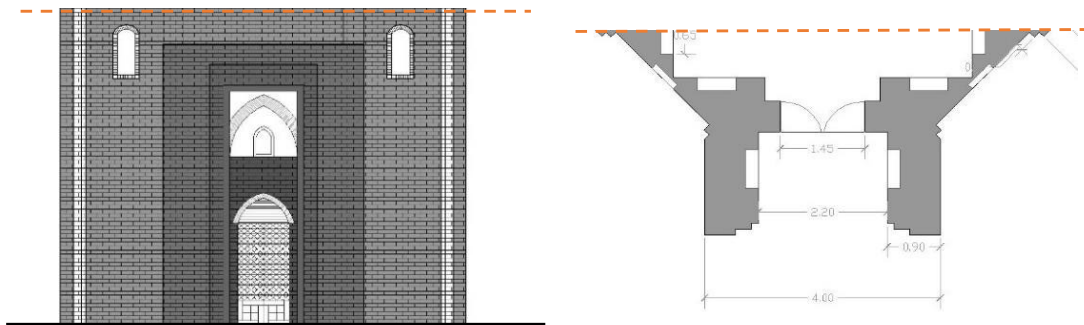
Image 7- Emānzāde Esmā'īl, view from NW, photo by R.Hillenbrand, (source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt OFUB.)

Entrance

The entrance into the building is located on the northern side, which includes a small porch with an opening 2 meters wide and 5.50 meters tall. The porch is built on a rectangular plan, 1.70 meters deep and 4 meters tall; it was repaired recently¹. Another small porch was added to this part of the structure during the Qajar era; this had unfortunately destroyed and concealed

¹ The provided sizes are based on maps of ICHTO.

the ancient decorations of the entrance. However, some parts of the original stucco decorations were revealed in the course of new restoration works, when the Qajar porch was removed.



Drawing 2-3. Plan and elevation of current portal (Source: Archive of ICHTO)

The entrance into the domed chamber itself is 2 meters tall and 1.45 meters wide. A window, covered with plaster lattice, is located above the entrance, providing some light to the interior of the building. A fragment of a carved plaster inscription is visible above the window. This is probably related to the primary mausoleum construction, with the vault added later, covering most of this inscription. Its height suggests that originally, the portal's arch was higher. Not much of this inscription is currently legible, but the words "this work" (هذا عمل ...) suggest it included information about the building.



Image 8- Inscription above entrance door



Image 9- view of current condition of portal of Emāmzāde Esmā'īl

The vault of the porch is covered with joint plugs decorations in a single flower pattern, with a band of geometric chain designs on each side. The western and eastern walls on both sides of

the small porch are also covered with joint plugs. Above the socle, there are two recessed niches, about 0.15-meter-deep, decorated with stucco. Unfortunately, the recent restorations have to some extent obscured the internal form of the niches.

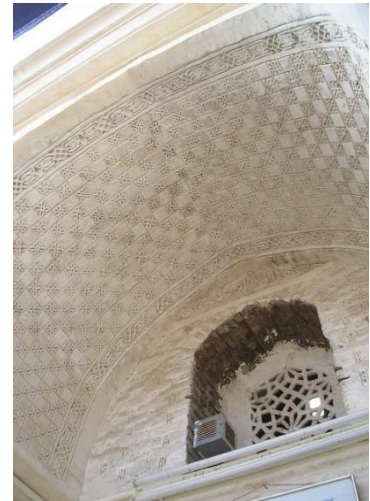


Image.10-11 Stucco decoration of the niches on the lateral walls of the porch

Image.12 Decoration of a bay on the portal

A great part of the decorations on the front walls were also demolished. Only a small part, which in the past was covered by the Qajar portal, currently remains, however, it is enough to infer that the original portal must have been heavily decorated with ornate stucco. If we could confirm that the porch was definitely built in the initial phase of the building, then this would be the only Il-Khanid tomb structure in Qom with such an entrance portal.



Image 13. The surviving stucco decorations of the portal

Interior

The interior of the mausoleum was built on a square plan, 5 meters on each side. Currently, the building has doorways on three sides: northern, eastern and western. Although the south side is currently closed, the particularly thin wall here suggests that in the past, it used to be open as well. On each side of the domed square, there is a rectangular niche 2 meters wide and 1.30 meters deep. The chamber is about 4.5 meters tall.

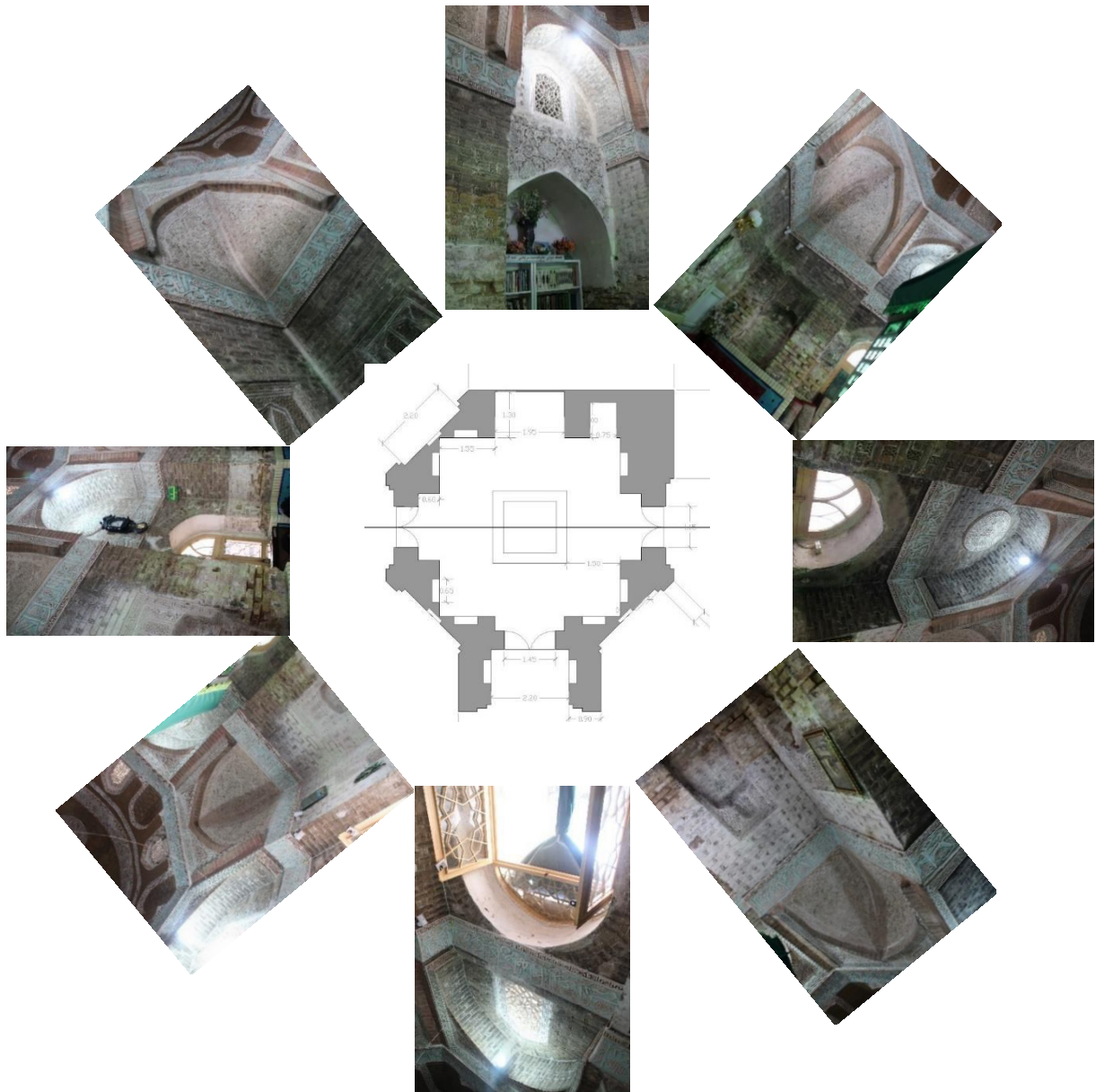


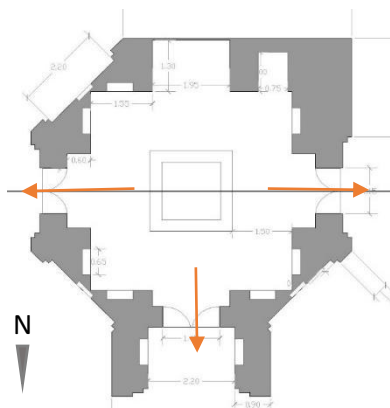
Image 14. Photographic documentation of the eight sides in the interior of the mausoleum of Emānzāde Esmā‘īl

Drawing 4. Plan of the mausoleum (Source: Archive of ICHTO, with additions by the author)

There are two 0.65m-wide niches at the four corners of the square chamber. These are 0.84-meter-tall and placed about one meter higher than the existing building floor.

On the southwestern side, instead of a niche, there is an entrance to the crypt. This is now closed and would require archeological survey to identify its precise dimensions and form.

There are two additional entrances located on the eastern and the western sides; these are now closed with metal doors. The *mihṛāb* is located to the south and covered with stucco decorations on the upper part of the chamber. It is likely that this part was added in the second phase of construction, at the same time as the portal. It later seems to have been blocked, with the *mihṛāb* still marked, as the domed chamber served also as a mosque. All around the building, a 0.75 meter socle was installed from the floor, with the walls then plastered with joint plugs decoration up to a further 2.5 meters. The first inscription is set above it.

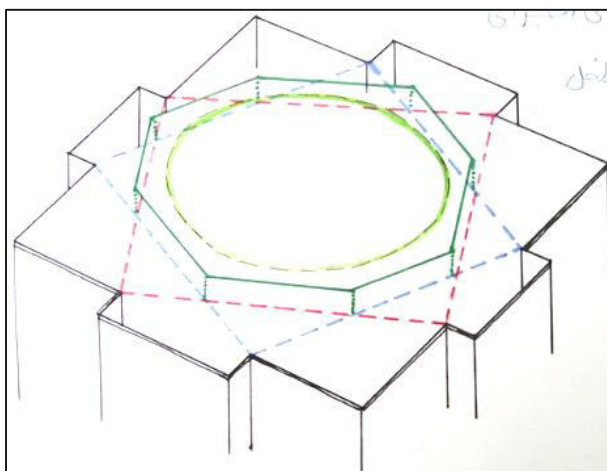


Drawing 5- Plan of Emāmzāde Esmā'īl's (Source: Archive of ICHTO)



Image 15 -The interior of Square chamber, looking northwest

Above this inscription, the squinches transform the square plan of the building into an octagon, on top of which stands the second inscription band. Above this, at a height of 6.80 meters from the floor, sixteen blind, pointed arches mark the zone of transition from an octagon to a hexadecagon.



Drawing 6- 3-dimensional diagram of the transition stages



Image 16- Interior of domed chamber, looking SE

Eight of these sixteen niches include windows, each covered with carved plaster lattice. Another inscription band is located above, which forms the starting point of the dome. This dome has two separate shells, which are hemispherical on the inner side. The height of the dome chamber from the current floor up to the dome foundation is about 9 meters, while the dome itself has a height of about 2 meters.²



Image17- The inner surface of the dome

The cenotaph is located in the middle of the square chamber. Currently, it is covered by a metal shrine; in the Qajar era, the two tombs were covered with tiles. (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 397).



Image 18. The new metal shrine in the middle of the domed chamber (Source: archive of OOQ.)

Mihrab

The *mihṛāb* originally stood on the south side of the building, however, due to humidity at the bottom of the wall, it has now completely collapsed and, as mentioned before, only a part of the decorations above the arch remains (Img. 20). We do have a report from Feyz, who notes some details not visible today: “... on tympana of the southern chamber sits a *mihṛāb*, which has stucco decorations with high relief flowers and bushes as well as a complete *mihṛāb* scheme.

² All sizes are mentioned on the basis of the available drawing by ICHTO.

Chapter 4

On the arch of *mihṛāb*, there is a 0.15m wide and 1.25m high inscription in *Kufic* script and this phrase is carved on it: " لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله على ولي الله "

Translation: There is no God, except Allāh, Muḥammad is his messenger and ‘Alī is the friend (wali) of Allāh.

There are 0.30m wide borders on all four sides of the *mihṛāb*. The eastern side bears the holy names, while the name “Moḥammad” is carved repeatedly in square *kufic* on the other three sides (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 393-394). Feyz also mentions that the text of the inscription of the *mihṛāb* itself came from the Quranic surah Isrā’. (17: 80), with the name of the mason, “Moḥammad b. Abī Šoḡā’”, mentioned at the end (Ibid). It should be noted, however, that considering the plan of the southern side and a part of the inscription band, which was cut to add a decorated arch, it seems that what Feyz describes was, in fact, an attachment added in the second construction phase, while originally this side was simply open (as already suggested above).



Image 19.- Inscription on *mihṛāb* before demolition (Source: GAQ, p.394)



Image 20. The current condition of carved stucco above the *mihṛāb*



Image 21-22. Southern side and details of the inscription as it connects to the additional wall on the *mihṛāb* side



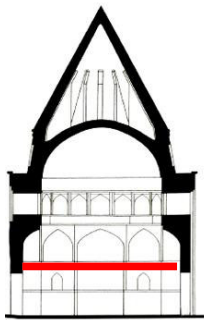
4-7-3 Epigraphic Material

Various inscriptions are used in this building, the most important of which are the three main inscription bands in *Thuluth* and *Kufic* scripts. All these are about 0.50 to 0.60-meter wide and carved on colored background. The lowest inscription, at the square-to-octagon zone of transition, includes the Quranic surah al-Dahr (76: 1-11), written in *Thuluth* script. The inscription starts from the southeastern side. This phrase in *Kufic* script الملك لله الواحد القهار على و محمد خير البشر Translation: "The Rule is due to God, the Avenger, Muḥammad and ‘Alī are the best of humankind", is inserted repeatedly on the lower border of this inscription.³

Due to improper reconstruction, the quality of calligraphy in this inscription has deteriorated, with the letters becoming much thinner than originally – this is apparent when the current inscription is compared with old photographs.



Image 23- The lower inscription band in *Thuluth* script before restoration, 1976
(Source: TP, Fig. 93)



Drawing 7- The location of lower inscription band (Source: Archive of ICHTO addition by the author)



Image 24- The lower inscription band in *Thuluth*, view from s side



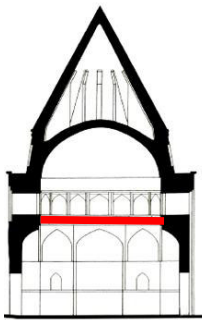
Image 25- The lower inscription band in *Thuluth* script, view from NW side

³ Tabātabā'ī and Feyz, have read this border wrongly as the name of Allāh and Moḥammad.

The second inscription band is located above the squinches. Written in *Thuluth* script, the inscription is carved on a green background with floral designs, framed by decorative, geometric borders. It starts in the upper part of the northern chamber and ends on the northeastern side. It includes information about the buried person and the patron of the monument, as well as the date of construction. It is worth noting that its content is somewhat similar to one inscription in the southern mausoleum of Bāġ-e Sabz. It reads as follows:

”ذكر القديم اعلى و بالتقديم اولى- امر ببناء هذه العمارة الرفيعة و الروضة الشريفة مرقد الامام المعصوم المظلوم اسمعيل بن الامام جعفر الصادق عليهم السلام صاحب الاعظم الاعدل الاعلم والى اقاليم الفضل و الكرم مستخدم، ارباب السيف و القلم المنصور بنصره خير الناصرين غياث الحق و الدنيا و الدين امير محمد بن المولى المخدوم الاعظم الاعدل الاعلم جمال الحق و الدنيا و الدين على بن صفى اعلى الله شانهما و رفع فوق الفرقدين مكانهما فى محرم الحرام سنة 774 ”

Translation: “The mention of the Eternal [God] is superb and is the worthiest exordium. The order for the construction of this lofty building and noble mausoleum of the innocent and victimized *imām*, Ismā‘īl, son of the Imām Ġa‘far aṣ-Ṣādiq, peace be upon them, was issued by the owner of magnificence, justice and knowledge, gifted with great justice and knowledge in all aspects of graciousness and benefaction, the commander of the masters of the sword and the pen, who is victorious by the help of the best of supporters, Ġiyāṭ al-Ḥaqq wa al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn Amīr Muḥammad, son of the most just and learned lord and master Ġamāl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn ‘Alī b. Ṣafī, may God heighten the rank of both of them and raise their station above the two bright stars of Ursa Minor (“Little Bear”). In the holy month of Muḥarram 774 AH. (1372).

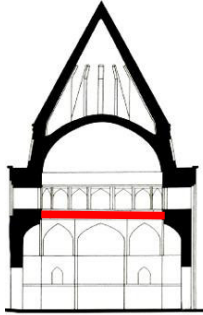


Drawing 8- The location of the middle inscription band
(Source: Archive of ICHTO addition by the author)



Image 26-27. Part of the middle inscription band in *Thuluth* script

Much like the band below it, this inscription has also deteriorated in quality through the course of restorations. The letters and words are thinner than they were originally, and the background is emptier, more sparsely decorated, with the decorations themselves also carved in lower relief (Image 28).



Drawing 9- The location of middle inscription band (Source: Archive of ICHTO addition by the author)



Image 28- Part of the middle inscription band before repairs (Source: TP, Fig. 94)



Image 29. Beginning and end of the middle inscription band in *Thuluth* script, view from NW

The upper inscription band is written in *Kufic* script and it has undergone less changes through restorations compared to the other two. It is framed by two borders, decorated with chain-like motifs, and marks the beginning of the dome. It comprises the Quranic surah al-Ḥamd (1:1-5), written in brightly-colored *Kufic* set against a mechanically hatched background of blue, green and red. It is not clear whether these colors were present before the recent repairs or not. The size of the letters is well coordinated with the background in a way that considerably improves the inscription’s legibility – this is one of this inscriptions’ strongest points.



Image 30- The *Kufic* inscription band at the base of the dome

The upper border is decorated with the name “Moḥammad” in square *kufic* and in the lower border, the common phrase “al-Mulk Lillāh” is repeated all around the dome.

A cursive, roundel-shaped inscription is inserted at the center of the dome, encircling a central, decorative floral motif on a green background. The design of this circular inscription is quite similar to the analogous inscription in the middle Tomb tower of Bāg-e Sabz, and it is likely that both were made by the same artist. It includes the (incomplete) Quranic surah al-‘Imrān (3:18-19). The other circular inscription on the surface of the dome is written in square *kufic* and consists of the repeating names of “Allāh, Moḥammad and ‘Alī” in green and red.



Image 31- Circular square *kufic* inscription



Image 32- Circular cursive inscription at the center of the dome

Other roundel-shaped inscriptions or medallions are placed in the tympana of the northern and southern chambers. On the northern side, the borders of these medallions include the names of twelve innocent *imāms*, written in *Kufic* script, and on the southern side, they include the name of ‘Alī, written eight times, also in *Kufic* script. The oft-repeated sentence of al-Mulk lillāh is written repeatedly again in square *Kufic* on the border of a southeastern medallion. The design of the medallions in the western chamber is different, with the combined names of ‘Alī and Moḥammad written four times at the center.



Image 33. The inscribed roundel on SE chamber



Image 34. The inscribed roundel on W chamber

4-7-4 Decoration

The interior surface of the mausoleum is decorated extensively in stucco. The lower part of the walls (i.e. the socle zone) has been repaired with new tiling and nothing remains of the former stucco decoration. However, other various parts of the walls are still decorated with false joint and carved and incised plaster. The stucco techniques used here are semi-embossed carved plaster, with reliefs of 0.5 to 2.5 centimeters, flat stucco in false joint, simulated incised brick joints, brick-end, with the grid pattern or *Ažde kārī* as an additional technique applied on carved plaster. The designs include geometric and vegetal motifs and scroll patterns, and the density of the decorations diminishes towards the level of the dome foundation and above, where a few medallions on the surface of the dome serve as the only ornament. The inscription bands provide additional decoration, in addition to the stucco on the surface of the squinches, the spandrels, and on a part of the existing *mihṛāb*. These patterns include scrollwork with arabesque and floral motifs, as well as geometric and epigraphic bands. The squinches on the four sides of the building include extensive vegetal designs, framed with carved bands in the form of cable moldings, undulating geometrical motifs, epigraphic and floral motifs.

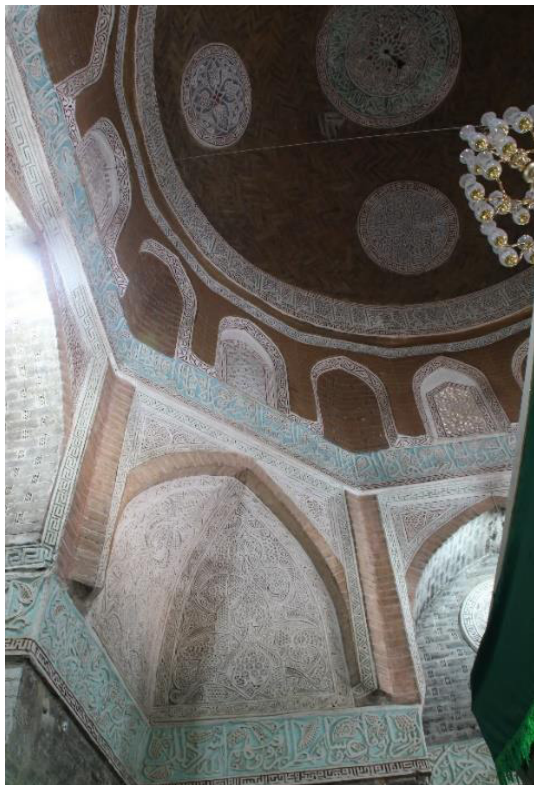


Image35 - Stucco decoration of internal surface of domed chamber

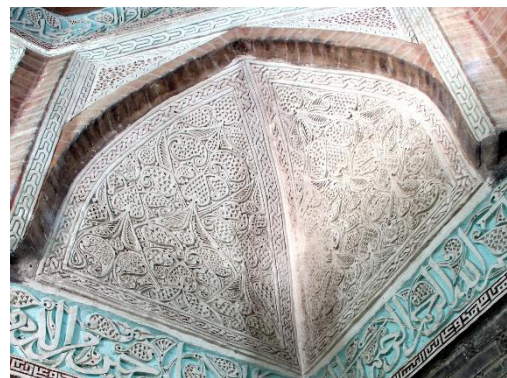


Image 36-38. Decorations on squinches

The Spandrels are located above the squinches, and the arches are decorated with triangular, scroll and geometric designs above their vaults, which are enclosed by a frame.

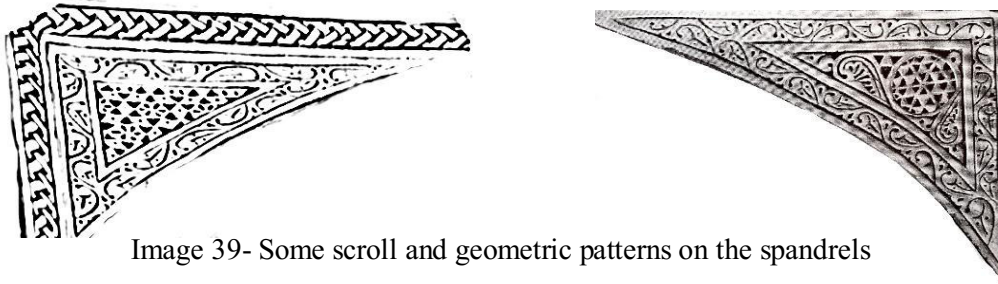


Image 39- Some scroll and geometric patterns on the spandrels

On the southern side, at the location of the *mihṛāb*, the carved plaster is applied in higher relief compared to all the other parts. Some ornaments are made in relief as high as 0.70 meter; these were made separately and installed with wooden connections (nails) in the depth of the works. Some still exist, but unfortunately most of these are lost. Among these designs, the holy words such as Allāh are inserted with lower relief designs.



Image 40- A part of the stucco on the *Qibla* wall, connected to the wall by wooden nails (Source: *Ārāyehā-ye Gačī dar ātār-e Tārīhī-ye Qom*, p. 79)

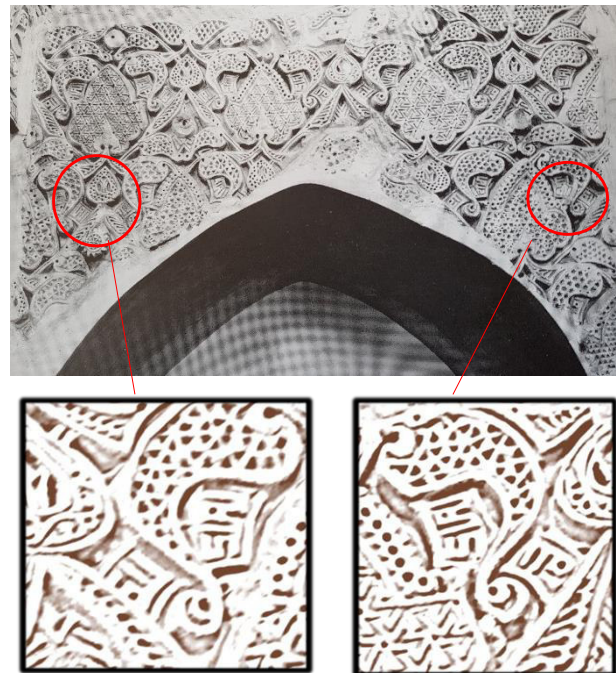


Image 41- Stucco decoration on the S chamber, the holy names included among the floral motives (Source: *Ārāyehā-ye Gačī dar ātār-e Tārīhī-ye Qom*, p. 79)

Another space extensively decorated in stucco are the chamber niches located 0.85 meter above the socles. All the niche surfaces are covered with scroll and grid designs. Each niche includes a carved, decorative border of repeating Greek key motifs, similar to the design of the *mihṛāb*.

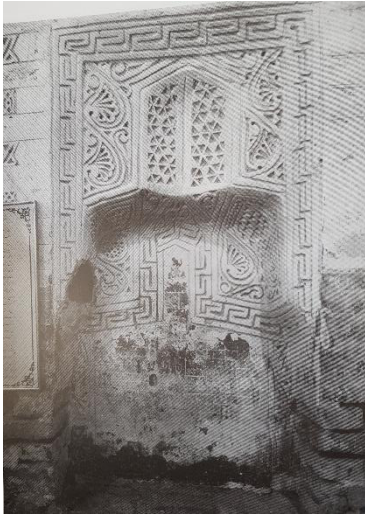


Image 42-43. Stucco niches on northeastern side of building

Among other decorations applied in this mausoleum, there are false bricks or joint plugs, which appear on the walls, from above the socles up to the starting point of the first inscription band, as well as on the surfaces of the tympana and the soffits belonging to the four main chambers. The plugs measure 0.7 * 0.4 meter. They are not simulated and are executed at the vertical segments of the bricks.



Image 44- false bricks on walls



Image 45- false bricks on W chamber

In the portal, which has been repaired recently, simulated incised brick joints are used on the walls and the soffits. The stamp motifs on the entrance vault consist of eight-pointed flowers, which are different from the plug motifs inside the building. This mausoleum is the only tomb that has decorations on its outer surfaces. However, the differences in technique and the decorative motifs used suggest that the decorations on the porch are related to the second period of construction. This part of the building needs further architectural study.

4-7-5 History of the mausoleum and the deceased

Based on the existing inscriptions, the mausoleum of Šāh Esmā‘īl was constructed in 744/1372 following the order of Ġīyāt al-Dīn Moḥammad or Amīr Moāḥammad, son of ‘Alī b. Šafi, members of the Šafi dynasty. It was decorated by ‘Alī Moḥammad abī Šoḡā‘ who also worked on several other domes in this era.⁴

The name and origin of Emānzāde Esmā‘īl is not mentioned in any historical books, but the inscriptions suggest that this monument belongs to Šāh Esmā‘īl b. Moḥammad b. Ġa‘far Šādiq. In the book of *Ganḡīn-ye Ātār-e Qom*, it is quoted that the person buried in this dome is one of the great honorable and noble *Sadāts* from Ḥorāsān: Abū al-Ma‘ālī Esmā‘īl. As mentioned in the book, Abū al-Ma‘ālī Esmā‘īl, son of ‘Abdollāh b. Ḥosain, was dispatched to capital of Ḥorāsān (Neyšābūr) for his education, and he gained such a position and sublimity that Solṭān Moḥammad Ḥārazmšāh selected him for the position of *Naqīb al-Naqabā* or *Naqīb al-Ašrāf* (Marshal of Nobility) of the country, which was a great spiritual and political title. He was the undisputed *Naqīb al-Naqabā* throughout the territory under the dominion of Solṭān Moḥammad till 617/1316 and his commentaries and ideas on all significant issues were greatly sought-after, with no important action taken without his agreement. Upon the Mongol invasions, Abū al-Ma‘ālī Esmā‘īl migrated from Neyšābūr to Qom and resided in a house outside the Qom boundaries. He was killed together with Sayyed Ġa‘far Naqīb Mūsavī during the later attacks on Qom. Both were beheaded and their bodies were buried in their house. However, his head was found among others (and was later buried besides his body), hence he was called Esmā‘īl Sarbaḡš (which means “the person who offered his head”) (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 385-89).

In any case, it seems that this person was so popular among the people and the government that a tomb like other tombs of the era was erected for him in 1372, with the support and on the orders of one of the Šafi rulers. This building was constantly modified at different periods. It was finally registered under No. 2168 in the 1998 as an Iranian National Historical Monument, and today, it is one of the places of pilgrimage in Qom.

⁴ Such as the southern Tomb tower of Bāḡ-e sabz in 1360, mausoleum of Ḥadīḡe Ḥātūn 1369 and Emānzāde Aḥmad Qāsem 1378.

4-8 Mausoleum of Ḥadīġe Ḥātūn

4-8-1 Location

The mausoleum known as Ḥadīġe Ḥātūn is located 35 km south of Qom, beside the eastern bank of the Qomrūd river, near the old road between Qom and Eṣfahān (which is an ancient route). This building stands on the outskirts of the village of Ḥadīġe Ḥātūn, whose name comes from the tomb. The mausoleum is located within the local cemetery, well-visible from all sides. According to local tradition, the village was originally called Ḥalaġ Ābād, but the name was changed after the burial of Ḥadīġe Ḥātūn, as a sign of respect for her.

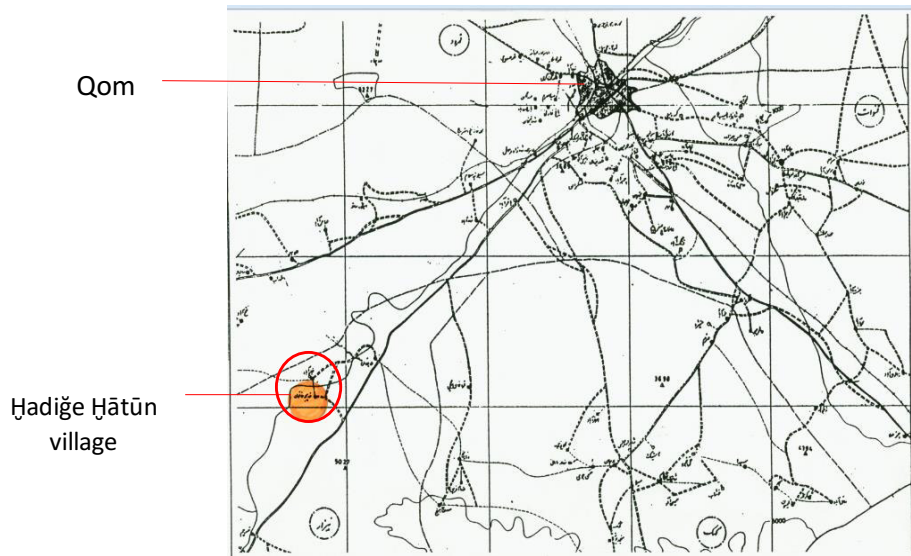


Image 1- Location of Ḥadīġe Ḥātūn village compared to Qom (Source: Archive of ICHTO, with addition by the author)

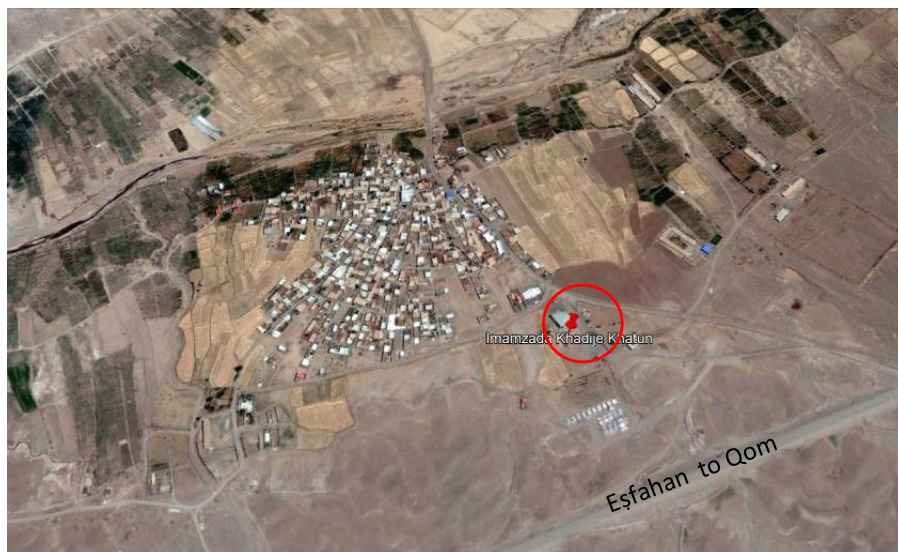


Image 2- Location of the building beside the village and the old Qom to Eṣfahān Road (Source: *Google Earth* 20.05.2018, with addition by the author)

Chapter 4

The earliest mention of the name ‘Ḥalağ Ābād’ can be found in 5th century AH sources. This area was established by the Ḥalağ tribe, who had migrated from India to this region, which consequently was known as Ḥalağestān at the time (Feyż Qomī, 1971:426-7). There are two other mausoleums near this monument: the mausoleum of Šāhzāde Zakarīyā and the monument of Ebrāhīm and Esmā‘īl, both within 75 meters from the mausoleum of Ḥadiğe Ḥātūn. Nothing is mentioned about these buildings in the *Tārīḥ-e Qom*. The dating of these buildings is vague; however, the location of these three mausoleums near the old Qom-to-Eşfahān road and their placement in an equidistant triangle seem remarkable. The mausoleum of Ḥadiğe Ḥātūn is now located in a cemetery, which includes a number of ancient gravestones, with the significant ones located on the eastern side of the building. Later, various buildings were constructed on the northern and southern sides of this mausoleum to meet the requirements of the pilgrims.

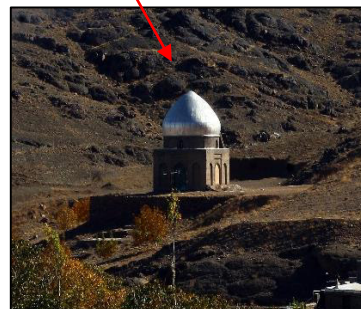
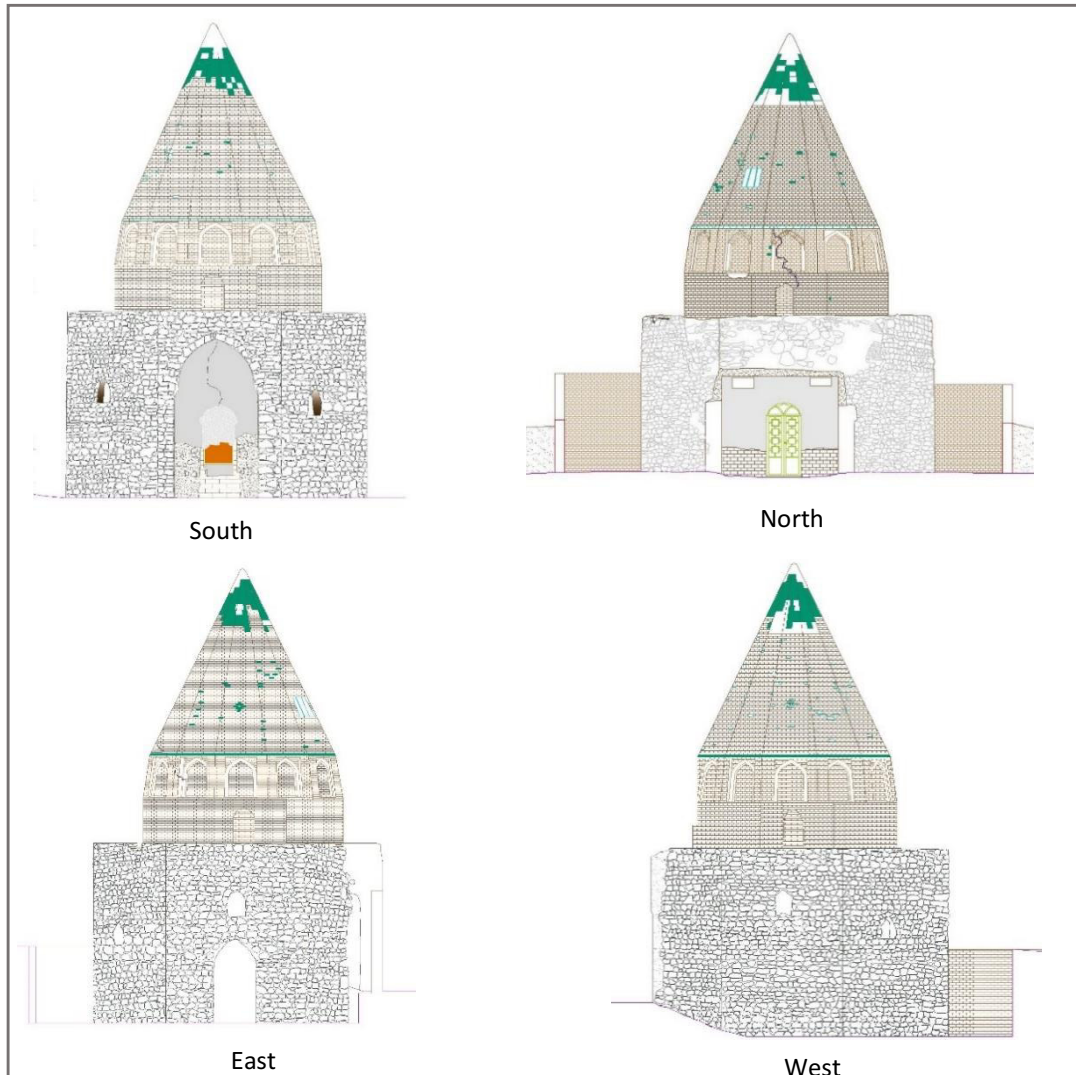


Image 3-4-5-6 The area of the Emāmzāde Ḥadiğe Ḥātūn and the location of the two mausolea near it (Source: *Google* 20.05.2018, with additions by the author)

4-8-2 Architectural specifications

Exterior

The mausoleum of Ḥadiġe Ḥātūn, with some differences in the construction materials in the main body, complies with the same architectural principles which guided the construction of most other mausoleums in Qom built around this time. Its exterior is built on an octagonal plan¹. The ground surrounding the mausoleum has been raised gradually over time; this is consistent with other mausoleums located in cemeteries and can be attributed to burials during the years following the tomb construction. According to archaeological research, the main floor of the building is about 1.5 meters lower than the surrounding ground. The building façade is 5.50 meters high, of which the first 5 meters seem to have been repaired extensively with rubble, bricks and gypsum and are thus not original. There are four windows facing onto the cardinal directions, all of which have been filled in. Currently, only two are visible from the outside.



Drawing 1. The elevations of Emāmzāde Ḥadiġe Ḥātūn (Source: Archive of ICHTO, with addition by the author)

¹ However, Feyż Qomī has incorrectly mentioned it as hexagonal in his reports. (Feyż Qomī, 1971: 428)

The drum The drum of the dome is placed immediately on top of the body of the octagon, with a recession at the height of 2.60 meters. It is a dodecagon, made of recessed, rectangular panels with blind, pointed arches. The dome was constructed on the drum, in the form of a twelve-sided tent roof. The total height of the mausoleum to the apex is 13.70 meters ². The roof was retiled with turquoise tiles, but most of these have since fallen off.



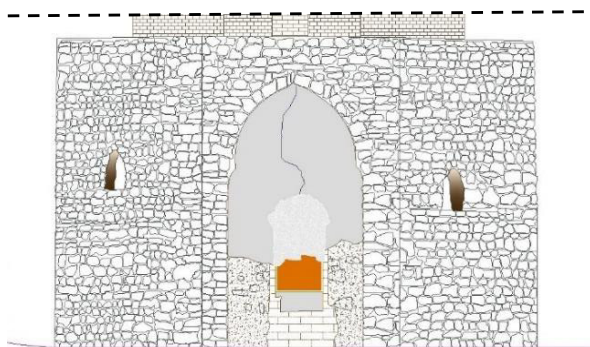
Image 7- Visualization of the eight facades of Emānzāde Ḥadiġe Ḥātūn

Drawing 2- Plan of the mausoleum (Source: Archive of ICHTO, with additions by the author)

² Sizes and dimensions are based on the maps available in the Qom Cultural Heritage Dept.

Entrance

The current entrance of the building is on the northwestern side. Despite the restoration, some disturbances can still be seen on this façade. On the other sides of the building, excluding the southern side, traces of openings in the arch forms are obvious but they are now completely filled in, due to the changes in the ground level of the eastern and southern parts of the cemetery. Most probably, this building used to include openings on several sides; however, given the form and height of the vault at the southern entrance and the appearance of the walls on this side, it seems likely that the main entrance was located on this side, although we do not know when it was made. The original form of the façade, which most probably was made of brick, has been lost through restoration.



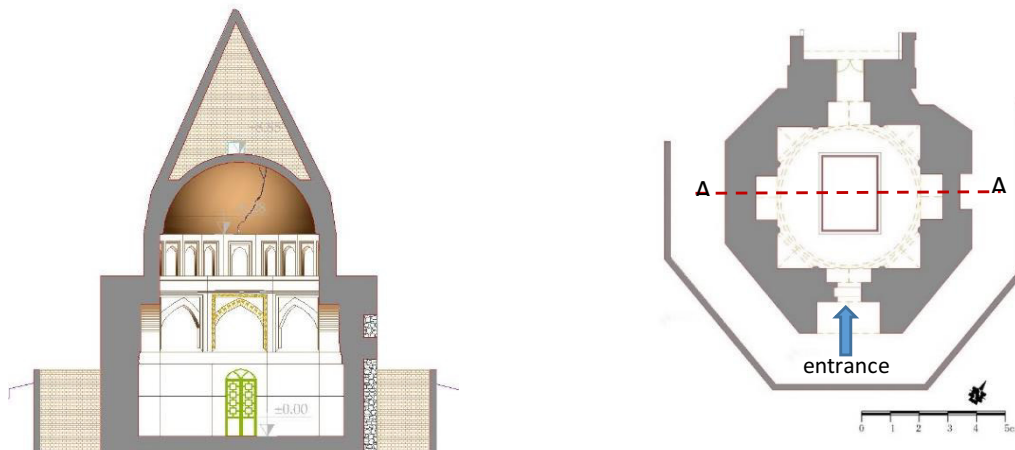
Drawing 3- The main entrance of the tower on the S side (Source: Archive of ICHTO in Qom, with additions by the author)



Image 8- Southern side of the tower

Interior

The internal plan of the building is a square, 5.50 meters on the sides and about 12 meters tall. Each side contains a rectangular, recessed panel, 3 meters wide and 1.25 meters deep. The architectural form and internal structure of the building are very similar to other mausoleums of the *imānzādes* in Qom.

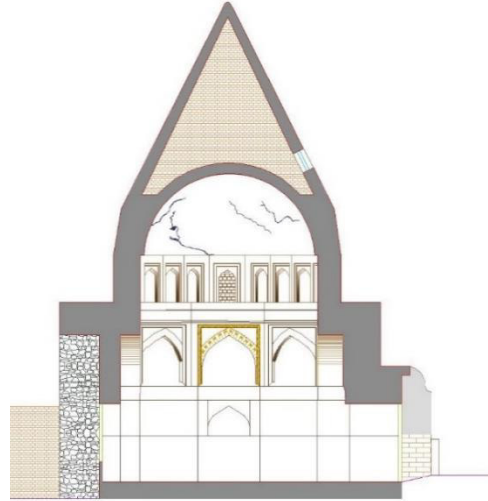


Drawing 4- Plan and EW section (Source: Archive of ICHTO, with additions by the author)

Originally, the domed chamber had openings on three sides, although now only the northern one remains open. The western side probably pointed towards the *qibla*, which is why it is slightly rotated. The socle zone is covered with new, star-shaped, blue tiles, up to 1.25 meters from the floor, surrounding the lowest portion of the domed chamber. Then the first inscriptions band rests above this part.



Image 9- interior view from SE



Drawing 5- the NS section of the mausoleum of Hadıġe Hātūn (Source: Archive of ICHTO, with additions by the author)

At 3 meters, the square shape of the building changes into an octagon via the addition of squinches on the corners. Further above, at the height of about 5 meters, the second inscription band is located, above which begins the zone of transition from octagon to hexadecagon. There are smaller, rectangular panels with blind, pointed-arch niches on each side. The four axial arches enclose windows; these arched, brightly lit openings determine the rhythm of the entire zone. The third inscription band is then located further above, at the height of 6.30 meters. This inscription band marks the beginning of the circular dome. The overall height of the structure, from the internal floor to the apex of the dome is about 9 meters.

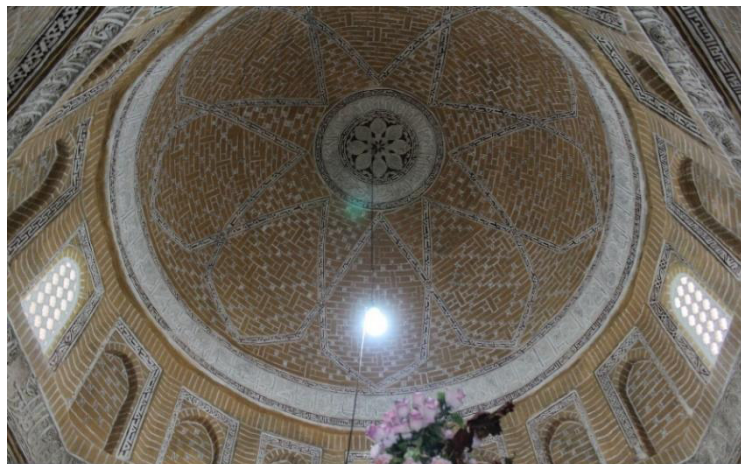
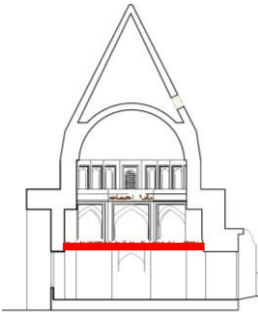


Image 10. The sixteen-sided zone of transition and the dome's structure

4-7-3 Epigraphic Material

The building includes three main inscription bands, one circular inscription, as well as other inscriptions located on the borders around the arches and on the surface of the dome. The first band is located at the transition zone between the square and the octagon, about 3 meters from the floor. It is 0.38 meter wide, written in *Thuluth* script, and begins in the west. The inscription contains some important information about the patron and the construction date of the building, and its text is further continued in the upper inscription band. It reads:



Drawing 6- Location of the inscription band (Source: ICHTO, with addition by the author)



Image 11- Part of the lower inscription band in *Thuluth* script

"المطاع الشهريار الاعدل الاعلم خليفة العرب و العجم صاحب السيف و القلم حافظ البلاد ناصر العباد مدير امور المملكة و خلاصه تركيب الماء و الطين جمال الحق و الدوله و الدنيا و الدين على صفى ايدهما الله تعالى و نصرهما على اعدائهما و ابد دولتهما فى شهور سنة سبعين و سبعمائنه."

Translation: ...who has to be obeyed, the most just and learned ruler, the caliph of Arabs and non-Arabs, the master of the sword and of the pen, the guardian of the lands and reliever of mankind, the administrator who controls the affairs of the kingdom, the essence of the mixture of water and clay (i.e. of human beings) Ġamāl al-Ḥaqq wa al-Daula wa al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn ‘Alī Ṣafī, may God support them both, make them victorious over their enemies and make their rule last forever. 770/1369.

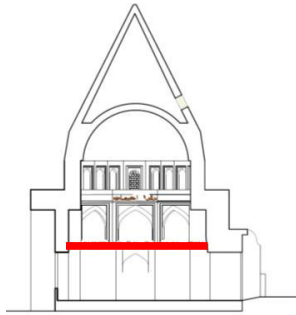


Image 12. the Parts of lower inscription band



Image 13- the Parts of lower inscription band

This inscription also includes excerpts from the Quranic Yāsīn (36:1-9), written with the same script and form; it runs around the chamber and ends on the northern side.



Drawing 7- Location of the inscription band (Source: ICHTO, with addition by the author)

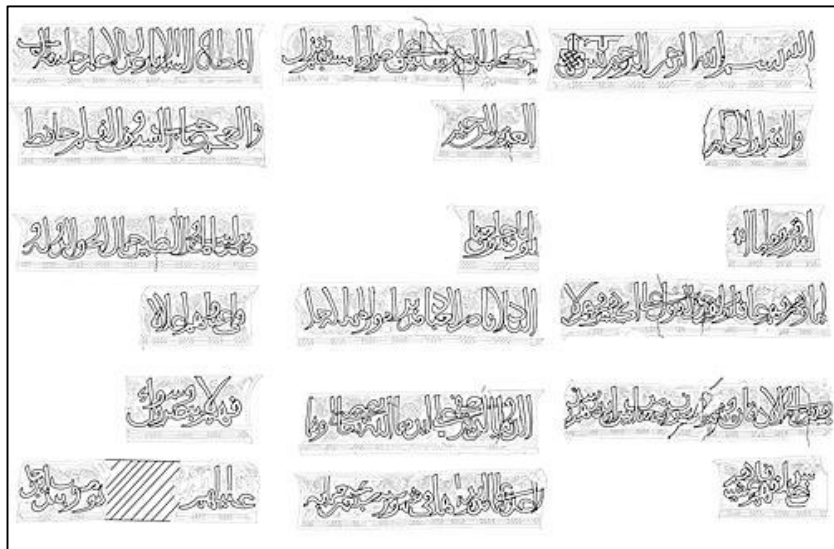


Image 14- Thuluth script used in lower inscription band (source: *emamzadegan* site, date: 07.08.2018)

Following it, also on the northern side, the two names are inserted: “Darvīš ‘Alī Hāgī Tāher and Darvīš Ebrāhīm, son of Ḥasan Ḥalāg̃” (Ṭabātabā’i, 1976:205) These men have probably been craftsmen who worked on the mausoleum. The meaning of the first two words is not clear.



Image 15- The phrases on the northern side, including the name of the constructor (Source: L. *TP*, Fig. 263; R. *emamzadegan* site, date: 07.08.2018)

Below the northwestern squinch, this phrase can be seen:

“ هذا العمل العبد على (بن محمد بن ابي شجاع و حسن بن على خلو). (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1976:205).
 translation: This building was constructed by the servant of God ‘Alī (b. Muḥammad b. Abī Šuġā‘ and Ḥasan b. ‘Alī Ḥulū).

The names were read by Ṭabāṭabā’ī, but they are partially demolished now.



Image 16 -The name of the stucco master

The second inscription band, 0.40-meter-wide, is written in high relief *Thuluth* script, on lobed, level background. It contains the names of the buried person and the constructor of the building, reading as follows:

"ذكر القديم اعلى و بالتقديم اولى امر بتجديد بناء هذا المشهد المقدس مضجع السيده المعصومه و سيده نسا خديجه بنت الامام المعصوم جعفر بن الامام محمد الباقر بن على بن الحسين بن امير المؤمنين على بن ابي طالب عليهم الصلاه و السلام المولى المخدوم الصاحب الاعظم الدستور الاعدل الاعلم عمده اعظم الوزراء فى العالم اعتضاد الملوك و السلاطين المؤيد بتأييد رب العالمين غياث الحق و الدوله و الدين الافتخار و النظام ايران امير محمد بن المولى المخدوم المطلق"

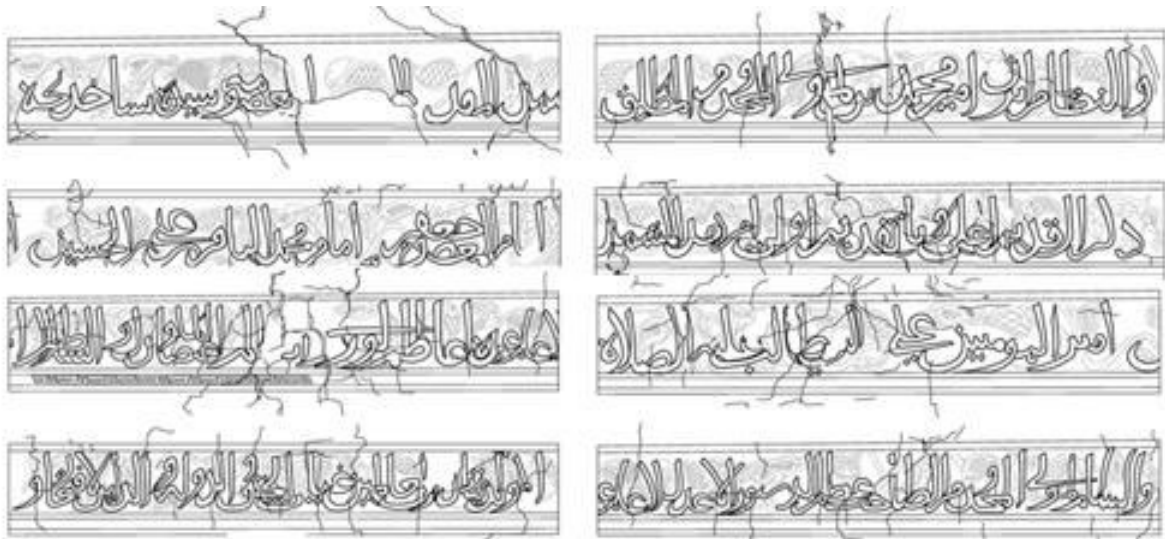
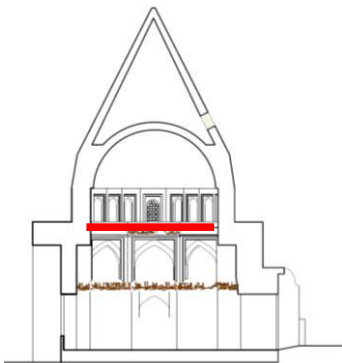


Image 17- Middle inscription band in *Thuluth* script (source: *emamzadegan* site, date: 07.08.2018)

Translation: The mention of the Eternal [God] is superb and is the most worthy exordium. The order for the reconstruction of this holy mausoleum, the resting place of the innocent lady, the princess of womankind, Ḥadīġa, daughter of the innocent Imām Ğa‘far, son of the Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir, son of ‘Alī, son of al-Ḥusain, son of the commander of the faithful ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib - God bless them and bestow peace upon them! - was issued by the lord, the supreme master, the most just and learned counsellor, the dean of the most eminent viziers of the world, the support of kings and sultans, who is strengthened by the support of the lord of the two worlds, Ğīyāṭ al-Ḥaqq wa al-Daula wa al-Dīn, the glory and the administrator of Irān, Amir Muḥammad, son of the absolute lord.



Drawing 8- Location of the inscription band (Source: ICHTO, with addition by the author)



Image 18- Part of middle inscription band in *Thuluth* script with names of the deceased person and the sponsor of the building



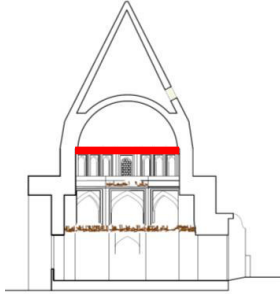
Image 19- Starting point of the middle inscription band in *Thuluth* script



Image 20- Middle inscription band before restoration, including name of the deceased person, Ḥadīġe

The third inscription band is located above the sixteen pointed blind niches at the beginning of the dome structure. This inscription is written in *Kufic* script on a lobed, vegetal background. It contains excerpts from the surah al-Ḥamd, i.e. the first chapter of the Quran.

This inscription is framed by two bands, upper and lower, both cut into a crimson background. The upper band includes the name of Moḥammad, written in Square *Kufic* script, and the lower band consists of the phrase: “الملك لله الواحد القهار محمد و على خير البشر” (translation: The rulership is due to God, the Avenger, Moḥammad and ‘Alī are the best of human kind).



Drawing 9- Location of the inscription band (Source: ICHTO, with addition by the author)



Image 21- Inscription band in *Kufic* script below the dome (source: *emamzadegan* site, date: 07.08.2018)

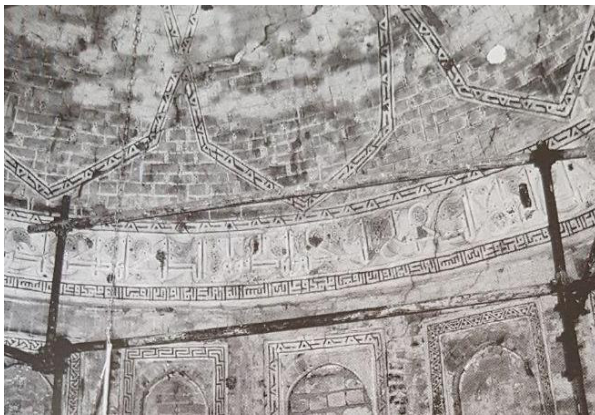


Image 22-23 Inscription band in *Kufic* script below the dome, before restoration (source: Moḡtabā Maḥmūdi, personal album)



Image 24- Inscription band in *Kufic* script below the dome, after restoration

At the center of the dome, there is a circular inscription, written in *Thuluth* script on a crimson background. It contains a verse from the ‘Imrān surah (3:17). The inscription itself is placed between two narrow bands; the upper one is also epigraphic and includes the repeated name Moḥammad in *Kufic* script, while the lower consists of a decorative, vegetal design.

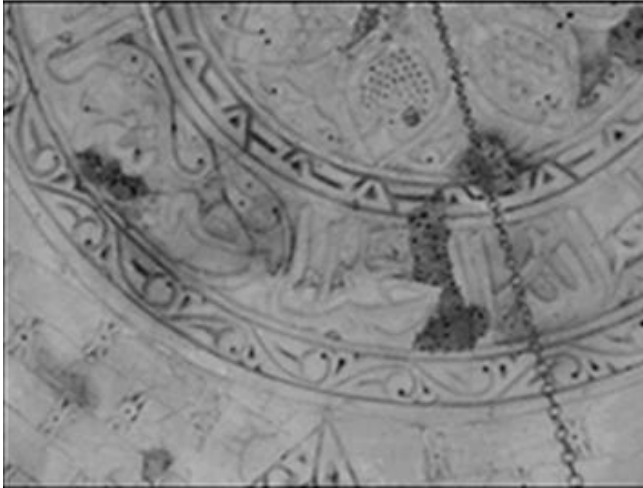


Image 25- The inscription around the medallion inside the dome



Image 26- Drawing of the central inscription on the dome (source: *emamzadegan* site, date: 07.08.2018)

4-8-4 Decoration

The original decorations of this building included tiles and stucco but now there are no traces of tilework left. However, according to Ṭabātabā’ī, the internal socle zone of the tomb chamber used to be covered with 8-pointed star and cross-shaped tiles; this is a very typical style in the Il-khanid era. Most of these tiles were broken even before Ṭabātabā’ī and the remaining tiles he observed were covered with plasterwork (Modarresī Ṭabātabā’ī, 1976:206). Kāvūsī also reported a number of broken, star-shaped, Il-khanid tiles around the building (Kāvūsī, 2005:82), of which nothing remains now. The enameled tiles added during repairs are also noteworthy, but these probably date to the Qajar era and so are not relevant here.



Image 27. the turquoise tiles on the dome

Like other mausoleums in Qom, this building is primarily decorated with stucco, which usually would have covered the entire interior of such a structures. Stucco decorations were applied on all surfaces with the techniques of carved and incised plaster, simulated incised brick joints and brick-end. Inscription bands, the central medallion, the bands of geometric pattern beneath the dome, borders of niches and squinches, are all decorated with carved stucco.



Image 28-29. Stucco on various surfaces inside the building

The bands around the sixteen niches also include various incised designs. These are quite varied and include repeating geometric motifs, epigraphic borders and floral scrollwork. The inscriptions consist of repetitions of sacred names such as Moḥammad and/or of the phrase al-Mulk lillāh ³”الملك لله”, all written in square *Kufic* script.



Image 30. The pattern of some decorative bands

³ الملك لله الواحد القهار محمد و على خير البشر : translation: The rulership is due to God, the Avenger, Muḥammad and ‘Alī are the best of human kind.

False bricks or false joints are another type of decoration used in this building. After restorations, more of them are simulated and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the structural and simulated forms. This technique was used on all the internal surfaces of spandrels, chambers, squinches, tympana and inside the sixteen blind-arched vaults, as well as on the surfaces below the dome. Currently, all the existing designs are in false bricks and in bow tie form. They are applied more vertically on most surfaces except above the arches, where they are mostly horizontal or in arch-form.

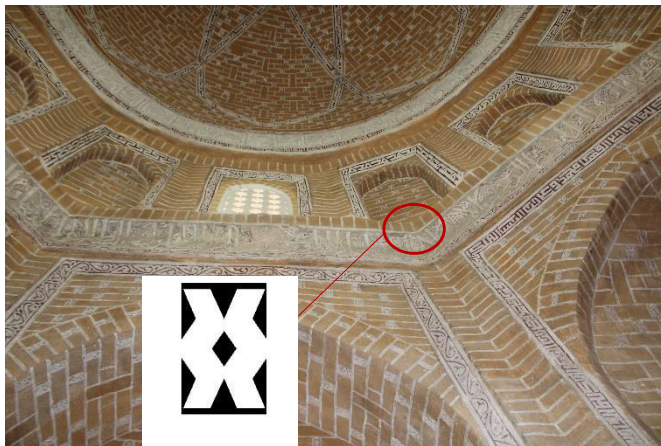


Image 31- Brick-end plugs on the internal surface of the dome chamber after restoration



Image 32- Horizontal brick-end plugs, before restoration (Source: Archive of ICHTO)

The internal surface of the dome is decorated with stucco bands, simulated incised brick joints and brick-end, including polygonal star shapes, inside which a medallion and a central inscription band are located.

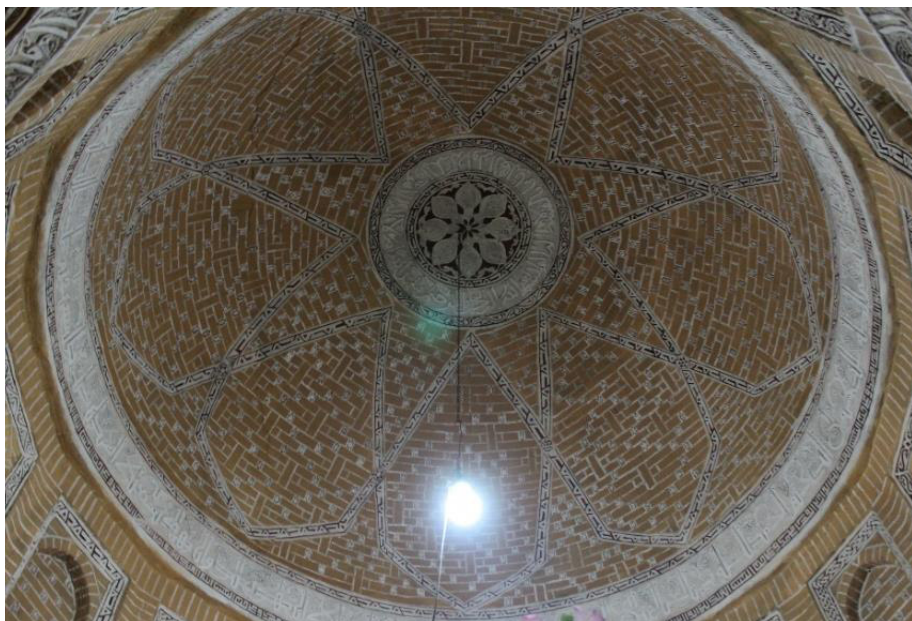


Image 33- Eight pointed star-shaped patterns below the dome

The bands outline the star form and are all epigraphic, with the name of Moḥammad written in square *Kufic* script.



Image 34-35. Epigraphic bands detail on the surface of the dome (source: M. Maḥmūdī, personal album)

4-8-5 History of the mausoleum and the deceased

According to the surviving inscriptions, this building was built by one of the local Ṣafī rulers, probably Ġīyāṭ ad-Dīn Moḥammad, son of Ḥāvḡe ‘Alī Ṣafī, in 770/1369. At the beginning of this inscription, the phrase “order for reconstruction of the building” was inserted, which implies that the building did, in fact, exist before, but was damaged or demolished and needed repairs or reconstruction. The date of the original building must have been some time before 1369, however, based on a comparison between the architectural style, form and decorations of this building with those constructed in the same period, we can reasonably assume that the building was built in 1369 in its entirety, and that probably the former structure had been totally demolished.

As for the deceased person buried here, the name of Ḥadīḡe, daughter of Imām Ġa‘far, is inserted on the inscription. However, it should be mentioned that we have no information available about this Ḥadīḡe; *Tārīḡ-e Qom*, which is the most important reference on the *emāmzades* in Qom, does not mention her name, leading one to believe that perhaps she lived in Qom after it was compiled (378/989). According to Feyż, Ḥadīḡe Ḥātūn lived in the 12th century, or even in the 13th century. She is one of the grandchildren of ‘Alī b. Ḥasan ‘Arīzī, a descendant of ‘Alī b. Ġa‘far, who is buried near the Kāšān gate. However, the inscriptions in the mausoleum suggest that she was Imām Ġa‘far Ṣādiq’s daughter. This is hardly possible,

since we know the name of Imām Ṣādiq’s three or four daughters, and the name of Ḥadiġe Ḥātūn is never mentioned among them. Thus, the more reasonable assumption is that Ḥadiġe Ḥātūn was Imām Ġa‘far Ṣādiq’s granddaughter (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 427-28).

A number of additions and alterations were made to this building over time and it has been subject to multiple reconstructions and repairs. In 1943, a tiled inscription band containing a poem in praise of Ḥadiġe Ḥātūn was added on the southern side. This building was registered in 2000 on the List of National Monuments under No. 2495 and was repaired internally and externally by the Cultural Heritage Organization in 2007-2008, when some further additions were made. The title of this building now belongs to the Endowment Organization. It is used as a pilgrimage site.

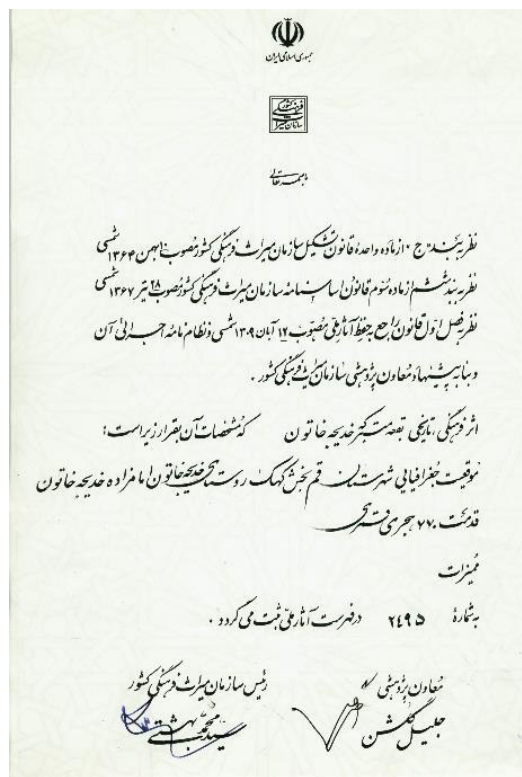


Image 36- The national registration document of the Mausoleum of Ḥadiġe Ḥātūn (Source: Archive of ICHTO)

4-9 Mausoleum of Šāh Ğa‘far

4-9-1 Location

The mausoleum of Šāh Ğa‘far Mūsavī, also called Emāmzāde Ğa‘far or Sayyed Ğa‘far, is to the west of Qom, on Emāmzāde Ebrāhīm street, about 800 meters from the western side of the Emāmzāde Ebrāhīm mausoleum. Based on a map from the Qajar period, this building was constructed in the suburbs, in the area then known as Mazdīgān, 2 km from the city gate (‘Alavīyye gate or Bakče gate), beside the old road leading to Ṭogrūd and Āve.

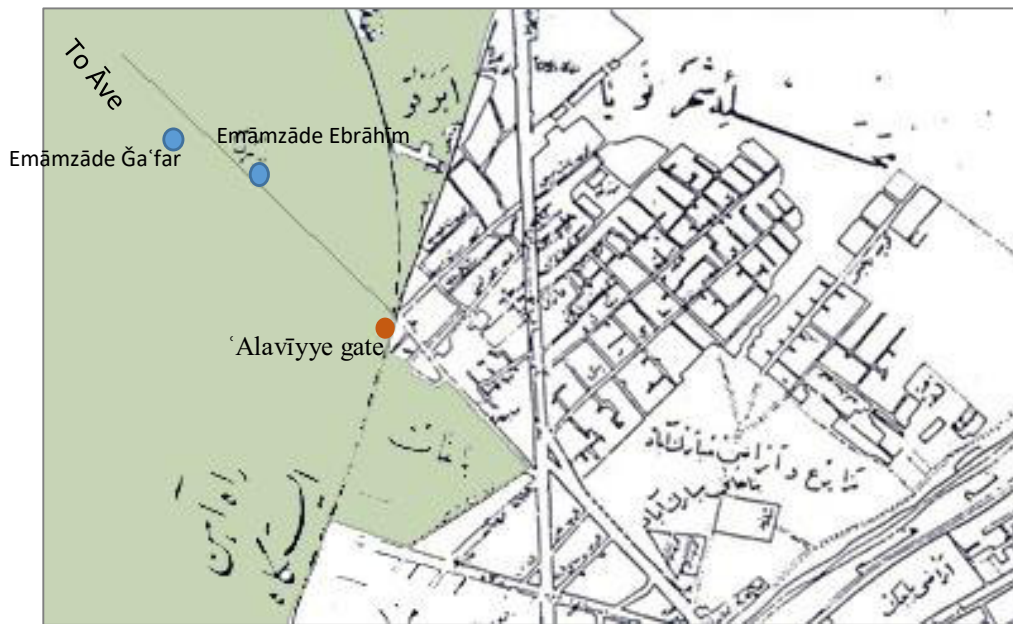
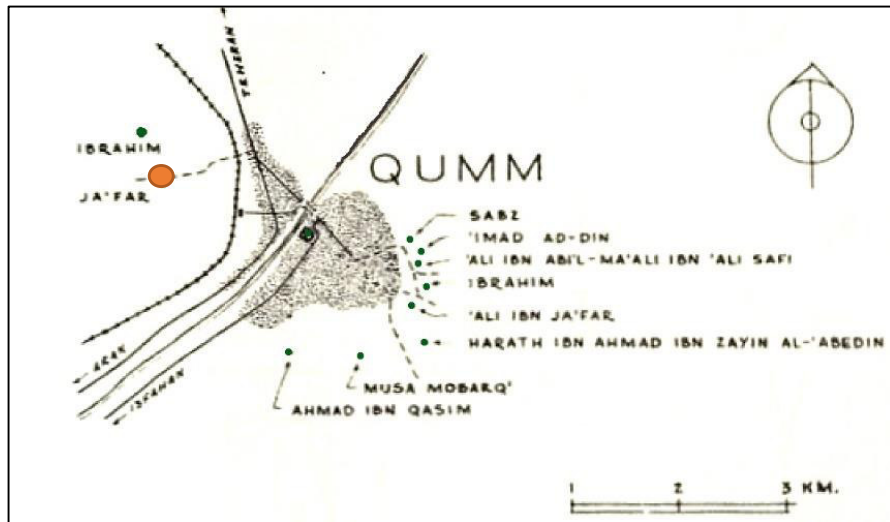


Image 1- the location of Emāmzāde Šāh Ğa‘far, by H. Karīmān 1949
(source: *qomshenasi* site 22.08.2018 with addition by the author)



Image 2- Current location of mausoleum of Šāh Ğa‘far and mausoleum of Šāh Ebrāhīm on the main street (Source: *Google Earth* Site 11.3.2018, with addition by the author)

On a map provided by Wilber, this building is also located outside the city. Wilber has also drawn the mausoleum of Šāh Ğa‘far to the south of Šāh Ebrāhīm, however, this is incorrect, as we know that former is to the west this mausoleum, at a distance of about 100 meters. Nowadays, unfortunately nothing remains of the original form of this building, as after the Islamic Revolution it was entirely reconstructed and developed into a single complex with a prayer hall, a portal court and a domed chamber.



Drawing 1- The location of the mausoleum of Šāh Ğa‘far in old Qom, sketch plan by Wilber, 1955 (Source: *The Architecture of Islamic Iran*, Fig.2)



Image 3- Current location of the mausoleum of Šāh Ğa‘far



Image 4- The current condition of the added iwān and court

According to Feyż's report from 1971, this mausoleum was originally located inside a cemetery, whose walls were in the form of battlements. It opened onto the cemetery from three sides (Feyż Qomī, 1971:261). Now, the cemetery is located in an open area on the southern side of the mausoleum. The entire building was demolished to make way for a new one, with a brightly tiled dome, which was built next to the residential area in Qom. However, old cartographic evidence, as well as the relatively detailed reports by Feyż and Ṭābāṭabā'ī, together with some historical images and a few tiles still surviving at the Āstāne Qom Museum, allow us to present a brief description of its former condition.

4-9-2 Architectural specifications

Exterior

The external façade of this mausoleum appeared simpler than it was for most other tomb structures. It could be divided into two main parts: body and dome. The external plan was an octagon, with a simple brick façade. Each side included a rectangular, recessed panel, topped with a shouldered, flat arch. The tent dome was also made of brick and rested directly on the exterior wall of the building, without the usual, exposed zone of transition. For this reason, the body of the mausoleum is higher than that of most other tomb structures. The dome itself was built in an eight-sided tent form and included a window on the northern side. Its surface was covered with turquoise tiles, which Feyż considers to have been added in the Safavid era. The dome was 8 meters tall and 8 meters in diameter (Feyż Qomī, 1971:261).



Image 5- A view of mausoleum of Šāh Ġā'far before demolition, R. Hillenbrand (Source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt of OFU Bamberg)

Entrance

According to old reports, the building had three openings. In the plan provided by Wilber, there were three doorways to the north, east, and west. Considering the considerably recessed part and the portal on the northern side, the main entrance may have been located there. At some point, a portal was added on the northern side, including some chambers and recessed spaces, as mentioned by Feyz (Feyz Qomī, 1971:255).

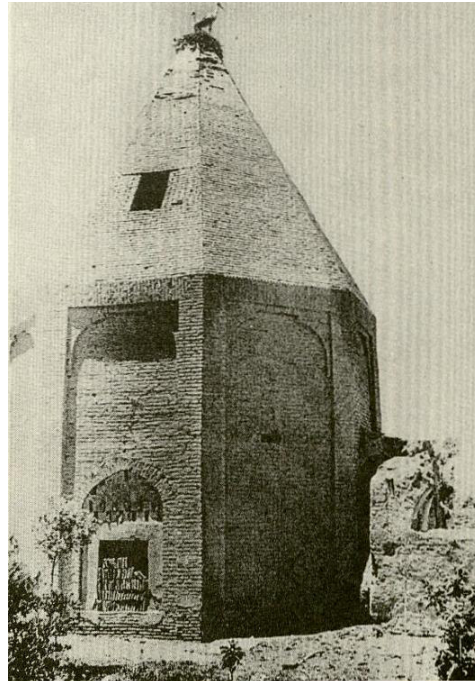
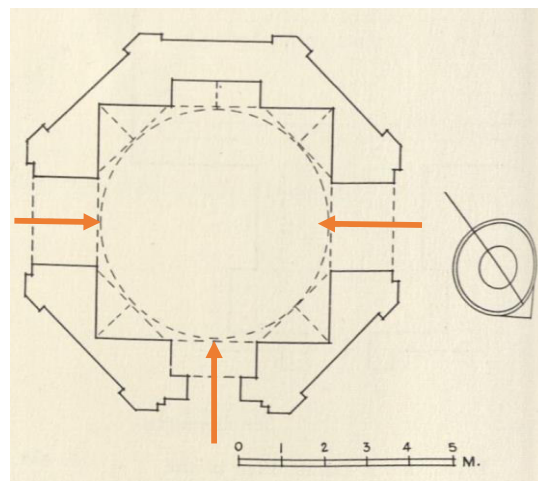


Image 6- Northern entrance of the mausoleum of Šāh Ğā'far before demolition, Wilber, 1955 (Source: *The Architecture of Islamic Iran*, Fig.12)

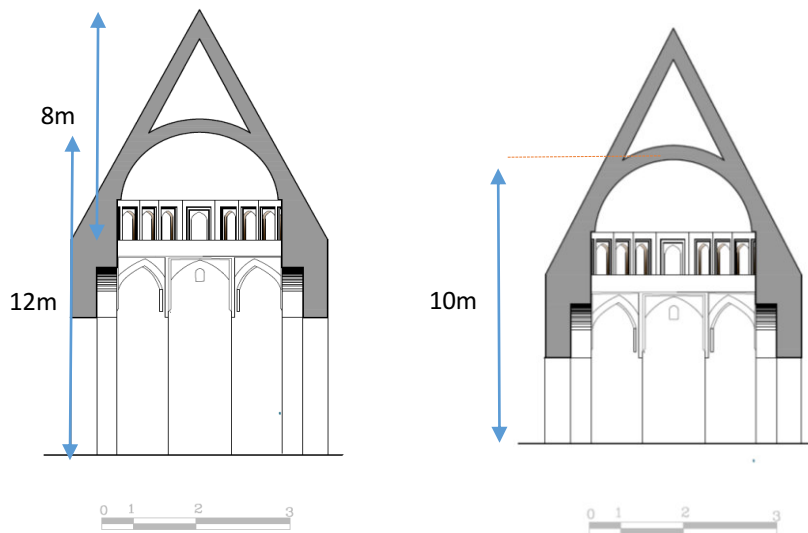
Interior

According to Feyz and Ṭābāṭabā'ī, the interior of the building was built on a square plan, 5.30 meters on each side. Each side except the southern one included an entrance, its walls 1.50 meters thick and 2 meters wide; thus, the mausoleum resembled the form of a pavilion, allowing people to enter it from different directions. These openings also improved the lighting and ventilation inside the building. The southern side was closed and most probably included a *mihṛāb*, fitted with a rectangular, recessed panel, 1 meter deep and 2 meters wide (Ibid).



Drawing 2 -Plan of mausoleum of Šāh Ğā'far by Wilber, 1944 (Source: *The Architecture of Islamic Iran*, Fig.10, with addition by the author)

The modality of transition from the square to the octagon resembles that of the other tomb structures: it is done through the use of squinches. Then, above the octagon, there was a 0.80-meter inscription band, above which a row of blank, pointed arches transformed the structure into a hexagon. Another inscription rested on top of this section and still above, the dome proper began. According to Feyż, the height of the dome was 12 meters (Feyż Qomī, 1971:256), whereas Ṭābāṭabā'ī mentions 10 meters. The photographs of the external façade point to Ṭābāṭabā'ī's estimate being more accurate.



Drawing 3-4- Two suggested sections from the mausoleum of Šāh Ğa'far , on the right according to the dimensions from the report of Modarresī Ṭābāṭabā'ī, on left side as reported by Feyż Qomī. Drawings by the author.



Image 7. Interior of the domed chamber of Šāh Ğa'far before demolition, view from NW (Source: *TP*, Fig.4)

4-8-3 Epigraphic Material

As reported by Feyz and according to Ṭābāṭabā'ī's pictures, the building contained one inscription band, 0.80, written in *Thuluth* in polychrome plaster. It contained the name of the deceased person and possibly also a date, though the latter is illegible. The inscription starts from the north-west, and the visible part has been read as follows:

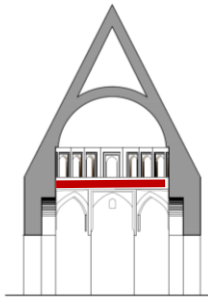
" ذكر الله اعلى هذا المرقد الطاهر المطهر ابن موسى الكاظم بن جعفر الصادق بن محمد الباقر بن علي زين العابدين بن الامام الشهيد الحسين بن امير المومنين علي بن ابي طالب عليهم السلام ...

Translation: The mention of God is superb. This pure and clean tomb for son of [Imām] Mūsā al-Kāẓim son of [Imām] Ġa'far aṣ-Ṣādiq son of [Imām] Muḥammad al-Bāqir son of [Imām] 'Alī Zain al-'Ābidīn, son of the martyred Imām, Ḥusain son of [Imām] 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, blessings upon them...

On the southeastern side, some parts of the inscription are also legible, including:

امر ببناء هذه العمارة (المنورة) و الروضة المقدسه الدنيا و الدين...

Translation: The order for the construction of this holy and splendid edifice was issued by...al-Donyā wa al-Dīn ... (Modarresī Ṭābāṭabā'ī, 1976: 36 and Feyz Qomī, 1971: 257).



Drawing 5- The location of the inscription band

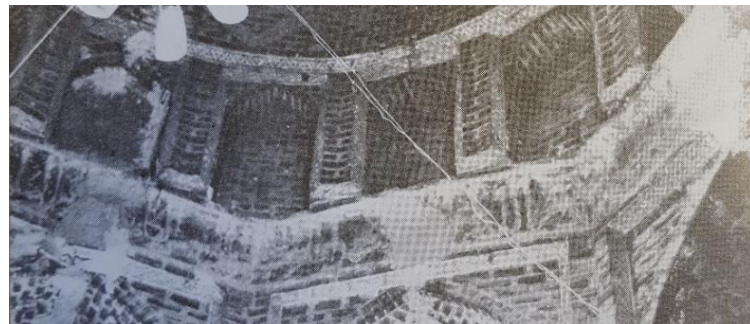


Image 8- Inscription band in *Thuluth* (Source: TP, fig.6)



Image 9- Inscription band in *Thuluth* (Source: TP, fig.9)

There were three other inscriptions, which are now kept at the Āstāne Museum in Qom. The first inscription is attributed to the cenotaph and it reads:

هذا مشهد طاهر مطهر الشهيد جعفر بن الامام ... بن امام جعفر صادق ... باقر بن امام علي زين العابدين بن امام حسين بن امام مطلق امير المومنين سيد وصيين ذكر الله اعلى... صلوات الله عليهم اجمعين في تاريخ محرم سبع و ستين و ستمائه.

Translation: This pure and clean tomb for the martyred Ğa‘far, son of the Imām [Mūsā al-Kāzīm] son of the Imām Ğa‘far Ṣādiq [son of Muḥammad al-Bāqir] Bāqir son of Imām ‘Alī Zain al-Ābidīn, son of the Imām Ḥusain son of the absolute Imām, the commander of the faithful, the master of authorized persons, the highest praise of god [‘Alī], blessings over all of them by the date Muḥarram 667/1269.

According to Ṭābāṭabā‘ī, the cenotaph was 1 meter high and 2.60 meters long, and was covered with high quality, turquoise tiles, bearing the name and origin of the deceased (Modarresī Ṭābāṭabā‘ī, 1976: 37). Feyz described these tiles as fifteen pieces, 0.30*0.30 meter, in turquoise blue, with a *Thuluth* inscription in high relief. These tiles were arranged in three rows, 0.90 by 1.50 meter. Of the fifteen tiles, twelve and a half are kept at the Āstāne Museum, although not in their proper arrangement (Feyz Qomī, 1971:258).

Image 10- A number of tiles of the cenotaph, on which the time of construction is written (Source: *TP*, fig.15)



Image 11-12 A number of tiles from the mausoleum of Šāh Ğa‘far, kept at the Āstāne museum in Qom

Another inscription remains on the mosaic tiles from the Safavids era, which dates the reconstruction of the building to the year 942/1335. This inscription is written in *Thuluth*, in gold on an azure background, and includes the phrase:

تجدید عمارت این درگاه مشهد مقدس منور زبده الاعیان غازی پیرقلی نموده است. 942

Translation: The holy and sacred mausoleum was repaired by the most noble Ġāzī Pīr Qolī, 1535.

It is currently kept at the Āstane Museum in Qom.

4-8-4 Decoration

The decorations of this mausoleum can be divided into tiling and stucco.

I- Stucco Decoration

Like many other mausoleums in Qom, this building had a plain exterior, and its decorations were mostly limited to the stuccos on interior surface. As seen on a photograph from 1955, the walls and niches were covered with joint plugs and simulated incised brick joints up to the inscription band. The pattern of brick-end plugs of the tympana in the southern chamber (where the *Mihrāb* was) was different, as it was executed with four-leaved flower patterns.



Image 13- Joint plugs on walls (Source: *TP*, fig.7)

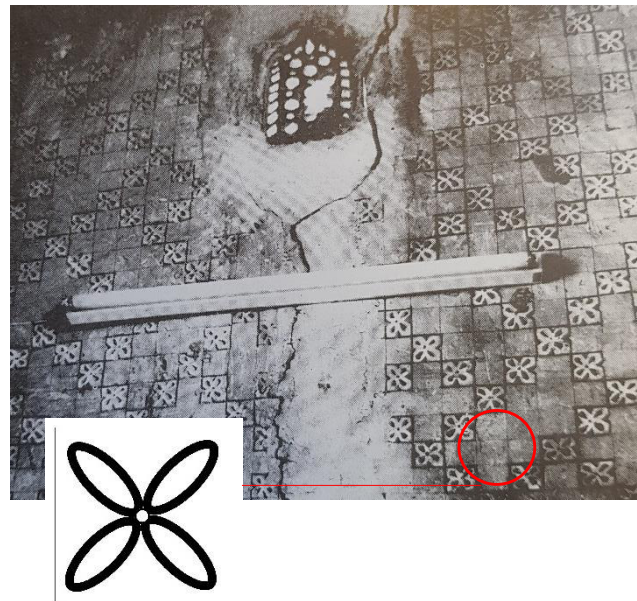


Image 14- Simulated incised brick joints on southern side of mausoleum of Šāh Ġā'far (Source: *TP*, fig.8)

The panels and squinches of the octagonal side were surrounded with bands of incised plaster, decorated with scrollwork patterns. Feyż also reports that some were covered with floral decorations, with the names of Moħammad and 'Alī carved between them (Feyż Qomī, 1971:257), however, it is not clear where these would have been located. Also according to Feyż, “The main inscription had been in colored plaster works. For this purpose, the place of letters was first is carved in plaster, then they were filled with crimson colored plaster ” (Ibid).

Given these descriptions, it can be said that this building was probably one of the first mausoleums in Qom to include colored plasterwork.

Other stucco decorations included a stucco border with vegetal designs, running around the sixteen-sided niches at the base of the dome. Unfortunately, the poor quality of the old photographs makes it impossible to recognise the pattern on this border. Two other decorated bands were placed at the base of the dome; these were decorated with a zigzag pattern, though it is also hardly recognizable due to the poor quality of old photographs.



Image 15- some patterns of the border design

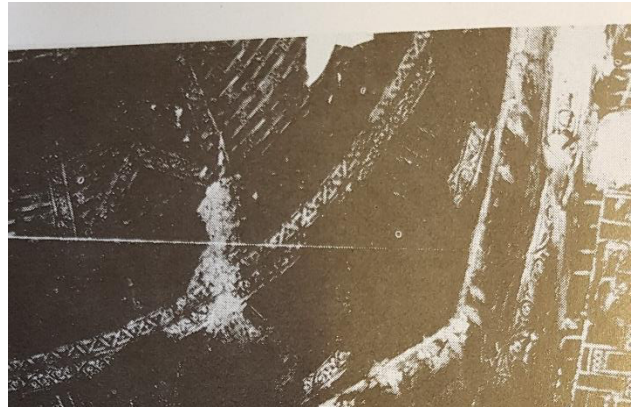


Image 16- Inscription band at the base of the dome (Source: TP, fig.5)

The inner surface of the dome was also decorated with stucco bands. Based on reports by Feyz and Ṭābātabā'ī, they were executed in colored plaster. The pattern on the base of the dome was a polygonal star, framed by bands of stucco. These bands were decorated with the names of Moḥammad and 'Alī, while the intervals between the star lines of the dome included joint plugs.

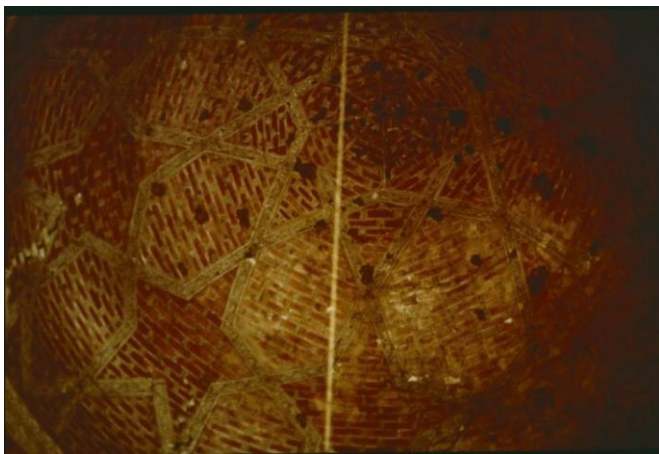


Image 17- Display a star pattern on the inner surface of dome, R. Hillenbrand (Source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt of OFU Bamberg)



Image18- Borders design around the Squinch, R. Hillenbrand (Source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt of OFU Bamberg)

II- Tile Decoration

According to the available evidence as reported by Feyz Qomī, as well as to Ṭābāṭabā'ī's 1955 photographs, the socle was covered with eight-pointed star and cross-shaped tiles, up to the height of 1 meter. Feyz Qomī compares these tiles to those from the shrine of Fāṭeme Ma' sūme and notes that at his time, only twelve pieces of tiles remained in place and the rest had been stolen (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 256). These twelve pieces were kept inside the wooden shrine until the inspection of Feyz, after which they were transferred to the museum. Old photographs show that they were quite similar to those used in the mausoleum of 'Alī b. Ğa'far, which Feyz also noted. All have vegetal relief patterns in the middle and the margins are decorated with a 0.3 meter-wide *naskh* inscription, dark on a light background. Ṭābāṭabā'ī has read the date on the border of one tile as 665 AH (1267), which is recognizable on one of his photographs. (Modarresī Ṭābāṭabā'ī, 1976: 39)



Image 19- The old image of the 8 pointed star- and cross-shaped tiles available at mausoleum of Šāh Ğa'far. R. Hillenbrand (Source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt of OFU Bamberg)



Image 20- An old image of a star-shaped tile on the eastern side of building, dated to the year 665/ 1267 (Source: *TP*, fig.11)

The epigraphic tile margins probably included a selection of Quranic quotes.¹ Feyz Qomī dates one of these to 705/1305. He also singles out an inscription with some verses of al-Fağr (89), noting that it was probably used in order to discredit the Mongols and to highlight the consequences of oppression (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 255-256).



Image22- star- and cross-shaped tiles of the mausoleum of Šāh Ğa‘far, R. Hillenbrand (Source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt of OFU Bamberg)

4-9-5 History of the mausoleum and the deceased

The inscription band names the person buried in this mausoleum as Sayyed Ğa‘far, one of the descendants of Imām Mūsā Kāzīm, also known as Sayyed Ğa‘far Mūsavī. However, according to Feyz Qomī, the tomb belongs to Sayyed Ğalīl Ğa‘far Mūsavī’, the *naqīb* (Marshall) of the Alawite in the late 12th-early 13th century, whose ancestry we do not know anything about. This Sayyed Ğalīl Ğa‘far Mūsavī’ was killed in Čangīz’s attacks on Qom in 617/1220, following the uprising of the prince Ğate Noyān (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 255). The tiles date the building variously to 667/1269 or to 705/1305: this suggests that the inscriptions of this tomb provided a memento of Čangīz’s massacre to the later generations. All this suggests that this tomb is probably one of the oldest Il-Khanid tombs of Qom.

The tilework also included a Safavid date (942) marking the mausoleum’s reconstruction.



Image 23. Some tiles from the mausoleum of Šāh Ğa‘far, dated to 942 AH- Āstāne Museum of Qom

¹ Chapters of surah al-Qadr, al-Nās, al-Naşr, al-Ikhlās, Āyat al- al-Isra, al-Ğom‘e, al-Taqabun, al-Baqara, al-Fağr etc.

After the Islamic Revolution, this building was completely demolished by the Endowment Organization to make way for a new one, which is totally different from the original structure. Moreover, additional buildings were added to this mausoleum for the convenience of the pilgrims, further altering the original form.



Image 24- The Existing condition of the domed square and new shrine

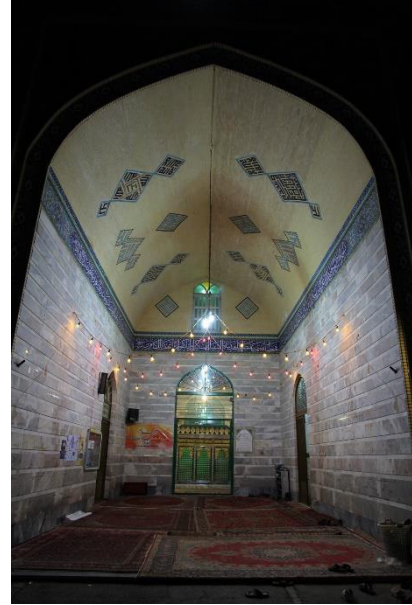


Image 25- The existing status of attached prayer hall beside domed

Currently, the tomb includes a portal area, which leads into a vestibule that gives access to the dome chamber proper. A number of photographs of the ancient building are installed on the walls – this display acts as a small museum of the mausoleum’s history. The building is still surrounded by the old cemetery, to which a porch has been annexed.

The current location of the building and its boundaries are totally different from what is shown on the surviving historical photographs and reports, and no physical building exists which could be discussed and defined in line with the objectives of this project. However, the historical photographs nevertheless demonstrate that this mausoleum had been one of the significant historical monuments of the region and had many of the unique architectural features of the Tomb structures of 13th and 14th century Qom. By reviewing old reports and photographs, taken before the modern reconstruction, we can provide a brief description of the building and discuss its architecture and decorations within the context of other tomb structures of Qom.

4-10-2 Architectural specifications

Exterior

Photographs of this building taken before the restoration (in 1931, 1955 and 1976) demonstrate that, like other, similar monuments in Qom, it was a single, free-standing building, built on an octagonal plan, 5.5 meters wide on each side. Four doorways gave access to the building from the cardinal directions. Each side had one deep, double-stepped niche, 2.5 meters wide, 1.25 meters deep and 7 meters tall¹; these were flanked by two smaller niches, identical in shape. (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 266). A window, covered with plaster lattice, was set on the tympanum of each of these arches.



Image 2- The existing condition of the mausoleum

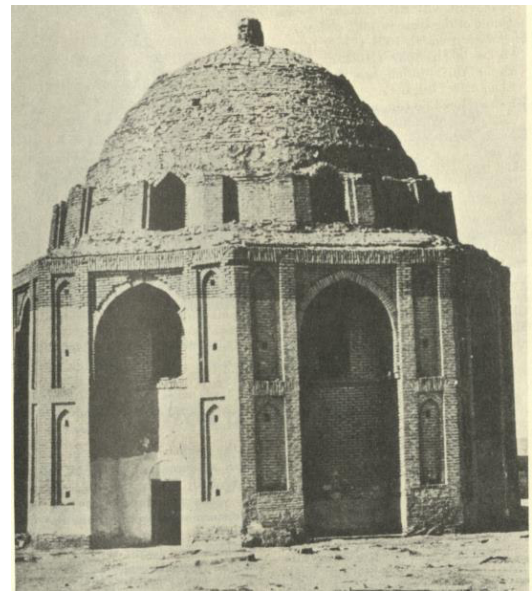


Image 3- Exterior view of Šāh Ebrāhīm's Tomb tower, A. Pop 1931 (Source: *Bulletin of the American institute for Persian Art and Archaeology*, V. 1, p.37)

¹ Dimensions according to Feyz Qomi's report in 1971.

The external intermediate zone, or ‘drum’, was about 2 meters tall, hexagonal in shape, and set well back from the octagon below. Each side had sixteen recessed, blind pointed arches (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 266) and included eight axial windows.

The dome was constructed directly above the drum. Old photographs show it as hemispherical, but this may have been a later repair and not its original shape. Given the resemblance of the tomb’s plan and external façade to the northern dome in Bāg-e Sabz, it seems likely that the inner dome was crowned by an outer, sixteen-sided tent roof, which must have been demolished and repaired.

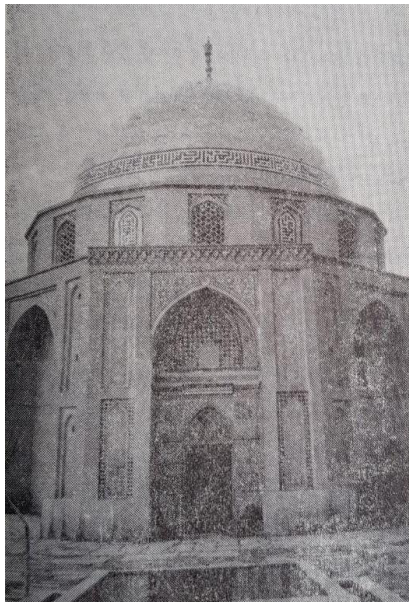


Image 4- Southern entrance after repair in 1971 (Source: *GAQ*, p. 268)

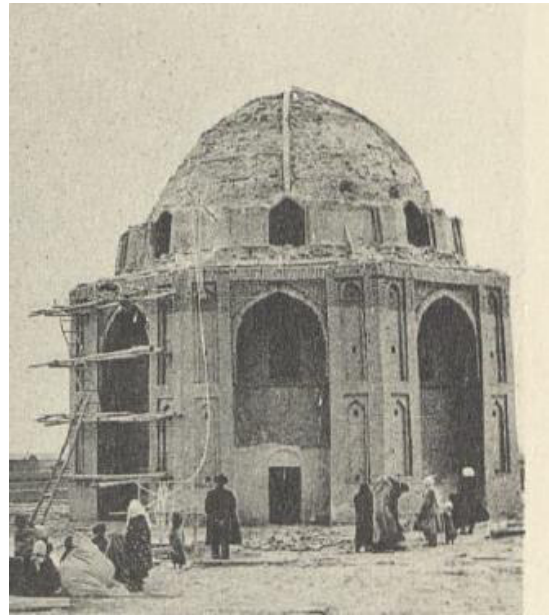


Image 5- Southern entrance, Wilber, 1955 (Source: *The Architecture of Islamic Iran, the Il-Khanid Period*, fig.183)

Entrance

It is not clear where the main entrance of the building was located. Feyz Qomī suspects it was on the southern side due to its unique, tiled decorations (Feyz Qomī, 1971:268). However, according to the photograph Feyz attached to his report, it seems likely that the main entrance may well have undergone some changes, much like the dome, and was originally located somewhere else.

The interior

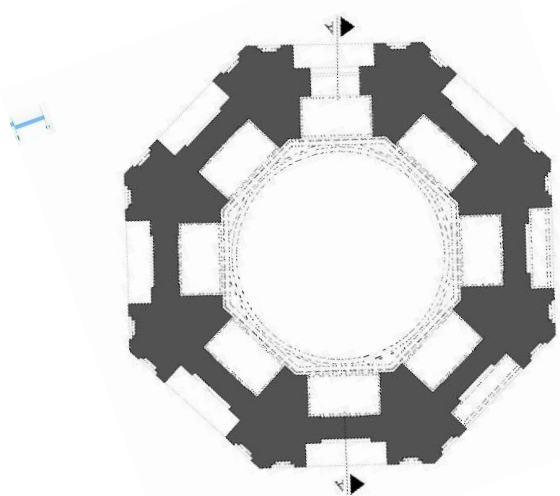
Based on the reports by Feyz Qomī and the maps provided by Ṭābāṭabā’ī, the plan of the monument from the inside can be inferred to have been a regular octagon, 4 meters on each side and about 14 meters tall. Each side of the internal chamber included a rectangular panel with a deeply recessed, pointed arch, 2.40 meters wide and 0.30 meters deep. At some point, the socle of the monument had been repaired with cement up to the height of one meter. Above the

octagon, the internal plan changes into a hexadecagon, 7-meters tall, with a window on every other side. The dome rests directly above it (Ibid).

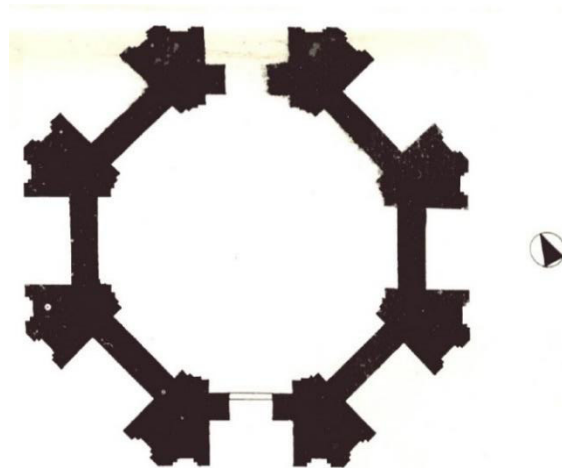
There is also a plan of this building in *Torbat-e Pākān*, which corresponds to the architectural descriptions provided by Feyz. This plan shows two entrances, located on the northern and southern sides, with the eastern and western sides being closed; this contradicts Feyz report of four entrances. It is possible that the two other sides were opened in the course of later repairs and that the original building only had the two entrances mentioned in *Torbat-e Pākān*.

The internal plan of this building resembles the northern mausoleum in Bāg-e Sabz, though they differ in the depth of their eight external panels, which is greater in the Mausoleum of Šāh Ebrāhīm, and the depth of their eight internal panels, which, conversely, is greater in the northern mausoleum of Bāq-e Sabz. (Drawing 3).

Unfortunately, we have no more information or photographs available from the interior of this building, except for a report of a wooden shrine in the middle of the monument, and a tomb, 1.10 meters high, 1.60 meters wide, and 2.50 meters long (Feyz Qomī, 1971:269)



Drawing 2. Plan of the North Mausoleum of the Bāg-e Sabz by M. Biglarī, 2016



Drawing 3- Plan of Šāh Ebrāhīm Mausoleum by Ṭābāṭabā'ī, 1976 (Source: *TP*, p.72)

4-10-3 Epigraphic Material

Unfortunately, we have no detailed information on the interior of this building. However, Feyz mentions two tiled plates on the cenotaph, which he considers to date from the 13th century, similar to those in the Mausoleum of Alī b. Ğa'far. According to Feyz, these two plates consisted of six tiles, 0.70*0.70 meter, but according to the older report by Ṭābāṭabā'ī, there were in fact eight (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 269; Modarresī Ṭābāṭabā'ī, 1976: 71). The border of this

tilled plate included an inscription, azure blue on a grayish-white background, written in *thuluth*. According to Ṭābāṭabā'ī, “This inscription contains the Āyat al-Korsī (2: 255-57) at the end of which the greatness of Allāh and the prophethood of Moḥammad in the Quran as God's messenger are emphasized” (Modarresī Ṭābāṭabā'ī, 1976: 72).

Additionally, two inscription bands were located between these two plates on the cenotaph; these were also written in *thuluth* script, in high relief, with the larger patterns colored in red. According to Ṭābāṭabā'ī, the southern plate read:

“ هذا الضريح للسيد الشريف الطاهر المطهر التقى النقى الزكى محمد بن موسى بن جعفر بن محمد بن علي بن الحسين اخ الحسن ابنا امير المومنين علي بن ابيطالب عليهم السلام ”

Translation: This shrine belongs to the noble lord, the pure and immaculate, the pious, excellent and virtuous Muḥammad b. Mūsā [al-Kāẓim] b. Ğa'far [al-Şādiq] b. Muḥammad [al-Bāqir] b. 'Alī [Zain al-'Ābidīn] b. al-Ḥusain, brother of al-Ḥasan, the sons of the commander of the faithful 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib – peace upon all of them.

The inscription of the northern plate was attributed to Emāmzāde Ebrāhīm:

“ هذا الموضع للسيد الشريف الطاهر المطهر التقى النقى الزكى ابراهيم بن موسى بن جعفر بن محمد بن علي بن الحسين اخ الحسن ابنا امير المومنين علي بن ابي طالب عليهم السلام ”

Translation: This mausoleum belongs to the noble lord, the pure and immaculate, the pious, excellent and virtuous Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā [al-Kāẓim] b. Ğa'far [al-Şādiq] b. Muḥammad [al-Bāqir] b. 'Alī [Zain al-'Ābidīn] b. al-Ḥusain, brother of al-Ḥasan, the sons of the commander of the faithful 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib – peace upon all of them.

4-10-4 Decoration

The oldest photograph of this building, taken by Baẓl in 1931, shows that, unlike other tombs, the external façade bore no decoration and was made of simple brick (img.3). As mentioned before, there is no evidence or documentation regarding the internal decorations of the building, except for the two tiled plates described above.

4-10-5 History of the mausoleum and of the deceased

According to the two inscription plates on the cenotaph, this building belongs to two persons, Ebrāhīm and Moḥammad, who were sons of Imām Mūsā Kāẓim, the 7th *imām* of the Shias.

Feyż suggests that two great *Emānzāde* are buried in this monument: father and son, Abū Ğa‘far Moḥammad, son of Moḥsen b. Ebrāhīm ‘Askarī, and his son Abū Esmā‘īl Ebrāhīm.

The new inscription on the interior of the *iwān* describes these two *Emānzāde* on the basis of the genealogy extracted by ‘Allāme Mar‘ašī. *Anvār-e Parākande*, where the ancestry of *Emānzādes* is discussed, states that Abū Ğa‘far Moḥammad was buried in this mausoleum, he with his uncle, Eshāq, (who was buried between Sāve and Āve in a mausoleum called *Emānzādeh Eshāq*.) had migrated from Iraq to Qom. Another theory is that *Emānzāde* Ebrāhīm, a great *Muhaddith* [an expert narrating Hadith from prophets and *imāms*], who has compiled many books including *al-Imāme* and *al-Qazā va Ğeyr Homā* and passed away in the 10th century, is buried in the mausoleum (Faḳīh Ğalālī, 1997: 533). This would place the construction of the mausoleum remarkably early. Conversely, Pope suggests it was built in the Seljuk period (Pope, 1978: 37-38). However, Wilber, who also includes a photograph of the building in his book, thinks it was constructed between 1300-1365 (Wilber, 1955: 37-38), which, given the architectural style of this mausoleum, seems the most likely.

At any event, there is no conclusive evidence about the exact date of the building. However, based on the reports of Il-Khanid tiles inside, as well as on the architectural style, which is very similar to that of the mausoleums in Bāġ-e Sabz, we may reasonably infer that this building has been one of the Tomb towers of the 13th -14th century, when mass construction of tombs in just such a style was under way in Qom.



Image 6- The condition in 1950 (Source: Archive of ICHTO)

At the time of Feyż, the mausoleum was located within a cemetery and was in a completely derelict condition, with just the dome repaired in 1893. In 1937, the building was restored, and the entrance porch and the dome were covered with tiles. The adjacent buildings were added in the following years, then the surrounding cemetery was flattened, and the buildings for public

services were constructed for the pilgrims' convenience. A mosque was also added on the eastern side. A courtyard, together with a portal, was added in the Pahlavi era. Between 1942-1945, fundamental repairs were undertaken, which included adding much tile work; sadly, we have no reports of these. Since then, the building and its surroundings have been the subject of many changes and reconstructions, and the current complex is quite incomparable to the monument preserved on old photographs. Due to the nominal similarity with the monument of Emānzāde Ebrāhīm near Kāshān gate, some parts of the information registered with the Cultural Heritage Organization have been filed erroneously, and unfortunately there is no information about the historical registration, the changes and modifications, and the restoration activities on this building.

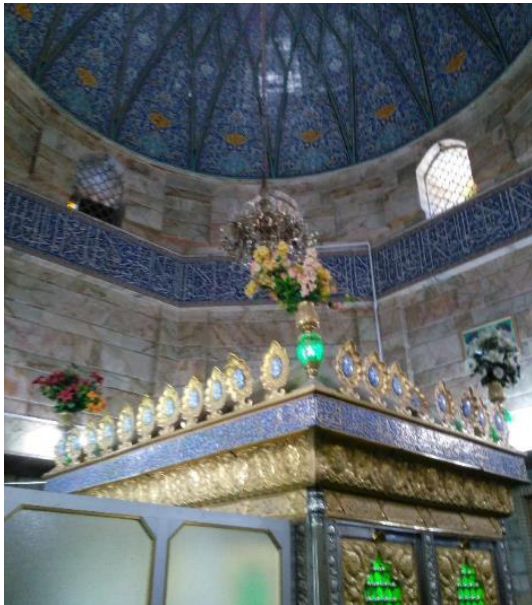


Image 7- Interior of the dome chamber



Image 8- The new mosque beside the dome chamber



Image 9- Current appearance of the entrance porch

4-11. Mausoleum of Šāh Aḥmad Ḥanafīye

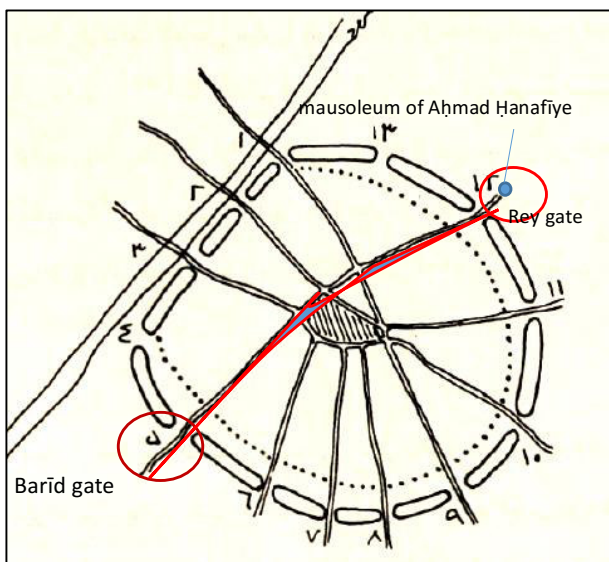
4-11-1 Location

The mausoleum of Aḥmad Ḥanafīye is best known as Emāmzāde Aḥmad-e Mīyānī among the people of Qom. This monument is now located on the eastern side of the recently developed part of Qom, on Pānzdah-e Ḥordād Street, right after the ‘Ammār-e Yāser Intersection and between the monuments of Čāhār Emāmzāde and Emāmzāde Sayyed ‘Alī. The mausoleum is placed in the middle of an enclosed cemetery. Given its height, it is clearly visible from all sides.



Image 1- Current location of the monuments of Aḥmad Ḥanafīye and Emāmzāde Sayyed ‘Alī, adjacent to Rey Street (Source: Google Earth 20.05.2019. with additions by the author)

Prior to the city’s expansion, this building was located outside Qom proper, among the gardens and farms to the north of the city, near the Rey Gate (img.17). This gate was one of the main entrances to the city, through which passed one of the major roads of the country. The road through Rey Gate continued down the main street of Qom, passing the Ğāme‘ Mosque and ending in the ‘Arabestān district (Sa‘īdnīyā, 1987:155), where it passed through the southwestern gate (Barīd gate), leaving Qom and continuing onwards to Iraq. The exact location of the Rey Gate is now uncertain but its approximate location can be estimated from the name of the street, which is still called the Rey Gateway.



Drawing 1- The approximate location of the mausoleum of Aḥmad Ḥanafīye and the old gateways of the city (Source: Sa‘īd nīyā, 1987, p.158, with additions by the author)

4-10-2 Architectural specifications

Like the other tombs described, the Aḥmad Ḥanafiye mausoleum is a single-domed chamber located in the middle of a cemetery, which, considering the relatively recent date of the graves, may have been set up after the construction of this building. The oldest photograph of this building comes from 1989, when the cemetery had not yet been developed and the mausoleum was adjacent to a garden and restricted within its confined space. The mausoleum was enclosed inside the cemetery by the buildings annexed to it. In 1990, walls were erected around the cemetery and an entrance portal was added, opening the building's yard to Pānzdah-e Ḥordād Street.



Image 2- Location of the mausoleum of Aḥmad Ḥanafiye in 1989 (Source: Archive of OOOQ.)

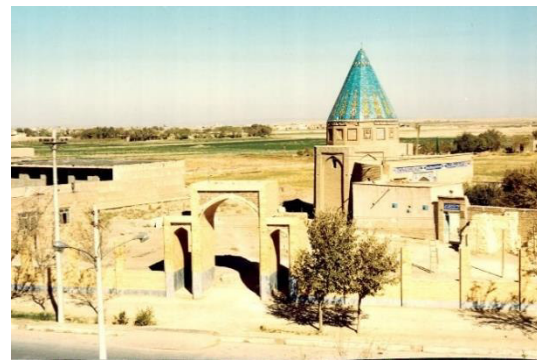


Image 3- General view of the mausoleum in 1990-92 (Source: Archive of OOOQ.)

The entrance of the building on the eastern side is distinguished from the other sides through the addition of a porch. In the photographs from 1989, a wider porch decorated with tilework and a *muqarnas* vault is visible – this was probably added to the building during the Qajar era. During the recent restorations, however, the building has regained much of its original form and that entrance has been resorted completely, adorned with brickwork to maintain some homogeneity with the other façades of the building. Thus, currently nothing remains from the *muqarnas* vault and the walls on both sides of the porch.



Image 5-The portal after restoration, 2017 (Source: Archive of OOOQ.)



Image 6- The porch attached in the Qajar era, 1989 (Source: Archive of OOOQ.)

The current portal is about 2.5 meters wide and 2 meters deep. Only some parts of its southern side are decorated with monochrome blue tiles.

Exterior

Like the other mausoleums described in this text, this one is also set on a platform octagonal on the exterior, with each side measuring 3.60 meters. On each face, there is a double-stepped niche, 0.10 meter deep, framing a pointed arch. On the four cardinal sides, windows capped with pointed arches are also located, supplying light and ventilation for the space inside the domed chamber. The window facings have been covered with blue, reticular tiles in the course of recent repairs.

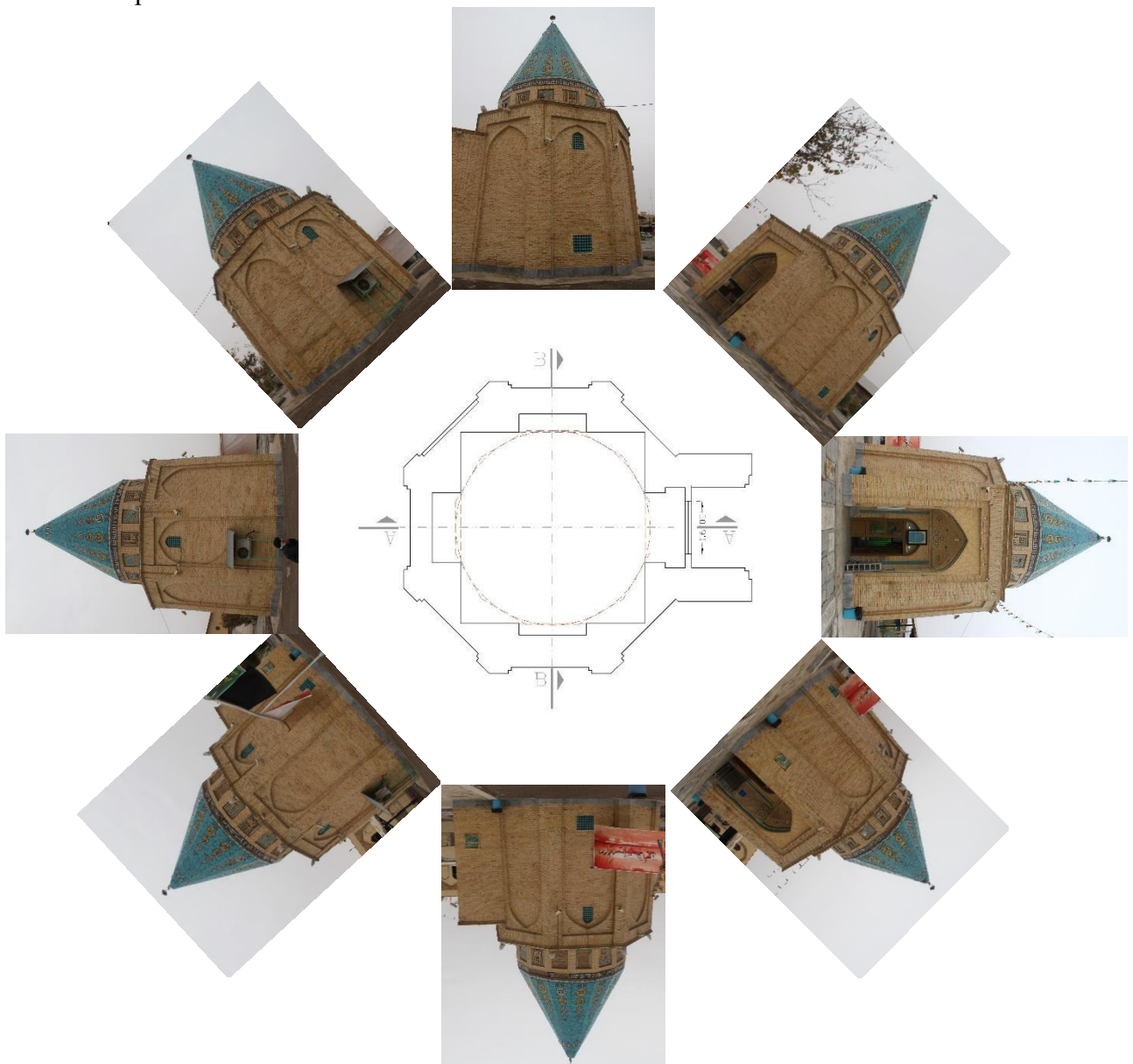


Image 7- Photographic documentation of the eight sides of the interior of the mausoleum of Ahmad Hanafiye
Drawing 2- plan of the Mausoleum (Source: Archive of ICHTO, with additions by the author)

The external transition zone consists of a dodecagonal drum, 1.70 meters high, which is set back by 1.50 meters from the exterior walls. The dome stands on this drum. Each side of the drum includes a shallow, rectangular, recessed panel, decorated with square tilework. On some tiles, the phrase “Al Mulq lillāh” (الملك لله) (meaning “The rulership is due to God”) is written, while others include the repeated name of ‘Alī (علي). An inscription band is located above the drum, made of tiles bearing the same phrase of “Al Mulq lillāh” (الملك لله) written in white, Kufic script on a blue background.

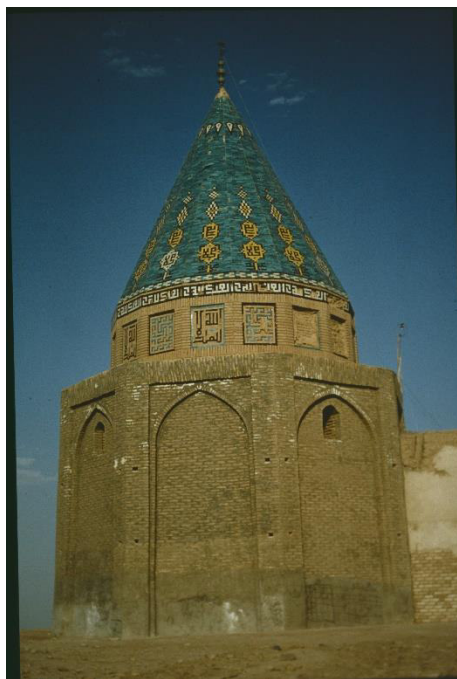


Image 8- S elevation of Emāmzāde Aḥmad Ḥanafīye, R. Hillenbrand (source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt OFU Bamberg)



Image 9- Emāmzāde Aḥmad Ḥanafīye, after restoration, view from S

Like the other mausoleums discussed, this tomb chamber is crowned with a sixteen-sided tent dome, about 6 meters tall. The surface of the dome is decorated with turquoise tiles, with the names of Allāh, Moḥammad and ‘Alī inserted repeatedly in square Kufic script around the dome. The overall height of this mausoleum is 13.80 meters from the extant floor to the apex of the dome.

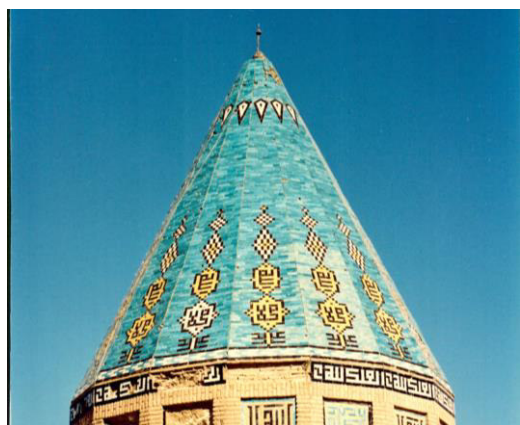
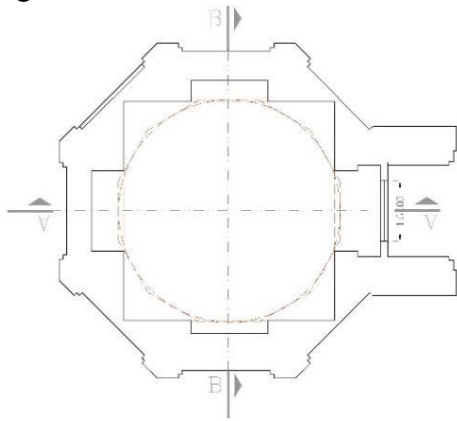


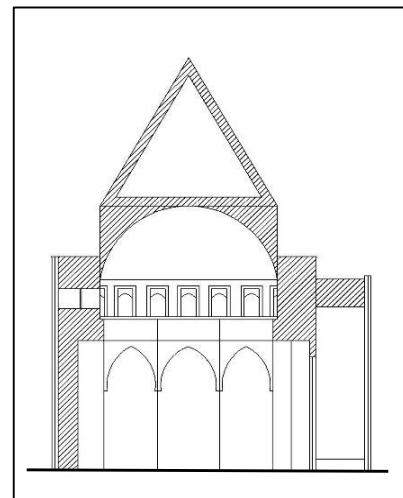
Image 10- The sixteen-sided tent dome of the mausoleum of Aḥmad Ḥanafīye

Interior

The entrance to the building is from the eastern side, through a portal 1.60 meters in width and 3.70 meters in height. The domed chamber rests on a foundation platform, which is square on the inside. Each side is 5.70 meters long and contains a rectangular niche with deep recess, crowned by an offset, pointed arch. Each niche is 2 meters wide and 0.55-meter-deep, and the only opening is located on the eastern side. The socle zone of the monument has been repaired with marble stone up to the height of 0.75 meter. According to reports by Feyz Qomī, it had originally been covered with eight-pointed bricks (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 611), which may have been similar to the eight-pointed star and cross-shaped luster tiles used in other tombs in this area. Above the socle, up to the height of 2 meters, the walls are completely covered with white plasterwork, and nothing remains of the old stucco decorations described by Feyz, save for two remaining stucco medallions on the northern and eastern sides.



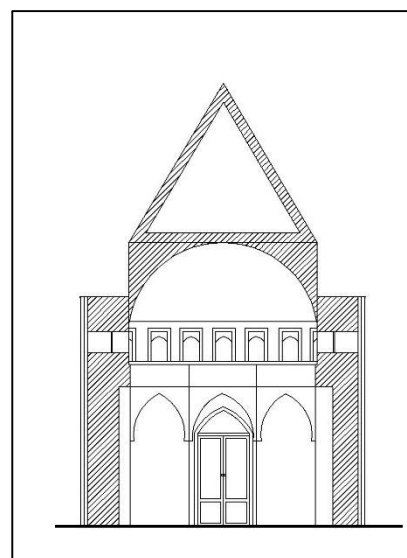
Drawing3- Plan of the mausoleum of Ahmad Hanafiye (Source: Achive of ICHTO.)



Drawing 4- WE section (Source: Achive of ICHTO.)



Image 11- interior of the dome chamber



Drawing 5- NS section (Source: Achive of ICHTO.)

The structure of this domed chamber looks like all the other mausoleums in Qom, as described above. The transition from a square to a circular plan is divided into two phases. The first zone of transition is located above the 3-meter-tall chamber, where a set of squinches, each 1.80 meters tall, transforms the square form of the chamber into an octagon. Above this, an inscription band is located, which marks the space where the octagon changes into a hexadecagon, consisting of 16 blind pointed arches, four of which contain recessed, open windows. These sixteen arches are 1.20 meters tall and serve as the collar of the hemispherical dome.



Image 12- interior of the dome chamber of Ahmad Hanafiye

Cenotaph

The cenotaph is located at the center of building, surrounded by a steel shrine. It is 1.20 meters high and 2 meters long, and is decorated with mosaic tiles from the Safavid era, bearing the name, the origin and the date of death of the deceased.



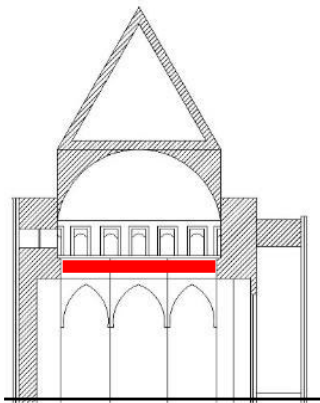
Image 13- The old wooden shrine in 1989
(Source: Archive of OOQ.)



Image 14- The modern shrine around the cenotaph

4-11-3 Epigraphic Material

Currently, the building includes an inscription band located in the transition zone between the octagon and the hexadecagon. It is 0.60 wide, written in *thuluth* script; the letters are quite spindly, with characteristic shafts and a decorative background. The space between the letters is filled with leaves decorated with small holes. The writing and the background patterns have been damaged in the course of restoration, which has significantly lowered their quality. This is evident when comparing the current inscription with past photographs. The inscription includes excerpts from the Quran, including the surah al-Fath (48: 29), which talks of victory and triumph. The entire text of this chapter is included in this frieze.



Drawing 6- The location of the inscription band (Source: Archive of ICHTO.)



Image 15- A fragment of the inscription band inside the mausoleum, 1976 (Source: *TP*, Fig. 153)

This inscription band is bordered at the top and at the bottom. The upper band has been demolished completely but in the lower band, repeated zigzag patterns can still be seen. One picture taken by Hillenbrand shows the inscription as painted in blue on a yellow background – it is not entirely clear whether this inscription band was originally colored or not.



Image 16- The inscription band in the mausoleum of Ahmad Hanafiye, R. Hillenbrand (source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt OFU Bamberg)

The surface of the dome includes sixteen roundels inscribed in *thuluth* script with the names of Moḥammad, Fāṭeme and the twelve *imāms*. Each medallion is framed with a geometric border and has a painted background.

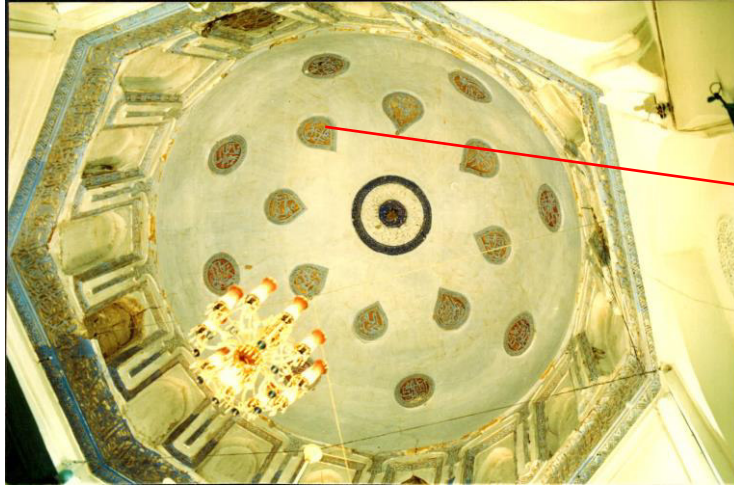


Image 17- The inner surface of the dome with sixteen inscribed roundels, 1989 (Source: OOQ.)

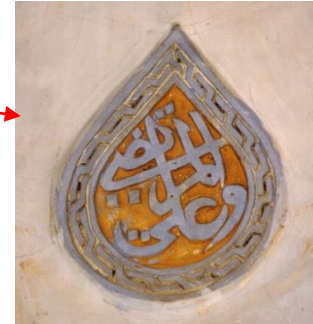


Image 18- One of the inscribed roundels under the dome, 1989 (Source: OOQ.)

There is also another circular inscription band in *thuluth* at the center of the dome, containing the phrase: “لااله الاالله محمد رسول الله على ولى الله اميرالمومنين” (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, 1976: 93)
Translation: There is no god but Allāh, Muḥammad is Messenger of Allāh, ‘Alī is the friend (*walī*) of Allāh, commander of the believers.



Image 19- The inscription band in the middle under the dome before restoration, 1989 (Source: OOQ.)



Image 20- The inscription band in the middle under the dome after restoration

After multiple restorations, the inscriptions have lost much of their quality and cannot be compared with their original form. On the central dome inscription in particular, a stucco border decorated with vegetal motifs, as well as a star-shaped design at the center were originally seen, however, their details are not clear now.

Finally, another inscription has been placed on the cenotaph. Feyẓ reads it as:

هذا مرقد المطهر السيد ابو احمد محمد بن علي بن عبدالله بن جعفر بن محمد حنفيه ابن امير المومنين و امام متقين على
 ”بن ابيطالب عليهم السلام. فى سنة 932.

Translation: This is the pure tomb of Abū Aḥmad Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. ‘Abdullāh b. Ğa‘far son of Muḥammad Ḥanafīya, the son of Imām of believers, ‘Alī b. Abī Tālib, in 932/1526.

4-11-4 Decoration

Unfortunately, there is not much surviving evidence of the decoration inside the building. The most significant, extant piece of ornamentation is probably the inscription band, which has been already described. Additionally, the borders of the sixteen niches are decorated with stucco in geometric patterns. The intervals between these niches were also decorated with stucco tulips but these have been painted over.



Image 21- Stucco decorations of the 16- sided panels; photo by R. Hillenbrand (source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt OFU Bamberg)



Image 22- Details of stucco decorations between the sixteen niches (Source: TP, Fig. 153)

Among the remaining pieces of decoration there is a stucco medallion on the tympanum in the southern chamber, decorated with an eight-pointed star, geometrical design in plaster lattice. This may have been used to highlight the direction of the *Qibla*, as no similar decoration appears on the other sides. Originally, this side probably included a *mihṛāb*, though this is now demolished.

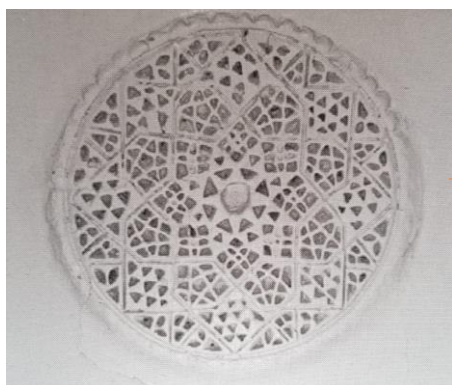


Image 23-24 Medallion on *Qibla* wall



4-11-5 History of the mausoleum and the deceased

The inscription on the cenotaph clearly states the name of Abū Aḥmad Moḥammad b. ‘Alī b. ‘Abdollāh b. Ğa‘far son of Moḥammad Ḥanafīye, or, in short, Aḥmad Ḥanafīye, as the man buried here. However, there is still no consensus on the actual identity of the person interred in this tomb.

By referring to *Tārīḥ-e Qom* and other resources, Feyz Qomī states that “Among the descendants of Moḥammad Ḥanafīye who had come to Qom was Abū Aḥmad ‘Obaydollāh b. Aḥmad b. Moḥammad Ḥanafīye”. He further says that Abū Aḥmad, who originally came from Kūfa but eventually settled in Qom for the rest of his life, was buried in the Mālek Ābād cemetery, in a brick domed square near to where prayers for the deceased are conducted, and that he left no descendants (Feyz Qomī, 1943 :146).

However, the name mentioned in *Tārīḥ-e Qom* contradicts that written on the cenotaph. The book mentions an Abū Aḥmad ‘Obaydollāh b. Ğa‘far b. ‘Abdullah b. Ğa‘far b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī (Qomī, 2006: 658); while the name of Abū Aḥmad Moḥammad b. ‘Alī b. ‘Abdollāh b. Ğa‘far b. Moḥammad Ḥanafīye b. ‘Alī b. Abī Tāleb is written on the cenotaph. It is possible that this was a simple mistake of whoever wrote the cenotaph inscription; nevertheless, there is too much doubt for us to ascertain the identity and lineage of the deceased with any certainty. The only date mentioned in the building is 932/1526, also on the cenotaph; this is probably related to the building’s restoration in the Safavid era. Feyz mentions this date as the date of restoration and decoration, though he cites no evidence for doing so (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 610). *Tārīḥ-e Qom* refers to a brick dome standing in this area in the 11th century (Qomī, 2006: 659) – this may be related to the original construction of the monument. In any case, the building’s architecture, both external and internal, is very similar to the 14th century Tomb structures of Qom, suggesting that it was built or at least rebuilt at this time. However, its exact date cannot be estimated and requires independent archeological investigation.

Like all the other monuments of *emānzādes*, this building is now owned by the Endowment Organization (Oūqāf Department) and has been registered on the Iran National & Cultural Register in 2000, under the no. 2427. In recent years, Oūqāf Department has carried out fundamental repairs on this building under the supervision ICHTO of Qom, but unfortunately these have not been based on archeological or scientific principles or evidence.

4-12 Mausoleum of Čāhār Emāmzāde

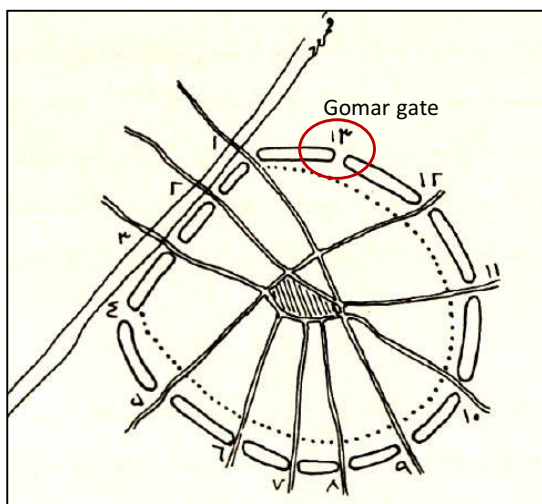
4-12-1 Location

The monument known as Čāhār Emāmzāde or Emāmzāde Mollā Āqā is one of the mausoleums located outside the northern boundary of old Qom. Now it stands within the city, near Pānzdah-e Ĥordād, on the 9th Hā' erī Street and at a distance of 700 meters from Emāmzāde Aḥmad. No written evidence or documentation remain from the original construction of this building to establish its date; however, due to its architectural resemblance to other mausoleums of the 14th centuries, this building can be considered to have been built then.



Image 1- Location of mausoleum of Čāhār Emāmzāde in Qom (Source: *Google Earth* 20.05.2019, with additions by the author)

Like a number of mausoleums in Qom in this era, this one is located near an important city gate, the Ğomar Gate. In ancient Qom (8th – 9th centuries), this area was called Ğomar or Sa'd Ābād. The region of Ğomar or Kamare is one of those which were allocated for the residence of the Arabs in the first year of their migrations to Qom. Later, this area was merged with the administrative region of Mamağan, wholly controlled by the Aš'arī Arabs (Sa'īd nīyā, 1987: 148). The precise location of the Ğomar gateway and the old road is no longer recognizable.



Drawing 1- Location of the Ğomar gateway in schematic map of Qom in 12-13 centuries (Source: Sa'īd nīyā, p. 158, with additions by the author)

On the Qajar maps of Qom gardens, the mausoleum in question was marked as part of the Bāḡak gardens. This suggests that this building may have been originally constructed within a garden, which was extant until at least the Qajar era.

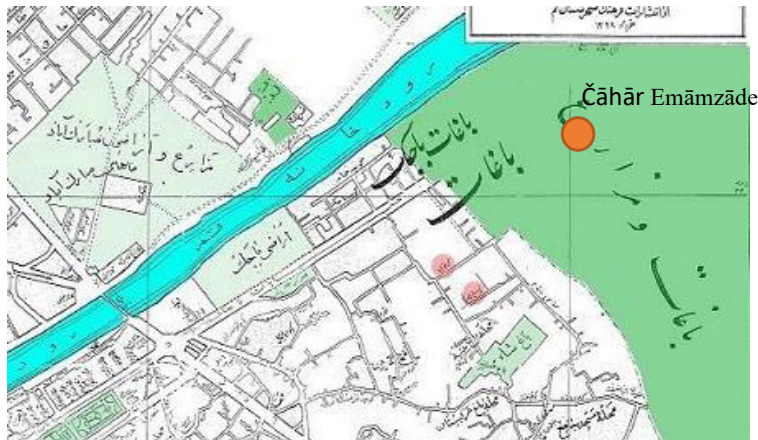


Image 2- Location of the mausoleum of Čāhār Emāmzāde in 1949, H. Karīmān (Source: *Qomshenasi* site, date: 05.12.2019)

14-12-2 Entrance and adjacent structures

The entrance to the mausoleum is located on the main street, on western side. The current shape of the monument and its surroundings has been subject to constant alterations, which included its establishment as a free-standing dome chamber. The open area around the building was developed after the Islamic Revolution, when a court was also added to this complex.



Image 3- Western facade, the entrance of the complex from the street (Source: Archive of ICHTO)



Image 4- Southern facade and the mausoleum's surroundings (Source: Archive of ICHTO)

Currently, the building is surrounded by new structures. The main façade (not original) is located on the west side. It has three steel doors with pointed arches, their spandrels decorated with tilework. The western entrance leads to the domed chamber via a corridor. The monument also includes an arcade to the east, with contiguous arches covered with tiles at the top. The entrance passes through the arcade and ends in two separate prayer halls for men and women

(northern and southern sides, respectively). Both the northern and the southern façade includes windows.



Image 5- Eastern façade
(Source: Archive of ICHTO)

4-12-3 Architectural specifications

Exterior

Old photographs show that the mausoleum originally was a single, octagonal domed chamber, similar to all the other monuments mentioned in this project. According to the Feyz, there was a porch with tile decorations on the eastern side, attributed to the Safavid era, of which nothing remains now (Feyz Qomī, 1971:592).

Ṭābāṭabā'ī's 1976 photograph shows the probable western entrance of the mausoleum. A later picture taken by Hillenbrand also shows the western side and includes the monochrome, turquoise tiles on the dome.



Image 6- Eastern façade, 1971
(Source: *GAQ*, p. 592)



Image 7- Western façade,
photo by R. Hillenbrand,
(Source: Bildarchiv Islamische
Welt OFU Bamberg)

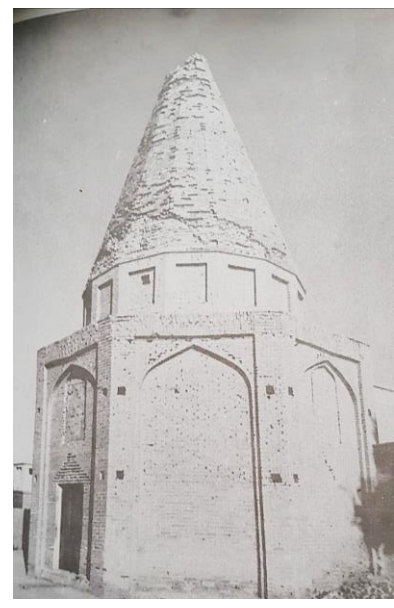


Image 8- Western façade, 1976
(Source: *TP*, p. 160)

Old photographs clearly show that this mausoleum was built on an octagonal plan, with sides 4-4.80 meters each. Each side included a shallow, recessed, rectangular panel topped with a blind, pointed arch. There are also four windows on four sides of the building, which would have provided the light inside. The 2-meter-high drum is set well back from the octagon below and comprises sixteen rectangular, recessed panels.

Above the drum stands a high, sixteen-sided tent dome. Feyz Qomī reported its height as is 9 meters (Feyz Qomī, 1971:592), while the renovated dome is 11 meters tall. Conversely, the drum has been shortened by about one meter, and there are not traces of the sixteen niches on its sides. The dome has also been covered with new tiles, which include the names of Allāh and five Shiite saints¹.



Image 9- Northern facade (Source: Archive of ICHTO)

Interior

The interior of the mausoleum has been completely renovated and covered with marble. However, based on a report by Feyz on the building's condition before the restoration, as well as to the existing plan, the original interior can be reconstructed to some extent. The chamber was built on a square plan, 5.5 meters on each side, and 9 meters tall. Each side included a rectangular, recessed panel, 3 meters wide and 1 meter deep on each side (now these open onto the prayer hall). Each panel has an open window (Feyz Qomī, 1971:592). In 1970, only the eastern window was open and the rest were blocked, and the walls were coated with plaster, rather than covered with stone. There was only one decorative band inside, which included an

¹ Muḥammad, 'Alī, Fāṭima, Ḥasan and Ḥosain known als Panḡtan (five person).

indented pattern and was located on the spandrels' and the walls of the niches. Above this band, four squinches transformed the square into a hemispherical dome (Feyz Qomī, 1971:592).

An available map of the mausoleum in its present condition does not include the proportion between the heights of the external and internal domes, and the distance of the two shells seems to have been overestimated. The drum was omitted on the interior, with the internal plan going from a square to an octagon, then directly to a circle. All this suggests that the internal shell had been completely demolished at some point in history and then repaired later. There is a silver shrine inside the building, erected on a marble stone base.

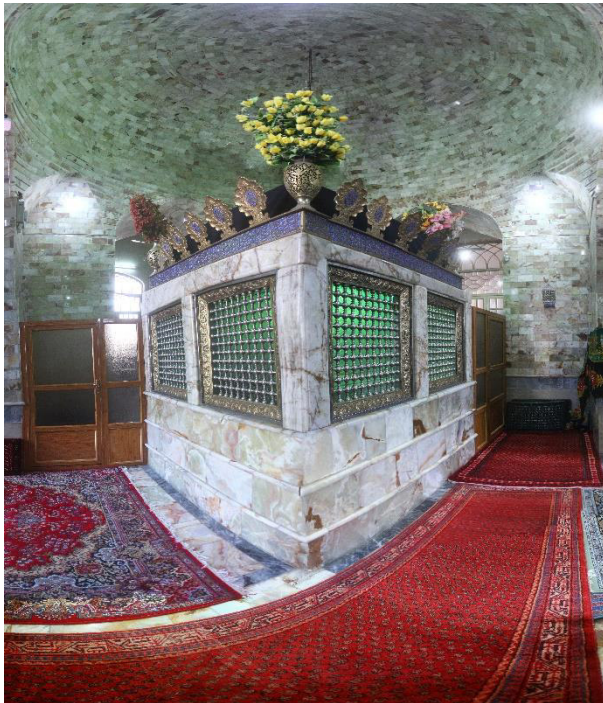
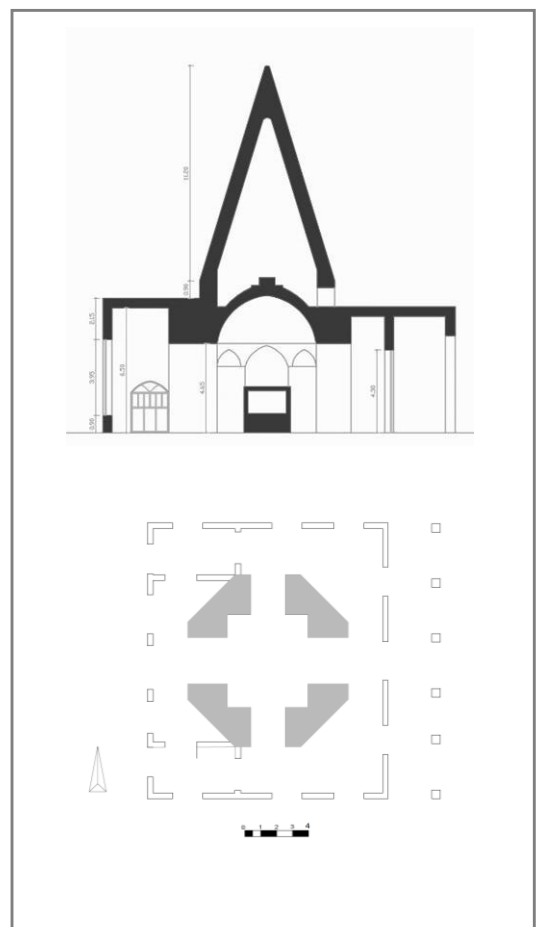


Image 10- The existing interior space
(Source: Archive of OOQ.)



Drawing 2- Section and plan of the monument
in its present condition Čāhār Emāmzāde
(Source: Archive of ICHTO)

4-12-4 Decorations

Currently, no traces of the old decorations survive – this includes not only the original ornamentation but even the Safavid additions, as reported by Feyż. All the new decorations, from the tilework on the dome to the interior, are of recent construction.

4-12-5 History of the mausoleum and the deceased

There are various accounts of the person(s) buried in this building. Firstly the name of this mausoleum, i.e. “Čāhār Emāmzāde”(four *emāmzāde*), suggests that it is the tomb of four descendants of a Shi'i *imām*. The present cenotaph also includes names of four deceased persons: Šāhzāde Ḥasan, Šāhzāde Ḥosain, Šāhzāde Ebrāhīm and Šāhzāde Ğa'far, who were the grandsons of the fourth Shi'i *imām*, i.e. Zain al-‘Ābedīn (Feyż Qomī, 1971:591). *Tārīḫ-e Qom* does report the migration of the descendants of Imām Zain al-‘Ābidīn to Qom. The book also mentions the migration of Abū ‘Abdollāh Ḥosain, also known as Ḥamze b. ‘Abdollāh b. Ḥosain Kokabī. He died in Qom, leaving behind five sons: ‘Alī b. Ḥamze, Abū Moḥammad Ḥasan, Abū Ğa'far Moḥammad, Abū Ṭāleb Moḥsen, Abū Abolfazl Moḥammad (Qomī, 2006:625).

Faqīh Ğalālī also believes that the names of the four *emāmzādes* buried in the mausoleum cannot be asserted with certainty; however, based on the evidence provided by *Anvār al-Moša'ša'in* and the comments of Feyż Qomī, as well as a number of other sources such as such as *Ansāb al-Mağdī*, the existence of four descendants of Imām Zayn al-‘Ābedīn has been verified (Faqīh Ğalālī, 1378:496-304).

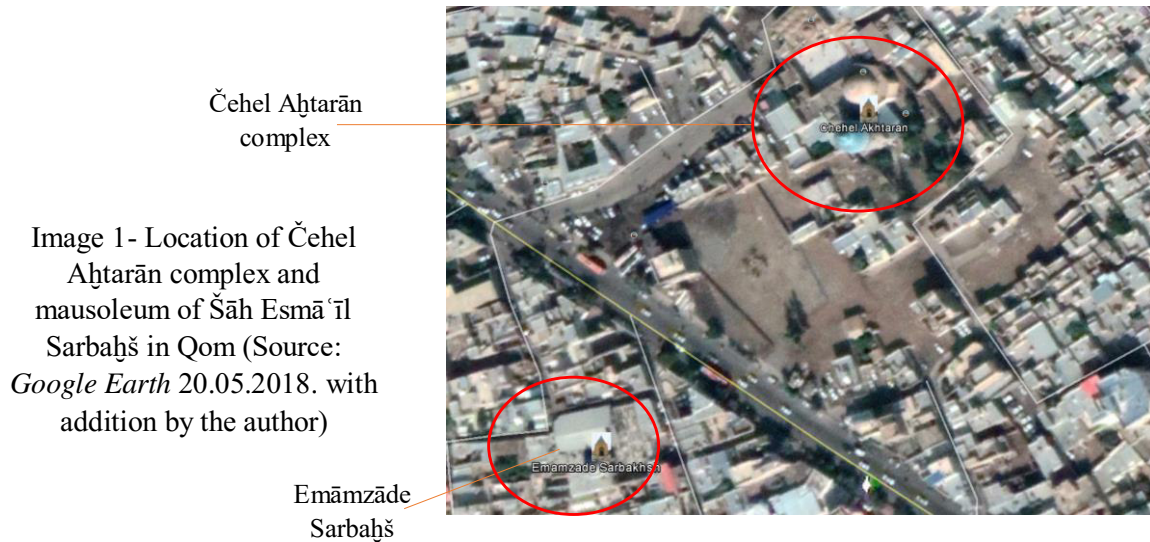
There is no evidence available concerning either the construction date of this monument or its form before 1976, but there are various theories. Wilber mentions this building among the tomb towers of Qom from the 13th – 14th centuries (Wilber, 1955: 115). Feyż Qomī has estimated that this building was constructed before the Safavids era, and he also speculated that the interior decorations seemed to have been made under Šāh Ṭahmāseb (1524) (Feyż Qomī, 1971:592); this assessment probably included the dome tiles and the additional entrance. Although we do not have much evidence of the building's original shape, we can say with some certainty that it consisted of a ground plan with high interior elevation, an external intermediate zone, and a dome; these recall the 14th century dome chambers of Qom, pointing to Wilber's interpretation of the tomb's age as correct. Unfortunately, no archeological research has been carried out about this building, and as most of the original form has been altered or destroyed following the multiple restorations, we cannot say much about it with any certainty.

This edifice was registered as one of the historical and cultural works of the country in 2012 and it is now among the properties owned by the Endowment Organization (Ouçāf). It is managed by this organization as a center of pilgrimage in Qom.

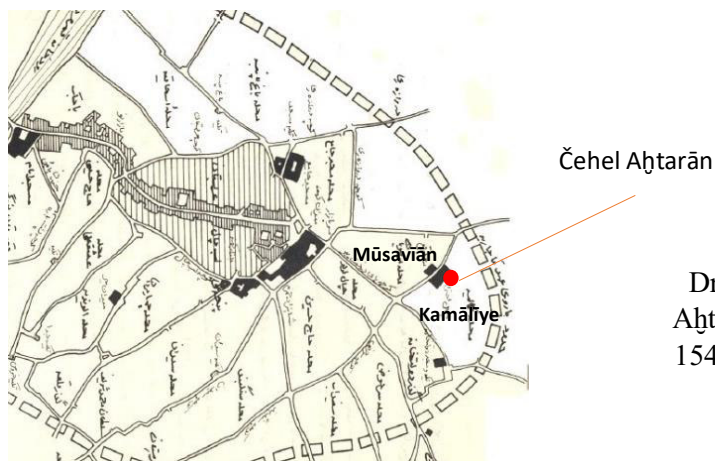
4-13 Čehel Ahtarān complex (Emānzāde Zeyd and Mausoleums of Mūsā Mobarqa‘)

4-13-0 Location

These two monuments, together with the mausoleum of Čehel Ahtarān, are known as the Čehel Ahtarān complex. They are located on the Šahīd Tāleqānī Street, in the eastern part of Qom, about 170 meters from the mausoleum of Šāh Esmā‘īl Sarbaḡš. The complex consists of three mausoleums, which were previously located in two separate courts, which were merged in the 20th century, so that now they are surrounded by a single courtyard.



The old map of Qom demonstrates that this complex was located inside the city fortifications. As described in *TQ*, this area was one of the ancient districts of Qazdān (Qomī, 2006:89). In *T P*, it is mentioned as “Qazvān” (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, 1976: 12) and in *Tārīḡ-e Dār al-īmān-e Qom* it is referred to as “Ġazvān”: a farm in the east of Qom, from which the river Šahrestān was replenished (Qomī, 2006: 68). On a map from the Qajar era, Čehel Ahtarān was located to the east of the city, in an area called “Kamālīye”, while the mausoleum of Mūsā Mobarqa‘ was marked in a district known as “Mūsaviyān”. A street is shown passing through both, leading to one of the city gateways. However, the current vicinity and adjacency of these two monuments makes it hard to imagine such street between them.



Drawing 1- Location of the Čehel Ahtarān complex in the Qajar era, p. 154 (Source: Sa‘īd nīyā, p. 154, with additions by the author)

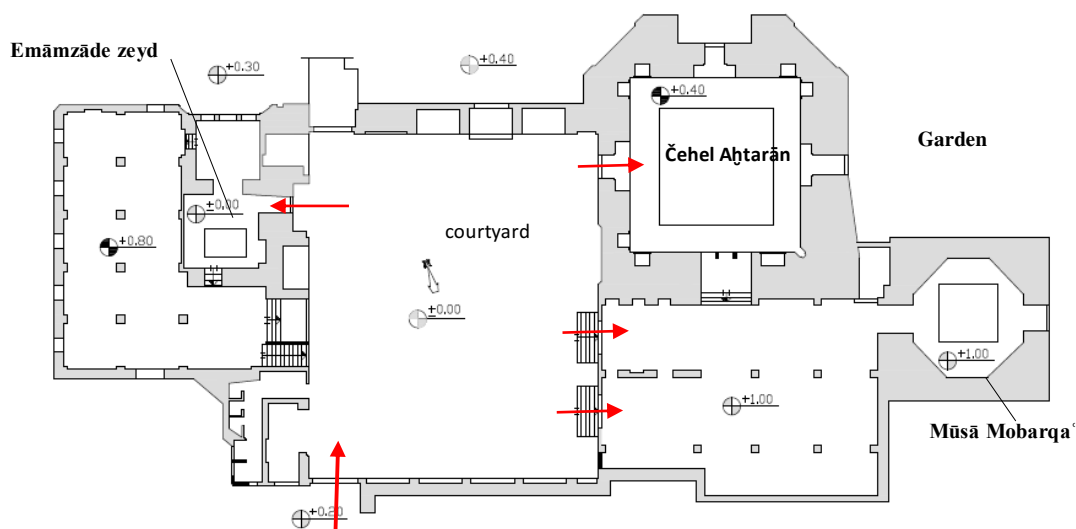
This suggests that what the author of the map above presents as the location of the Mausoleum of the Čehel Ahtarān must have been the Emāmzāde Sarbaḥš, as both monuments are located in the Kamālīye region. In another map of Qom from 1949, the location of Čehel Ahtarān complex is shown at the eastern tip of the city, bordering a farm (probably the Ġazvān farm).



Image 2- Location of the Čehel Ahtarān complex, by H. Karīmān 1949 (source: *qomshenasi* site, date: 22.08.2018 with additions by the author)

4-13-1 Access & Entrance to the Complex

The entrance of the complex is located on the southern side of the current court. The dome of Čehel Ahtarān is on the northeastern side, the mausoleum of Emāmzāde Zeyd is on the western side, and the monument known as Mūsā Mobarqa' is on the eastern side of the court. The old garden of the complex was located on the eastern side of the monument of Čehel Ahtarān, but it is now in a derelict state. Čehel Ahtarān and the mausoleum of Mūsā Mobarqa' are linked together through a common, 500m² courtyard, covered with gravestones. Nowadays, there are two entrances from the eastern side of the main court, leading to Čehel Ahtarān and to the monument of Mūsā Mobarqa'.



Drawing 2- Plan of the Čehel Ahtarān complex (Source: Archive of ICHTO, with additions by the author)

The entrance from the western side also leads into the monument of Emānzāde Zeyd. On the western side of this mausoleum, there is a mosque adjacent to the western and southern sides of the monument, with an entrance opening outwards. Family tomb chambers are located on the northern and western sides of the court, and the sanitary services are on the southwestern side.



Image 3- The court of Čehel Ahtarān complex



Image 4- The existing southern entrance of the Čehel Ahtarān complex

Unfortunately, due to the extensive alterations and renovations of the complex, no traces remain of its original form and style, which is why it currently looks very different to all the other 14th century tomb structures of Qom. However, historical evidence clearly demonstrates that these buildings were constructed (or at least rebuilt) in the 14th century. In light of historical and limited architectural evidence, as well as reports by Feyz Qomī and Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, we can attempt to provide a brief description of the architecture and the decorations in the two mausoleums, Emānzāde Zeyd and Mūsā Mobarqa'.

4-13-2 Emānzāde Zeyd

This monument is also known as Ḥvāḡe Bahā al-Dīn, as per an inscription on the eastern portal. It is located on the western side of the complex.

4-13-2-1 Architectural specifications

Exterior

Due to extensive modifications added at different times in history, currently no sign of an independent mausoleum remains. The ancient dome would have been a tent-shaped structure on a collar, much like it is at other mausolea in Qom in 14th century. Although it has been completely rebuilt, Feyz reports that its height was between 5 and 6 meters (Feyz Qomī, 1971:535). There is a picture of the new dome from 1974, which suggests that it was probably constructed around this time. This dome is now mostly hidden from view by the

various developments around it and nothing is visible from the external façade of the monument.



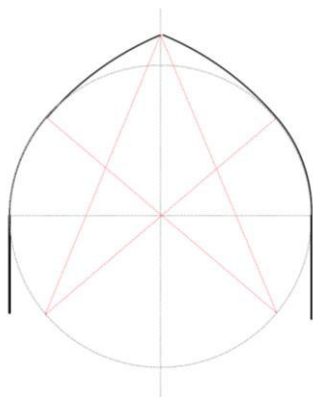
Image 5- The west side of the court and entrance of the Emāmzāde Zeyd ,2015



Image 6- The western side of the court and the new dome of the monument of Emāmzāde Zeyd in 1974 (Source: Archive of ICHTO)

Entrance

The current entrance of the tomb chamber is located on the eastern side and includes a portal with a dated, colored stucco inscription band. This inscription and other stucco decorations of the portal are the only remnants of the original form of this building. There used to be another entrance on the northern side, though it is now closed and has been transformed into an arcade. The eastern portal is 3 meters wide, 1.20 meters deep and 3.50 meters tall, with its walls decorated up to 1.50 meters and the vault arch starting directly above. This arch resembles those of 13th-14th century Iranian architecture (Wilber, 1955:68) and the height, shape, and proportions of the portal are generally quite similar to those in other tomb structures of Qom. The entrance from this portal is not entirely straight, which suggests that it may have been added before or after the main building



Drawing 3- the arch of the E portal of the mausoleum

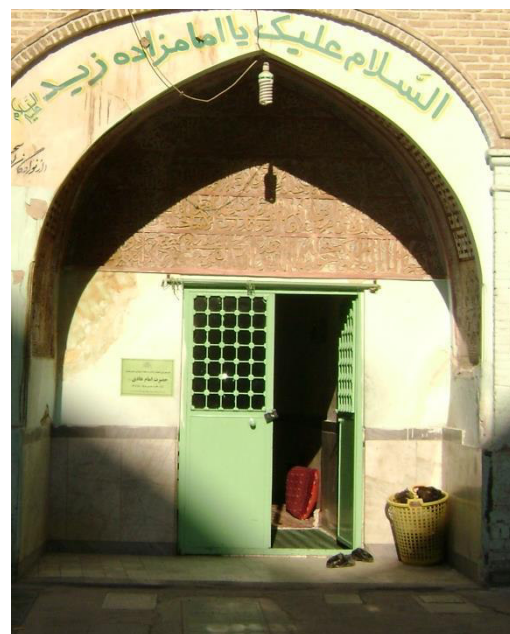
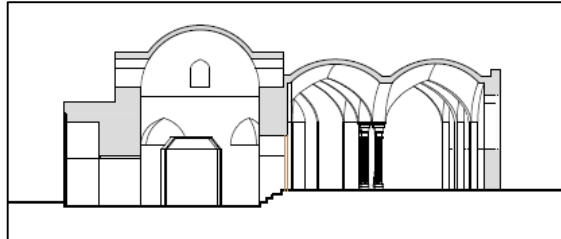
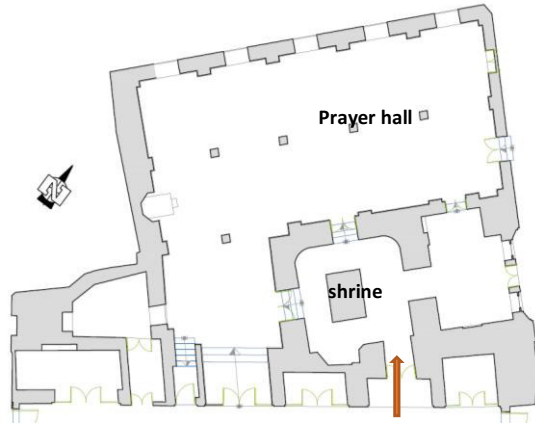


Image 7- portal entrance of Emāmzāde Zeyd

Feyz mentions that the main entrance used to be on the northern side but that this was transformed into a *rivāq* after the construction of the new entrance (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 529-534). In recent years, a prayer hall (Šabestān) has been added on the western side of this monument.



Drawing 4-5. Plan and section of Emāmzāde Zeyd and adjacent structures (Source: Archive of ICHTO, additions by the author)

Interior

Access to the internal space of the domed chamber is via a 2-meter corridor leading from the eastern entrance. The internal plan of the building is square-shaped, 5.30 meters on each side. The socle is covered with new, blue tiles. At about 2 meters, squinches transform the square plan into a circle and above that, a new inscription band on ochre background has been added, with four windows placed above it. The internal surface of the domed chamber has a finishing coat of white plaster and its height from the floor level to the apex is 7.50 meters. No evidence remains of the original shape and decorations of the building. Feyz has noted some floral and vegetal stucco decorations, as well as some peacock patterns. These can be seen on old photographs but are now demolished.



Image 8- Decorations on the internal dome of Emāmzāde Zeyd, 1974 (Source: Archive of ICHTO)



Image 9- The domed chamber and cenotaph after restoration, 2015 263

4-13-2-2 Epigraphic Material

The western wall of the entrance portal includes a stucco inscription in *thuluth* script, containing some information about the building:

”بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم كل شيء ها لك الاوجه له الحكم و اليه ترجعون و قال النبي الامى صلوات الله عليه , من زار احدا من ذريتي فكانما زارنى و من زارنى فقد زار الله عز و جل. هذا مضجع الامام زيد بن الامام زين العابدين على بن الامام الحسين بن على عليهم السلام. تشرف بهذا البنا الصدر الكبير خواجه بهاء الدين هبة الله قمى فى شهر سنة سبع و اربعين و ثمانمائه“ (Feyz Qomī, 1971:533)

Translation: In the name of the merciful and compassionate God, “All things will perish but his face. The rule (decision) belongs to him to him and to him you will return” (surah al-Qiṣāṣ, 28: 88). The illiterate (ummī) prophet - the blessings of Allāh be upon him - said: “Should anyone make the pilgrimage to one of my descendants, it is as if he/she makes the pilgrimage to me. And who makes the pilgrimage to me, makes the pilgrimage to the almighty God”. This is the tomb of the Imām Zaid b. Imām Zain al-Ābidīn ‘Alī, son of Imām al-Ḥusain, son of ‘Alī - peace be upon them! The great lord, Ḥwāḡa Bahā’ al-Dīn Hibbat Allāh Qumī had the honour [to commission] this building in 847 /1443.”

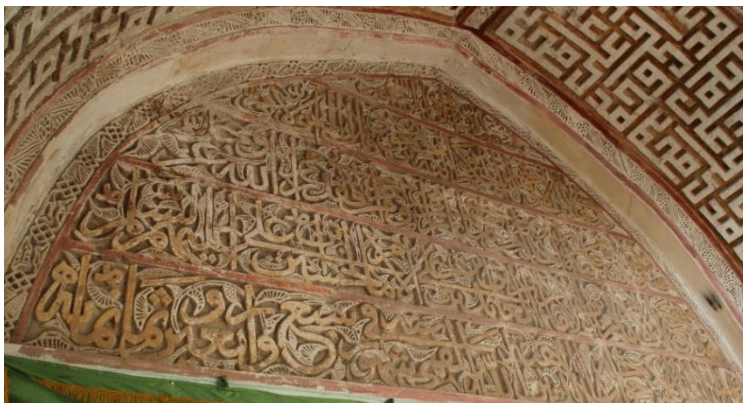


Image 10- Inscription frieze on the eastern portal of the mausoleum

Feyz Qomī has mentioned other inscriptions related to later phases of construction and restoration, such as the stucco inscription on the southwestern wall and the stone plate on the entrance wall, however these are not visible now (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 534). According to Feyz Qomī, the cenotaph used to be decorated with tiles, 30*20cm, including an inscription band with two sentences from al-Baqara (2:255) (Ibid: 530).

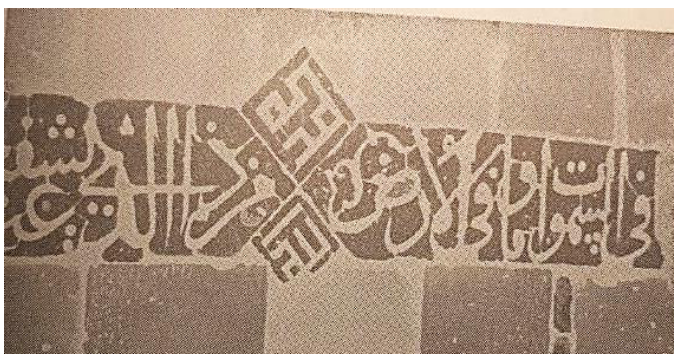


Image 11- The old tiles on the cenotaph of Emāmzāde Zeyd (Source: GAQ. p. 530)

4-13-2-3 Decoration

Currently, none of the original internal decorations remains, save for some fragments of stucco at the entrance. These are located on the western side of the portal at 2 meters and on the two other sides at 1.5 meters. The western section, which includes the entrance, has an inscription band of five rows written in *thuluth* script, in carved, semi-embossed plaster. This inscription band is decorated with a vegetal border. The lines of the inscription are separated with simple, ochre-colored bands, and some decorative, rolling leaves, carved in incised plaster, fill the background.



Image 12- Inscription frieze on the entrance portal

Compared to other works of the period, this inscription can be considered of moderate quality in terms of proportions, composition and detail. However, unlike those of the monuments constructed in the same era, e.g. Dodar School in Mašhad (1439), Ġīyāīye School in Ḥargerd (1444), Mosque of Ḥasan Pāšā in Tabrīz (late 1460-14) or the Blue Mosque in Tabrīz (1465), this inscription's quality is of higher standard, and the letter design, with their characteristically elongated shafts, resembles more closely other late 13th-14th century mausoleums of Qom.



Image 13- Details of the *Thuluth* inscription in Ġīyāīye (left) Mosque of Ḥasan Pāšā, (right) photos by Ḥasan Qāder, private collection

The 0.80 meter-wide soffit is decorated with epigraphic stucco in *bannāīī*. The names of 'Alī and Moḥammad, repeated in square Kufic, fill the surface of the vault. The two sides of the decorations on the entrance vault are surrounded with two borders of repeated vegetal designs.

The decorations inside both margins are executed in incised plaster. At the beginning of the arch, on both sides, two great flowers are added to the vegetal patterns. The surfaces of the flowers and leaves are filled in grid pattern technique or *Azde Karī* and are confined within a square frame.

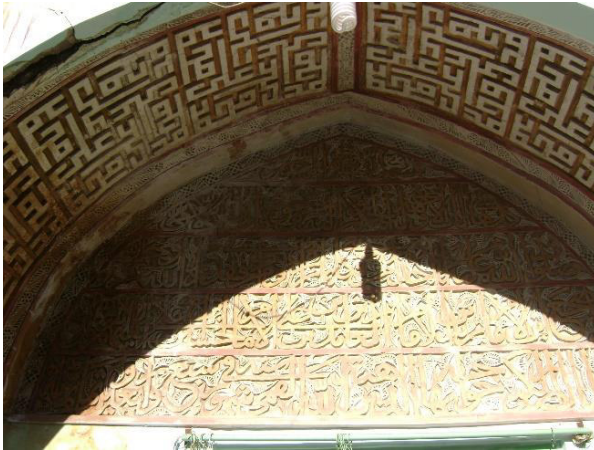


Image 14-15 Incised plaster decoration on the soffit of the portal



4-13-2-4 History of the mausoleum and the deceased

Based on the inscription on the eastern entrance, the person buried in this building is the son of the fourth *imām* of Shi'as, Imām Zain al-‘Ābedīn. According to Feyz, however, the buried person is Zeyd b. ‘Alī b. ‘Alīakbar b. Moḥammad al-Salīq b. ‘Ubaydollāh b. Moḥammad b. Ḥasan b. Ḥosain al-Aṣḡar b. Zain al-‘Ābedīn. Feyz believes that Emāmzāde Zeyd passed away at the beginning of 4th century AH and was buried in the vicinity of Moḥammad b. Mūsā Mobarqa‘, who had been buried in this place in 295/908 (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 527-8). The other name written in this inscription is Ḥvāḡe Bahā’ al-Dīn, who sponsored the construction of the entrance portal and was probably a minister of Abū Mo‘ez Mīrzā Ūsuf b. Šāhruḡ, the son of a Timurid Amir (Ibid: 534).

The most valid source of the date of construction comes from the same inscription band, which mentions year 847/1443. Wilber considered this as the construction date of this building, which he associated with the name of Emāmzāde Ḥvāḡe Bahā’ al-Dīn Hibbat Allāh Qomī (Wilber,1655:115). However, due to the incompatibility of the entrance plan with the dome plan, it is obvious that the building and the entrance portal were completed at different times. Feyz believes that the different building elements were completed in different periods: the hemispherical dome comes from the 16th century, while the tomb chamber and the eastern portal

had been constructed earlier than that but also not together. Considering the content of the inscription, where the word tomb (المضجع) had been used first and then the word structure (البناء) subsequently, it is highly probable that the building to which the date of 847/1443 refers was, in fact, the portal. The asymmetries between the plan of the dome and the portal also suggest that they were constructed separately. Most likely, the domed chamber is the oldest, original building, which underwent structural alternations following the initial construction phase. The shape of the dome and the paintings below allow us to quite confidently attribute it to the Safavid era, underscoring the fact that the tent dome had been demolished and/or damaged during the Safavid era. This dome, mentioned by Feyz had been repaired in the style typical of Safavid domes, in conjunction with the construction of the adjacent building of Čehel Aĥtarān¹. However, it is obvious that categorizing the building in a specific historical term requires further detailed archeological and historical research. This building has been registered in 1973 by the Organization of Conservation of Historical Monuments (No. 965) and has undergone extensive and near-constant renovations up to the present date. Currently, it is a popular pilgrimage site.

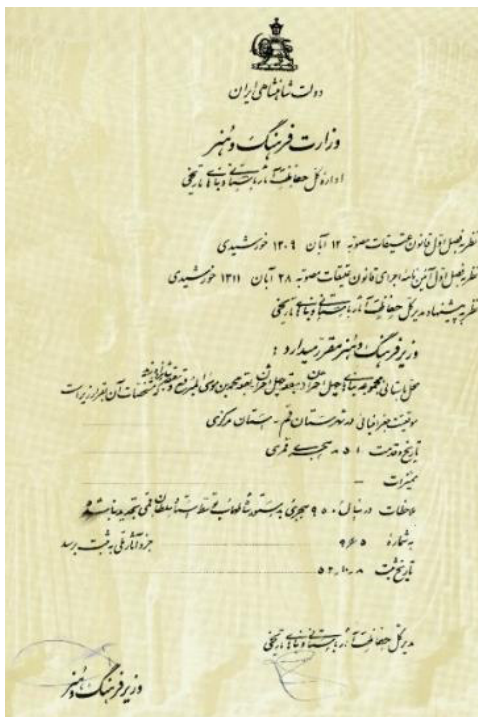


Image 16- The registration document of the Čehel Aĥtarān complex (Source: Archive of ICHTO)

¹ Based on the texts of *Tarīḥ-e Qom* and given the burial of a number of descendants Mūsā, the son of Imām Ġavād in the vicinity of Mūsā Mobarqa³ Tomb (Qomī, 2006: 405;409;411), this building is known as Čehel Aĥtarān (Forty Stars) or Čehel Doĥtarān (Forty Daughters). Feyz Qomī has mentioned the number of persons buried in this tomb as 14 descendants of Mūsā Family, most of whom were ladies, and for this reason the site has become popularly famed as Čehel Doĥtarān (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 651).

4-14 Mausoleums of Mūsā Mobarqa'

Entrance

This monument is located on the eastern side of the Čehel Aĥtarān Complex. It has two entrances on the eastern side of the court, which now open onto a foyer used as an antechamber. The building has been renovated and expanded several times. Old pictures and maps, as well as a report by Feyz Qomī, point to numerous modifications resulting from the most recent repairs. However, the earlier condition of the building can be briefly described based on this evidence.

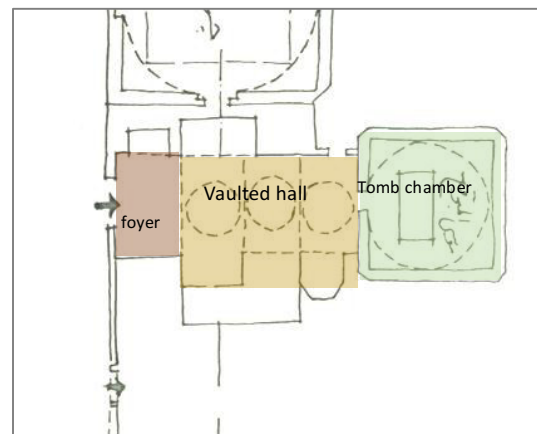
4-14-1 Architectural specifications

Interior

The two entrances from the court lead to a vaulted hall, which was repaired and partially reconstructed in 1955 (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 554). This hallway is divided into two parts. The front part is the entrance foyer, 7.5 meters long, 10 meters wide and 6 meters tall, acting as an anteroom for pilgrims. Three historical niches are placed side by side on the northern side; each is 0.80 meter wide, 0.40 meter deep and 1.50 meters tall. According to Feyz, there was also a number of similar niches on the southern side, however, these are now completely filled with plasterwork. (Ibid).



Image 1-The hallway of the Mausoleum of Mūsā



Drawing 1- Plan of the monument in the Qajar era (Source: Archive of ICHTO)

The main part of the vaulted hall comprises two archways. The hall is 19.80 meters long, 11 meters wide and 8 meters high. On the northern side, there is a 3-meter-wide opening onto the Čehel Aĥtarān. Ṭabāṭabā'ī describes an inscription band on the western niche of the foyer, dated to 851/1447, which has been removed in the course of the 1957 repairs (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1976: 80).

The relation between the hall and foyer and the tomb chamber is not clear, and the architectural structure of the vaulted hall seems to be related to later centuries (maybe Safavid or Qajar), while the foyer shows signs of 14th-century decorations.

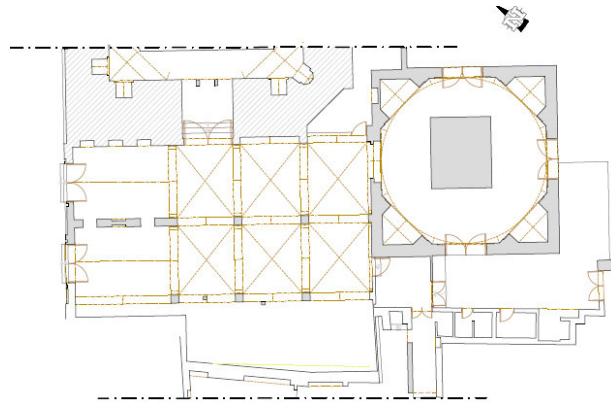


Image 2- current plan of the monument (Source: Archive of ICHTO)

Image 2 - The vaulted entrance hall -1974
(Source: Archive of ICHTO)

At the westernmost end of the vaulted hall in the Čehel Aĥtarān complex, there is a square chamber attributed to Mūsā Mobarqa'. This structure has been totally reconstructed on the inside and outside. Presently, the internal domed chamber is circular in shape and up to 9 meters tall. The walls of the domed chamber are entirely covered with mirror-work and the tomb is located in the center, enclosed by a silver shrine.



Image 3- The interior of the domed chamber of Mūsā Mobarqa'



Image 4- Entrance and new dome of the mausoleum of Mūsā Mobarqa'

4-14-2 Epigraphic Material

On the front part of the hallway, above the niches, there is a colored stucco inscription, written in *thuluth* script, whose background is filled with vegetal and floral designs. These designs resemble the stucco decorations in other mausoleums of Qom, which were made in hatched or perforated form. The quality of the lettering and the pattern composition is very high, especially considering the spatial constraints. Moreover, the letters and words are at the foreground, with the decorative motifs coming behind – this has allowed the artist to create a beautiful texture of light and shadow.

Excerpts from this inscription read as follows:

“رسول الله عليهم السلام النجوم امان لاهل السماء واهل بيتي امان لامتي صدق الله العظيم”

Translation: ...the Messenger of God, peace be upon them [said]: „The stars are the security of the people/inhabitants of heaven and my family (*ahl al-bait*) are the security of the people on earth (my *umma*). The almighty God speaks the truth.”



Image 5- Part of the inscription band in *thuluth* script on the northern wall of the hallway (Source: Raḥmatī, p.92, with additions by the author)

4-14-3 Decoration

The foyer of the hallway includes an inscription and three colored stucco niches dated to 851/1447. The tympana, spandrel and niche borders were decorated with carved, painted plaster in semi-embossed and incised plaster technique and *Aḏde kāri*. These greatly resemble the

techniques and patterns of stucco decorations in other monuments of Qom, such as the mausoleum of ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far. The niches are framed with borders of vegetal and geometric motifs. Ṭabāṭabā‘ī reports that one of them also included holy names (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, 1976: 80).

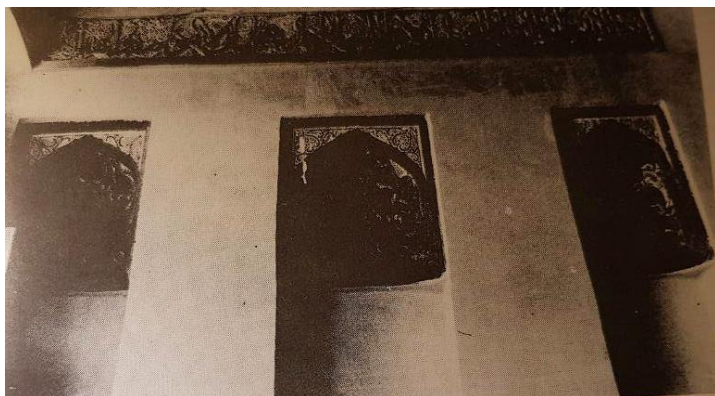


Image 6- Northern wall of the hallway before repairs
(Source: *TP*, p. 132)



Image 7- One of the niches on the northern wall of the hallway (Source: Raḥmatī, p.92, with additions by the author)

4-14-4 History of the mausoleum and the deceased

This monument is known as the tomb of Mūsā Mobarqa‘, the son of Imām Ğavād’s, the ninth *imam* of Shi‘as. Ṭabāṭabā‘ī believes that based on *lobāb al-Ansāb*², and ‘*Omde al-Ṭālib*³, this identification is correct (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, 1976: 78).

However, the most reliable source of information on the deceased buried in this mausoleum would be *Tārīḥ-e Qom*, which relates the story of Mūsā Mobarqa‘’s (i.e. an individual named Mūsā, who wore a mask), who was the first of *Raḏavīyān* to migrate to Qom. The story states that Abū Ğa‘far Moḥammad b. Mūsā b. Moḥammad b. Alī b. Mūsā b. Ğa‘far journeyed from Kufa to Qom in 256/870, and always wore a mask. He was first expelled by the Arabs of Qom and he proceeded to Kāšān, but then the Arab chiefs in Qom asked him to return, honored him and to offer him an abode and a fortune. His sisters followed suit. He passed away in 296/909 and was buried in a mausoleum attributed to Moḥammad b. Ḥasan b. Abī Ḥāled Aš‘arī, an important Shiite historians and chronicler (Qomī, 2006: 575-89). Abu ‘Alī, his nephew, was also buried here in 315/926 and Zeynab, daughter of Mūsā, is also buried in this mausoleum (Ibid).

² by ‘Alī b. Zeyd Bayhagī b. Fandoq, 493/1100

³ by Aḥmad b. ‘Anba, 828/1425.

However, we have no information on the mausoleum's dating, its features or the historical events associated with it.

Based on the book *Rāhnamā-ye Qom*, Wilber links the history of this building with the later parts of the 13th century (though he mistakenly situates it in southeastern Qom). He also suggests that the existing tomb and courtyard date to mid -15th century (Wilber, 1955: 120), although he does not provide robust evidence for this claim. Based on the text of Qomī's book (*TQ*), the remains from the 14th century and the extant building, the followings can be stated about the history of this monument:

- 1- In the year 296/909, a grave was dug in this place, which was then a *sarāy* or a court.
- 2- Given the religious significance of the deceased, this tomb became the focus of religious, spiritual, and political attention like other *emānzādehs* in Qom. Subsequently, it was altered many times; this included the decorations described above as having been added in 851/1447, when the dimensions and form of the court were also modified.
- 3- The tomb was either topped with a dome in the style and form of other mausoleums in Qom, now gone, or else it was always covered with a cupola which was preserved, repaired, and renovated in later periods (such as the Safavid era), concurrently with other additions to the complex, dating back to the 15th century.

In any case, establishing the actual history of the complex requires further archeological investigation, as very little can be said about its history now with any certainty.

4-15 Mausoleum of Šāh Esmā‘īl

4-15-1 Location

This monument is one of the most famous *emānzādes* outside Qom and is regarded as one of the most significant mausoleums by the people in the city. It is located in Fordo¹, a rural area near Bīdeqān² village, located in the Kahak district, 35 km to the southwest of Qom. It is surrounded by tall mountains and a small river, which is derived from the Emānzāde Esmā‘īl dam and is now almost dry. The reasons for the construction of such a building are not clear, as, contrary to other monuments in Qom, this one was not built near any significant urban element (such as a city gate). However, the multitude of precious, 13th century tiles found in this building suggest that it must have been one of the most important tomb structures in the area. It has undergone numerous modifications and changes through time, leaving unfortunately no sign of the original architecture and decorations.

Qom



Image 1- Location of the mausoleum of Šāh Esmā‘īl in relation to Qom (Source: *Google Earth* 20.05.2018. with additions by the author)

Bīdeqān



Image 2- Location of the mausoleum of Šāh Esmā‘īl and of Bīdeqān village (Source: *Google Earth* 20.05.2018. with additions by the author)

¹ In *Tārīḥ- e Qom*, this region is called Forde.

² *Tārīḥ- e Qom* mentioned Bīrkān as located in the Ġebāl area (Qomī, 2006:352-3)

4-15-2 Architectural specifications

Exterior

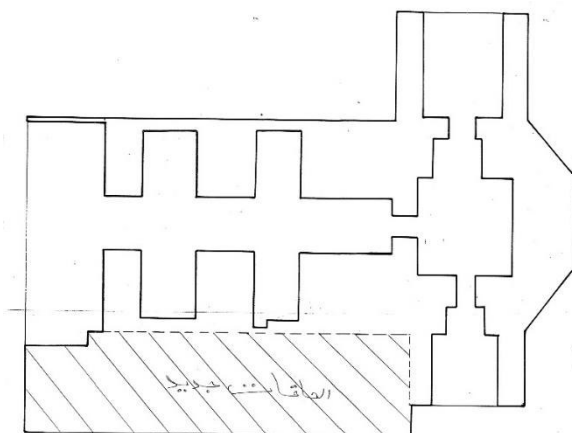
This mausoleum had originally been built as single domed chamber, which was subsequently expanded to accommodate pilgrims; as a result, its original shape was lost. The building now includes one tomb chamber, two *iwāns* to the north and the south, a court and a mosque. The somewhat harsh climate and mountainous terrain surrounding the building had an influence on the construction materials used in construction, which were predominantly stone and plaster. The plan of the building is octagonal, and its entire original façade (except on the eastern side) was demolished at some point in the course of construction and restorations. The dome is a sixteen-sided tent form, about 10 meters tall, decorated with modern, turquoise tiles. It is placed on a cylindrical drum, also sixteen-sided, with rectangular panels on each side. Feyz described this building in 1971, mentioning three entrances, with porches at the northern and southern doors and a long roofed hall (*riwāq*) to the west, at a distance of 16 meters between the domed chamber and the court. The *riwāq* consisted of three parts, with a door in each so that all in all, the pilgrims could reach the monument through six doors (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 303).



Image 3 The current condition of the area within the shrine of the complex



Image 4- Mausoleum of Šāh Esmā‘īl in the course of restoration, 2001 (Source: Archive of ICHTO)



Drawing 1- Plan of Emāmzādeh Esmā‘īl, current condition (Source: Archive of ICHTO)

Interior

From the inside, the domed chamber is built on a square plan, 5.50 meters on each side and 9 meters in height. The northern side includes a rectangular niche, 2.20 meters wide and 1.50 meters tall. To the south, there is a doorway, leading to an adjacent *iwān* through a vestibule. The doorway is also linked to a vaulted prayer hall on the western side, which was annexed to the building after the initial construction phase. Inside the main domed chamber, the socle zone was repaired with new tiles reaching up to a height of 1.5 meters, and the rest was coated in white plaster without any decorations. At 5 meters, the plan of the chamber changes from a square to an octagon through an addition of squinches at the corners. Further above, the foundation of the dome and then the dome itself were built. The hemispherical dome has been completely reconstructed in stone.



Image 5- Adjacent structure on the western side (Source: Archive of ICHTO)



Image 6- Domed chamber in the course of restoration 2001 (Source: Archive of ICHTO)



Image 7- The current inner surface of the dome



Image 8- The inner surface of the dome in the course of restoration, 2001 (Source: Archive of ICHTO)

4-14-3 Decoration and epigraphic material

The domed chamber is completely repaired and covered with white plaster now, and nothing can be seen of the stucco decorations or tilework of the past. However, some tiles from the mausoleum are currently kept at the museum of Āstāne in Qom. These, together with the descriptions provided Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī and Feyż, suggest that originally, the socle of the monument had been decorated with luster-painted tiles, most likely Il-Khanid. Of these, only 10 dated pieces survive and are currently kept at the Āstāne Qom Museum. Ṭabāṭabā'ī believes that the tiles were made under the Abū Ṭāher family from Kāšān³ (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1976:191). These were the familiar, eight-pointed star- and cross-shaped tiles, which were commonly used to decorate the socle zones of *emāmzādes* in the 13th and 14th centuries. No information is available on the large number of tiles which were illegally removed, except for a few images in *Torbat-e Pākān*. The patterns on these tiles include animal designs such as deer, peacocks, storks, and dragons, as well as vegetal and floral designs. Some also include inscription borders. These tiles are very similar to those known from the 'Alī b. Ğa'far mausoleum.

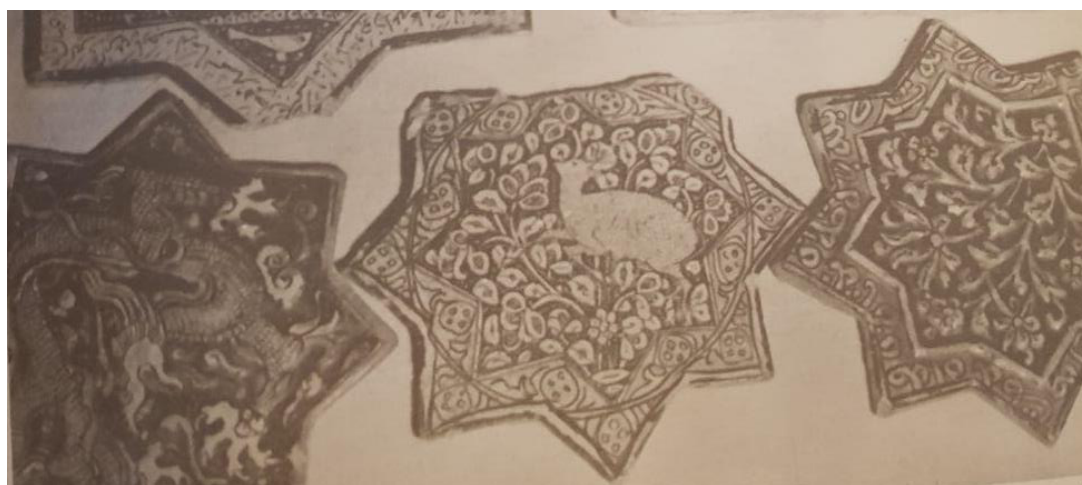


Image 9- eight-pointed star- tiles on the plinth zone (Source: *TP*, Fig. 236)

One of the important dated tiles, which may even date to the original construction of the building, is a 31*31 cm, star-shaped tile preserved in the Āstāne Museum in Qom. The pattern on this tile consists of an image of three horsemen wearing highly adorned Mongolian clothes. They are bearded, have halos around their heads, and are riding with three pigeons flying above them. There is an image of a tree above the tile and of a fish below. The design of a fish, as mentioned by Godard, is one of the favorite motifs of the artists of Kāšān (Godard, 1937:327). The pattern on this tile is painted in brown on a creamy background. The star has a 0.2 meter-

³ They were mentioned in chapter of the monument of 'Alī b. Ğa'far (chapter 4-5).

border, on which some verses from Šāhnāme are carved, ending in the phrase: “فی شهر سنه “ احدی و ستین و ستمائه”, thus giving the year of manufacture as 661/1263. Godard believes that this tile did not originally belong to this mausoleum at all (Godard, 1937:327).



Image 10- Star-shaped dated tile from the monument of Emānzāde Esmā'īl in AMQ.

Another priceless tile from this monument, currently kept at the Āstāne Museum, is a 20*20 cm, luster-painted, square tile, with a Quranic inscription on the margin. It also contains additional inscriptions written in blue Kufic, which join in a decorative knot in the center of the tile. On one side, the tile is adorned with an image of a running stag, accompanied by several birds painted on the other half.



Image 11- A luster-painted tile of the mausoleum of Šāh Esmā'īl, currently at AMQ.

Four big pieces of mud brick tiles from this monument, 43*43 cm, have also been preserved at the Āstāne Museum in Qom. These are painted in brown luster on a creamy background and

are very different from the others, since they contain no borders or inscriptions and are instead completely filled with patterns. On the image below, these tiles are numbered 1-4.

Tile No. 1 shows two persons facing each other in a garden full of flowers and birds, and, on the lower part, there is a pond full of fish in the typical Kāšān style. On tile No. 2, there is a figure standing in the middle, with six others sitting around, and on the lower part, there is a pool of fish, with two birds facing each other above it. The characters' clothing is very ornate and the tile's background is filled with floral, vegetal and bird designs. Tile No. 3 is heavily degraded and only the faces of five persons can be observed. Tile No. 4 includes a design of a horseman falling to the ground with folded feet. The horse's body, like its rider, bears pointed decoration.

The reason for applying such tiles with such content is not evident in this monument, and it is not clear whether they were originally used in this edifice or added later.

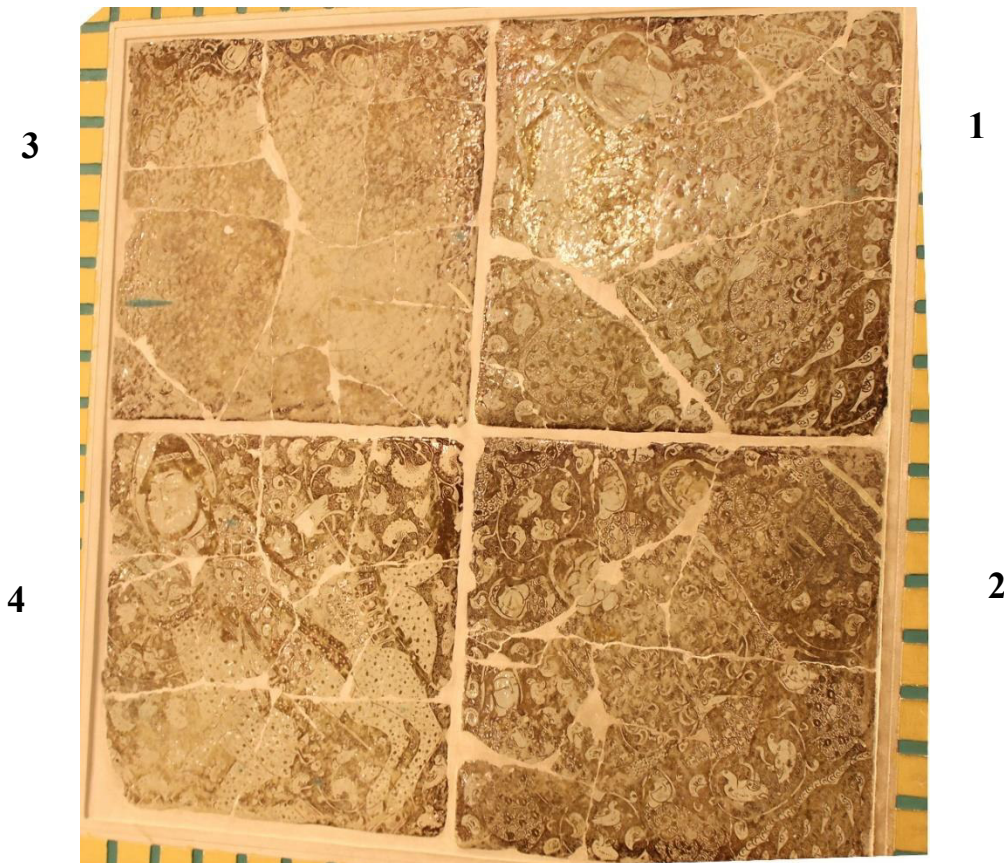


Image 12- Four pieces of painted tilework attributed to the mausoleum of Šāh Esmā'īl, currently at AMQ.

A number of monochrome turquoise tiles, with high relief designs bearing inscriptions written in a combination of *thuluth* and *naskhi* also survive. Their backgrounds are plain, and the inscriptions are quite sparse; it seems that they were quite long. They all contain quotes from the Quran, including parts of surah Yāsīn (36) (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1976:191). Unfortunately, we do not currently know where these tiles are and we have to rely on photographic evidence. However, we can say that they greatly resemble in color and calligraphy the monochrome glazed tiles of the Šāh Ğa'far monument.



Image 13- Turquoise, relief tiles of Emāmzāde Esmā'īl (Source: *TP*, Fig. 238)

4-15-4 History of the mausoleum and the deceased

People consider this monument to be the tomb of Šāh Esmā'īl, who was one of the children of Imām Šādeq, the sixth *imām* of the Shi'as, as well as the tomb of Moḥammad, Mūsā Kāzem's son. The text carved on the cenotaph denotes it as the tomb of three persons: Šāh Esmā'īl, his son, Ḥamze and Šāhzāde Moḥammad. However, no evidence has ever been found to validate this claim. Feyz Qomī mentioned that: "Sayyed Abū Moḥammad Esmā'īl was the head of *Sādāts* (descendants of Prophet Moḥammad) in Qom. He had a particular character and was a prominent figure. He developed the Bīdeqān village and planted trees along its river. He then moved there in summer, and earned his by farming and agriculture. And when he passed away at the end of 4th Century H, he was buried there, and for the first time, the tombs of his children and descendants were constructed above his. The honored *sadāt* of Abarqū who were his descendants in 12th, 13th and 14th centuries, migrated to Qom" (Feyz Qomī, 1971: 295).

To date, we have found no architectural evidence dating to the original period of construction of this building. However, the surviving tiles, which are the oldest dated documents associated with this building (1263), suggest that this mausoleum was constructed in the 13th century AD.

On the other hand, the variety of tiles found may suggest that they were brought or donated to the building after the original construction. Unfortunately, we have no information on whether the building was rebuilt or renovated in the 13th century. However, the political and religious status of Qom in the 13th and 14th centuries suggest that, like many other *emānzādes* and other sacred buildings, this one may have been either constructed or substantially rebuilt at this time. We have no evidence about the patrons or architects responsible for this building – all we know is that it has been restored and repaired many times. Evidence of restorations from the Safavid and Qajar eras include some tilework, the intricately carved, precious wooden doors, the carved wooden box around the cenotaph dating back to 1514, the old pulpit (*minbar*) from 1805 and several carved stone artefacts. This building was registered in 2000 as a national monument by the Iran Cultural Heritage Organization under the registration No. 3491



Image 14- gravestone of Emānzāde, 2000 (Source: Archive of ICHTO)



Image 15- Tilework of the Qajar era (Source: Archive of ICHTO)

4-16 Some other tomb mausoleums from 13th – 14th century

Undeniably, there are more mausoleum built in Qom during the 13th and the 14th centuries than the fifteen selected for this project. Most of these have now lost their historical identity following various phases of modification, restoration and reconstruction, but they may still reveal signs of the “golden” Il-khanid or post Il-khanid period, if a deeper archeological survey is undertaken. However, due to the inadequate information available at present, only their names are mentioned in this project. In addition to the fifteen monuments selected for this project, the other mausoleums most likely built in the 13th-14th centuries within the limits of the city of Qom and its surroundings were:

- 1- The mausoleum of Aḥmad-e Ḥākfarāğ in Komeydān to the northwest of Qom⁴
- 2- Emānzāde Ṣafūrā to the northwest of Qom
- 3- Šāh zāde Ḥamze near Meydān-e Kohne
- 4- Bābā Mosāfer to the northeast of Qom near Rey Gate
- 5- Šāh zahīr near Meydān-e Kohne
- 6- Solṭān Moḥammad Šarīf near Gal‘e gate⁵
- 7- Emānzādes Ṭayyeb and Ṭāḥer on the road from Qom to Serāğe
- 8- Ḥadīğe Ḥātūn on the road from Qom to Serāğe⁶
- 9- Emānzāde Sayyed Eshāq at Sāve⁷
- 10- Moḥammad b. Mūsā Kāzem, Mašhad Mīqān at Farahān
- 11- Šāhzāde Yaḥyā at Narāq
- 12- Šāh Ebrāhīm–e Bīdeqān in the Bīdeqān district
- 13- Aḥmad b. Eshāq near the Emānzāde Ḥamze at Qom
- 14- The Mausoleum of Abū al-‘Abbas Aḥmad b. Sağād at Qom
- 15- Mausoleum of Sakīne Ḥātūn, east of Qom
- 16- Paṅğ Emānzādeh at Vašnūh Village
- 17- Emānzāde Ḥalīme Ḥātūn and Settīye Ḥātūn at Qom

⁴ An inscription on cenotaph from the 14th century remains from this tomb.

⁵ One tile inscription on cenotaph from the 14th century remains from this monument.

⁶ One tile inscription on cenotaph from the 14th century remains from this monument.

⁷ One dated tile 676H. remains from this monument.

The Mausoleums of Qom in the 13th-14th centuries

Architecture and Ornamentation



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5- Analysis and review of documentations on tomb structure

The catalogue of the Qom mausolea, which were presented individually in the previous section, provides comprehensive information about the architectural and structural features, the decorative techniques and the inscription materials of each mausoleum. In this section, the data and architectural features are compared with each other and, in keeping with the previous section, their analysis will be divided into three categories: architecture, decorations and inscriptions. In the section on architecture, the plans, facades, the overall volume and the elements of the internal spaces are compared with each other and their specifications and common features are explained. The tables presented in this section summarize the comparisons of the existing catalogues and are annexed to each category to facilitate the analyses.

5-1- Analysis of the architectural and structural elements

Generally, the plans of Qom's tomb structures can be divided into three categories:

- 1- Octagonal plan both for the interior and the exterior (Rulers' Tomb towers)
- 2- Octagonal plan for the exterior and square plan for the interior (*Emāmzāde*)
- 3- Dodecagonal plan for the exterior and octagonal plan for the interior (the second stage of Rulers 'Tomb tower construction).

By taking into consideration the visual¹, physical and structural features of this collection of tomb structures, the common traits, the differences and the components of the interior and exterior spaces are described and analysed in this section.

5-1-1- The features of exterior spaces

- 1- All the mausoleums - except for Ḥadīġe Ḥātūn where rocks were also used- are made of bricks and consist of a single and freestanding construction visible from all sides.
- 2- The tomb structures are of regular shapes, i.e. their components are regular, balanced, with symmetrical axes. Furthermore, the main shapes used in the construction of these monuments – cube, prism and pyramid – are all regular forms, placed perfectly next to, and providing support to, each other (Drawing 1).
- 3- The principal shape of the tombs' exteriors – except for the Šāh Ğa'far mausoleum, which is considered the oldest – includes the three main segments of the main body, the drum and the dome. The drum plays the role of a foundation or a rise of the dome in the structure, thereby distributing the weight of the dome equally among the bases. In all

¹ The visual features of the tombs include shape, dimension, colour, texture, location and visual balance. It is through these elements that the monuments considered are described and analysed at different scales

the tombs (except in the Šāh Ğa‘far mausoleum), by receding from the main body, the drum sits on the body, and this is the main feature of these tombs. The prism of the intermediate zone (drum) has been designed in some cases with a slight slant (Bāġ-e Sabz and Ḥadīġe Ḥātūn) and in others it is quite perpendicular (Šāh Esmā‘īl Sarbaḥš, ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far). It should be mentioned that except these three main sections at the Šāh Esmā‘īl Sarbaḥš and Emāmzāde Zeyd, a separate portal section was also added (of course archeological surveys and studies are required to determine the accurate dates of their construction).

- 4- There are rectangular panels in all the facades of the bodies and intermediate zones, which have slightly recessed, blind pointed arches. Their function is to create deep shadows, as well as rhythm and movement, on the surfaces of the facades. They are executed in two rows and at two different scales, which emphasizes the grandeur of the exterior, with its strongly marked alternation of recessed forms.
- 5- The original plans of the all tomb structures’ exteriors are octagonal ²
- 6- The access to the six Tomb towers was originally from all sides, or at least from three entrances: they were designed as pavillions³. The entrances had an important role in supplying light to these spaces, in addition to improving air circulation and ventilation.
- 7- In the body segment, the two Tomb towers of the Šāh Ebrāhīm Mazdīġān mausoleum and the Northern tomb of the Bāġ- e Sabz have been designed with two stories on the facades, but all the others are of single stage (Drawing 4).
- 8- In ten cases, the height of the towers varied from 13 to 22.50 meters. The towers of the Bāġ-e Sabz and Šāh Ebrāhīm Mazdīġān are higher than the others, while the lowest tower belongs to the tomb of Šāh Ğa‘far, which has two segments in the exterior and is much older than the others (Drawing 2).
- 9- The proportions of the three segments in the Bāġ-e Sabz, which are Rulers’ Tomb towers, are different from the *Emāmzādes*. In the Rulers’ Tomb towers, the ratio of the main body to the entire building is 1:3. In the *Emāmzādes*, however, the elevation of the body and the dome have nearly equal proportions, and the ratio of the drum to the total is usually 2:5, in some cases 1: 3.

Generally, the ratio of the height of the domed chambers to their external diameter is 1:1.6 and 1:1.8.

² It should be noted that the two southern and middle towers in the Bāġ-e Sabz are currently 12-sided, but originally they were designed and approved as octagonal and the transformation of octagonal to dodecagonal exterior occurred during the manipulations of the second period of construction.

³ The access in most tombs has been blocked in later periods, leaving only a single entrance available today.

- 10- The windows are all situated in the collar of the dome, set in sixteen-sided niches and mostly located on the main axes. The incorporation of windows in this segment, mainly in the four cardinal directions, serves the key purpose of keeping a tomb well-ventilated: two windows are always facing towards the wind and two back to it, creating the circulation of wind in the middle segment of the tombs.
- 11- The domes are polyhedral tent forming in double-shelled discontinued domes. Apart from solving the structural static issue of the elevated dome, the double shell insulates the interior space against sound, heat and humidity. Furthermore, from a visual and practical point of view, the shorter internal dome reduces the height of the inner space, thereby bringing it closer to human proportions.
- 12- Most buildings are devoid of an entrance terrace or portal, with a few exceptions, where these components appear to have been annexed (Emānzāde Ebrāhīm, Šāh Esmā'īl Sarbaḥš, Zeyd and 'Alī b. Ğa'far). Most of the main entrances are either simple or only distinguished from the other sides through small elements, and their geographical location does not seem to follow any particular pattern.

5-1-2- The features of the interior

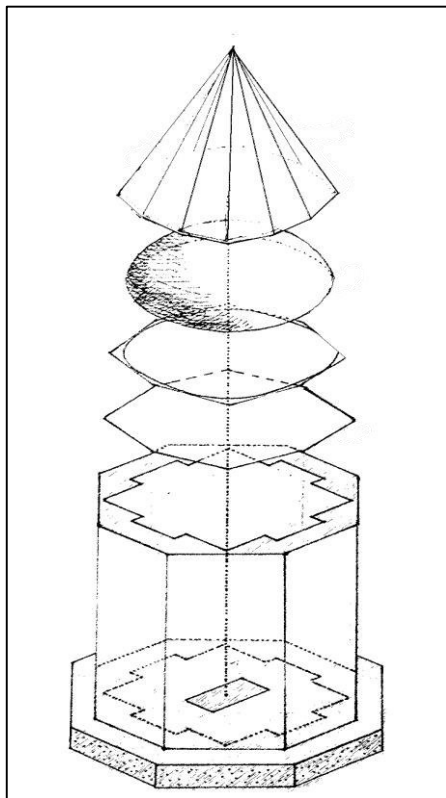
- 1- In the types of mausoleum discussed, there is overall more emphasis on the interior than the exterior. Interiors display a carefully calculated reciprocity of parts, which acts as a strong unifying factor. The application of a definite and determining system in the design of the interior spaces of all the tombs underlies just how careful, meticulous and meaningful their design is.
- 2- Symmetry is widely used in the tomb tower interiors, both in the general plan and within specific decorative elements. This creates a sense of balance in the building and a calm and spiritual environment on one hand, while also highlighting the central point and the main axes, achieving geometrical perfection.
- 3- From a formal point of view, the internal plans of these tombs can be divided into two groups: (Drawing 3)
 - A: Octagonal (The Tomb towers of Bāg-e Sabz and Šāh Ebrāhīm)
 - B: Square (all *Emānzādes*)
- 4- The internal surface area of the mausolea varies between 30 to 75 square meters. The largest structures belong to the rulers in Bāg-e Sabz, while the *Emānzādes* are generally smaller.
- 5- The interior spaces of the tomb structures reflect the three-storied nature of the exterior.

- 6- All the internal sides include rectangular recessed panels, which have blind, pointed arches. Despite reducing the large volume of the walls, these panels have helped in the expansion of the internal space, while breaking the visual monotony of the walls and playing a significant role in creating depth, shadow, rhythm and movement in the interior space.
- 7- In all the Tomb structures, there is much repetition of single and uniform elements, such as arches, spandrels, niches and windows, which are also seen in the smaller components, and constitute an architectural principle of these tombs. This makes the tomb interiors particularly impressive, especially considering the regularity of these repetitions, which determine the rhythm of the entire space.
- 8- The size of the bearing walls has been calculated proportionately to the weight of the roof and the elevation of the structure and of the main bases. It varies from approximately 3.30 meters (the northern tomb of Bāg-e Sabz) to 1 meter (the tomb of Aḥmad Ḥanafīye). In the two monuments of Šāh Ebrāhīm Mazdīgān and the northern tower of Bāg-e Sabz, the bearing walls are reduced to a minimum and the elevation keeps a fine balance between the open and closed areas.
- 9- The transition of the four-sided forms to domes occurs differently in *emāmzādes* and in the Rulers' tombs. This transition is first mediated by squinches, built diagonally across the corners of the square tower to support and act as a transition to a polygon in addition to distributing the weight of the dome among the vertical bases. The squinch areas are subdivided into two parallel arches buttressed by a half arch to create two concave segments per squinch corner (Drawing 4).
- 10- In all the tomb structures, sixteen pointed-arch niches have been incorporated into the collar of the dome. In addition to the transition of structure from eight to sixteen sides, this segment transfers the weight of the dome to the lower section.
- 11- Six standard forming of arches, have been used in the internal and external sections of these tombs. The pointed arches are often the stretched type- taller than the length of the arch, which was quite customary for the pointed arches in this period (Wilber, 1955: 68-71) (Drawing 5).
- 12- Lighting and exposure, in particular on highly decorated surfaces of these tombs, constitute an important visual element, which draws attention to specific parts of the tombs. Light enters through the windows on the collar of the dome, and, in contrast with the darkness dominating the interior space, it creates a bright environment in all directions in the interior. These windows have been designed in symmetry and

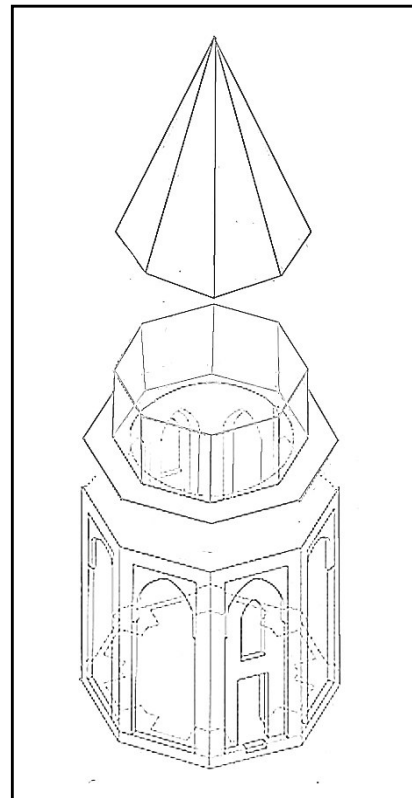
positioned on the four cardinal directions. In the two larger tombs (Šāh Ebrāhīm in Mazdīgān and the northern tomb of Baġ- e Sabz), there are 8 windows in this section. Whether during the day with the sun or at night with the moon, light is meant as a counterpoint to darkness and bestows a spiritual atmosphere in this sacred space. The quality of sunlight varies during the day and from one season to another, and these changes in color and the sky's condition are reflected in the interior and the decoration on different surfaces. By changing the type of light and by creating shadows and dimensions on these surfaces, the space of a mausoleums gains a fresh appearance, further highlighting its internal form to the spectators.

13-Of all the tombs discussed, four have *mihhrabs* in their southern wings, and their main entrances are to the north.

14-Seven of the tombs contain burial crypts constructed in the basement. Three of these crypts, which have undergone excavation and renovation, are cross-shaped and are accessible from a hatch on the main floor of the building.



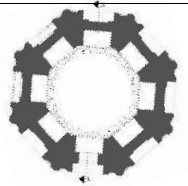
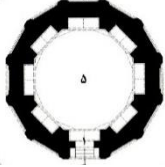
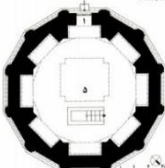

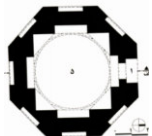

Square internal (Type 1)



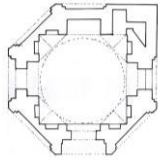
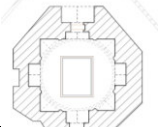
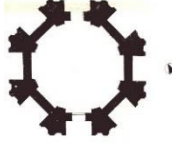
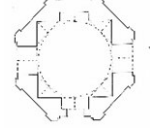
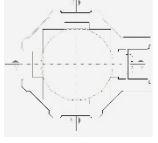

Octagonal internal (Type 2)

Drawing 1- Schematic of the two styles of masouleum in Qom

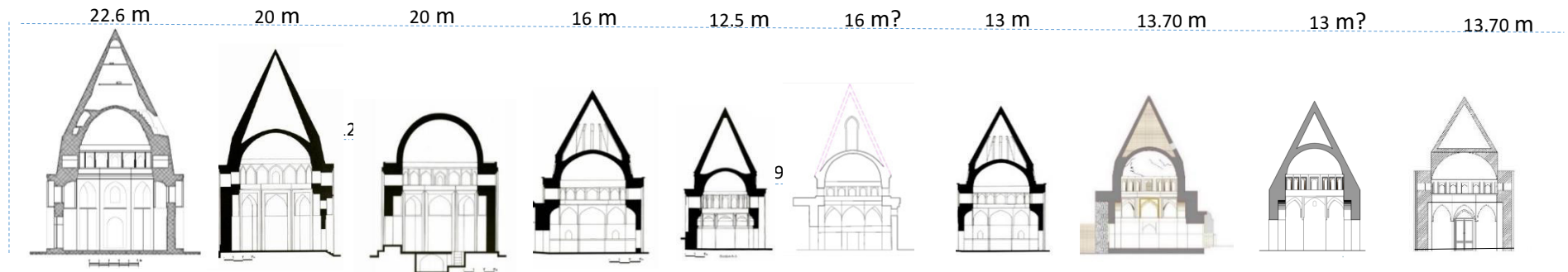
Architectural features

	Monument Date	Architectural features									entrance	crypt	Mihrab	plan
		Exterior					Interior							
		shape	measure		door way	Dome	shape	measure		Area				
side	height		diameter	height										
1	North Tomb tower (Bāg- e Sabz) 714-60 / 1315-59 ?	octagon	c. 5.60m	22.60 m 7.80 chamber 3.90 collar 10.80 dome	8	tent roof	octagon	8.25 m	14.40 m	75 M2	South-west	*	-	
2	Middle Tomb tower (Bāg- e Sabz) 792/ 1390	Octagon original (Twelve-sided in 2. construction phase)	4.80-5m (In octagonal plan) 2.40 (1n 12 sided)	20 m 9 chamber 2.20 collar 8.40 dome	8 ?	tent roof	Octagon Original (Twelve-sided in 2. construction phase)	9.70 m	12.50 m	60 M2	North	*	south side	
3	South Tomb tower (Bāg- e Sabz) 761/1360	Octagon original (Twelve-sided in 2. construction phase)	4.70-5(In octagonal plan) 3 (1n 12 sided)	? 8.40 chamber	8 ?	tent roof ?	Octagon Original (Twelve-sided in 2. construction phase)	8 m	12 m	61 M2	North	*	south side	
4	Emānzāde 'Alī b. Ğa'far 740/1339	octagon	4m	16 m 7.30 chamber 2.20 collar 6.30 dome	3	tent roof	Square	9 m	12 m	54 M2	North	?	south side	
5	Emānzāde Ebrāhīm (Darvāze-ye Kāšān) 805/1402	octagon	4m	12.50 6 Chamber 1.10 collar 5.40 dome	1	tent roof	Square	5.30 m	7.30	33 M2	North-east	*	?	
6	Emānzāde Šah Aḥmad Qāsem 780/1378	octagon	4.50m	? 4.70 Chamber 2.50 collar	3	tent roof	Square	9 m	?	50 M2	west	*	?	

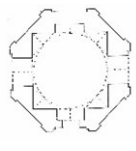

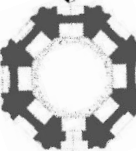

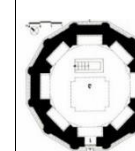
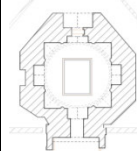
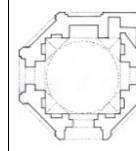
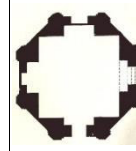
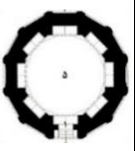
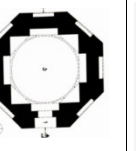
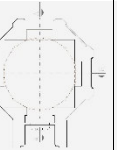
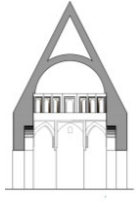
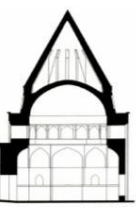
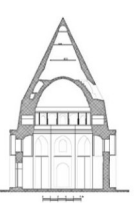



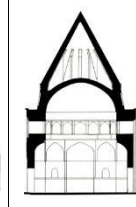
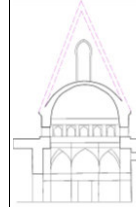
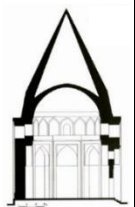
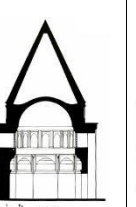
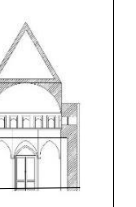
Architectural features

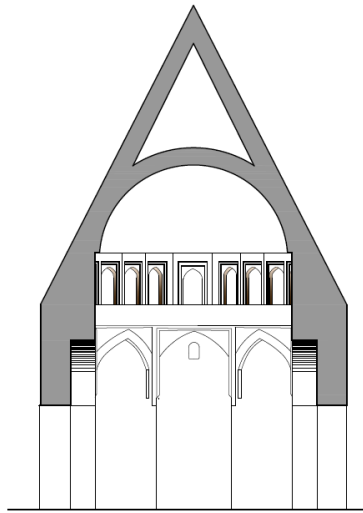
	Monument date	Architectural features									entrance	crypt	Mihrab	plan
		Exterior					Interior							
		shape	measure		door way	Dome	shape	measure		Area				
side	height		diameter	height										
7	Emānzāde Šāh Esmā'īl Sarbaḥš 744/1372	octagon	c.4 m	c. 13 m	3	tent roof	Square	7.15 m	11 m	34 M2	North (with Portal?)	*	South side	
			5.50 m chamber 1.80 m collar 6 m dome											
8	Emānzāde Ḥadīge Ḥātūn 770/1369	Octagon	c.3.50 – 4m	13.70 m	3	tent roof	Square	7 m	9m	30 M2	south	?	-	
			5.50 m chamber 2.62 m collar 5.70m dome											
9	Tomb of Šāh Ebrāhīm Mazdīgān 669-766/ 1300-65 ?	Octagon	5.50m	?	8?	tent roof	Octagon	8.50 m	14m	67 M2	south	?	-	
			7 m chamber 5.70m dome											
10	Emānzāde Šāh Ġa'far 667/1269	octagon	3.50m	c. 13 m	3	tent roof	Square	7.30 m	9 m	30 M2	North	?	*	
			5.50 m chamber 8 m dome											
11	Emānzāde Šāh Aḥmad Ḥanafīye 14 th century	octagon	3.60m	13.70 m	1	tent roof	Square	7.80 m	8.70	38 M2	east	?	-	
			6 m chamber 1.70 m collar 6 m dome											
12	Čāhār Emānzāde 14 th century	octagon	4 - 4.80m	18 m	4	tent roof	Square	7.70	?	30 M2	East?	?	-	
			2 m collar 9 m dome											

Architectural features														
	Monument Date	Exterior					Interior				entrance	crypt	Mihrab	Current plan
		shape	measure		door way	Dome	shape	measure		Area				
			side	height				diameter	height					
13	Emāmzāde Mūsā Mobarqā' 851/ 1447? second construction phase?	?	?	?		?	octagon	?	?		west	*	-	
14	Emāmzāde Zeyd or Ḥvāḡe Bahā' al-Dīn 847/1443 second construction phase?	?	?	?	4?	?	Square	7 m	7.50 ?	c. 28 M2	East (with Portal?)	?	-	
15	Emāmzāde Šāh Esmā'īl Bīdeqān 661/ 1263	Octagon	5.30	?	3	tent roof	Square	7.50 m	9 m	c. 30 M2	?	?	-	

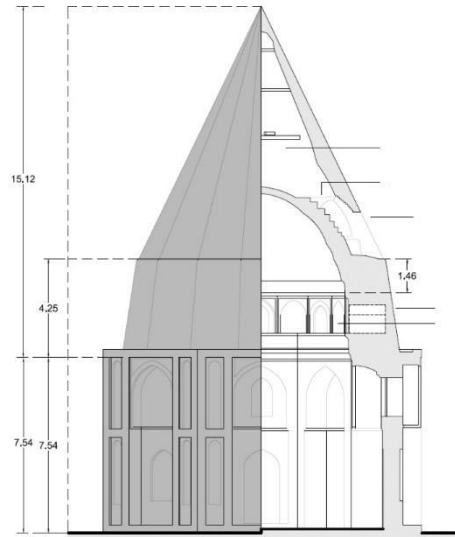


Drawing 2. Height comparison chart of mausoleums in Qom

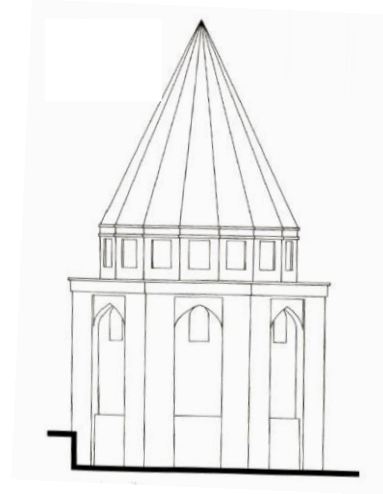
Architectural features											
name	Šāh Ğa'far	ʿAlī b. Ğa'far	North Tomb tower (Bağ- e Sabz)	Šāh Ebrāhīm Mazdīġān	South Tomb tower (Bağ- e Sabz)	Ḥadīġe Ḥātūn	Šāh Esmā'īl Sarbaġš	Šāh Aġmad Qāsem	Middle Tomb tower (Bağ- e Sabz)	Šāh Ebrāhīm (Darvāze Kašān)	Šāh Aġmad Ḥanafīye
Date	1269	1339	1315-1359?	1315-1359?	1360	1369	1372	1378	1390	1404	14?
Plan											
Type-plan	1	1	2	2	2-3	1	1	1	2-3	1	1
section											
Type-elevation	1	3	2	2	4	3	3	3	4	3	3
Area (M2)	30	54	75	67?	61	30	34	50	60	33	38
type of arch	D	A-B-F-K	B-Q	B-Q	A-B-K	A	E	C-K	A-K	-	A
Architect					Ḥasan b. ʿAlī Ḥolū						



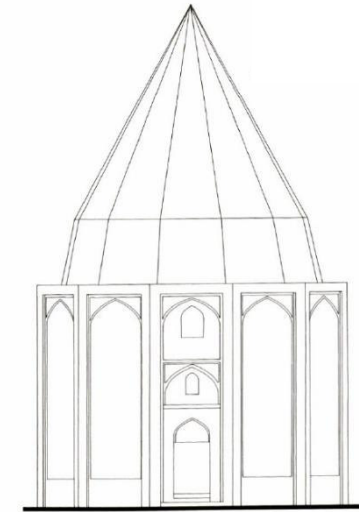
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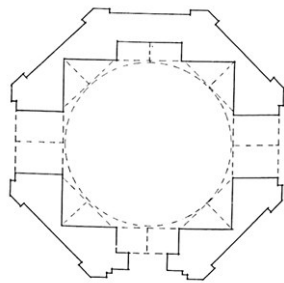
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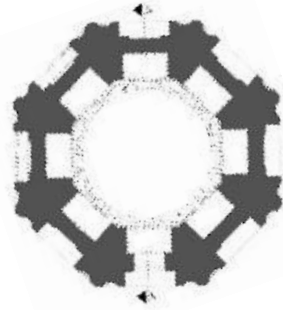
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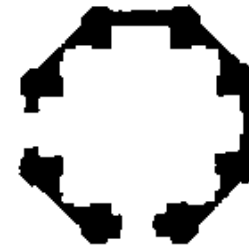
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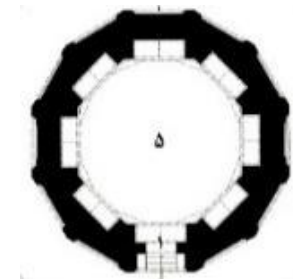
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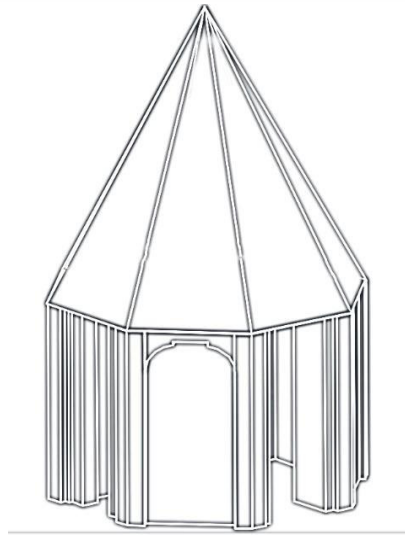


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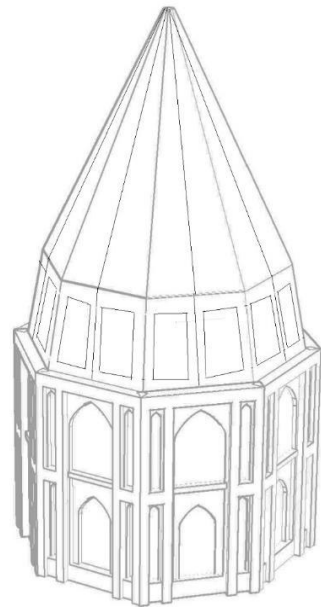


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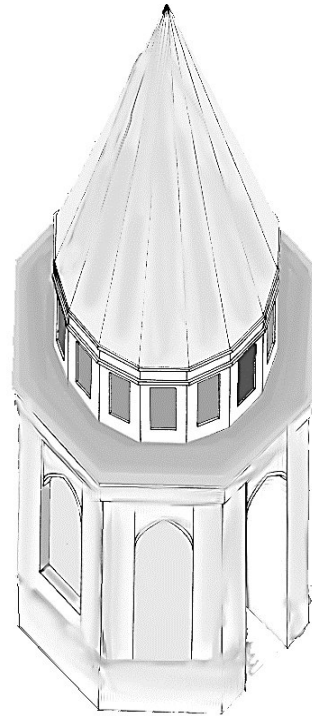
Drawing 3- Categorization of the architectural plans and elevation of the tomb structures in Qom



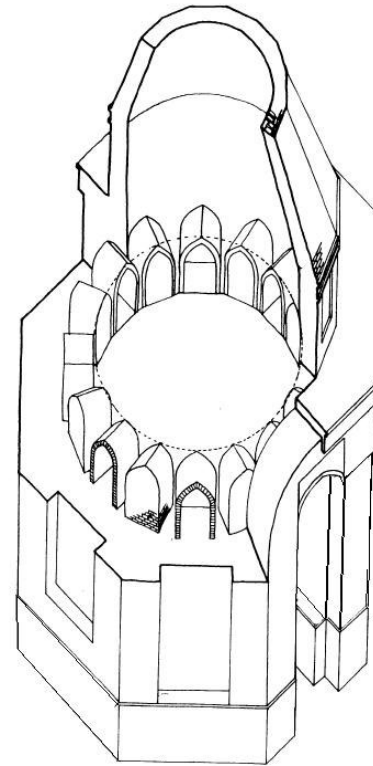
Type 1



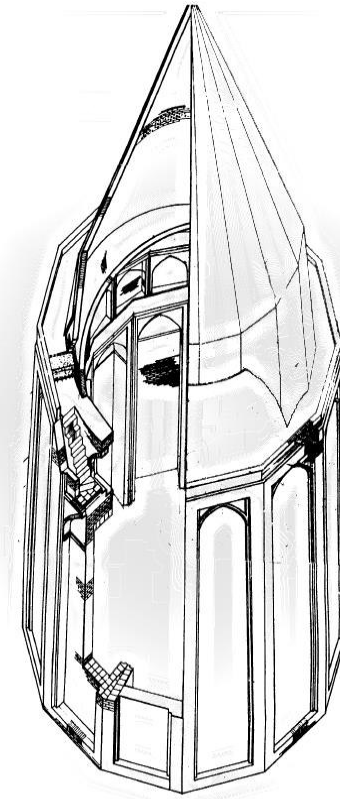
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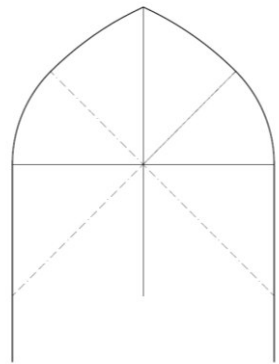


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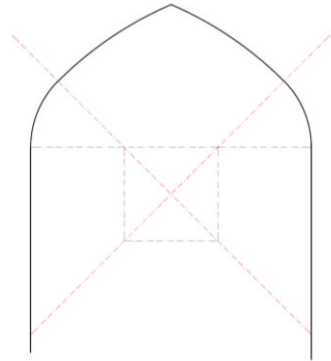


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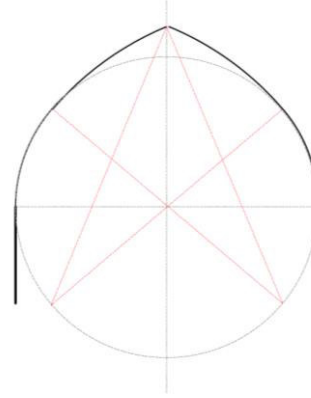
Drawing 4- Axonometric drawings of the different type of facades of tomb structures of Qom



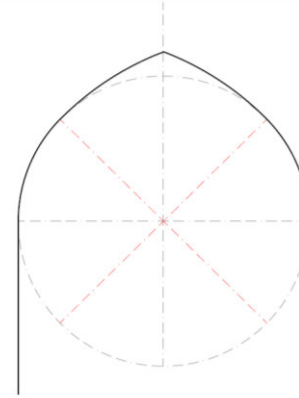
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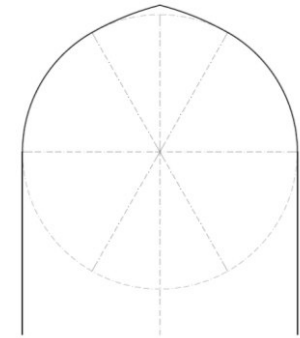
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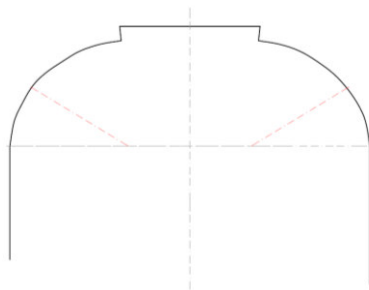
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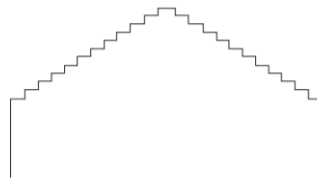
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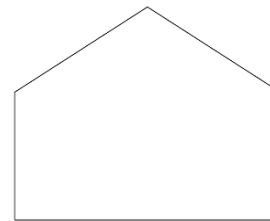
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Drawing 5. Sample of arches used in the tomb structures of Qom

5-2 Assessment and analysis of the epigraphic materials

Inscriptions play an important role in the adornment of the mausoleums. In addition to their visual aesthetics, they convey multiple concepts reflecting the social, religious and cultural conditions of their times, while also providing a testament to the Muslim artists' creativity and spirituality. The interior spaces of the mausoleums showcase the harmony between these inscriptions and other decorations, ultimately realizing the artists' principal goal of creating a majestic and spiritually charged environment.

Certain features of tomb inscriptions allow us to categorize the latter according to their location, workmanship, quality of the calligraphy, composition and appearance, context and content. These are summarized below:

- 1- The inscriptions are mainly used in the interior spaces and do not feature on the facades.⁴
- 2- Most of the tombs have three main inscription bands in their interior space. In the quadrangular tombs, these appear in all the zones of transition, while in the octagonal tombs, they are located around the arches, in the space of octagon-to-decagon and octagon-to-hexadecagon transition, and at the hexadecagon-to-circle transition.
- 3- The density of the background of an inscription depends on its placement, as the background and position influence how easy they are to read by the visitors. See the clear, *Kufic* Inscription around the arcade of the southern Tower of the Bāg-e Sabz (Ch.4-1 Img.24).
- 4- The location of an inscription, including where it begins, depend on the placement of various architectural components: for instance, the global inscription of the quadrilateral section in the Šāh Esmā'īl Sarbaḥš mausoleum begins at the entrance and ends on the same side (Ch.4-7, Img.23).
- 5- Shading in the inscriptions' background creates contrast in the negative space, enhancing the legibility of the writing. See the inscriptions in the middle Tomb of the Bāg-e Sabz or Emāmzāde 'Alī b. Ğa'far (Ch.4-5, Img.28-29).
- 6- The calligraphic styles employed in inscription writing are quite diverse. The *Thuluth*, *Naskh* and *Kufic* styles are used together in all these monuments, and such diversity adds movement, motion and variety to the mausolea' interiors.
- 7- Intra-stylistic variety also exists. Different styles of *Kufic* are employed, often within the same building. Taking the example of Bāg-e Sabz, very ornamental *Kufic* is used on the





⁴ Except for 2 Emamzades (*Zeyd and Esma 'īl Sarbaḥš*) which the date cannot be determined and they need more research and excavation.

- inscription at the base of the dome in the middle tomb; this is very intricate but quite hard to read. In the southern tower of the same tomb simple, more easily legible *Kufic* is employed in the inscription around the eight arches in the southern tower. while Square *Kufic* appears on nearly all the interior surfaces of the monument (Ch.4-1, Img.24-25)
- 8- On inscriptions set on plates, *Thuluth* is used instead of *Naskh*, as the latter occupies less surface space than the former (Qāder, 2009:27).
 - 9- Ornamental cursive leaves or lobed leaves are used in all backgrounds, especially with the *Thuluth* inscriptions, to fill the empty spaces and to create a balance in the composition of the lines. Moreover, in sections where the bulk of content is less than the size of the inscription, the empty spaces are filled with ornamental elements – see the lower inscription in Emāmzāde ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far (Ch.4-5, Img.28-29).
 - 10- The quality of the lettering and background pattern composition differs among the tombs. For example, the inscription of Emāmzāde Mūsā Mobarqa‘ is among the finest, executed in careful *Thuluth*. Space constraints have forced the artist to arrange the letters tightly together, yet it has been done very skillfully (Ibid). In some other cases, however, the visual quality of the inscriptions is compromised due to weak arrangement – the inscription of the Ḥadīġe Ḥātūn Mausoleum (Ch.4-8, Img.12-13) or the band inscription in the Mausoleum Šāh Aḥmad Qāsem (Ch.4-6, Img.24-25) are examples.
 - 11- We also witness a diversity in the quality of execution and, ultimately, in the visual composition in the planning or layering of the inscriptions’ elements (pattern/ornament and the letters themselves) (Ibid). Generally, the letters and words are in the foreground, with the decorative motifs placed behind. Layering the two allows an artist to create beautiful texture and to play with the appearance of light and shadow. The inscription in the Emāmzāde Mūsā Mobarqa‘ is a fine example (Ch.4-14, Img.5), while in both the Šāh Aḥmad Qāsem and the Šāh Esmā‘īl Sarbaḥš mausoleums, this has been done with much less skill.
 - 12- The proportions of the patterns and the writing are among the most important factors affecting the quality of the inscriptions (Ibid. 29). In some mausolea, such and Mūsā Mobarqa‘, this factor has been properly taken into consideration, with the density and the dimensions of the patterns facilitating (or at least not hindering) the inscription’s legibility. This inscription would have been executed by two artists, a calligrapher and a craftsman, but their work is so perfectly synchronised that one may reasonably assume that the stucco craftsman was versed in calligraphy, or that the calligrapher had supervised the inscription’s execution. Not all inscriptions are executed with such great skill – on the

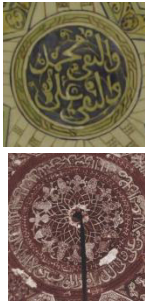

- inscription at the portal of Emāmzāde Zeyd (Ch.4-13, Img.12), the decorative motifs in the background hinder the legibility, and one gets the impression that the inscription would benefit considerably if the decorations were eliminated altogether. These two examples demonstrate how the technique of using stucco and calligraphy alongside each other can at times enhance the strength of the inscription, and at other undermines it, to the extent that in some cases, the elimination of the stucco ornaments would enhance the beauty of the inscription (Qāder, 2009:27).
- 13-The monocolour tile inscriptions of the Šāh Emā‘īl in Bīdeqān, Šāh Ğa‘far and ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far mausoleums are unique in that the lettering is particularly sparse, and the resulting negative space is filled with diacritic marks, intended to create a visual balance. These particular inscriptions are executed in a combination of the *Naskh* and *Thuluth*, styles, and their lines resemble the peripheral lines of the star mosaic tiles (Ch.4-5, Img.55; Ch.4-9, Img.20).
- 14-In general, there is a relation between the length and the content of the inscriptions, which define the density and the number of words. For example, in places where the inscription is long, the calligrapher has stretched the letters and composed them with much separation between them; on the other hand, where little space is available, the composition is more compact, such as in the Mūsā Mobarqa‘ Mausoleum and in the niche inscriptions of Emāmzāde ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far (Ch.4-5, Img.18).
- 15-In older tombs, the thickness of the calligraphic pen is equal to the letters, but in the later monuments, the thinner and more stretched the letters are in comparison to the pen’s thickness. This trend can be observed in the inscriptions of Šāh Ğa‘far, which is older, through the *Thuluth* inscriptions of Emāmzāde Šāh Esmā‘īl Sarbaḥš, Šāh Aḥmad Qāsem, and finally at the Šāh Aḥmad Ḥanafīye Mausoleum (Ch.4-11, Img.16).
- 16-Most of the inscriptions are written in Arabic, and as the letters *Alif* and *Lam* are used widely in Arabic words, their vertical stretching has greatly assisted in keeping the proportions and composition of the inscriptions harmonious and pleasing to view – see the inscriptions in the Emāmzāde ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far, where these letters were used to manage the width of the inscription (Ch.4-5, Img.11).
- 17-In some cases, due to the shortness of the inscription and the constraints of space, the text has been written in two lines, with the stretching of alifs to their maximum height possible. The upper stucco inscriptions of Emāmzāde ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far (Ch.4-5, Img.14).
- 18-Naskh inscriptions are used in the borders of star tiles, which afford the calligrapher more space. *Thuluth* script are mostly Quranic and usually, they are composed with a single,






quite ornamental word in the middle of the tile – see the eight pointed star tiles of Emāmzāde ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far (Ch.4-5, Img.50).

- 19- The themes of inscriptions include the holy name of Allāh, Quranic verses and chapters, the sacred names of the Prophet and the *imams*, prayers, hymns, religious citations, names of the works’ patrons or benefactors, the ruling kings or sultans, the authors of the work, the stucco or tile workers, the masons or the writers and calligraphers, the date of construction, Persian and Arabic poems, as well as writings and terms of bequeath.
- 20- The themes of the Square *Kufic* inscriptions are usually the Sacred Names, while decorative *Kufic* inscriptions are Quranic.
- 21- The majority of the Quranic chapters incorporated into the inscriptions are: Tabārak and al-Raḥmān, al-Ḥaṣr and al-Faṭḥ, al-Qadr, Yāsīn, al-Mo’minūn, al-Dahr, ‘Imrān, al-Ḥamd, al- Iḥlaṣ, al-Isrā’ and al-‘Arāf. They appear in different sections of the tombs such as the body, the space beneath the dome, the *Mihrab* and the tiles on the plinth and on the cenotaph. No particular pattern can be observed as to which Quranic verses are used in which sections, but most of them reference the rewards awaiting the righteous after death or prayer, and as such are eminently suitable for monumental mausolea.
- 22- In most buildings, where the dome’s shell has remained intact, the central inscription is accompanied by a common design. Three tombs contain a verse from the ‘Imrān Chapter, and the remaining tombs are adorned with verses containing the concepts of Uniqueness of God, the Prophethood of Moḥammad and the Guardianship of ‘Alī.
- 23- The sentences “al-Mulk lillāh, al-Wāḥid, al-Qaḥḥār and Moḥammad wa‘Alī Ḥayr al-Baṣar” (الملك لله الواحد القهار و محمد و على خير البشر) are a common feature in these tombs, as they appear in nearly all the inscriptions (at least all those preserved and legible in the present day). These are used mainly in the interval bands of the surfaces and on the borders of the main inscriptions. Additionally, the repetition of various sacred words and appellations, including the names of Allāh, Moḥammad, ‘Alī and the fourteen Shiite *imams* and saints, has been used in abundance on different surfaces, no doubt in order to promote a religious message.
- 24- In monuments which have three inscription bands, the middle one usually contains information about the building, the names of the deceased, the builder, the patron, the master craftsman and the date of construction, thus constituting important epigraphic evidence.

1- Epigraphic material								
	Monument	inscription band			Encircled inscription or medallion			
		location	Script style	content	location	Script style	content	
1	North Tomb tower (Bāg- e Sabz)	1- running along the chambers	Thuluth	Quranic: Surah Tabārak(67) and al-Raḥmān(55)	Base of the dome	Square Kufic	The name of Moḥammad and ‘Alī	
		2- the zone of eight to sixteen transition	Thuluth	Quranic. surah al-Ḥaṣr(59) and al-Faṭḥ(48)				
		3-base of dome	Kufic	Quranic: Surah al-Qadr (97) Lā Ilāha Illalāh... *5				
2	Middle Tomb tower (Bāg- e Sabz)	1- running along the chambers	Thuluth	Quranic: surah Yāsīn (36)	Center of dome	Thuluth	Quranic: surah ‘Imrān (3) -on Border: Moḥammad	
		2- the zone of eight to sixteen transition	Thuluth	-Quranic (surah al-Mo’ minūn (23) - epigraphic evidence for dating and deceased	On sixteen inscribed medallions on dome	Thuluth	Lā Ilāha Illalāh ... *6	
		3-base of dome	kufic	-Quranic: surah al-Dahr (76) -Borders: Moḥammad and ‘Alī	Spandrel	Thuluth	name of Allāh and the fourteen immaculate Shia figures	
3	South Tomb tower (Bāg- e Sabz)	1- running along the chambers	kufic	-Quranic:surah al-Dahr((76) and surah al-Qadr(97)	- Spandrel (above the entrance)	naskh	Name of craftsman ?(‘Alī b. Moḥammad b. Abī Ṣoḡā’)	
		2- zone of 8-to-16 transition	Thuluth	epigraphic evidence for dating, patron of the building and the deceased	Over the entrance	naskh	Name of architect? (Sayyed Ḥasan ‘Alavī)	
		3-base of dome	Thuluth	Quranic: surah al-Faṭḥ(48)	Spandrel sixteen inscribed roundels	naskh	The Great Salutation	
		Mihrab	Thuluth	surah al-Isrā’ (17)	Tympanum	Thuluth	Name of ‘Alī, Moḥammad, Fatime, Ḥasan and Ḥosain	

*5 لا اله الا الله الملك الحق المبين- محمد رسول الله الصادق الامين -على ولى الله - *5

Epigraphic material								
	Monument	inscription band			Encircled inscription or medallion			
		location	Script style	content	location	Script style	content	
4	Emānzāde 'Alī b. Ġa'far	1- Under squinche zone	Thuluth	Quranic: Surah al-Dahr (76)	Eight inscribed medallions on surface of the dome	Naskh	The Great Salutation	
		2- At the beginning of octagonal zone	Thuluth	Name of the deceased and sponsor ('Aḡā Mālek Mīr Moḡammad al-Ḥasanī,)				
		3- On eight blind pointed arch niches above plinth	Naskh	-Decorator? (Bahrām Qazbīnī.) -Date -name of donors	Center of dome	Naskh	Lā Ilāha Illalāh ... *6 لا اله الا الله الملك الحق العدل المبين محمد رسول الله صادق الوعد الامين على ولي الله امير المؤمنين	
5	Emānzāde Ebrāhīm (Kāšān gate)	the zone of eight to sixteen transition	Thuluth	-Epigraphic evidence for dating and the name of constructor (Ḥasan b. 'Alī Ṭusī.)	-	-	-	-
6	Šah Aḡmad Qāsem	1-under squinche zone naskh	Thuluth	-Quranic surah Yāsīn(36)	Spandrel	Square kufic	Moḡammad and 'Alī	
		2- the zone of eight to sixteen transition	Thuluth	-Patron of the building -the deceased Name of craftsman? (Moḡammad b. Abū Šoġa')	Spandrel	Square kufic and naskh	Allāh, Moḡammad and 'Alī	
		3-base of dome	Kufic	Quranic surah al- Ḥamd (1) and al-Iḡlaṣ(112)	Spandrel	Square kufic	Moḡammad	
		4- border of arches	Square kufic	Al Mulk lillāh va....				

Epigraphic material								
	Monument	inscription band			Encircled inscription or medallion			
		location	Script style	content	location	Script style	content	
7	Šāh Esmā‘il Sarbaḥš	1- Zone of four-to eight transition -On border	-Thuluth - square Kufic	-Quranic: Surah al-Dahr (76) - Al Mulk lillāh va....	Center of dome	Thuluth	Quranic: surah ‘Imrān (3)	 
		2- The zone of eight to sixteen transition	Thuluth	Name of the deceased and constructor (Ġiyāṭ al-Dīn Moḥammad)	On dome	Square Kufic	Allāh, Moḥammad and ‘Alī	
		3-Base of dome -On border	Kufic - square Kufic	Quranic: Surah al-Hamd (1) - Al Mulk lillāh va....	- Tympanum - Tympanum - Tympanum	-Square Kufic - Square Kufic - Square Kufic	-Names of twelve <i>Imams</i> of shia - Al Mulk lillāh va..... - ‘Alī and Moḥammad	
8	Ḥadiġe Ḥātūn	1- Zone of four-to eight transition	Thuluth	-Sponsor and construction date of the building - surah Yāsīn Name of craftsmen an architect (Moḥammad b.Abī Šoġā‘ and Ḥasan b.‘Alī Ḥolū)	-Center of dome -On border of central medallion	-Thuluth - Square kufic	-Quranic: surah ‘Imrān (3) - Moḥammad	 
		2- Zone of eight to sixteen transition	Thuluth	Epigraphic evidence of deceased and the constructor (Ġiyāṭ al-Dīn Moḥammad)	-	-	-	
		3-Base of dome	Kufic	-Quranic: Surah al-Hamd (1) -Borders: Al Mulk lillāh va....	-	-	-	
9	Šāh Aḥmad Ḥanaḥfiye	1- Zone of eight to sixteen transition	Thuluth	-Quranic: surah al-Faṭḥ(48)	Sixteen inscribed roundels on surface of the dome	Thuluth	Name of Moḥammad, Fāṭime and twelve <i>Imams</i>	
					Center of dome	Thuluth	“لااله الاالله محمد رسول الله على ولي الله امير المؤمنين	

Epigraphic material											
	Monument	Inscription in Bannai		Inscription on tiles			Mihrab or niches		Others inscription		
		location	content	location	content	Script style	content	Script style	location	content	Script style
5	Šah Aḥmad Qāsem	The walls between sixteen-sided panel	The name of 'Alī	-	-	-	-	-	18-sided Zone of transition Chamber on W-side	- Al Mulk lillāh va.... Date- Hoval -Malek..	square kufic
6	Šah Esmā'īl Sarbaḥš	-	-	-	-	-	Lā Ilāha Illalāh ... *6 Quranic: surah Asrā' (17)	Square kufic Thuluth	Portal	The name of sponsor or Architect?	Thuluth
7	Ḥadiḡe Ḥātūn	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18-sided panel Borders	The name of Moḡammad Al Mulk lellāh va....	square kufic
8	Šah Ġa'far	On walls of chambers	The name of 'Alī and Moḡammad	Cenotaph Plinth area	name of deceased person and date Quranic	Thuluth naskh	-	-	Above chamber Polygonal bands on inner surface of the dome	name of deceased person and date name of 'Alī and Moḡammad	Thuluth square kufic

Quranic inscriptions		
	Monument	Surah-Verse
1	North Tomb tower (Bāġ- e Sabz)	surah al-Isrā' (17:78), al-Dahr (76), surah al-Qadr (97), surah al-Fatḥ (48: 1-4)
2	Middle Tomb tower (Bāġ- e Sabz)	surah Yāsīn (36:1-45), surah al-Mu'minūn (23:1-8), surah al-Dahr (76:1-6), surah al 'Imrān (3:16-17)
3	South Tomb tower (Bāġ- e Sabz)	surahs of Tabārak (Surah 67), al-Raḥmān (Surah 55), Surahs of al-Ḥašr (59:22-24), al-Fatḥ (48:1-4), Surah al-Qadr (Surah 97)
4	Šāh Ebrāhīm	-
5	Emāmzāde 'Alī b. Ğa'far	Surah al-Insān (74:1-9), surah al- Baqarah (2: 255-57), surah Yāsīn (36:1-10), surah al-'Arāf (7:54-55), surah al- Isrā (17:78), surah Al-Ḥamd (1:1-7), Surah al-Naṣr (110:1-3),
6	Šāh Aḥmad Qāsem	surah Yāsīn (36: 1-12), surahs al-Ḥamd(1), al-Iḥlāš (12-1),
7	Šāh Esmā'īl Sarbaḥš	al-Dahr (76: 1-11), surah Isrā' (17: 80), al-Ḥamd (1:1-5), surah al-'Imrān (3:18-19)
8	Ḥadīġe Ḥātūn	Surah Yāsīn (36:1-9), surahs al-Ḥamd(1), 'Imrān surah (3:17).
9	Šāh Ğa'far	al-Faġr (89)
10	Šāh Ebrāhīm Mazdīġān	al- Baqarah (2:255-257)
11	Šāh Aḥmad Ḥanafīye	surah al-Fatḥ (48: 29)
12	Čāhhr Emāmzāde	-
13	Emāmzāde Zeyd	surah al-Qiṣaš (28: 88),surah al-Baqara (2:255)
14	Mūsā Mobarqa'	-
15	Šāh Esma'īl Bīdeqān	surah Yāsīn (36)

5-3 - Assessment and analysis of decorative materials

In general, the decorative styles related to architectures at various regions, possess different quality and feel, with the variations depending on different factors and conditions of their times. In each historical era, religious artworks draw on previous styles, while adding new elements to their design and reflecting technological change. The period between the 13th-15th centuries in Iran constitutes an important artistic epoch, during which many art forms derived from earlier times, particularly from the Seljuk and Khawarazmian periods, undergo truly astonishing changes. The masterpieces created in this period have been credited to the innovative fusion of Iranian and Far Eastern influences (Blair; Bloom:2009: 3). The artists of the time created truly novel works, which gradually evolved into a distinct and independent style (Şālehī Kāḥakī; Šekofte, 2014: 6). In architecture, tombs are some of the monuments, which most provide a perfect space to exhibit the talents and creativity of Muslim artists, to such an extent that the decorations of these tombs can be termed the main manifestation for Islamic art in this period, while maintaining their religious and spiritual significance. Among the tombs that find the proper opportunity and background to display decorative styles are the Qom masoleums. The choice of octagonal plan allowed a larger surface for decoration and manifestation of the artists, and in fact, the combination of the two elements of architecture and decoration next to each other, has created an exceptional spiritual atmosphere in the tombs.

The main decorations of these tombs consist of stuccos and tilework, each with their own, specific features, as described below.

5-3-1- The stuccos

As the dominant element of Il-Khanid artistic production, stucco work demonstrates the extraordinary skill of contemporaneous craftsmen. Plaster work is used extensively for architectural ornamentation in this period, and many different techniques are used according to the architectural surfaces worked on and the components rendered thus (Wilber,1955:79). Many studies have been undertaken on the stuccos in the Il-khanid period: some of the most important were conducted by Wilber (1955), Blair and Bloom (1994) and, more recently, by some Iranian scholars (see below)¹.

In Qom, the largest number of stuccos by far can be found in the the 14th century tomb structures, which followed the Il-khanid style and displayed a specific pattern in design and execution. In

¹ They include Aslānī (2006), Alvandīyān (2006), Dādvar (2006), Hamīdī (2011), Makī Nežād (2008) Sālehī Kāḥkī (2014), Šekofte (2014).

these monuments, the decorations have been executed exclusively in the interior spaces², and they exhibit the features outlined below:

- 1- The mausolea's decorations all follow a set of design principles, and the surfaces described have all been covered in plaster according to a comprehensive pattern for Tomb structure decoration. In most tombs, the surfaces around the chambers, the spandrels and the tympana, the soffits, the squinches, the zones of transition, the blind arch niches and the domes' surfaces are covered with stuccos of different techniques, though the density of these decorations varies between the tombs.
- 2- The decorations of these monuments follow the same, specified rhythm. The repetition of simple modules creates different designs juxtaposed to each other, which ultimately are all arranged in harmony and order.
- 3- Each of the different surfaces (on the arcades, entablures' medallions, spandrels etc) have their own, unique designs and patterns and, although they can be quite similar, no two designs are completely the same.
- 4- Stucco decorations can be classified according to the details of technology and execution³ into:

- a) Semi-embossed carved and incised plaster

Usually, the semi-embossed technique – with reliefs of between 0.5 to 2.5 centimetres – was applied to decorate the different surfaces of chambers such as squinches, spandrels, inscription bands, and also on the *Mihrābs*.

- b) Flat stucco in false joint and simulated incised brick joints and brick-end technique.

False joints are used on large surface walls in a number of tombs in Qom. They are usually executed between the vertical joints of the brick walls. The false joint designs consist mostly of four-petal flowers, crosses, butterfly designs, and in some cases the sacred names (Ch. 4-1 Img. 40; Ch.4-7, Img.43-44).

Most false joints are of simulated incised brick-end patterns – these can also be referred to as flat stucco (Sālehī Kāh̄kī, Šekofte, 2014:68). In this technique, parallel lines with joints are executed to simulate brick designs and the plug patterns are on the assumed points of the vertical joints. Geometrical and abstract patterns, as well as sacred names,

² Except for two cases of portals, which require archeological studies to determine the dates of their construction.

³ There are many classifications of plaster decorations, which are mainly based on shape and design. However, the classification of technology and techniques proposed by researchers such as Sālehī Kāh̄kī, Aslānī and Šekofte in recent years are more complete and relevant to the specimen or materials of this project. It is based on the level of embossment and technical skills. For more information about the executive methods and techniques of plaster carving in Iran, refer to their articles titled “Introduction to twelve stuccos applied in the decoration of Islamic architecture of Iran, and the methods and evolution of plaster decorations of Iranian architecture from the seventh to ninth centuries”

are used in the false joints. When placed next to each other on some surfaces, they create the larger Bannā⁴ inscriptions. Given the ease and speed of execution, as well as the ease of filling a large area with this technique (e.g. walls, niches, dome surfaces), this type of decoration has been used in many tombs (Ch.4-5, Img.39; Ch. 4-2, Img.22). In a few cases, color is used to create contrast and to emphasize the false joints

c) Carved plaster lattice

Carved plaster lattice or open work stucco is generally used as window decoration. The common decorative motifs of most stuccos are floral and geometric (Ch.4-5, Img. 9). In most monuments, more than one technique is used next to each other on different surfaces.

- 5- The term *Azde kārī*, or grid pattern technique, denotes an additional technique, commonly applied on semi-embossed incised and carved plaster of various designs⁵. (Ch.4-5, Img.24-25-26)
- 6- Painted plaster is an additional technique, sometimes employed together with the main stucco techniques, such as false joints or semi-embossed carved plaster. The colours used in the tower tombs are ochre, green, red, yellow, white, and dark and light blue. These colors help the artists to highlight the luster and sheen of the patterns and to underline their volume (and, in some cases, their contrast) for a better display. Colors are used in the medallions, the band inscriptions, the spandrels, the margins and the surfaces of the domes. The middle and north tombs of Bāg-e Sabz are the most colourful and varied (Ch. 4-2, Img.9)
- 7- The decorative motifs of most stuccos are floral and arabesque, geometric and epigraphic. Animal and bird patterns were also used, but only in one monument (Ch.4-4, Img. 22)
- 8- The vegetal designs consist mostly of lobed leaves, single or multiple leaves, arabesques and scrollwork patterns, in which cavities or hatches in grid or cross-hatched forms are created.
- 9- Inscription friezes with special designs are used in profusion on different surfaces of most tombs. The background of the inscriptions and the end of the shaft letters have been filled

⁴Bannāii is a script form of the Islamic calligraphy It is a kind of angular Kufic script, which has geometric forms like square, rhombus, rectangular, parallel and crossed lines.

⁵ The execution of this method is explained in Wilber's book "the Architecture of Islamic Iran, The II- khānid period, P. 81.

with decorative motifs and highly twisted into dense, spiral-shaped vegetal stems. Their design and composition differ from the calligraphy⁶.

- 10- The use of bands or border designs is very common in the plaster decorations of these tombs. They are used as frames for different surfaces and margins of the inscriptions and are executed with the semi-embossed carved technique. The patterns used in the bands include simple geometrical or vegetal motifs or inscriptions, repeated next to each other.
- 11- Ornamental medallions are used in most tombs, either round or in the form of paisleys, and they include inscriptions and geometrical or vegetal designs. A special case are the circular medallions at the centre of domes, bearing a combination of vegetal and arabesque designs and inscriptions, which can be found in most tombs such as Šāh Esmā‘īl Sarbaḥš, the middle tomb of Bāg-e Sabz, the tomb of ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far, the tomb of Ḥadīḡe Ḥātūn.
- 12- Another popular design are the polygon and star patterns with ornamental bands, used on the inner surfaces of domes. This is also used in most of the tower tombs in Qom.
- 13- Carved plaster lattice coverings are used to cover the windows in the collars of the domes in most tombs. These include geometric (‘Alī b. Ğa‘far) or arabesque (Ḥadīḡe Ḥātūn) designs.
- 14- In a number of tombs, the names of two famous stucco craftsmen (‘Alī b. Moḥammad b. Abū Šoḡa’ and ‘Alī Qazbīnī) are rendered alongside the date of execution.

5-3-2- The features of tile decorations

In the Il-Khanid period, tilework, which developed from similar crafts in earlier periods, was considered more refined and artful than brickwork. In Qom tombs, both monochrome glazed and glazed, luster-painted tiles⁷ were used. All the latter were made in a specific workshop in Kāšān, which was the center of production of luster tiles between the 13th-14th centuries (Blair; Bloom, 1994: 33). In the Mongol period, this type of tile was developed to the extent that it is considered as the most important advance in decoration during the 12th and 13th centuries (Tahūrī, 2002: 72). The luster-painted tile was made according to a complex and ambiguous process⁸, and most of them are dated and signed. The end of the glaze luster tile production is usually considered to coincide with the establishment of the Il-Khanid dynasty, though they were actually made even after that, primarily in workshops in Mašhad and Kāšān (Maslenitsyna, 1975: 13). The names of

⁶ This is processed in details in the section of analysis of inscriptions

⁷ Indeed “luster” is a complex, over-glaze technique, in which the pigment is applied to the surface of a hard, already fired glaze in a second firing, at a temperature lower than the first (Watson, 1985: 31).

⁸ If we try to explain it briefly, the glazed luster tile is obtained from applying the combination of silver oxide and copper on the cold surface of ceramic or tile and re-firing it in a muffle kiln (Kalbādī Nežād: 16, 2011)

producers and dates of production make these tiles particularly useful in dating the structures where they were used, and they also facilitate stylistic comparisons, both synchronic and diachronic.

Most of the surviving glazed luster tiles in Qom have been obtained from the mausoleum of ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far. They are discussed in detail in the documentation section related to this monument. A number of *mihṛāb* bearing Abū Ṭāher family’s signature are available.⁹ The luster *mihṛāb* currently displayed in the Islamic Department of the National Museum in Tehran, which belongs to the ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far mausoleum at Qom (734 /1334), is among the latest *mihṛābs* of the Abū Ṭāher clan. In addition to the unprovenanced *mihṛāb* from year 663 /1264, currently at the Berlin Museum, which Watson suggests that it belonged to Emāmzāde Aḥmad b. Qāsem in Qom (Watson 1985: 185). A large number of tiles salvaged from the mausoleum of ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far and a few from other tombs have been transferred to museums and presently, no tilework belonging to this period is available at any of the tombs. The general specifications of the tilework in these tombs are as follows:

- 1- The tile decoration on the exterior of the monuments was executed exclusively on the domes of the tombs, which were covered in turquoise, monochrome tiles. No other part of the exterior bears tile decoration.
- 2- The use of tilework in the interior space of tombs was exclusive to Emamzades, and the tombs of rulers are devoid of this element.
- 3- In general, the tile decorations in the interiors are executed in the plinths, the *Mihṛābs* and on the cenotaphs.
- 4- From a technical point of view, the tiles are divided in the two groups of luster and monochrome glaze types, and from a formal aspect, they are divided into eight-pointed star, cross and four-sided shapes. The luster tiles are also divided into the three groups of star, azure and mud brick types.
- 5- Documents demonstrate the use of star and cross tiles in the internal plinths of five Emamzades, to the height of approximately 0.90 meter to one meter.
- 6- The oldest surviving tile, dated to the year 665/1267, belongs to the mausoleum of Šāh Ğa‘far, and the most recent dates back to the year 738/1338 and belongs to the mausoleum of ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far.

⁹ Similar surviving lustre tile *mihṛābs* include the large *mihṛāb* of the Meydān Mosque at Kāšān (623/1226) now in Berlin, the large *mihṛāb* from Emāmzāde Yaḥyā (663 / 1264), a section of *mihṛāb* in ‘Abdoṣṣamad at Naṭanz (707 / 1308), the three *mihṛāb* of Emām Rezā mausoleum at Mašhad, two of which bear the date of 612 / 1215. These are among the oldest surviving *mihṛābs*, with the third dated as 640 / 1242.

- 7- The azure-colored, embossed tiles produced by luster technique belong to the cenotaph of the mausoleum of 'Alī b. Ğa'far. They feature an inscriptional design, executed in a kind of gilded glaze on azure ground¹⁰(Ch.4-5, Img. 44).
- 8- Other salvaged tiles are the beige and brown-colored mud brick tiles, 0/43x0/43 m, bearing the images of human figures with Mongol features and dressed in Mongol attire. Only four such pieces are available, all coming from the mausoleum of Šāh Esmā'īl.
- 9- Twelve pieces of mud brick tiles with turquoise glaze and relief inscription, 23x23cm, have been obtained from the oldest tomb discussed (Ch.4-9, Img.11-12).
- 10- Various luster, eight-pointed star tiles, 23x23cm or 31x31 cm have been salvaged from a number of tombs. These contain both patterns and inscriptions, the latter mostly Quranic verses, as well as various adages and Persian poems. The decorative elements can be vegetal, arabesque or geometric, in addition to somewhat abstract animal and bird patterns. A single case of a figurative design is also available. The colours used in these tiles are limited to brown, white, blue, and azure (Ch.4-5, Img. 48-49).
- 11- The inscriptions used in these star tiles, whether Quranic or otherwise, are usually effective and practical instructions and recommendations about Islamic ethics for social and individual life. They were probably selected by the artists themselves and are written on the margins of the tiles.
- 12- The cross-shaped tiles were placed between the eight-pointed star tiles and, due to their forms, they provide the possibility of development and duplication of the surfaces of the star tiles. These are embossed monochrome tiles (Ch.4-5, Img. 53).
- 13- Some of the tiles salvaged from the tombs bear the name of the artist and the date of production, pointing to their workshop as "the Kāšān Workshop" (the mausoleums of 'Alī b. Ğa'far and Šāh Ğa'far). Among the names of craftsmen, obtained from the tiles of a single tomb ('Alī b. Ğa'far,) are the names of Master Yūsef b. Moḥammad as well as two others, Master Ne'matollāh Ğūšāqānī and Master Ğamāl Naqqāš, both of whom were working at the workshop of Master Rok al-Dīn Kāšīkār.
- 14- A large, flat panel *Mihrāb* measuring 2.83 x 1.22m and consisting of 45 individual luster tiles, installed in the 'Alī b. Ğa'far mausoleum, is among the truly outstanding *Mihrābs* in Iran. It was produced in the 14th century in the Kāšān Workshop.

¹⁰ The azure color is obtained by cobalt oxide with thin gold leafs and has an extraordinary gloss (Kalbādī Nežād: 18, 2011)

Decoration						
	Monument	Tile decoration		Stucco decoration		
		location	Style/technique	location	Style/technique	characteristics
1	North Tomb tower (Bāg- e Sabz)	-	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Eight-sided chamber -Borders on different zone and parts - Two zones of transition and around eight- sided panels -Eight spandrels, soffits, and the blank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simulated incised brick joint -Carved plaster - Carved painted plaster - Carved plaster and incised plaster work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In four-petal flowers, and sacred names -Scrolls- cable mouldings and undulating motifs -Lobed vegetal element in background -Floral motifs
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Arches of the hexadecagon and Spandrels - Inner surface of the dome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Carved medallions -Incised plaster work with frieze bands, <i>Āzde Kārī</i> and painted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Floral motifs - In polygonal design with floral motifs
2	Middle Tomb tower (Bāg- e Sabz)	-	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Tympana of eight chambers and eighteen-sided panel -Two zones of transition and around eight- sided panel and central of dome -Tympana, under the dome, spandrels of 18- sided panel -on soffits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simulated incised brick joint -Inscription frieze in carved painted stucco -carved painted medallions - Carved painted plaster -Incised painted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In four-petal flowers, and sacred names -lobed vegetal element in background -Sacred names and floral design -Floral design and polychrome
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inner surface of the dome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Incised plaster work with frieze bands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pinted plaster in polygonal and star design

Decoration						
	Monument	Tile decoration		Stucco decoration		
		location	Style/technique	location	Style/technique	characteristics
3	South Tomb tower (Bāg- e Sabz)	-	-	<p>-Mihrāb</p> <p>-Tympana and spandrels of chambers</p> <p>- 2 zones of transition, around 8- sided panel and center of dome</p> <p>- Tympana and soffits of chambers</p> <p>-Tympana of 18-sided zone</p>	<p>-Carved plaster with <i>Āžde Kārī</i></p> <p>- Carved plaster medallions</p> <p>-Inscription frieze in carved plaster <i>Āžde Kārī</i></p> <p>-Brick-end plugs and carved painted plaster</p> <p>-Brick-end plugs</p>	<p>-Inscription frieze with floral motifs in background and border</p> <p>-Sacred names and floral design</p> <p>-lobed vegetal element in colored background</p> <p>-Simulated in cross, butterfly design, and sacred names</p> <p>-Simulated work</p>
4	‘Alī b. Ġa‘far	<p>Cenotaph</p> <p>Plinth area</p> <p>Mihrāb</p>	<p>Luster-painted frieze</p> <p>Eight-pointed star and cross shaped tile</p> <p>Luster-painted frieze</p>	<p>-Above plinth and under the dome</p> <p>-On 3 zones of transition</p> <p>-Squinches and 16-sided zone</p> <p>- Inner surface of the dome</p> <p>-Opening on 16-sided zone</p>	<p>- Simulated incised brick joint</p> <p>-Carved inscription frieze and painted plaster</p> <p>-Polychrome plaster carved plaster with <i>Āžde Kārī</i></p> <p>-Incisedpainted plaster work with frieze bands</p> <p>-Carved plaster lattice</p>	<p>- Cross and butterfly design</p> <p>- vegetal element in colored background</p> <p>-Floral design</p> <p>-In polygonal and star design</p> <p>-Arabesque design</p>

Decoration						
	Monument	Tile decoration		Stucco decoration		
		location	Style/technique	location	Style/technique	characteristics
5	Emānzāde Ebrāhīm (Kāšān gate)	?	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Above chambers -Spandrel of eight-sided panels - Around sixteen rectangular panels - Inner surface of the dome - Opening on sixteen-sided transition zone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Carved inscription band and <i>Āžde Kārī</i> -Carved plaster -Carved plaster bands -Painted plaster -Carved plaster lattice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lobed vegetal elements in background -Floral and bird design -Geometric motifs -In polygonal and star design -Floral design
6	Šah Aḥmad Qāsem	Plinth area	Eight-pointed star and cross shaped tile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Three zones of transition - Squinches and spandrels of eight- sided chambers -Borders of all surfaces and around sixteen-sided panels -Spandrels of chambers -The wall between sixteen-sided arches -Opening on sixteen-sided zone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Carved plaster inscription band and <i>Āžde Kārī</i> -Carved plaster and <i>Āžde Kārī</i> -Carved plaster -Carved plaster medallions - Simulated incised brick joint -Carved plaster lattice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Leaf or vegetal elements in background -floral design -Geometric or epigraphic design -Epigraphic design - In butterfly pattern and epigraphic design -Geometric design

Decoration						
	Monument	Tile decoration		Stucco decoration		
		location	Style/technique	location	Style/technique	characteristics
7	Šah Esmā'īl Sarbaḥš	Plinth area	Eight-pointed star and cross shaped tile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Portal -Portal and Mihrāb -Three zones of transition -Borders all the surfaces -Squinches -Spandrels of chambers - Niches above the plinth zone -Above the plinth zone -Opening on sixteen-sided zone -Three zones of transition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simulated incised brick joint -Carved plaster and <i>Āžde Kārī</i> -Carved, painted plaster inscription band and <i>Āžde Kārī</i> -Carved plaster -Carved painted plaster and <i>Āžde Kārī</i> - Incised plaster and <i>Āžde Kārī</i> -False brick joints -carved plaster lattice -Carved inscription band and <i>Āžde Kārī</i> - Simulated false bricks -Incised plaster -Carved plaster in medallion design and <i>Āžde Kārī</i> -Carved plaster bands -Carved plaster lattice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -In cross, butterfly design -Geometric and floral elements -Floral and script design Leaf or lobed elements in background, -Cable moldings, undulating geometrical motifs, epigraphic and floral motifs -Foral design -Scroll and geometric design -Scroll design as well as geometric designs -In cross, butterfly pattern - Geometric design -lobed vegetal in background -In cross, butterfly design -Scroll and geometric elements epigraphic and scroll motifs, colored -Epigraphic and floral design - polygonal and star design -Geometric design
8	Ḥadiġe Ḥātūn	Plinth area	Eight-pointed star and cross shaped tile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Squinches, Spandrels of chambers, sixteen- sided blank arches, under dome -The margins around sixteen panels and eight chambers -Central the dome - Inner surface of the dome -Opening on sixteen-sided zone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Carved inscription band and <i>Āžde Kārī</i> - Simulated false bricks -Incised plaster -Carved plaster in medallion design and <i>Āžde Kārī</i> -Carved plaster bands -Carved plaster lattice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -lobed vegetal in background -In cross, butterfly design -Scroll and geometric elements epigraphic and scroll motifs, colored -Epigraphic and floral design - polygonal and star design -Geometric design

Decoration						
	Monument	Tile decoration		Stucco decoration		
		location	Style/technique	location	Style/technique	characteristics
9	Šāh Ġa'far	Plinth area Cenotaph Wall?	Eight-pointed star and cross shaped tile Turquoise glazed brick luster-painted frieze	-All surfaces -Eight-sided panels -Above chambers - Inner surface of the dome	- Simulated incised brick joint -Carved plaster bands -Carved and colored plaster works -Incised plaster work, Polychrome stucco with frieze bands	- On South side in four-petal flowers design, and real falls bricks in butterfly design -Epigraphic and floral design - vegetal design in background - In star design
10	Šāh Ebrāhīm (Mazdiġān)	Cenotaph	Luster-painted frieze? relief and larger patterns in red	?	?	?
11	Šāh Aḥmad Ḥanafiye	-	-	-Above chambers - Inner surface of the dome -Around and between of the sixteen-sided panels -Central the dome	-Carved painted plaster and <i>Āẓde Kārī</i> -Carved painted medallions - Carved plaster bands -Carved painted plaster	- Vegetal design in background - Epigraphic design - geometric and scroll motifs -Epigraphic and floral design

Decoration						
	Monument	Tile decoration		Stucco decoration		
		location	Style/technique	location	Style/technique	characteristics
12	Čāhār Emāmzāde	?	?	?	?	?
13	Emāmzāde Zeyd	-Cenotaph	-Glazed brick	-Portal -The Bay of portal	-Carved and painted plaster with <i>Āzde Kārī</i> - Carved and painted plaster	- Vegetal design in background - Floral design on lower parts and borders and epigraphic design on upper part
14	Mūsā Mobarqa	?	?	-on northern wall of hallway - the niches on northern wall	-Carved plaster inscription band - Incised and painted plaster	- Floral elements in background - Vegetal and geometric motifs
15	Šāh Esmā'il	-Cenotaph -Plinth area -Wall?	-Glazed brick -Eight-pointed star and cross shaped tile -Four big pieces of mud brick tiles in luster-painted	?	?	?

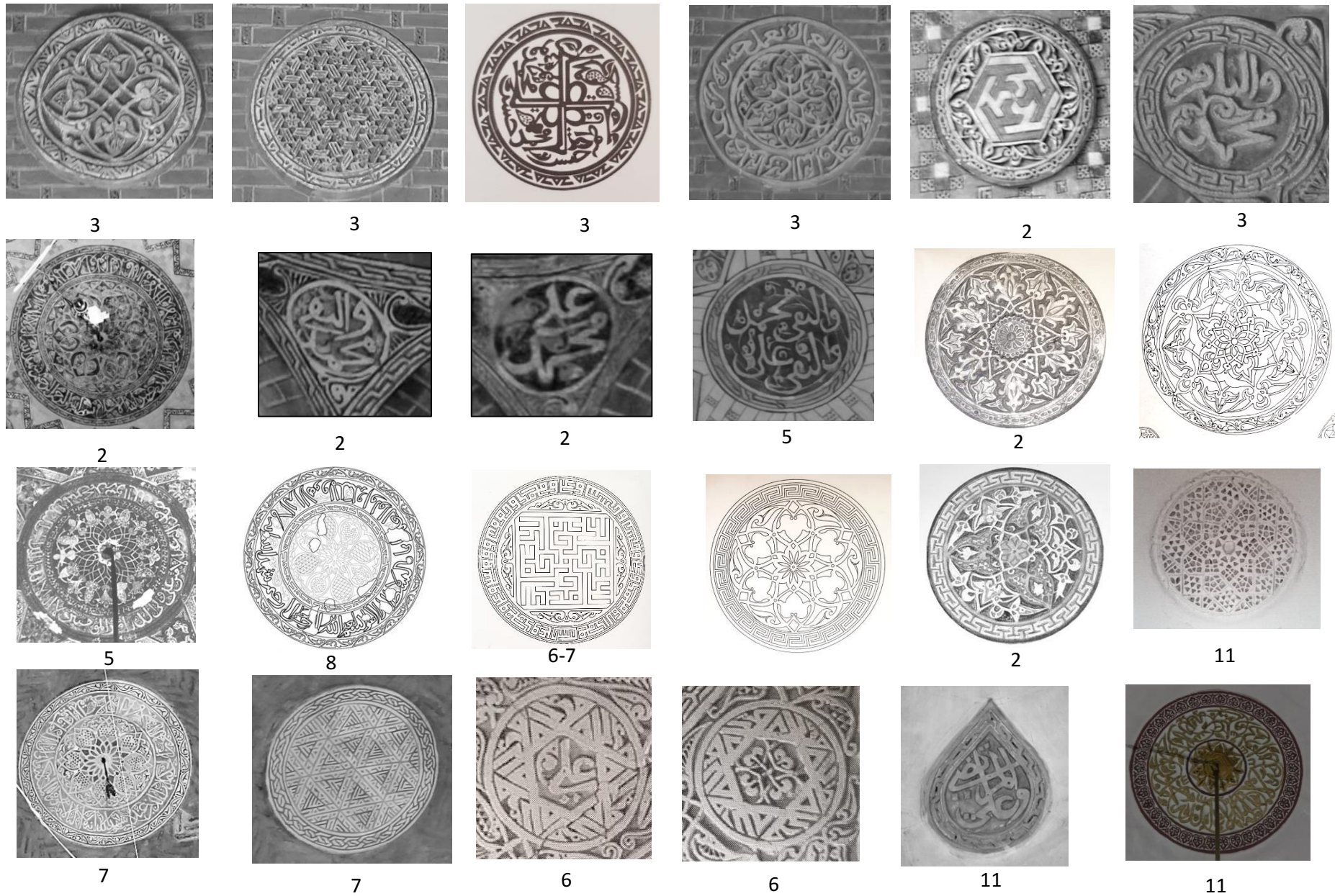


Image- 1 Some samples of carved stucco medallions from mausoleum of Qom

Chapter 6– Conclusion

6- Conclusion

As one of the main cultural centers of Shiism, the ancient city of Qom became the victim of anti-Shiite fanaticism during the Mongol invasion (1224) and was heavily ruined. After nearly half a century, it was revived once more, and one of the key manifestations of this resurrection was the construction of tomb structures throughout the city. At the end of the 13th century, Qom witnessed the construction of numerous grand mausoleums of similar architectural form, which, in the light of their architectural and structural features, invoke the image of post-Seljuk tomb construction. The question that springs to mind is why the flourishing and development of these monuments reached its zenith in this period and particularly in the city of Qom. The answer lies in the historical and the political events of these centuries in the country.

In the year 656/1258, Hulākū Ḥān conquered Baghdad and overthrew the Abbasid Dynasty to establish the Il-khanid government in Marāḡe. Thus, the stage was set for a new reality for the Shiites in the Islamic world. A key figure of this new state of things was Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, the Grand Vizir. The first impact of this association between the Il-Khanids and the Shiite Grand Vizir was the protection of both Shiite lives and of their holy shrines. As Mostaufi has said “Hulākū was so impressed by the Shiites' reasons in preserving Emām Ali's Shrine that he became convinced that this act would ensure his benefaction in the world ” (Mostaufi,1998: 1213-1214). The practical policies of Ḥvāḡe Naṣīr to protect the Shiite heritage continued during the reign of Ābāqā, the second Il-khan, by exerting serious efforts in preserving their sacred sites, schools and endowments (Faḡlineḡād, 2025: 94). In his lifetime, Ḥvāḡe Naṣīr also wrote treatises, which paved the way for greater attention of rulers to the Shiite community. Amongst these is the *Aḡlāḡ Mohtaṡami*, in the second section of which numerous recommendations on the necessity of obeying the Prophet's household and the innocent *imāms*, as well as their legacy, were quoted (Ṭūsī, 1998: 16-25). Aḡā malik ḡovainī also did much in Iraq in the years 657 - 681 to please the Shiites and the *Sādāts*, including reorganization of their holy sites to such an extent that *Tārīḡ-e Vaṡṡaf* spoke of the abundance of holy monuments and sites (Šīrāzī, 1852: 26).

During the reigns of ḡāzān Ḥān and Öḡgaitü Shiite pilgrimage cities prospered, and alongside the mausoleums of the Shiite imams, the scientific, economic and religious development of the Shiites and the *sayyids* was boosted. For instance, during Öḡgaitü's rule, the mausoleum of Emām Reḡā in Maṡhad received special attention and underwent repairs and restorations (Adīb Heravī, 1947: 39). The tomb of Šāh Čerāḡ in Šīrāz, the son of Emām Mūsā Kāḡem, was also rehabilitated and renovated. Moreover, it is during this period that visiting the tombs of religious figures and the mausoleums of the *imāms* became an established practice (Hamadānī, 2007:

324 – 327). New mausoleums were built to honor the tombs of Sufi Sheiks such as the tomb of Bāyazīd Baṣṭāmī (699/1300) and the tomb of Abd al-Ṣamad at Naṭanz (709/1309) (Blair; Bloom, 1994: 10). Emāmzāde Ğa‘far (725/1325) is also one of the tombs built from this era at Eṣfahān. The majority of Shiites in the Il-khanid domain lived in the ‘Erāq-e Aḡam, Ḥorāsān, Māzandarān, Ṭabarestān and Iraq proper, while the Shiite communities residing in other regions of Iran were minorities. As the most important events of Shiite history occurred in Iraq and the tombs of martyred Shiite *imāms* and leaders were in that region, it became one of the most important hubs of Shiism. Despite its Sunni majority, Baghdad had some densely-populated Shiite neighborhoods; the tombs of Emām Mūsā Kāẓem and Moḥammad Taqī to the west of the city were also surrounded by a large group of Shiite inhabitants. Consequently, in light of the period’s political and cultural developments in Iran and Iraq, as well as the aid of Shiite ministers and scholars, the construction and restoration of Shiite mausoleums increased, and the hubs of Shiite pilgrimage prospered.

In the ‘Erāq-e Aḡam region of Iran, the cities of Āve, Qom, Kāšān, Rey and Farahān were among the most important Shiite centers. In the 13th and 14th centuries, Āve was famed for its Shiite allegiances and the references of the period cite differences between the inhabitants of this town and those of Sāve, who were Ṣāfe‘īs¹ (Qazvīnī, 1994: 150). The most prominent Shiite politician of Ölgaitü’s reign, Sayyed Taḡ al-Dīn Āvaḡī, had his roots in this town. A number of Emāmzādes, including ‘Abdollāh and Faẓl, who were sons of Emām Mūsā Kāẓem, were buried in Āve. As for the city of Qom, it was a center of Shiite gatherings and the assemblies of seekers of religious wisdom and knowledge since the beginnings of Islam, especially due to the presence of the mausoleum of Fāṭeme Ma‘sūme (the daughter of Emām Mūsā Kāẓem). This mausoleum, as well as the numerous madrasas and endowed lands and property in the city, played a great role in the propagation and education of Shiism in this period.

As mentioned in the historical section, there is little information about the condition of Qom immediately after the Mongols’ invasion in the year 621/1224, which severe destructions in the city and left it in a sorry state for twenty years. The city, which had calmly developed its civilization for 500 years, became a ruin during the early Il-khanid period (Drechsler, 1999: 238). There is no evidence of construction activities in this era, except for a *miḥrāb* constructed in 1264 for the tomb of Ṣāh Ğa‘far, itself dating back to the year 1266 - this is the oldest tomb discussed in this project. Another early construction is a nameless *madrasa*, which bears the date of 1325 on its portal.

¹ The Ṣāfe‘ī or Shafī‘ī is one of the four schools of Islamic law in Sunni Islam.

Following the downfall of the Il-khanids in the year 1336, the city came under the dominion of the powerful and influential Shiite local dynasty of Şafi, which lasted for two centuries. The extent of their power was such that in the year 793 /1391, Hāfiz-i Abrū has referred to the ruler of Qom - who was from a powerful local family - as the governor and “şāḥeb-e sīyāsāt”² (Hāfiz-i Abrū, 1997:298). The dynasty’s rulers’ strategy centered around peaceful cohabitation with all the opposite powers in the surrounding regions. Although the reign of this dynasty coincided with the most tumultuous period in the history of Iran, especially in the central region of the country; and despite finding themselves surrounded by hostile forces, the rulers’ peaceful approach seems to have protected the city from harm. (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1971: 71).

The titles given to the kings highlight their domain of influence and their status in the central regions of Iran. The monuments they left behind in Qom paint a picture of these rulers as patrons of science and art, which gained them much admiration and respect of their people. The revival of Qom after the Mongol destruction is partially due to their services (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1985: 19). It can therefore be claimed that religious evolution in the central government of Iran during the Il-khanid period, alongside the power, wealth and the staunch Shiite faith of the Şafi rulers of Qom, paved the way for the greatly developed tomb building movement in the period discussed in this project. But the question still remains: Why did the construction of tombs become the custom in Qom, and why did the rulers not consider the construction of other monuments, such as mosques or *madrasa*?

The local rulers in Qom constructed numerous secular mausoleums for their families, as well as for religious figures and *emānzādes*. It is probable that through building and restoring the tombs of *emānzādes*, they ensured their popularity among the people, while by constructing their own mausoleums, they exhibited their power to the society. Unfortunately, there are no clues remaining about the shape or the architecture of the tombs before the 13th or 14th centuries in Qom. This concerns also the most important mausoleum that could have had an influence on the monuments of subsequent eras, that of Fāṭeme Ma’sūme. However, as mentioned before, this mausoleum has undergone major changes in modern times. Nevertheless, on the strength of historical reports mentioned in chapter 2, we can claim that it may have served as a model for the construction of 13th and 14th centuries’ tombs, in the form and manner that was already practiced in the 9th century. Indeed, at this junction, by combining the past structural models with new ideas, the tombs of 13th and 14th centuries in Qom presented a novel architectural form and style, which spread quickly as new tombs sprang up in the city and sporadically in the surrounding regions such as Arāk, Farahān, Mahallāt, Hamadān, Āve and Sāve, which were all

² Translation: Statesman

under strong influence of the Qom rulers. It is still not clear which factors determined the distribution and location of these tombs in the city.

The mausoleums of Qom, with their elevated conical domes, acted as an important part of the urban landscape, which not only defined the boundaries of urban areas but defined the limits of the old town as well. As mentioned in the chapter 3, *Tārīḥ-e Qom* provides an insight into locations of the walls, gates and regions of Qom in the year 988, but there is no further information about its changes and evolution prior to the Mongol invasion. The city possessed thirteen gates, six of which opened onto the region's main roads and the remaining seven to the surrounding farms and villages. Gardens covered the areas beyond the city walls and in some parts within the walls. Except for the mausoleum of Fāṭeme Ma'sūme and some others, which were built inside the old town, most tomb structures surviving in the north and northeast to south and southeast of Qom were constructed close to city gates. Two tombs located just outside the old city to the northeast are located along the main roads entering the old town, while the two tombs located inside the city were placed along the main road running from east to west. These two tombs were constructed on this road, which led to Āve in the west and which probably had a special political or commercial significance in the era (Ch.3, Img.15).

The Kāšān Gate Tomb towers - including three tombs of Bāg-e Sabz, the Emāmzāde 'Alī b. Ğa'far and Emāmzāde Ebrāhīm - are located in the eastern part of the city. The tomb of Emāmzāde Šāh Ğa'far and Šāh Ebrāhīm lie in the western part of the city in the Mazdīgān area along the road that leads to Taqarūd and Markazī province about 1.5 km away from the 'Alavīye Gate. The tomb of Emāmzāde Aḥmad b. Qāsem lies to the south, alongside the Qal'e Gate. The tombs of Emāmzāde Mūsā Mobarqa', Emāmzāde Sayyed Sarbaḥš, and Emāmzāde Zeyd are located inside the structure of the old city along the route passing through the tombs of Šāh Ebrāhīm and Šāh Ğa'far and close to Šahrestān Gate. Three other tombs, namely Emāmzāde Aḥmad Mīyānī, Emāmzāde 'Alī, and Čāhār Emāmzāde, were located in the north and outside the old city near the Rey Gate and possibly the Ğomar Gate (Ch.3, Img.10).

Due to its position between Rey and Ešfahān and its location on the ancient road leading to these cities, Qom was on the route of caravans. It can therefore be easily imagined how, in the light of their position along the main city gates and roads, these tombs were always the focus of attention for travelers. In fact, such high mausoleums could have been meant as an invitation to travelers and passers-by outside the city to experience its spiritual and religious spaces. This, in itself, could have been instrumental in the promotion of the region's culture and traditions to other areas, which ultimately served the purpose of a hub for cultural interactions. Seeing these grand, domed tombs ensured that the travelers who passed by would always remember the

greatness and power of the political rulers and religious figures of Qom, thereby realizing to some extent the objectives of the patrons of the tombs. Furthermore, the designations and titles employed in the inscriptions underline the fact that the *emānzādes* mausoleums reflect the religious aspects or encourage the adoration of the emānzāde, or even honor the personality of the deceased. Titles such as *šahrīyār al-eṭlāq*, *al-moṭā' al-šahrīyār al-'adl va al-'elm*³ and *ḥalīfe al-'arab wa al-'aḡam*⁴, which are identified in the inscriptions of tomb towers of Bāḡ-e Sabz (Chapter 4-1), demonstrate this trend towards glorification and underscore the tombs' religious function.

Frequently, cemeteries and gardens were located close to the tombs' perimeters. Except for Emānzāde Aḥmad-e Qāsem, which is inside the historical cemetery to the south of Qom, those around other tombs could have sprung up after the emānzādes, in direct consequence of tomb building, and as such do not have a long historical background. However, gardens could also have offered an ideal site for the construction of tombs, thus it appears quite feasibly to date them before the mausolea. Given the historical evidence mentioned in chapter 3, Qom was surrounded by gardens and farmland, some of which served as a base for tomb structures. They offered the visitors and travelers the possibility of enjoying a special, calm and green environment when visiting these holy sites. In fact, by entering the premises and resting under the shades of the trees, symbols of paradise, they could attain physical and spiritual serenity, and this sense of tranquility may be taken as a reason why one of the tombs was named as Darb-e Behešt (Gate of paradise).

Another key question concerns the architectural style of these monuments. Based on the analyses of the architecture of the tombs, as detailed in chapter 5, it can be concluded that most of the mausoleums in Qom had an open design. In order, to realize a closer link with the exterior space, these tombs were shaped as pavilions, a feature that made access to the surrounding gardens possible from all directions. Of course, the open plan was used in some of the grandest Shiite mausoleums of the region, such as the original mausoleum of Emām Reżā at Mašhad, which had a square plan, with arcades open on all sides (Pīrnīyā, 2004: 244), and also the (no longer visible) original, octagonal dome chamber of Fāṭeme Ma'sūme in Qom, with entrances from the four cardinal directions, and in the octagonal pavilion at Naṭanz (Ch. 2, Drw. 2). These could have served models for designing the tombs in Qom. Robert Hillenbrand has also attributed the initial design of a Tomb tower in Bāḡ-e Sabz to this plan, which is exactly like

³ Translation: who has to be obeyed, the most just and learned ruler.

⁴ Translation: caliph of the Arabs and non- Arabs.

the plan of Emānzāde Ebrāhīm (in Mazdīgān) in Qom: an octagonal pavilion, accessible from all sides.

Robert Hillenbrand believes that this type of plan was quite common in a number of post-Mongol tombs, such as a certain series of buildings in the north-eastern Ḥorāsān (Hillenbrand, 2014: 78), though he does not name these. One that springs to mind in this region belongs to Emānzāde Ḥamze at Šīrvān, known as Maqbare-ye Teymūrī, constructed in the year 1384 or perhaps simultaneously with the building of tombs in Qom. The monument's structure is also octagonal and open from all sides; however, its internal structure is completely different from the mausoleums in Qom.

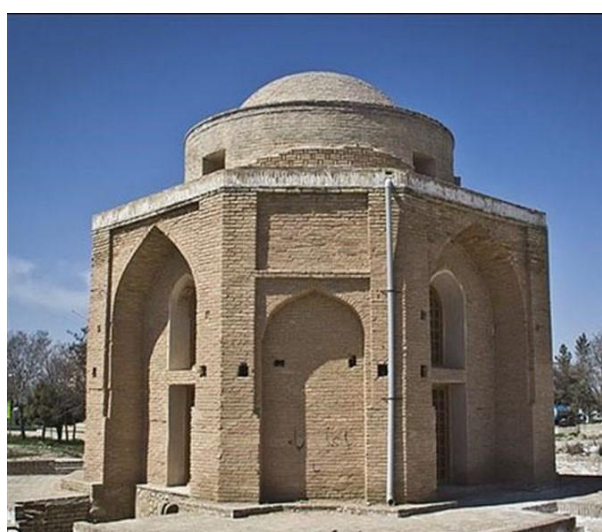


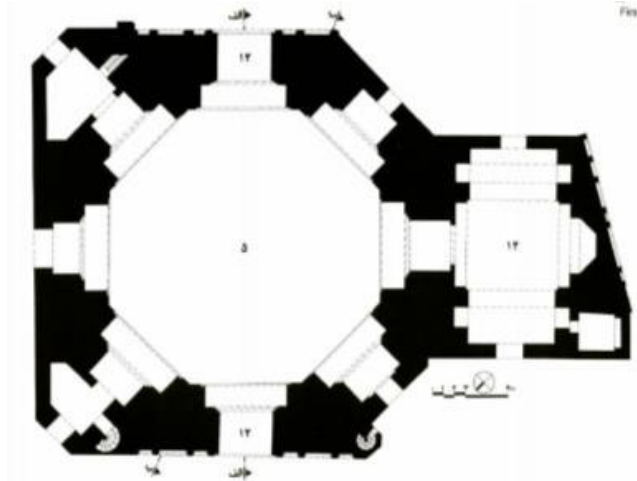
Image 1. Maqbare-ye Teymūrī at Šīrvān (source: Morteżā Heydarīyān in: *tasnimnews* site, date 25.07.2020)



Image 2. Interior of Maqbare-ye Teymūrī at Šīrvān (source: in: *eneshat* site, date 02.08.2020)

In any case, it can be estimated that most of these tombs had an open plan, and the change in shape of the two tomb towers of Bāg-e Sabz to the closed, twelve-sided form (the middle and southern tombs) or the obstruction of entrances in other cases were among the modifications of later periods. The other architectural specification of these tomb structures was the attention paid to elevation and height as a visual principle in these types of construction, which was among the architectural features of the Il-khanid period. This element can be seen in particular in the three tombs of rulers, which reach a height of about 22 meters. In addition to offering a better view from a distance and as a sign to announce the city of Qom from afar, the height of these monuments evokes a sense of ascension and movement towards heaven, which occupies a significant position in religious philosophy (Noşratī, 1998: 39). although explicit statements from contemporaneous sources are lacking to confirm this understanding.

The mausoleum of Ölgaitü in Soltāniye is a clear example of a high and large mausoleum built for the Il-Khanid ruler in the early 14th century. Many authors have mentioned the huge dimensions of this dome. Hāfiz-i Abrū has described it as octagonal, large and perfect with a height of 120 Gaz, and has added that there is no monument like it in all the world (Hāfiz-i Abrū, 1939: 9). It is important to note that he exaggerated the height, because it was the most important criterion of greatness in architecture



Drawing 1. Plan of Mausoleum of Ölgaitü in Soltāniye (source: *Ganġnāme*, Vol. 12, p. 25)

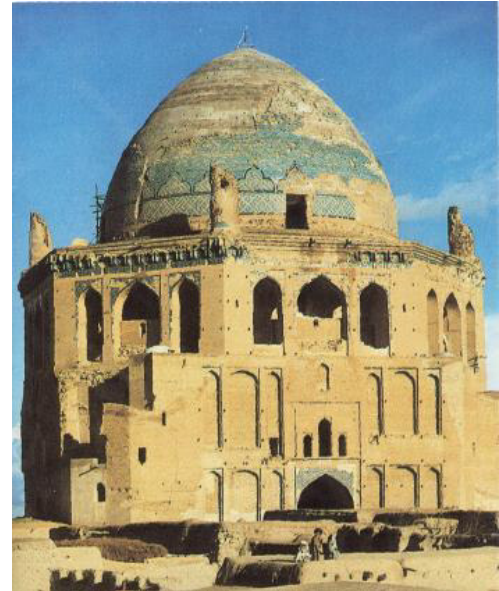


Image 3. Mausoleum of Ölgaitü in Soltāniye (source: Archive of ICHO)

In addition to its spiritual aspects, it also fulfilled a range of social-political considerations, and it is closely linked with the identity of the deceased and their political-religious status. The most prominent example in Iran is the Gonbad-e Qābūs (1006), whose astonishing height stands in obvious relation to the political status claimed by its patron and occupant Qābūs b. Vošmgīr (Ch.2, Img. 3). The same principle was followed in the construction of the mausoleums in Qom, and especially in the construction of tombs of the political rulers buried in Bāġ-e Sabz. To ensure the objective, i.e. exhibiting the building's height, conical or tent domes were used in these tombs, despite the fact that this form is not suited to the hot and arid climate of Qom, being more appropriate for rainy conditions. Nonetheless, these tall, conical domes served other, more symbolic purposes. From a cosmological point of view, they rise up to the sky and attract the viewer, who, upon reaching to the foot of the building, is forced to raise his/her head towards the sky to observe the dome. The two principles of height and of movement and ascension to heaven occupy a special place in religious philosophy, wherein domes are the meeting point of sky and earth, allowing those buried here to find their way to heaven, which can be seen as the location of the divine. (Nošratī, 1998: 39). Moreover, pilgrims who visit the

tombs seeking their needs in the material world, are able to connect with the sky through these high monuments and to voice their pleas.

Apart from the mentioned visual and philosophical objectives, from a structural and static perspective, the apex of this form of a dome rises dramatically. Therefore, in addition to being helpful in averting the destructive factor of precipitation, the weight of the structure is transferred at a more perpendicular angle to the load-bearing elements and walls, thus increasing the construction's stability.

Karīm Pīrnīya and Kāzem 'Arab are of the opinion that the use of the conical dome in the Shiite monuments of this period could have had a historical background, in the sense that following the demolition of a large number of Shiite monuments with tent domes, like the tomb of Šāh 'Abdol 'Azīm in Rey, by Soltān Maḥmūd (1002-1030)⁵ this style was revived when the Shiites regained power towards the end and the downfall of the Il-khanids. They maintain that the tent dome became synonymous with Shiism and was applied extensively in Qom, Rey and Kašān, where Shiism was re-established ('Arab, 1994: 113; Pīrnīyā, 1991: 126). At important Shiite centers of Iran, including Qom, Kāšān, Sāveh, Āveh, Varāmīn, Rey and Sārī, which were recalled as the hubs of this sect in history books such as *Kitāb al-Naqẓ*, *Tārīḫ-e Qom*, *Mu'ğam 'al-Buldān* and *Ātār al-Bilād*, these cities were described as the centers of Shiism or *emāmiyeh* (Bārānī; Naderīyān, 2016: 35-53). A large number of tombs with mostly conical domes survived in these regions until the 14th and 15th centuries. Their examples include Borğ-e 'Alā'eddīn (688/1289), and Emāmzāde Yaḥyā at Varāmīn (1307-08), Emāmzāde Eshāq at Sāve, Emāmzāde sayyed Hārūn at Sāve (13 Century) Emāmzāde Maḥmūd b. Bāqer at Kāšān, as well as all the tomb towers in the region of Qom and surrounding areas, which date back to 13th and 14th centuries. Furthermore, all the domes in the 14th and 15th centuries tombs of Mazandarān, which are attributed to the Mar'ašī Shiites, have conical covers (Neyestānī, 2004: 149 – 340 – 341).

Despite the numerous examples, the theory maintaining that the conical shaped domes were exclusive to the architecture of Shiite tombs cannot be correct. For instance, the tombs of Yūsof b. Koşeyr and Mo'mene Ḥātūn in Naḥğavān have both conical domes. Mo'mene Ḥātūn was the daughter of the Seljuq King Toğrol II and the wife of Šams al-Dīn İldeñiz the Atabeg. She was

⁵ Soltān Maḥmūd was a fanatic Sunni and attacked Rey in the year 420 Hijri. It is written in *Moğmal al-Tavāriḫ va al-Qeşaş* that he treated the Shiite with cruelty and that he had massacred them in large numbers (Ebn-e Mohlab: 1931: 404 – 405)

a religious and pious lady and history books have noted her piety and religious activities⁶ (Zahīrī-e Neyšābūrī Rāvandī, 1921: 299, 1954: 82). Yūsuf b. Koşeyr's tomb dated of 1162-63, was probably also built for a member of the Atābak dynasty. (Sarre, 1910: 11). Historical sources do not directly mention the Sunni or Shiite affiliation of these two persons, but in the light of the prominence of Sunnism among the rulers of Seljuq period (Bausani, 1968: 285), these tombs may be supposed to belong to persons of Sunni confession. Therefore, one cannot claim with certitude that conical or tent domes were exclusive to Shiites. The selection of such a shape for the tombs in Qom, all of which are conical, could be attributed to the vision and the predetermined designs that the patrons and the architects of these monuments had in mind for this city. The conic shape of the dome at Fāṭeme Ma'sūme's Shrine could have served as a model to be considered and followed in the construction of tombs in subsequent periods.



Image 4. Mausoleum of Yūsuf b. Koşeyr at Naḡgavān 1162-3 (source: F. Sarre, *Denkmäler persischer Baukunst*, 1910, p.9)

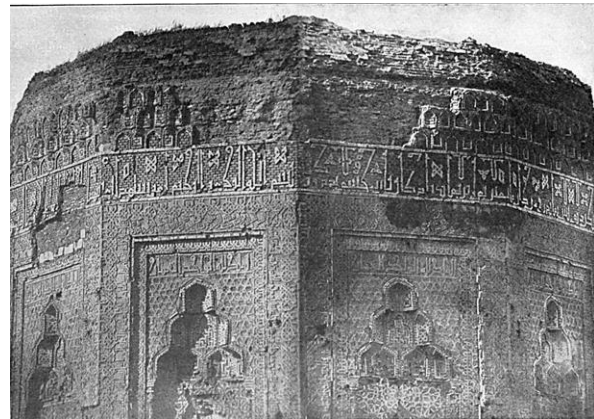


Image 5. Mausoleum of Mo'mene Ḥātūn at Naḡgavān, upper part, 1186-87 (source: F. Sarre, *Denkmäler persischer Baukunst*, 1910, p.12)

The facades of these tombs consist of the three main sections of a body, a drum and a dome, separated from each other by vaults, niches and galleries in each section. This visual separation allows each section to keep a distinct character and design. Except for the mausoleum of Šāh

⁶ Mo'men-e Ḥātūn died in the year 1175, and a month later, her husband, Šams al-Dīn Atabak Eldiguzid, the founder of Azarbayḡān Atābak Dynasty (1136 – 1175) passed away (Bandārī Eşfahānī, 1921: 300, Rāvandī, 1977: 361). Eldiguzid was very influential at Seljuq court and his body was laid to rest alongside his father Soltān Rokn al-Dīn Toḡrol.

Ğa‘far (1269), which is the oldest, this form of a facade can be seen in all the tombs that were constructed during the 60-year period from 1339 to the end of the 14th century. However, there are also differences between the monuments studied, on the basis of which one may divide the facades of tomb structures of Qom into three categories:

- 1- Two-part facade, including the body and dome, with the dome placed directly on top of the body.
- 2- Three-part facade, including the body, drum and the dome. The drum sits on the body with a recess and then the dome is placed over it.
- 3- Three-part facade like above, but with the facade’s body comprising of two storeys.

In general, one of the distinguishing elements is the drum, which differs in height between 1.5 to 4 m, recessed from the main body of the dome. It can be considered part of the roofing, as it covers part of the vault inside. This concept did rarely occur in the design of tomb structures of previous eras and can therefore be considered a special feature of the architecture of tomb structures in Qom. Another detail is the attention paid to the height of the facades.

The mausoleums of the rulers are higher than the *emānzādes*. For this reason, and in the light of their classification – see chapter 2 – they can be classified as tomb towers, whereas, given their proportions, the *emānzādes* should rather be classified as domed octagons.

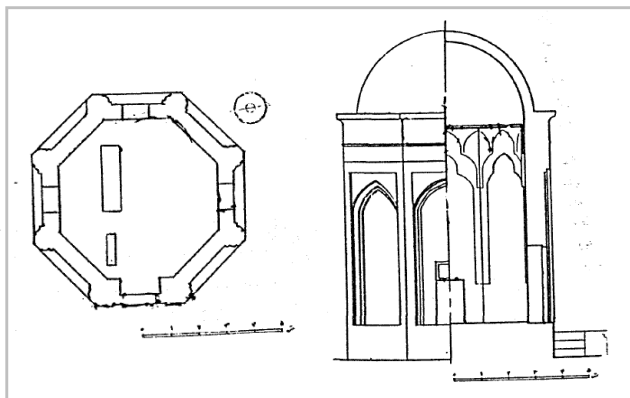
The octagonal plan is used in all of the mausoleums in Qom as a uniform design. As mentioned in section 2, the selection of this plan in this period’s trend of tomb construction is considered a natural progress in the architectural design of the tombs after passing through the diverse forms of circle, square and various polygons. There are numerous examples of this in the previous eras in Iran, with the earliest being the octagonal shrine of Fāṭeme Ma‘ sūme (Ch. 2, P. 29) and the octagonal pavilion of Naṭanz (338/998). The octagonal tomb structures of the next eras were the Ḥarraqān towers at Qazvīn (455/1063 – 486/1093), the Gonbad-e ‘Alī at Abarkūh (448/1056), Yūsof b. Koşeyr at Naḥğavān (557/1162), Şeyḥ Ğonayd at Taft (543/1148), the tomb of Ḥvāğe Atābak at Kermān (12th century), Gonbad-e Ğabalīye at Kermān (12th-13th), Emānzāde Ğa‘far at Eşfahān (725/1324) (Ch.2, Tb. 2-3). These are some of the most prominent examples of octagonal tombs earlier than the Qom tomb structures. From a structural aspect, this type of plan is better suited to facilitating the change in the form of plan to a circle. From the point of view of interior space, it may be important that the octagon offers corners in which persons could place themselves praying and being in touch with the building. The eight sides of the octagon offered the possibility of having eight arches and windows for sufficient light to enter the building, and to create a visual connection between the interior and

the exterior. At the same time, the outside of the octagon has flat surfaces that represent true façades, in contrast with a building on a circular plan.

Dānešvarī argues that the octagonal plans of the mausoleums are representations of paradise and attributes them to the Muslim eschatology and cosmology, wherein the concept of paradise has been described as eight gardens or eight gates, and for Muslims, the number of eight is the symbol of paradise (Dānešvarī, 2011: 33).

However, in addition to the advantages of octagon as the choice plan in Qom, the octagonal shrine of Fāṭeme Ma'sūme could be considered as the oldest and the most noteworthy model for the construction of tombs in this city at later historical periods. This may be the most convincing reason for the selection of octagonal plan for the tombs in Qom.

However, the octagonal designs of Qom tomb structures can themselves be divided into two groups. The first one includes the buildings where both the exterior and the interior are octagonal; these buildings also tend to be taller and belong to rulers. This type of plan was also common in the earlier periods (Saljuq and Il-khanid). Many monuments surviving from the Il-khanid period in particular were mostly octagonal both on the outside and on the inside. Amongst these, one may mention the tombs of Ölgaitü at Soltāniye (703/1303), Emānzāde Ğa'far at Eṣfahān (725/1324).



Drawing 2. Plan and section of Emānzāde Ğa'far Eṣfahān (source: *Banāhāy-e Ārāmghāhī*, 1997, p.108)

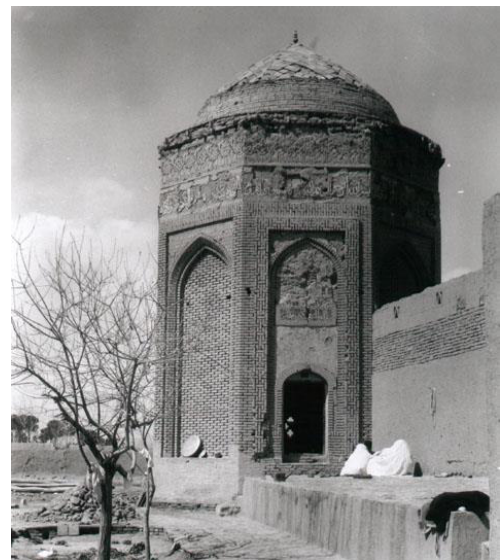


Image 6. Emānzāde Ğa'far Eṣfahān (source: *archnet* site, date: 25.08.2019)

Another notable tomb, contemporary with those in Qom, is the Šāh Fīrūz mausoleum at Sīrġān. This monument's plan is octagonal, open on all sides, and closely resembles the typical plan of the ruler mausoleums at Qom, with their only difference being in the shape of their domes and

their drums. The plan of Gonbad-e Ğabalīye at Kermān (13th Century) was built in this style but with stone material.

However, in the case of Qom's *emānzādes*, we witness yet another type of plan, which does not really find precedent before. Here, only the exterior is octagonal, with the interior designed as a four-sided plan, with a receding niche on each side. (Drawing 3)

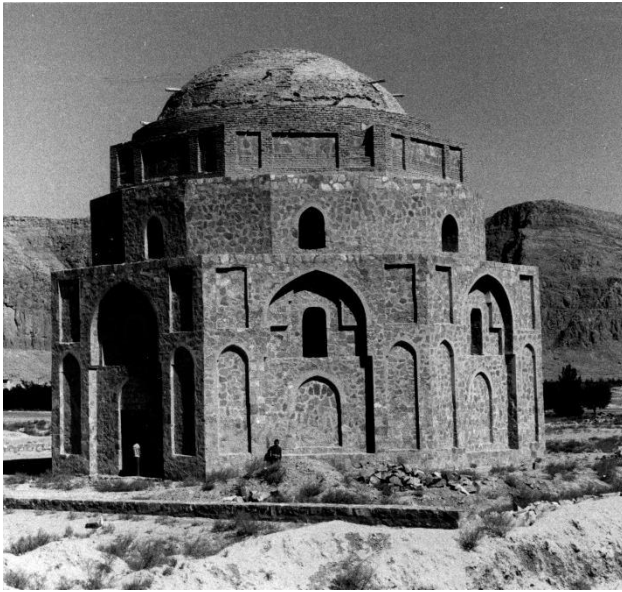
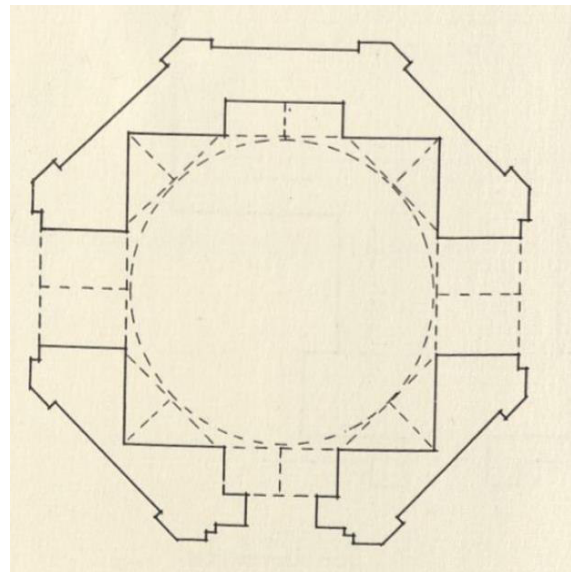


Image 7. Gonbad-e Ğabalīye at Kermān, B. Finster (source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt OFU Bamberg)

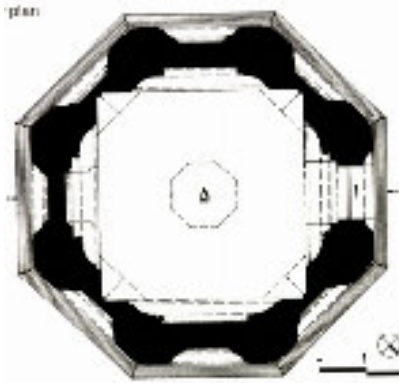


Image 8. Mausoleum of Šāh Fīrūz at Sīrġān (source: S. Amīrhājīlu, 2015)

Drawing 3 -Plan of mausoleum of Šāh Ğa'far in Qom, Wilber, 1944 (Source: *The Architecture of Islamic Iran*, Fig.10)



The mausoleum of Ḥvāḡe Atābak is a rare example of such a structure prior to this period, as it dates to the Seljuq era, although here the niches are quite shallow, and one cannot see the complete cross-shape in them. Sheila Blair states that the cross-shaped, square chambers with wide niches on all sides were inspired by the previous examples of the traverse, blind pointed arches, and are considered a Timurid architectural innovation (Blair, 1994: 99).



Drawing 4. Mausoleum of Ḥvāḡe Atābak in Kermān (source: *Ganḡnāme*, Vol. 12, p.272)

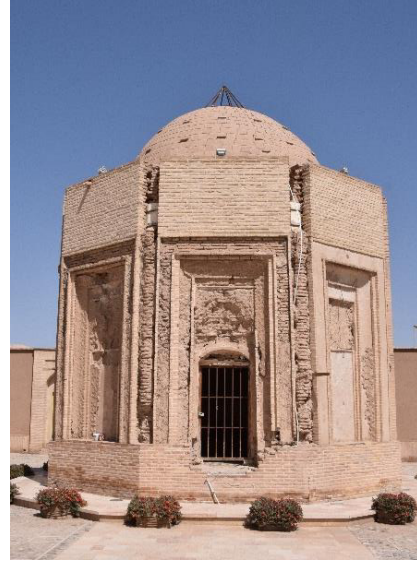
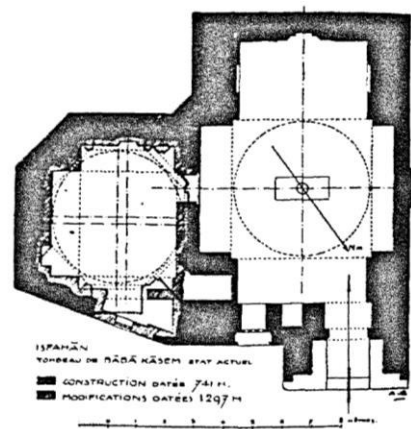


Image 9. Mausoleum of Ḥvāḡe Atābak in Kermān (source: I. Āqāḡānī 2019)

Another example of a cross-shaped tomb of this period is the Bābā Qāsem at Eṣfahān (741/1341). In this case, the niches in the walls are wider, and their blind, pointed arches are quite different from those in the Qom's *emāmzādes*.



Image 10. Interior of the mausoleum of Bābā Qāsem at Eṣfahān ,1340 (source: *esfahanemrooz* site, date: 25.08.2019)

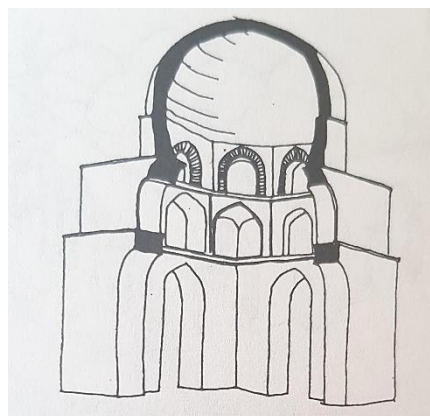


Drawing 5. Plan of the mausoleum of Bābā Qāsem at Eṣfahān ,1340 (source: *Banāhāy-e Ārāmgāhī*,1997, p.255)

A cross-shaped plan is also typical of the mausoleums of the Ayyubid and Mamluk dynasties in Egypt and Syria between the 12th and 13th centuries, although the difference here is that they have a square external plan – see the Sab‘a Banat at Cairo. The mausoleum of Gūr-e Mīr in Samarkand (1403 – 1404) is an advanced example of this plan, built during the Timurid era.



Image 11. The Mausolea of Sab‘a Banat, Cairo (source: in: archnet site, date: 02.08.2019)



Drawing 6. Sab‘a Banat, third tomb from E, Cairo by R. Hillenbrand (source: *Islamic Architecture*, 1994: pp.312)

Despite the prevalence of octagons, one cannot ignore the two dodecagonal tomb towers at Bağ-e Sabz and not count them among this category of tombs. As mentioned in sections 4 and 5, they were initially built in the same manner as their adjacent octagonal tomb tower (the northern tomb); only during a later period, of no clear date, they underwent a change in form. The addition of the exterior casing and the transformation of octagon to dodecagon has occurred in the second period of construction. Therefore, the dodecagon can be considered the third category of plans. The transformation may have had some ideological underpinning. Hillenbrand suggests these twelve-sided towers may be linked to Qom becoming the hub of twelve-*imām* Shiism at this period in history (Hillenbrand, 2014: 73), but he fails to highlight the two-period construction of the monument. In any case, the emphasis on the twelve-*imām* Shiism, which shows itself in other elements of the building such as the decorations, was quite prominent and led to a very subtle change in the plan, which cannot be discerned easily. Among the dodecagonal plans prior to this period, one can point to the Borġe Mehmāndūst at Dāmġān (490/1097), the mausoleum of Mo‘mene Ḥātūn at Naḥġavān (582/1186), Borġ-e Qorbān at Hamadān (12th Century), Emāmzāde Hārūn at Sāve (13th – 14th centuries) and the mausoleum of Pīr-e Morād Ābād at Farahān (13th- 14th centuries), though it should be noted that their construction was realized as a single stage, with corresponding internal and external plans.



Image 12. Emānzāde Hārūn, Sāve, 13-14th (source: M. Moeini 2014)



Image 13. Mausoleum of Mo'men-e Hātūn at Nahāvān 1186-87 (source: M. Moeini 2021)



Image 14. Borḡe Mehmāndūst (1097), (source: M. Moeini 2014)

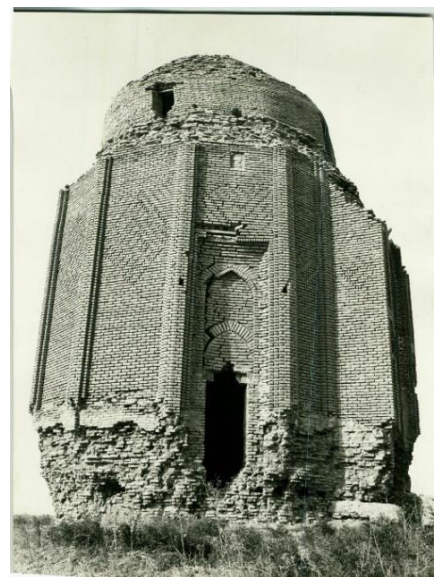
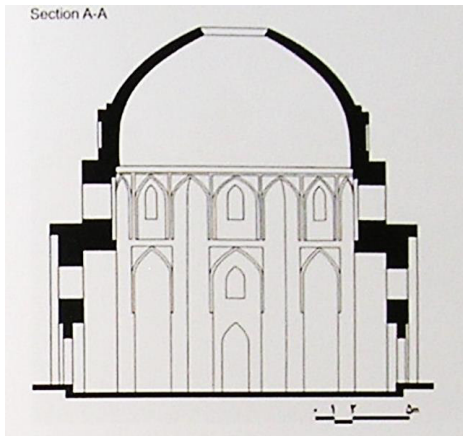


Image 15. Mausoleum of Pīr-e Morād Ābād at Farahān 13th – 14th C. (source: Archive of ICHO)

The interior spaces of the tombs reflect the three-storied nature of the exterior, and the transitions between these zones are executed with harmony, order, balance and symmetry. The polygonal design of the interior is carefully articulated to ensure maximum variety, with a regular alternation of arches on the axes enclosing recessed open windows, arches on the diagonals enclosing recessed blind arches, and splayed blind arches over the corners of the octagon. The quantity of windows, arches and reveals both in plan and in section make these

structures some of the most regulated and spatially sophisticated mausoleums ever built in this era.

The dome transition system follows two patterns according to the design. In the first, which is related to the octagonal plan of the first category, it changes in the internal intermediate zone to a circle through a zone of sixteen-pointed-arch niches. Examples of this model of construction can be seen in the Emāmzāde Ğa‘far at Eṣfahān (725/1324), with some difference in depth of the eight niches and the shape of the vaults, and in the domed chamber of Čalabī Oĝlū at Soltānīye, with a lower height of the eight niches in this construction, and also in Gonbad-e Ğabalīyye in Kermān and Gonbad-e Šeyḥ-e Ğonayd in Yazd (543/1146) with stone material.



Drawing 7. Section of Gonbad-e Ğabalīyye at Kermān (source: *Ganġnāme*, Vol. 12, p.286)



Drawing 8. Section of Gonbad-e Šeyḥ-e Ğonayd at Yazd (source: *Ganġnāme*, Vol. 13, p.213)

The second type of construction relates to the second category of plans. Here, the squinches were used to transform the square into an octagon. They were built diagonally across the corners of the square tower to support and act as a transition to a polygon, in addition to distributing the weight of the dome among the vertical bases.

Prior examples of this construction can be seen in some domed chambers, though of different functions, such as the dome chamber of Bābā ‘Abdollāh mosque at Na‘īn (700/1300), and in the 14th century Hārūnīye monument at Ṭūs. Blair believes that this construction became common during the Timurid era (Blair, 1994: 100).

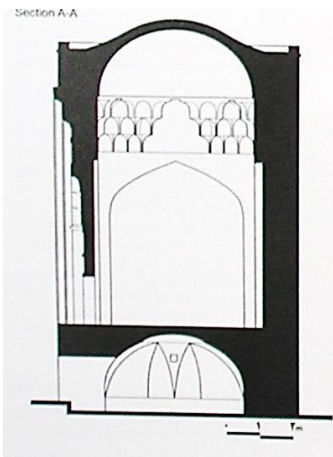


Image 16. The interior of the dome chamber of Bābā ‘Abdollah mosque at Na’in, (source: E. Moḥammad Ḥosainī in: *naeeni* site, date: 22.08.2018)



Image 17. Interior of Hārūnīye monument at Ṭūs (source: Ārād in: *arad60* site, date: 25.07.2020)

Among other features of these tombs is the crypt built underground, where the deceased is buried. In three tombs at Bağ-e Sabz, which, as mentioned in section 4, were subject to archeological surveys, the existence of cross-shaped crypts under the mausoleums was demonstrated. The construction of a crypt in such a way was not a new phenomenon; rather, there are many examples of tombs with crypts in previous eras, including Borğ-e Šebli (11th Century), Torbat-e Malek Ġāzī (11th century), Se Gonbad at Urūmīye (1185), and most of Azarbāiġān’s tombs such as Gonbad-e Kabūd (1197) and Gonbad-e Ġaffāriye (1328).



Drawing 9. Section from Se Gonbad at Urūmīye-1197 (source: Gaṅṅnāme, vol.11, p. 79)



Drawing 10. Section from Borğ-e Šebli at Damāvand- 11th Century (source: Gaṅṅnāme, vol.11, p. 283)



Image 18. The interior of the crypt in Se Gonbad at Urūmīye-1197 (source: M. Moeini 2014)

The entrance to these crypts was either from outside the monument and under the main entrance (Se Gonbad) or from another direction, or even from the floor of the dome chamber (Gonbad-e ‘Alāvīān in 11th Century). Similarly, the access to the crypt of the rulers’ tombs in Qom is from the space of the dome chamber.



Image 19. The interior of the crypt in Gonbad-e Sorḥ at Marāḡe-1197 (source: M. Moeini 2014)



Image 20. The interior of the crypt in Gonbad-e Kabūd at Marāḡe-1197 (source: M. Moeini 2014,)

Furthermore, it has been established that the two *emānzādes* had crypts, but the shape of their plans is unknown, and in the light of subsequent modifications they do not have a clear entrance. Nevertheless, all the available evidences indicate that all the mausoleums in Qom possessed underground crypts, though ideally this would need to be proven through archeological survey or excavation.

Decorative features – Contrary to their bare exteriors, the interiors of most mausoleums are covered with decorations: This is a very characteristic feature of the tombs in Qom; otherwise it can be seen on some relatively early examples. From a visual aspect, a bare exterior may have highlighted the magnificence of the exterior: this was quite possibly the reason for the lack of ornamentation on the exterior on some earlier monuments such as Gonbad-e Qābūs (396/1006) or Mīl-e Rādkān at Gorgān (407/1016).

However, in later periods, such as the Saljuq or the Il-khanid period, in many cases decorations were used on the facades of mausoleums, for instance at Borḡ-e Ḥarāqān (1068/460), Gonbad-e Kabūd (593/1197) and Borḡ-e Kāšmar, 13th Century. This is in contrast to the mausoleums of Qom, where the exterior is free of decorations, while the interiors were very ornamental. It is

interesting to note that in the following centuries and during the Timurid period in Central Asia, the exteriors were once again covered with tilework decorations (Gūr-e Amīr, 1403-1404).



Image 21. Mausoleum of Gūr-e Amīr at Samarkand, L. Korn 2008 (source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt OFU Bamberg)

In Qom, the detailed and exquisite decorations have meant that architectural elements which, in principle, serve a structural purpose in the construction, such as squinches, blind pointed arches or carved plaster lattice coverings, are played down in their structural character. In fact, there are no bare surfaces in the mausoleums' interiors. This feature is particularly highlighted in the tomb structures of Qom. The types of decoration used in these mausoleums are tilework, stucco and painting on plaster, with stucco being the most prominent example.

Except for the monochrome tiles on the surface of the tombs' domes, the tilework has been executed mainly for in the interior spaces. It is worth noting that tilework appears only in the *emānzādes*, whereas in the tombs of the rulers, tiles were exclusively used on the external cover of the domes, while the interior space is completely devoid of any tilework. Traces of tilework can still be seen in four *emānzādes*. These include eight-pointed star tiles, which in composition with cross shaped tiles were used on the plinths. The cenotaphs were usually adorned with azure embossed tiles. Other types of dated tiles include the turquoise glazed brick tiles and those included in the *mihrābs*, though these are limited in number. The tilework technique used in Qom glazed with luster painting, and they were all made in a specific workshop in Kāshān. Lustre painted tiles were produced in a complex process, with different factors and conditions influencing their quality and quantity. Most of these tiles were dated and signed. A good number of the tiles, which are now in private and public collections throughout the world, were collected from ruined buildings. Oliver Watson names twenty-two monuments in Iran where these tiles were used. Six of these monuments belong to the group of mausoleums of Qom (Watson, 1985:

184). Currently, all these tiles are either missing, or were transferred to various museums. The cenotaph of Fāṭeme Ma'sūme is among the tombs which have lustre tiles; they bear the date of 602/1206. Examples of star and cross tiles can be found in the Emāmzāde Yaḥyā at Varāmīn (660- 1262) and at the entrance chamber of the Emāmzāde Ğa'far at Dāmġān (665 / 1266- 67). Similar examples, which are the last remaining tiles of this type, were used in the Emāmzāde 'Alī b. Ğa'far in Qom.



Image 22. Luster-painted eight-pointed star tile from the Emāmzāde Yaḥyā at Varāmīn, 661/1262 (source: Tomoko Masuya, 2000, p.45)

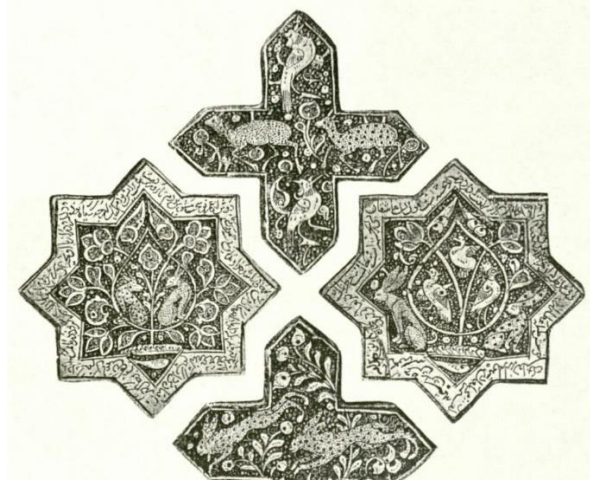


Image 23. Luster-painted eight-pointed star tile from the Emāmzāde Ğa'far at Dāmġān, dat.1266-67 (source: F. Sarre, 2000, p.45)

As the name of the deceased does not appear on the inscriptions of eight-pointed star tiles, it can be assumed that the tiles were not tailor-made for specific monuments. Furthermore, their similarities strongly suggest that they were mass produced and were probably purchased in the required quantity for each tomb. It is not a priori clear why these tiles were used only for the *emāmzādes* in Qom and not for the rulers' tombs. This is obviously connected with the question whether the sanctity of *emāmzādes* was underlined with the use of shiny tiles in decorations. One might also argue from a practical point of view that the function of these sites as pilgrimage centers made the use of tiles at those points that were most accessible for visitors (plinths, *miḥrābs* and cenotaphs) a necessity. It seems that in fact, the selection of tiles served two specific purposes, firstly, to provide protection for these parts of the building through the use of stronger materials such as tiles and secondly to serve as a vehicle to impart the religious and social messages to visitors.

Image 24. luster painted tile from the mausoleum of 'Abdoṣṣamad at Naṭanz, 707/1308 (source: *metmuseum* site, date: 25.08.2020)



The luster *mihrāb* which is currently displayed in the Islamic Department of the National Museum in Tehran belongs to the ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far mausoleum at Qom (734 / 1334) and is among the latest *mihrābs* produced in the workshop of the Abū Ṭāher family. Compared with other *mihrābs* of this provenance, it does not have a high quality and some tile pieces placed next to each other are not compatible.

However, the scheme of this *mihrāb* follows the model of previous lustre *mihrābs* from this workshop, which have these general features: The *mihrābs* are all designed with three sections and all include Quranic inscriptions. They are made of several tiles, and the mixture of motifs and inscriptions, choice of colour, selection of geometric and arabesque designs, and the application of symbolic elements such as half columns are among their defining specifications. From the aspects of method of production, motifs and calligraphy, as well as the texts of the inscriptions, these lustre *mihrābs* are considered as the finest examples of decorations, and the choice of the sites for application of such outstanding and valuable *mihrābs* underlines the financial capacity of the patron as well as the level of sanctity and importance of the building. For instance, the shrine of Emām Reżā, which has a very high religious value among the Shiites, contains three very precious *mihrābs*, which are among the oldest examples of the period. The use of such a *mihrāb* in mausoleum of ‘Alī b. Ğa‘far certainly served to highlight the level of sanctity and the status of the deceased among the people as well as the wealth of its patron, ‘Aṭā al-Molk Mīr Moḥammad, who, based on the titles (such as: the most appreciated of noblest decent and the highest in rightness in the world and in religion), enjoyed a high social status and had a particular esteem for the deceased to consider the construction of such a mausoleum.



Image 25. luster painted tile *mihrāb* from the Meydān mosque at Kāšān in Pergamon Museum in Berlin



Image 26. luster painted tile *mihrāb* from the shrine at Mašhad 612/1215 (source: Watson, 1985, P.126)



Image 27. luster painted tile *mihrāb* from the Emāmzāde Yaḥyā at Varāmīn, 661/1262

Despite these examples of grand tilework, stucco was the preferred mode of decoration applied in the mausoleums of Qom. Overall, the stucco techniques used there can be divided in three main groups:

- 1- Semi-embossed in carved and incised plaster (between 0.5 to 2.5 centimetres)
- 2- Flat stucco and false joint and simulated incised brick joints and brick-end technique
- 3- Carved plaster lattice or open work stucco

Furthermore, the additional techniques among common methods applied include:

- 1- Grid pattern technique or *ažde kārī*
- 2- Painted plaster

The semi-embossed, carved technique, alongside with colorful painting on plaster medallions, are among examples of stuccowork resembling those used in the tomb of Ölgaitü at Soltāniye (1303). Additionally, the composition of false joints next to each other in the shape of large diamonds, in these tombs, can also be seen in the earlier tomb of Pīr-e Bakrān (698/1299) and in the great mosque at Oštorġān (715/1315).

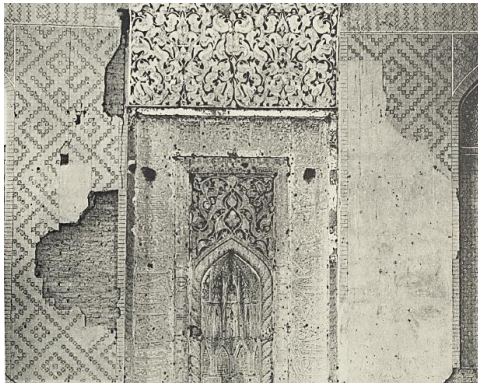


Image 28. simulated incised brick joints in the Great Mosque at Oštorġān, D.Wilber (source: *The Architecture of Islamic Iran*, 1955, no. 95)



Image 29. simulated incised brick joints in the shrine of Pīr-e Bakrān, (source: *Iranian Journal of Archaeological Studies*, 2, 2012, p.102)

The important point to note in the arrangement of stuccos in these tombs is the level of relief on the surfaces, according to which they can be divided in three categories:

- 1- Flat stuccos (less than 0.5 cm),
- 2- Semi-embossed stucco (0.5 to 2.5 cm)
- 3- Embossed stucco (more than 2.5 cm).

Accordingly, the stuccos used in Qom tombs fall within the first and second categories. In fact, it can be said that from the viewpoint of relief and workmanship, this type of stucco closely resembles the plasterwork of much earlier times, such as the stucco of 'Atīq Mosque at Šīrāz (Pope, 1964: 259) or the Neyšābūr School, which is inspired by the so called Samarra style (Wilkinson, 1986: 127). The stuccos of the Qom mausoleums are flatter than they were in the

following periods and they seldom display the high relief and decorative styles characteristic of the Seljuq and Il-khanid periods.

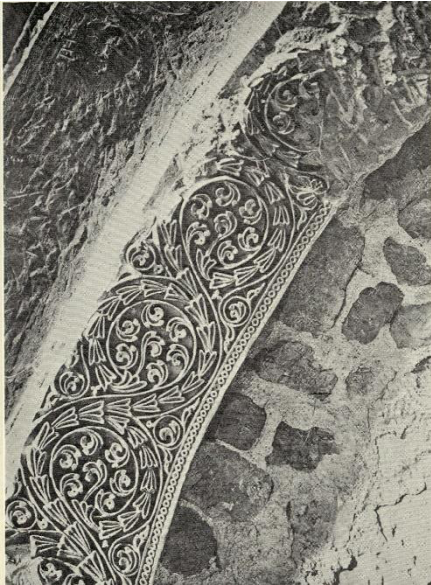


Image 30. Stucco on soffit of *mihrāb* arch in 'Atīq Mosque at Šīrāz, c.875 (source: Pope, vol.8, pl.259a,1977)

On the other hand, the presence of color in the Qom stuccos is more prominent, meaning that the use of bright and vivid colors on the background and on the motifs is a specific feature of these tombs' plasterwork. This amount and variety in the colors of the plaster decoration were rarely seen in pre-13th century tombs; the use of color was common in previous eras, e.g. inscription of the Ğāmi' mosque at Ardestān or the stuccos of the tomb of Pīr-e Bakrān, but never with such an intensity or variety.



Image 31. Detail of colored plaster work on soffit of Ardestān mosque (source: I. Āqāğānī, 2015)

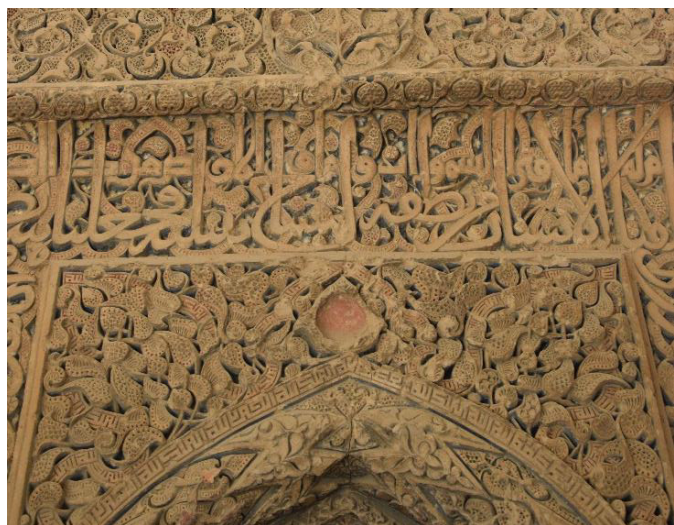


Image 32. Detail of polychrome stucco of Pīr Bakrān (source: I. Āqāğānī, 2016)

Historically, azure blue was generally used to impart a greater depth to the decorations, such as on the *mīhrāb* of Rabīʿe Ḥātūn at Oštorġān (709/1309), and it was also applied extensively here. The use of colors can be seen c.30 years before Qom reached its zenith in the mausoleum of Ölgaitü at Soltānīye (705/1305), where the artist was quite successful in realizing their variety and their appropriate composition.



Image 33-34. Polychrome plaster on the vault in the gallery of Ulğaito Mausoleum at Soltānīye (source: S. Fallāhfār, 2006)

In the next era, the Timurid, colored tiles replaced the colored stucco on the interiors and exteriors of the buildings; examples of this style include the mausoleum of Šāh-e Zende at Samarqand (787/1385), Ḥvāġe ʿAbdollāh Anšārī at Gazorgāh (828/1425) and the Gouharšād mausoleum at Mašhad (848/1444).

The other prominent feature of plaster decorations in these tombs is the extensive use of the grid pattern technique, applied on the panels with vegetal and geometrical motifs. This technique was also continued from previous eras, and its earliest example can be seen in the Ğāmeʿ mosque at Nāʿīn and the Resġet Tower (Aḥmadī, Šekofte, 2011:140 – 141), while in the Great Mosque at Ešfahān, we witness its application with different designs. Other examples include the Ḥeydarīye at Qazvīn and the Gonbad-e ʿAlaviyān at Hamedān.



Image 35. Detail of grid pattern technique in Ğāmeʿ mosque at Nāʿīn (source: I. Āqāġānī, 2015)



Image 36. The grid pattern technique of the Resġet Tower (source: Ḥ. Rāyatī, 2005) 343

In these tombs, the technique is applied in various ways, often executed in the shape of intricate and dense lattices or hatches.



Image 37. Detail of grid pattern technique in Gonbad-e 'Alaviyān at Hamedān L. Korn, 2013 (source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt OFU Bamberg)



Image 38. The grid pattern technique, *madrasa* of Heydariye at Qazvīn (source: I. Āqāgānī 2019)

The grid pattern technique in the stucco design of the tombs in Qom is executed on the foreground of the motifs. In some sections the grid system was executed on all the leaves or undulating foliated stems, while on all the *Thuluth* inscriptions it appears individually on single leaves and by a single lace pattern. In the two *Kufic* inscriptions among the Qom monuments, where grid patterns are seen on the foreground of the stucco work, this design serves to render the background comparatively darker and ultimately the text of the inscriptions clearer. There are not many examples of this type of grid patterns on the background of stucco inscriptions. A similar example can be seen on the *mihṛāb* in Rey and the al-Afdal's *mihṛāb* (1094) in the mosque of Ibn Ṭulūn at Cairo, where the name of 'Alī is mentioned. Moreover, this type of *Kufic* script is very similar to the *Kufic* script which is found in the two inscriptions of Qom.

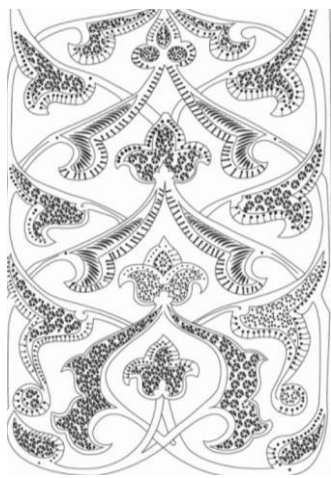


Image 38. A detail of Al-Afdal's *mihṛāb* in the mosque of Ibn Ṭulūn at Cairo 1193 (source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt OFU Bamberg)



Image 39. A detail of stucco *mihṛāb* from Rey mosque, 11th 12th centuries (source: National museum in Tehran, I. Āqāgānī 2019)

The grid pattern technique has been executed both on the foreground and the background surfaces of the designs. In the Ğāme' mosque of Ardestān, on the first bay southeast of *mihrāb*, the lattice patterns appear on the foreground, while in the second bay of *mihrāb* it is executed on the motifs. In some examples from Il-khanid era, such as Pīr-e Bakrān and the *mihrāb* of Haftšūye mosque this technique was employed on different decorative parts of the building and with different type of patterns on several sub-areas. It can also be seen in background and foreground levels of design in various scale of hatches. Basically, the design on the different surfaces of the building (such as the *mihrāb* or the surfaces of the walls) determines the relevant surface for the implementation of this technique, which is used by the craftsman to display more balanced composition and to create multi-dimensional decorative surfaces.



Drawing 9. The grid pattern technique of the Pīr-e Bakrān tomb in foreground system, (source: *Iranian Journal of Archaeological Studies*, Vol 2, 2012, p.103)



Image 40. The grid pattern technique in the Pīr-e Bakrān tomb, A.M Grbanovic 2013 (source: *zfdg* site, 15.08.2019)



Image 41. The grid or lattice pattern technique of *mihrāb* of Haftšūye mosque, A.M Grbanovic 2014 (source: *zfdg* site, 15.08.2019)



Image 42. The second bay of southeast of *mihrāb* of Ardestān Ğāme' mosque, L. Korn 2000 (source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt of OFU Bamberg)

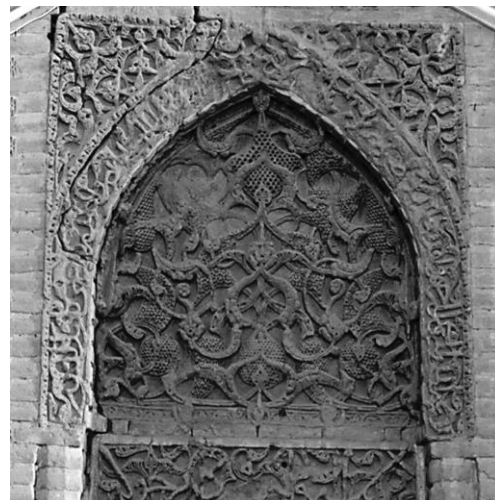


Image 43. The pattern technique on second bay of southeast of *mihrāb* of Ardestān Ğāme' mosque (source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt of OFU Bamberg)

In most cases the stucco artist's signature was also recorded. The potential difficulties in identifying individuals behind signatures is shown by the following four cases, we have a potentially single name: "Abū Šoġā'", written as "'Alī b. Moḥammad b, Abī Šoġā' Bannā'" Ebn-e Moḥammad 'Alī Abū Šoġā' ", "'Alī b. Moḥammad Abī Šoġā' " and "Ebn-e Moḥammad 'Alī Abū Šoġā' al-Bannā". Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī believes that all these names belong to a single person, namely 'Alī b. Moḥammad b, Abī Šoġā' Bannā, written in a number of forms (Modarresī Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1973: 37). Monuments bearing the name of this artist were built between 1369-1390, and it seems sensible to attribute them to the work of a single person. However, in this period, it was common for different members of a single family to be engaged in plasterwork, and so in the light of the diversity of names written, some have referred to it as the Abū Šoġā' clan (Šālehī Kāḥakī; Taqavī Nežād, 2017: 100). The signature of the artist in the four mausoleums where the decorations survive to date, is not located in a same place, and no special place has been considered in the buildings to record the signature. For instance, in the southern tomb of Bāġ-e Sabz, it is written horizontally in two parts on the spandrel above the entrance (Ch. 4-1, Img. 30), whereas in the monument of Aḥmad b. Qāsem, it appears at the end of the lower inscription band alongside other building's data (Ch. 4-6, Img. 27). The name Abū Šoġā' or the Abū Šoġā' clan, who were active in the 14th century, is only observed in the limits of Qom, and there are no signs of this name in any other historical books or documents. It is not clear whether this master craftsman was from Qom or had been transferred to Qom from another place, but there are no other stucco works comparable to Qom in decoration and especially of similar color scheme seen at any other place in this period (Ibid. 89- 99).

Another name featuring on Qom stuccos is 'Alī Qazbīnī, which appears at 'Alī b. Ğā'far mausoleum. From the aspects of technique and the choice of design and motifs, it greatly resembles the work in monuments bearing the signature of Moḥammad b. Abū Šoġā', but from a chronological order, it precedes them. There is no information about this artist's ancestry, but from the surname one may presume that he had been invited from Qazvin and that his design and style have served as models at later dates by Abū Šoġā' and his group. Raḥmatī, a researcher of plasterwork, considered 'Alī Qazbīnī, the master stucco artist of the Emāmzāde 'Alī b. Ğā'far, to be none other than 'Alī b. Moḥammad b, Abī Šoġā'. However, he reached this conclusion based on the similarity of design and selection of motifs, rather than on any historical reference (Raḥmatī, 2012: 60).

Another point to be noted in Qom tombs' stuccos is that the quality and quantity of the applied techniques are relatively different. The finest examples are perhaps preserved in the 'Alī b. Ğā'far mausoleum and in the rulers' tombs. Compared to these tombs, in some cases the

decorations are quite simple. It seems that the work has been carried out by workers according to a predetermined pattern with the master artist acting only as a supervisor. In cases such as the Mausoleum of Ḥadīġe Ḥātūn, where the stuccowork is of lower quantity and of poor quality, we witness two names next to each other: Abū Šoġā' as the principle craftsman and Ḥasan b. 'Alī Ḥulū, who was probably the former's worker and who probably performed under his master's supervision. Consequently, the low quality of the workmanship in the stuccos could have been due to the selection of the plaster worker or in fact the low cost of plaster worker. Therefore, in these tombs, the social and religious status of the deceased and the financial capacity of the patron or the cost considered for the decorations were instrumental in the selection of the master craftsman and the executive group. However, given the uniformity of patterns in the design and division of the levels, the technique of plasterwork's reliefs as well as the identical motifs, one may conclude that the surviving works were related to a single group of artist and his laborers

Decorative motifs – The use and the composition of decorative motifs in Qom show enough similarities to speak of a specific design model applied at different mausoleums. For instance, the design of the interior surfaces of the domes consists mainly of a star-shaped, geometrical network with a central medallion. This design was of course common during the Saljuq period. The examples can be seen in the Qerve mosque and the Ġāme' mosque at Golpayegan. This design was used as a model in the decorations under the domes of Qom tombs.



Image 44. The interior of the dome chamber of the great mosque of Qerve, L. Korn (source: *Aṭar*. 2018, p.94)



Image 45. Design of the interior surfaces of the dome, Great mosque of Golpāyegān, L. Korn 2004 (source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt of OFU Bamberg)

Furthermore, the decorative motifs of most stuccos are floral and arabesque, geometric and epigraphic. The vegetal designs consist mostly of lobed leaves, single or multiple leaves, arabesques and scrollwork patterns, in which cavities or hatches in grid or cross-hatched forms are created. These were used in the decoration of most squinches, spandrels and niches, and in the backgrounds of the inscriptions, and each surface was distinguished from the other by a frame or an ornamental border. The application of arabesques and floral motifs was rooted in the pre-Islamic era and was continued and perfected in the post-Islamic art. In combination with inscriptions, they become the main decorative elements for the buildings (Montašerī, 2017: 58). During the Saljuq period, many stucco decorations of diverse methods using arabesque and vegetal motifs were executed in the *mīhrābs*, niches and other surfaces of the buildings. The most noteworthy examples of the Saljuq period were executed in the decorations of the Ardestān and Zavāre Ğāme' mosques.

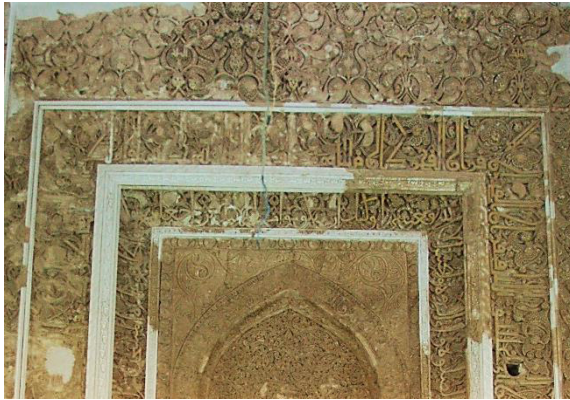


Image 46. The *mīhrāb* of Ğāme' mosques Zavāre (source: I. Āqāġānī 2015)



Image 47. The *mīhrāb* of Ğāme' mosques Ardestān (source: I. Āqāġānī, 2015)

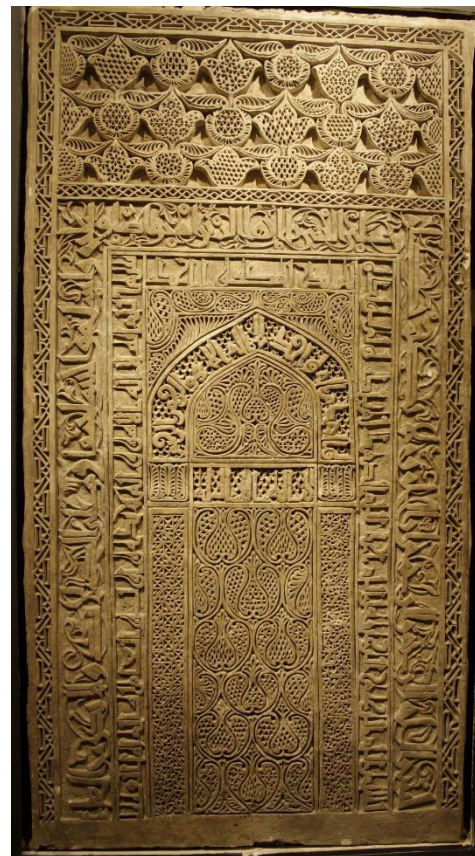


Image 48. Stucco *mīhrāb* from Rey mosque-11th – 12th centuries (source: National museum in Tehran, I. Āqāġānī, 2019)

Following the Saljuq trend, the motifs became finer during the Il-Khanid, e.g. the Ölgaitü Mīhrāb in Ğāme‘ mosque at Esfahān; while in some monuments the designs and patterns were used more compactly, as seen in the *mīhrāb* of the Ğāme‘ mosque at Urūmīye.

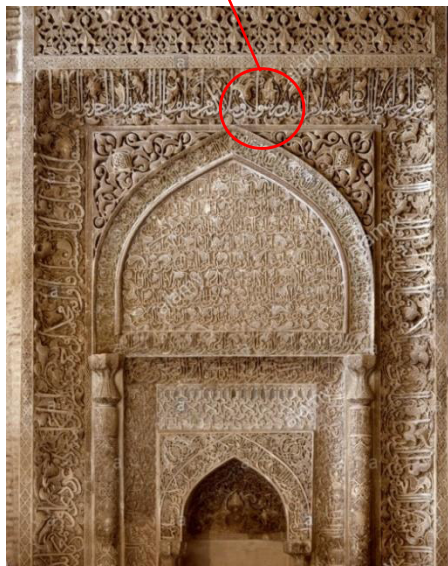


Image 50-49. Ölgaitü *mīhrāb* in Ğāme‘ mosque at Esfahān, A. M. Grbanovic 2014 (source: *zfdg* site, 15.08.2019) and bottom by B.O'Kane, 1993(source: *alamy* site, 15.08.2019)

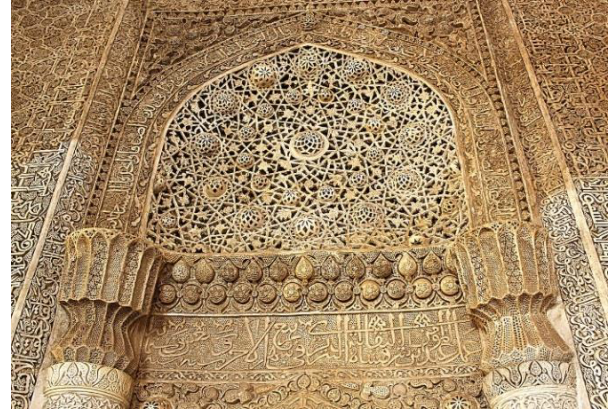


Image 51. The *mīhrāb* of the Ğāme‘ Mosque at Urūmīye (source: *Wikimedia* site, 05.07.2020)



Image 52. The *mīhrāb* of Rabi'e Hātūn in Oštorgān, Tehran national museum (source: I. Āqāgānī, 2015)

At the Il-Khanid period the internal surfaces of the buildings were covered completely in plasterwork. This practice is less evident in Saljuq monuments. For instance, in the tomb of Pīr-e Bakrān, the Varāmīn Ğāme‘ mosque and in the tombs of Qom, a large surface of the walls is completely covered with a thin layer of plaster, which was incised with the patterns of brick joints to serve only as a display. As an aesthetic objective of the craftsman at Il-Khanid era it had no relation with the underlying layers. In the decorations of the tombs in Qom, a number of styles are arrayed next to each other, while this disorder in the styles and techniques is not observed in any of the Seljuq era's decorations. In spite of their extensive adornment, the surfaces possess a systematic order, as seen in the Gonbad-e Alaviyān at Hamadān (Shani, 1996: 85).

The tomb of Pīr-e Bakrān (698/1299) is also among the tombs of Il-Khanid period, where the numerous styles and techniques similar to the tombs of Qom, can be observed on different surfaces and thrown together.



Image 53. The stucco decoration in Gonbad-e Alaviyān, L. Korn 2013 (source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt of OFU Bamberg)

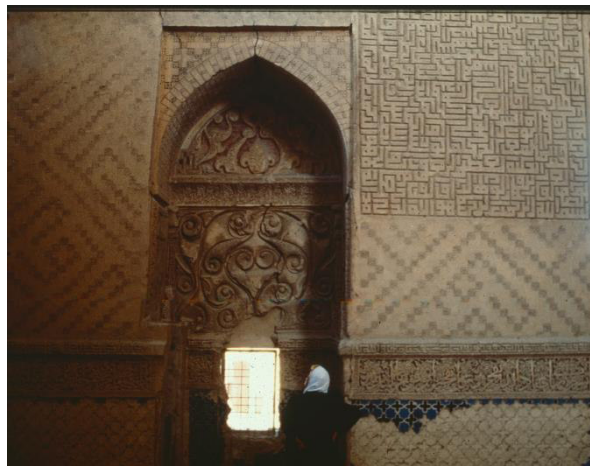


Image 54. plaster work in different styles and techniques of Pīr Bakrān tom, Schimmel 2018 (source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt of OFU Bamberg)

The use of cursive floral patterns, undulating foliated stems, narrow margins with curved motifs and sometimes square *Kufic* inscriptions, lace-like punctured motifs and the mixed patterns on joint plugs are a decorative trait common to this monument and the mausoleums of Qom. Basically, these motifs and schemes follow a traditional practice of both Saljuq and Mongol in Iran. Examples of such motifs can be seen in some of Saljuq *mihrābs* such as Zavāre Ğame‘ mosque and the tomb of Ölgaitü at Soltāniye, the tomb of Pīr-e Bakrān, the Ğāmī mosque at Ostorġān and the tombs of Šeyḡ-e Ğām and Bāyazīd-e Baštāmī, which belong to the Il-Khanid period.



Image 55. Detail of plaster work in lateral wall recesses in the *ivān* of the Pīr Bakrān tomb (source: I. Āqāġānī, 2019)

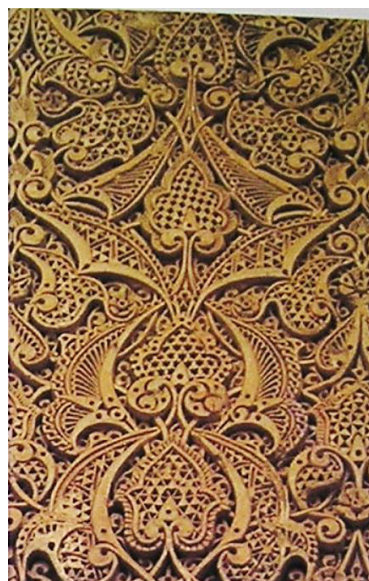


Image 56. Detail of stucco motifs from Šeyḡ-e Ğām (source: *Ġanġnāme*, vol.1 ʔ50 p. 224)

Ornamental medallions were used in profusion in the stuccos of these tombs. Most of these are in semi-embossed carved technique, and round or paisley-shaped, and include inscriptions or geometrical and floral designs. The circular medallions of the tombs in Qom, especially the ones used in the rulers' tombs, are quite similar to the ones in the tomb of Ölgaitü at Soltānīye.



Image 57-58. Colored carved medallions at tomb of Ulğaito at Sultānīye (source: Sa'īd Fallāhfār)

Inscriptions in *bannāii* or *mo'qqeli* form bearing sacred expressions or names or Quran verses are among the decorative items covering many surfaces of these tombs. Some art historians have claimed that this technique was launched with the brickwork of Ghaznavid and Saljuq periods (Šekofte, 2012: 87). The unique example of such works from the Il-Khanid period can be found in the tomb of Ulğaito at Sultānīye, which has been executed with tilework. The plasterwork examples from this period can be observed at the Oštorğān Ğāme' mosque and in its Allāh and Moħammad inscriptions, while their tomb counterparts are available at the mausoleum of Pīr-e Bakrān, and in the 14th century in the 'Atīq mosque of the Šeyħ-e Ğām complex.



Image 59. *Bannāi* inscription on soffit of the tomb of Ulğaito at Soltānīye Dome (source: Archive of ICHO)

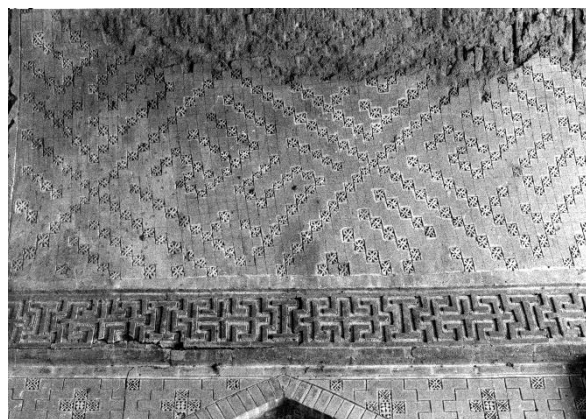


Image 60. *Bannāi* inscription on the walls of Oštorğān Ğāme' mosque, B. Finster (source: Bildarchiv Islamische Welt of OFU Bamberg)

Overall, these and other inscription bands are considered as important and widely used decorative elements in the tombs of Qom. They differ in the quality and quantity of execution from one tomb to another, while they follow the same pattern in content. It is highly probable that the social status of the deceased, as well as the wealth of the patrons played a role not only in the amount of decorations and inscriptions used in the construction, but in the quality of workmanship as well. For instance, one may compare the rich decorations and inscriptions used in the rulers' tombs to some less impressive mausoleums, such as that of Šāh Aḥmad Ḥanafīye.

The backgrounds of the inscriptions in these tombs are filled with decorative motifs, consisting mostly of vegetal designs. The surfaces of these inscriptions are less decorated than the ones belonging to the Il-khanid period, and this has helped make them more readable. This is one of the distinguishing factors of the 14th century inscriptions (Šekofte, 2012: 85).

The contents of the inscriptions are mostly Quranic verses, or else “building” data related to the construction. The use of Quranic verses or hadith served mainly the purpose of reviewing the Divine words and recalling the glory and power of God, underlining the religious role of these sites. On the other hand, the spiritual and decorative elements in the Islamic architecture were also important tools in the hand of governments for promoting their religious policies and their beliefs among the people. The repeated use of the name of ‘Alī, as well as the names of the 14 Shiite saints and the verses referring to prophethood alongside the Imamate of ‘Alī, were used to emphasize and highlight the Shiite character of these monuments. Shiites believe that the *imāms* are the saviors who can intervene on one’s behalf in the afterlife. Monuments, which made extensive use of Shiite names, include the great tomb of Ölgaitü at Soltānīye, where they include some of the earliest decorative elements added to this building (1309 – 1313). Some researchers consider it as one of the first properly “Shiite” work of architecture with a Shiite inscription (Faḡfūrī; Bolḡarī Qehī, 2016: 33).

The Quranic verses used in these buildings include: Tabārak (67), al-Raḡmān (55), al-Ḥašr (59) al-Faḡḡ(48), al-Qadr(97), Yāsīn(36), al-Mo’minūn(23), al-Dahr(76), ‘Imrān(3), al-Ḥamd(1), al- Iḡlaḡ(112), al-Isrā’(17) and al-‘Arāf(7).

No particular pattern was followed as to the choice of Quranic verses for different sections, except for the surah al-Dahr (76), which is consistently located quite low. However, as far as their content goes, most verses either refer to the rewards awaiting the righteous after death or are a call to prayer and are eminently suitable for mausoleums and monumental structures. It may be claimed that for this reason, the selection of verses in these sites was quite deliberate. However, no specific rules were followed to determine the position of these Quranic inscriptions, and their content relative to placement differs in each monument. Thus, one

monument may have used the Surah al-Dahr in its inscription band on zone of transition, while the other may have used it in the *mihrāb*. The only exception appears in the buildings where the dome's shell has remained intact, and where in most cases the central inscription is accompanied by a common design. Three tombs contain a verse from the 'Imrān Chapter, and the remaining tombs are adorned with verses containing the concepts of Uniqueness of God, the Prophethood of Moḥammad and the Guardianship of 'Alī.

Additional common expressions written on the mausoleum inscriptions include “Al mulk Lillāh al-wahīd al-Qahhār and Muḥammad wa'Alī Ḥayr al-bašar⁷”, which is an emphasis on the power and glory of God, the Prophet and the Shiite *imāms*.

In addition to religious inscriptions, building inscription is important in historical terms, providing information on the building names and dates of construction and the patrons, in addition to mentioning the names of admired rulers and describing relevant historical events (such as the inscriptions on the lower niches of Emāmzāde 'Alī b. Ğa'far). The locations of these inscriptions in the buildings also vary, but in a number of cases, the historically pertinent information was placed in the inscription band in the mid-section of the tombs. The compliance with this principle is seen in the tombs, which bear either the name of a single master craftsman or of the eldest one (probably the mentor of future artists). This feature may indicate that the master craftsman had a great role in planning and selecting the inscriptions.

The inscriptions are mainly in Arabic, with some Persian words blending in. In some cases, the Arabic grammar is not perfect, pointing to the shortcoming of the scribe's knowledge in this language. Other characteristics of these inscriptions include the exaggerated use of titles and the designations of the mausoleum's owner and patron, to such an extent that in some cases it becomes quite difficult to distinguish them from the actual name of the person.

To sum up, it can be claimed that the 14th century was a milestone in the construction of Shiite mausoleums of Qom, both sacred and secular. In this era, Shiite architects and artists, supported by wealthy patrons, found an opportunity to manifest their craft and to promote their beliefs in these tombs, through the medium of art and ornamentation both novel and rooted in the culture of their predecessors. Thus, through an artistic medium, they helped to realize the political goals of their patrons.

he tombs in Qom are works which clearly reflect the beliefs and the tastes of their patrons, apparently to such an extent that no significant advance or change was observed in their overall architecture and decoration over a period of one more than a century. The socio-political status of the deceased is an important parameter influencing the method of execution, the quality of

⁷ translation: Domination belongs to God, the Avenger, Muḥammad and 'Alī the best of human kind.

tomb construction, and in particular the type and the amount of their decorations. Such concentration of tombs in a single area and in the manner seen in Qom is not observed in any other part of Iran before the fourteenth century. As mentioned in chapter 2, in subsequent eras, Ṭabarestān and Māzandarān became “hubs” of Shiite tombs. The tombs of this region were built under the Shiite government, which dominated the different areas of Āmol, Sārī and Ğebal from about the year 760 /1359, and whose development activities continued until the year 989/ 1581 (Rā’i, 2011: 83). The construction of many of these tombs occurred when the *sādāt* of Mar‘ašī of Māzandarān were in power, who relied on Shiism and respect for the prophet’s descendants, and built the *emāmzādes*, to realize their political goals and ambitions (Hāšemī Zarġ Ābād, 2007: 652). Unlike Qom, the tombs in Māzandarān were not created around an important Shiite center, i.e. they were not concentrated around one large shrine such as Fāṭeme Ma’sūme in Qom. These tombs are spread throughout the entire region of Māzandarān, and contrary to Qom, where most are sited according to the structure and the gates of the city, in this province, the topographic conditions of the land (mostly plains) and historical events such as wars and conquests determined the construction sites of these tombs. The Heštel towers, Emāmzāde ‘Abdollāh in Āmol, Šāh Bālū in Nūr and the Tomb of Darvīš in Babol are examples of tombs that were built in accordance with historical events⁸ (Neyestānī, 2004: 152).



Image 61. Emāmzāde Moḥammad Ṭāher at Bābol (source: S. Soleymānī)



Image 62. Emamzāde Serest at Bābol (source: S. Soleymānī)

⁸ The number of tomb towers in this region is very high, but no major study has been undertaken on their siting and dispersion in the area. The information provided in this project is based on the case studies of the tomb as well as in the information provided by the experts of the Cultural Heritage Organization and the local individuals.



Image 63. Borġe-e Heštāl at Āmol
(source: S. Soleymānī)



Image 64. Emāmzāde Faḥr al-Dīn
(source: S. Soleymānīum)

They lacked the boldness or height of their counterparts in Qom, and they generally did not follow the latter in style, architectural proportions and decorative details. Moreover, they are all devoid of a crypt. Rather, the structures of Qom tomb in the period discussed here clearly possess their own, specific and indigenous style of architecture (Neyestānī, 2004: 304- 310). Their common traits are the free-standing construction, the conical domes and the serial construction according to a specific model throughout the region. Consequently, it can be agreed with some art historians who maintain that this period was the final chapter in the development of freestanding mausoleums (Hillenbrand, 1994: 286).

The freestanding polygonal mausoleums with conical roof had become a constituting part of the silhouette of the city of Qom, in which they marked significant points of the urban structure. Possibly, the origin of their design can be assumed in the tomb of Fāṭīma Ma‘šūma, the city’s saint of overarching importance among Shiites. The mausoleums of Qom had evolved as an architectural and urbanist instrument of expressing the city’s values, social and religious hierarchies. It seems that the building type of these mausoleums became so successfully linked with the city and its ruling family that hardly any changes were required during their period of power. Only after their demise as an independent political unit, the mausoleums remained as religious symbols that became ever deeper linked with the Shiite identity of Qom.

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