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### Original Research Article

## Investigating Ilkhanid Architecture based on the Architectural of Ujan

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### Abstract

**Problem statement:** The most important architectural monuments of the Mongol period (7th and 8th centuries AH/14th and 15th centuries AD) were built in the land of Azerbaijan, which was the political center of the Mongol state.

Some of these important architectural monuments are such as a Maragheh Observatory, numerous monuments in Tabriz, such as the mosque, caravanserai, and the bazaar, as well as two Ghazaniyya settlements and Rabi Rashidi. One of the most important cities in this period is Soltanieh, which construction and development of the city, in this period, was due to the passage of major trade routes. Meanwhile, a new area that has recently been discovered and excavated is the city of Ujan, which has been selected and built as the summer capital of the Ilkhans due to its large meadows and also being located at the crossroads of Central Asia to Mesopotamia and northwest to the Central Plateau of Iran. An important building has been found in this city, which has been excavated and studied for 4 seasons, and during this excavation, interesting and remarkable information about Ilkhanid architecture has been obtained.

**Research objective:** Therefore, in this article, we intend to introduce the architecture of the building found in this city, which is the government citadel and castle and study the Ilkhanid architecture based on the works found in this city. This article has been written with an archaeological approach and according to the archaeological excavations carried out in this area and intends to present a report of four seasons of excavation in the government citadel and castle of the historical city of Ujan, which was built on the ruins and remnants of ancient period Seljuq.

**Conclusion:** The architects of the Ujan, were not only influenced by the style and pattern of Seljuq architecture, but also by the architectural style of the previous periods of Iran, they presented a new pattern and method in making and decorating architectural works.

**Keywords:** *Ilkhanid architecture, ilkhanid capital of Azerbaijan, Soltaniyeh, Ujan, Seljuq.*

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## Introduction

Mongols' invasion Iran in 7AH/14AD with following formidable consequences and the Ilkhanid government, not only attracted historians but attracted curiosity and attention of other scholars such as archaeologists. Before the emergence of modern views that rooted in historical data from archaeological researches of the Islamic period, scholars considered Iranian history and culture, full of darkness and destruction, while the domination of the Mongols was a deep cultural and economic rupture. On the contrary, detailed studies of Iranian history during the period lead researchers to suggest theories that comprehend various social, political, and economic aspects. Various Iranian regions had different experiences, for example, Azerbaijan, especially Tabriz, tactfully and wisely made a friendly relationship with the Mongols, whereas accepted the Mongols' superiority by reception their tribes (Hamavi Baghdadi, 2002, 705, 706; Ibn Athir, 1999, 401); This resulted in continuation and expansion of local social and economic life (Fig. 1).

However, Azerbaijan was the focal point of the Ilkhanid government, so Maragheh, Tabriz, Soltanieh, and Ujan could reflect regional conditions during the period. Researchers rarely have considered Ujan in their studies. Therefore, the present attempts to investigate the city life and space to overcome, partially, the problem. Since their earliest times, Mongols understood the geographical and political significance of Azerbaijan. Economic facilities



Fig. 1 . Hasanlu. Phase 1 dates to Ilkhanid period . Source: Danti, 2007.

and weaving workshops, with armories and other factories, made Azerbaijani cities, including Maragheh and Tabriz, as logistics of the Mongol fighters. First, Holaku chose Maragheh as Ilkhanid capital. The intersection of caravans from far-east and India, from one hand, to Qobchaq plain and Mediterranean Sea led his successor, Abagha, to confirm Maragheh as the Ilkhanid capital (Razavi, 2009, 175). Later, Ujan reconstructed at the reign of Kazan on the earlier Seljuq ruins, whereas Khajeh Rashid al-Din Fazlollah titled the city as the "City of Islam" (Fazzollah Hamedani, 1940, 144). One can consider to a known archaeological source of Ilkhanid period Azerbaijan, cultural data from Hasanlu I, which Michael Danti published at 2004 as Ilkhanid Period at Tepe Hasanlu by Museum of University of Pennsylvania. The book compiled to formulate and define scarce Ilkhanid excavations at Hasanlu; dated to 13/ 14 AD centuries (Danti, 2007, 16). However, the location of Ujan discovered following University of Tehran archaeological surveys, 1392/2013, at Ujan region, at the same time, Metraqchi's explanations of Ujan (Metraqchi, 2000), especially what he drew as the picture of the city, significantly helped to discover the same location. Despite the significance of Ujan as an Ilkhanid political and commercial center, there is architectural ambiguity for archaeologists.

## Hypothesis

the location of Azerbaijan, as research problem, as intersection of Far and Central Asia to Mediterranean and Indian subcontinent, Ilkhanids renovated earlier cities and raised new constructions. Hypothetically, argues and compare continuity of nature and structure of Ilkhanid cities to earlier cities.

## Theoretical foundations

Urbanization is one of the most important areas in Iranian historical civilization, which has an ancient history in Iran. Historical sources focally have not discussed Ilkhanid urban centers, however, researchers have to recourse various political, literal, religious, among other, sources. Historical sources

present valuable information about Maragheh, Tabriz, and Soltanieh, and rarely Ujan. The significance of urbanization and urban architecture, during medieval periods, in world history and Iran reflects people attitude and values. Therefore, scholars of different fields have focused on different aspects of urbanization to problems. Azerbaijan adjacency to “Olus Juji”, as rivals and enemy, and proximity to Mamluks, forced the Ilkhans to create economic and commercial centers, therefore, looks at the foundation of Ujan from this point of view.

### History of research

Following fall of Baghdad, Azerbaijan the most significant political and commercial center of the Ilkhanids and witnessed advance and prosperity. Historical sources generally reflect cities including Maragheh, Tabriz, and Soltanieh, however, they are scarce and with no details. Joweini (1991), Fazzollah Hamedani, (1940), Wassaf (1961), Mostoofi (1958), other sources present valuable information about Maragheh, Tabriz, and Soltanieh, Ujan. This is a shortcoming about Ujan that only archaeological excavations can overcome. Studies on the Islamic cities of Azerbaijan have been limited to excavations and surveys of Soltanieh (Tohidi, Kabiri & Mehryar, 1986), scarce excavations at Maragheh Observatory (Varjavand, 1987), and excavations of Arg-i-Alishah at Tabriz (Sarfaraz, 1982). Hoveyda (1975) published an article “introducing the lost historical city of Ujan”, in Journal of Historical surveys as while

he introduced parts of the city. However, Ujan was discovered, for the first time, during archaeological survey, then archaeological expedition of University of Tehran excavated the site through four seasons since 2016 to 2019.

### Medieval cities of Iran (pre Ilkhanid era)

History of urbanization ancient time in Iran, while prospered considering various conditions. Avesta and ancient Persian language all urban centers, provinces, country, and government as “city” (Shahr). Words such as “Irânshahr” and “Shahrîâr” prove a connection to royal concepts (Ashraf, 1994; Pigoloscaya, 1994, 212); (Fig. 2).

Sassanid period is the summit of Iranian urbanization before Islam (Tashakkori, 1998, 31), whereas historical sources present Sassanid kings as the founder of great cities (Yaqoubi, 1982, 19-30). Royal policy and ecological-economic location played a significant role in city shapes and development. The focal point of any urban center was a complex of the palace, temple, fortifications, and central bazaar (Tashakkori, 1998). Sassanid legacy of urban form and space transferred to Islamic era, whereas, Sassanid caste system changed to social and economic dynamic at Islamic period that prospered urban centers. Religious organizations played a more expanded role in Islamic cities, where mosques, and Khanqah had a significant role in forming the body of the cities. At the same time, cities and villages made more close connections and created



Fig. 2. Sassanid cities: rounded, Firooz Abad. Polygone, Bishapoor. Source: Kiani, 1987.

a correlated complex (Ashraf, 1993, 11-110). There was not prosperity and advance in urbanization during two early Hijri centuries; until late Umayyad and early Abbasid period (Soltanzadeh, 1998, 80-81). Development emerged during Abbasid period, when urban centers that enjoyed commercial prosperity and development of trade routes advanced and grew significantly. Centers such as citadel (arg), Jami, bazar and districts formed space of cities. Then Madrseh, public bath, mint, caravanserai, and windmill occupied other parts of city spaces (Ashraf, 1994, 18-23). Architectural principles did not evolve vastly since entrance of Arabs to Iran until emergence of seljuqs. Concentrated power and financial power of the latter helped to evolution of architectural style. Iranian secretaries played role in the evolution of new architectural structure, which is combinational consequence of earlier centuries, what is repeated during Ilkhanids era as compilation of structural and decorative forms. Another point is dominant functional aspect of city during medieval period that connected to political structure and functional generalization, and led to a dependent urban center, as a polity, as part of political structure (Yusefifar, 2011, 57-59). Seljuqs mainly attempted to construct a typical structure as concentrated mosque. Ilkhanid architectures borrowed maps, material, and methods of Seljuqs. Tower tomb was significant in architecture of Seljuqs and continued during Ilkhanid era as role model. Seljuqs supported and encouraged artists and artisans, and invested in new styles and structures in art and architectures that caused to new architectural methods and manifestation of details of ancient architectural forms. However, Islamic architecture reached to its summit. Seljuqs followed the Ghaznavids styles, Sassanid were under influences. Actually, they were the heir of consolidated architecture and urbanization that had passed more than four centuries of constructive evolutions. Seljuqs architecture unique beauty and consistency. However, it is a one-thousand-year old architecture, but remains present skill and proficiency of masters and artisans of brickworks, plasterworks,

and inscriptions. architecture during the period peace, prosperity, and political stability of Seljuqs' territory, and emergence of a knowledgeable vizier (minister) such as Khajeh Nizam al-Molk in the ruling system (Kamalledin Helmi, 2008, 188-192); (Fig. 3).

Ilkhanid architectural style Seljuq time. It was four and half century after Arab invasion to Iran that architecture of Seljuqs reached its summit; the time that early empirical forms changed to distinguished and deailed Seljuq style that appeared in tens of present structures. Seljuq and lkhanid architecture are similar in condition and appearance. Seljuqs Turks, as uncivilized conquerors, drove westward toward Iran and and became interested in enlightening Iranian activities in fine arts and literature. At their reign, Iranian secretaries and administration handled affairs,



Fig. 3. Jami of Isfahan and Yazd located at the city center with religious function. Source: Kiani 1987, 504.

while new rulers rarely influenced Iranian cultural continuity and elements (Wilber, 2014, 34).

### The general approach of the Mongols to urban life

Mongolian tribes were divided into two groups of “sedentary hunters” and “steppe shepherds” (Tesof, 1999, 58-59) who subsisted husbandry and hunting. Like other desert nomads, continuous effort to hunt and plunder was part of their economy and imposed them nomadism. Following the formation of Genghis Khan’s political order, they continued their nomadism, with no interest in sedentary life and urbanization, while they moved to summer and winter residences despite ruling china and Iran (Lamb, 1998, 152-155), what continued during the later interregnum (Samarqandi, 1994, 152); (Fig. 4). Despite Mongolian nomadic attitude, post-Genghis condition and view of later Ilkhans overcome earlier nomadism that made Ilkhanid rulers a founder and developer of significant urban centers. Rashid al-Din Fazlollah (ibid, 178) mentioned building of Qaraqorum at the reign of Oktay and compared it to Baghdad. It is similar to Kublai Khan’s endeavor

in renovation of Khan Baliq. Historical writings imply few reformist actions of Ilkhanids at Khorasan before founding Ilkhanid dynasty at their plunder and conquering summit (Heravi, 1993; Spuler, 1999, 271).

### Central cities during the Ilkhanid period

Following the formation of the Mongol empire, nomadism and centrifugal trends of Genghis successors fundamentally changed by Chinese and Iranian legacies, and new conditions. Dual policy of residency and accepting Iranian cultural and social norms, alongside with martial and nomadic behavior, and loyalty to Genghis decretal survived until the end of the Ilkhanid dynasty, however, later Ilkhanid rulers including Kazan Khan, Oljaito, and even Abu Saeid balanced the process, while reformative policies, development, and economy weighed more. The three latter Ilkhanids era was the period of influence of Iranian bureaucracy in Ilkhanid administration (Toosi, 1992, 311-317). Maragheh was an important urban center in Azerbaijan even earlier than Ilkhanids; however, geopolitics and at the southern slopes of Sahand, and Soofichai River, made Holaku Khan designate the city as the capital of Ilkhanids.

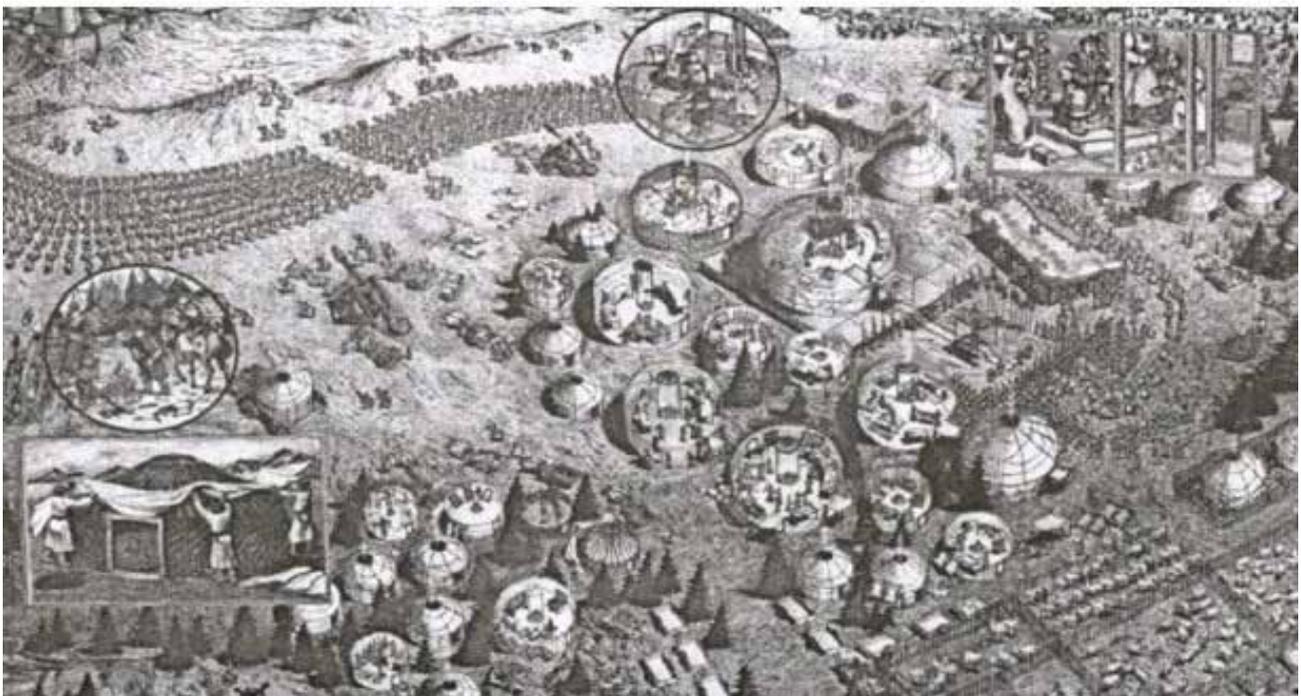


Fig. 4. Ilkhanid lifestyle in camp at their earlier times in Iran. Source: Velayati, 2017 a, 147.

Then, the death of Holaku increased significance, because tomb of Mongol nobles specially sanctified, what is apparent even now (Kiani, 1987, 521). The most important Ilkhanid structure, dated to the reign of Holaku, is the observatory of Maragheh that began in his life time. Considering archaeological excavations by Sarfaraz and Varjavand at the site of observatory, there were discovered sixteen architectural unit including a central tower, casting workshop to produce astronomical tools, five single towers, and several big structures. Vast area and quality of materials such as kilned brick, and glazed and luster tiles suggest the significance of astronomy for Mongols who were shamanist (Varjavand, 1987, 172). Considering Ilkhanid transhumance life style, they paid special attention to summer meadows of northwestern Iran, especially Azerbaijan, which led to the emergence of many residential areas across Azerbaijan including capitals such as Tabriz and Maragheh, and centers such as Takht-i-Soleiman and Ujan (Danti, 2007, 113); (Fig. 5).

Tabriz was another city that prospered during the Ilkhanid period and elected as the capital after Maragheh, while for commercial and economic reasons it was famous even for the most remote



Fig. 5. plan of the central tower of Maragheh observatory with imaginary vision of the complex. There were recovered central corridor and the side quarter at both sides of central corridor and the tower entrance within archaeological excavations. Source: Varjavand, 1987, 5.

areas. Tabriz was one of the most important industrial regions that produced high quality textiles (Hamavi Baghdadi, 2002, 717-718). Mongols knew the geographical and political conditions of Tabriz from their earliest days because the city had political centrality for them. Proximity to Olos Jochi and Mamluks of Levant and Egypt the Mongols monitor their rivals from Tabriz. The commercial significance of Tabriz, as an intersection of far eastern caravans to India, Qobchaq Plain, Mediterranean, Iraq, and Iranian cities, Made Abaqa Khan locate Tabriz as his capital. One should notify that Tabriz had deep ties and association to peripheral rural regions (Razavi, 2009, 177), because the city was the residence of landowners and farmers (Qazvini, 1998, 12; Mostoofi, 1958, 87-91). Marco polo visited Tabriz at the reign of Gikhato (751-755 AH) and impressed magnificence and wealth of the city. He reported “many non- muslim merchants live in peace in the city. They travel from India, Baghdad, and Hormoz to Tabriz to exchange their cargos and transport them to other lands” (Marco polo, 1994, 71); (Fig. 6).

On the contrary to Tabriz, Soltanieh, where was a resort for Ilkhanid rulers, was not known before foundation at the reign of Arqun. The extensive amount of cargos and commercial routes from Azerbaijan made Arqun Khan to found a city to enjoy revenue and benefits. He did not succeed to complete the city, and it was his son Mohammad Oljaito who finished it decently. According to Hamdollah Mostoofi “he moved many people from several nations and religions with different languages that mixed to Persian” (1992,71). Wassaf reported magnificence and greatness of the city as well. Several bureaucrat nobles including Taj al-Din Alishah and Rashid al-Din Fazlollah competed to construct their own districts at Soltanieh (Hafez Abru, 1992, 11-13). Trade routes was one of the most important reasons that Arqun and his son Oljaito developed Soltanieh. Using this position, they could stop caravans in the city and boast commerce (Wassaf, 1959, 55). Considering what has been discussed about political power and structure in urbanization, the same reasons



Fig. 6. location of Rab' Rashidi in the middle of Tabriz and aerial photo of Rashidieh castle. Source: Ajorloo & Moradi, 2019, 51.

are reliable for Ilkhanid architecture, for example, decorations and tiles of Ilkhanid structures are more magnificent than earlier construction styles as if it is a style to please Ilkhanid rulers. There are many building from Ilkhanid period with the same characteristic at Anatolia, and other regions. The other characteristic is immigrant workers and artisans from different regions to Azerbaijan that followed Mongol invasion, which led to vast movement of artisans toward more advance regions. Repetitive designs including glazed and unglazed potsherd, and interwoven flower designs of tiles are usual in the architectures from the Ilkhanid period. However, few scholars suggest “Azerbaijan School of Architecture” (Wilber, 2014, 95).

Following historical sources and archaeological excavations about Government citadel of Ujan,

Ilkhanid summer residence, one can suggest plan, material, and architectural style of Ilkhanid architecture are derivation of seljuqs’; so one can claim seljuqs’ architecture as a primary Ilkhanid style (ibid, 37).

Double shell domes that emerged at the Ilkhanid period can be an objective characteristic example (Sherrato & Grube, 1998, 7). Furthermore, there was a mention to the role of political will in emergence of cities at medieval period as one of fundamental variables of location and development, which presented about Soltanieh and continued on Ujan as following. There have been rare discussions about Ujan, only refered to when there were comments about Tabriz, Soltanieh, and Maragheh. However, recent archaeological activities recovered and introduced Ujan and its architectural remains including citadel, palace, a cave-temple similar to cave temple of Maragheh, and several tomb towers that dated to seljuqs era and renovated at Ilkhanids reign (Figs. 7 to 9).



Fig. 7. Comparing form and material of Ilkhanid Ujan to Rabat Karim stone castle. Source: Tajpoor, 2019.

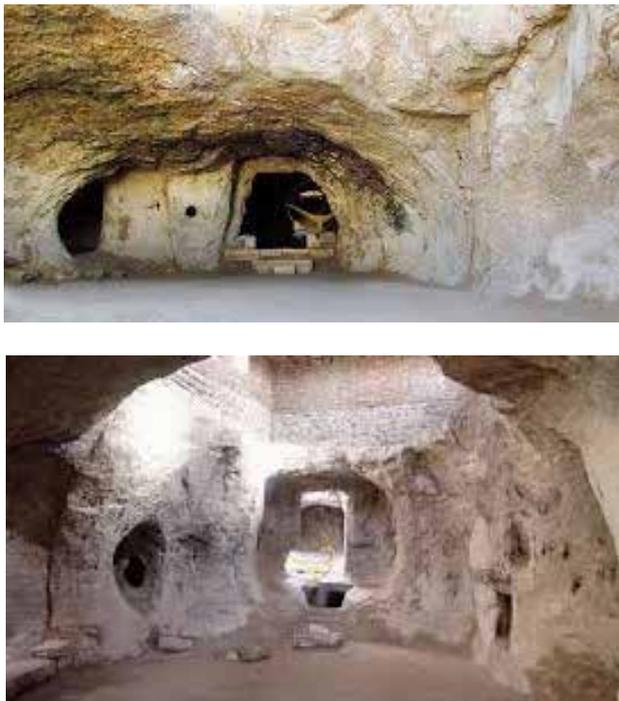


Fig. 8. Ilkhanid cave-temple under the observatory and the same structure of Ujan. Source: Velayati, report of excavation of Ujan, 2019.

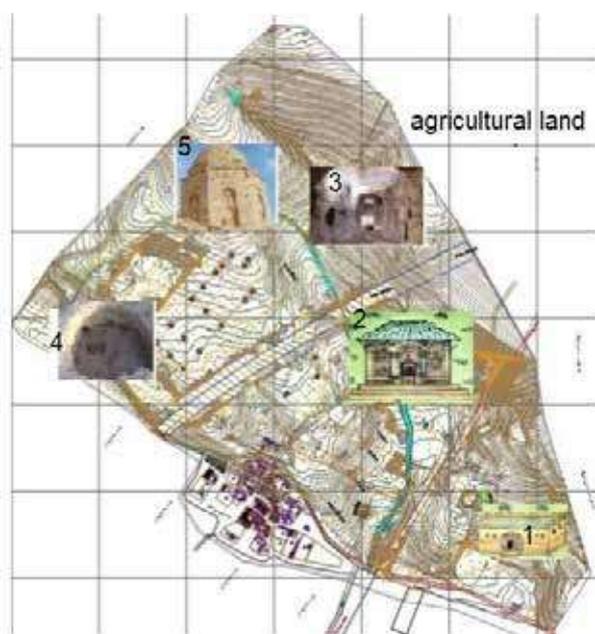


Fig. 9. location map of architectural remains of Ujan including 1.castle 2. Royal palace 3. Ilkhanid cave-temple 4. Southern destroyed tomb 5. Eastern destroyed tom. Source: Velayati, 2019.

According to some historical sources Ujan was occupied years earlier than Ilkhanids. Istakhri (1999, 181-182) the size of the city and compared it to Khoy,

Salmas, marand, and Tabriz. Also, archaeological findings suggest it was occupied and flourished during the Seljuq period (Velayati, 2017b, 115-122). Of Mongols invasion, Ujan was a small city with little population. Yaqut visited the city and described it as “ruined”. He also reports Ujan’s tower and sluggish bazar (2002, 456).

Following the emergence of Ilkhanid dynasty, especially when they converted to Islam, Kazan Khan (694-703) for some reasons to develop Ujan. He named it “city of Islam” when he carried out his intention (Wassaf, 1959, 212-213).

Kazan Khan was so serious in development that, according to Wassaf, “he constructed the city or partially made it; main parts of the city. His holiness divided the land to his close relatives, and they began construction of gardens, porticos, houses, fencing, and bazars. , the city developed, and now at the spring time move there.” Why Kazan Khan decided to prosper Ujan again and used all facilities. Just similar to reports about Ilkhans’ developing activities at Azerbaijan, they always paid attention to the exploitation of benefits of commercial routes including the silk road. Ujan had strategic commercial conditions, whereas it was close to Tabriz and the passage to Maragheh endowed special position to Ujan from commercial point of view. Ujan was significant for Military aristocracy, whom Ilkhans depended to, because Ujan was intersection of commercial caravans from east and west of Iran and could be a significant financial source. Ujan located at the important commercial routes of Iraq-i-Ajam, Azerbaijan, Aran, Armenia, Georgia, Shirvan, and Anatolia. The commercial route played a significant role in flourishing Azerbaijan, because it made relations to urban centers of Qobchaq plain, East, and other northern cities (Mostoofi,1958, 181-182). There two factors that played role in the development of Ujan, first, Abwâb al-Barr-i-Ghazani (Kazan’s endowed lands) or endowment of farming lands and rural peripheral spaces caused development; that is the reason that Ujan is known as “endowed city” (Karimian & Mahdizadeh, 2012, 11-13). Second,

Properties of Injo that can be regarded in the light of endowment policies (*ibid*); (Fig. 10).

Ilkhanid administration mainly traded to western states of the Islamic world, while caravans commuted from this point. This means people had to pass Ujan to reach Soltanieh, Maragheh, and Tabriz. So commercial and economic considerations played a fundamental role in formation of Ujan alongside Ilkhans' will as a facilitator, whereas transit routes accelerated prosperity of Ujan. Ujan flourished during Qazan's reign it was the name of one of the gates of Tabriz. City gates highly signified in economic life of contemporaneous urban centers. When commercial caravans reached Ujan, they camped in front of it. Then paid tax to enter their cargos to the city (A'onollahi, 2008, 5). Contemporary sources report construction of the city by skillful engineers during three years (Fazzollah Hamedani, 1940, 137-138); (Fig. 11).

According to Rashid al-Din Fazlollah, Ujan was divided into four districts. Every single district separated by fences of poplars and willows that divided the square of Ujan to equal parts, at the same time the tree borders were pavements for passersby. "And no creature never pass across the meadow, and every single clan has its own passage to get out" (*ibid*). Rashid al-Din Fazlollah presents detailed description about Ujan and appropriately facilitate qualitative and quantitative evaluation. Four clans

or social groups occupied four parts of the city that covered with grassland. The citadel located in the middle of the city, however, unlike other cities it was surrounded by beautiful trees, while separated from other parts. Pavilions, towers, baths, and great mansions were constructed around the citadel (*ibid* 137-138). There was a fortification around Ujan that constructed of local material, and Mostoofi (1958, 55) reported it was made of stone and lime. The environment was three thousand steps (*ibid*). Some historical events happened in Ujan, because it was Ilkhans' summer residence, where they gathered together (*ibid*, 117). However, one cannot consider formation of Ujan without commercial position of the city, Mongolian political structure and will played fundamental role. Ujan is known as Mongols' summer residence and city, however, it is one aspect of construction the city. Historical location of the site recognized through archaeological survey of Ujan region at 2013. Historical and geographical descriptions, especially Metraqchi's drawing from the city notably helped to recognizing location of the lost city. Ruins of the ancient city, northwardly reach to Ujan-chai, from south and east goes to No. 1 Industrial zone, while westwardly extends to Ashraf Abad village at so-called "Dali Darrah Si", the site covers around 100 hectares (Velayati, 2013). Field studies at region of Ujan is Detailed survey, test trenching, and excavation that led to recover and



Fig. 10. The Silk Road linking China to Ujan, and this city to Rome. Source: Velayati, 2017.

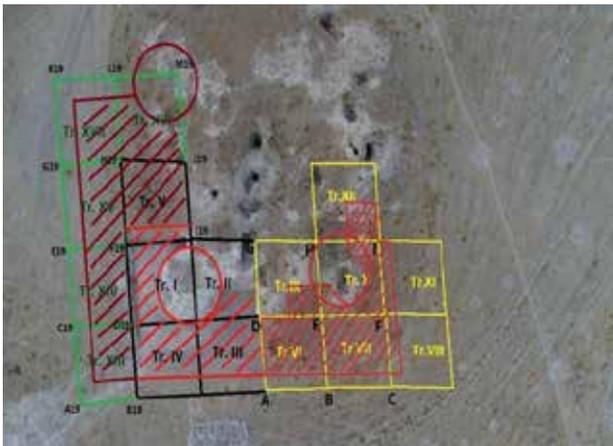


Fig. 11. aerial photo of citadel and castle of Ujan, and trenches at archaeological season. Source: Velayati, 2019.



Fig. 12. Eastern walls of castle indicating two types of architecture, one with uncut pebbles and second with cut or so-called Malone stone. According archaeological expedition of Ujan the first dates to Seljuqs reign, whereas the second is from Ilkhanid period. Source: Velayati, 2019.

recognition of various items from Ilkhanid period. Findings are pottery fragments from Islamic periods (6- 14 AH centuries/ Seljuq-Qajar), copper Ilkhanid

coins, architectural spaces and structures that present various aspects of occupation and continuation of settlement at the city (Fig. 12).

The archaeological expedition of Ujan excavated trenches to define the area and periphery of the site, that continued cultural and architectural levels, which itself led to next trenches. On the other hand, there were recognized four Islamic cemeteries, dated to Seljuqs, Ilkhanids, and modern times at peripheral areas, and also a citadel that is the biggest ruins of the site from the first days of the site. It was constructed at the Seljuqs period, and was renovated during later Ilkhanid era. Recognition and discovering ruins of two tomb towers from Seljuqs and Ilkhanid periods, location a troglodyte at west side of the site that was probably an Ilkhanid Buddhist cave-temple, and ruins of a watch tower on the western heights of the site confirm location of historical Ujan (Velayati, 2017a). The citadel that constructed with half-kilned lime and stone, has four rounded watch towers, diametrically 9 meters, while only three ones excavated and unearthed. Ceiling of the citadel is one of the architectural characteristics of the structure that is consisted of small domes, each made of pebbles and half-kilned lime arches. It appears that it is an architectural seljuq tradition that continued and renovated during Ilkhanid era. Side walls and towers were constructed of cut slabs or so called “malone stone” and lime, while it is only 5.30 meter high today (Velayati, 2017b). The castle excavated at eighteen 10× 10 meter trenches. Most of the walls and towers ruined because of earthquakes and debris scattered around the castle, while debris gathered and used again for renovation. There are rows of sized and cut stones close to the floor, whereas in higher rows, gradual decrease in size. The average size for the cut stones of the towers are about 20 to 40 cm. There are square and rectangle cut stones at interior and exterior façade structure. Material of the construction are dried sandstones and limestones. The mortar that used in stone laying is lime (probably half kilned) and mixed to few percent of limestone and sand. Even today the mortar keeps hardness, however, it is apparent that

the structure has lost primary consistency. Material of the façade fastened by the same mortar. The height of the ruin parts of the walls vary, however, it is higher than 1 meter in most of the cases, where these parts filled debris of tower (Velayati, 2018). Horizontal and vertical rows are fastened with mortar of lime and limestone as thick as 2- 4 cm. the mortar used thickly in the walls, in a way that stones deeply merged in to it (ibid,169); (Fig. 13.)

Another comparable structure to Ujan palace is the “palace of Khabbaz” (next to Euphrates River), and the “castle of castelum”, in modern Syria and near Tell-i- Barak, that suggests of form and architecture of castles from pre- Islamic periods to Islamic era. Aurel Stein drew the plan of the castle in his first visit in 1938. From an architectural view, the castle has watchtowers similar to Ujan’s that functionally had

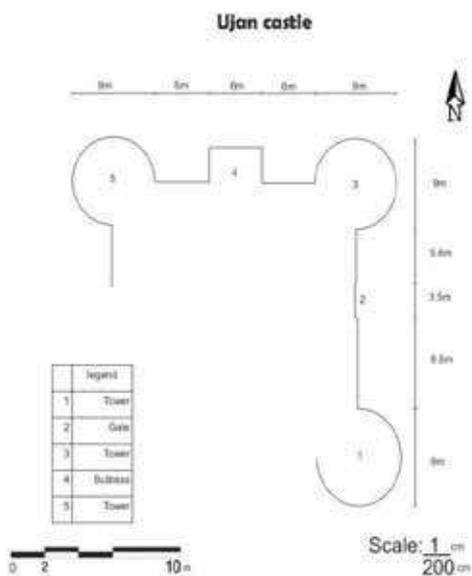


Fig. 13. three towers with real plan of the 3rd season of excavation to the 3rd tower of castle and citadel of Ujan. Source: authors.

defensive forms against Sasanids (Syrett, 2012, 50). Ilkhanid architecture adapted plans, material, and methods from Seljuq period. Tomb tower signified at seljuqs period and exploited as role model during Ilkhanid era. One can claim that Seljuqs architecture is basic style of Ilkhanids’, which developed during a three-hundred-year period in Iran. There are few examples of evolution. Verticality and delicacy of forms highly signified in Ilkhanid structures. Comparing to earlier seljuqs’ architecture, chambers relatively changed and vertically raised, in relation to horizontal size. Ivans are and bigger in Seljuqs’ architecture, while they are narrower and higher during Ilkhanid period. The corner columns have thinner lines and positioned closer, and the structure is intentionally more centralized (Wilber, 2014, 35).

### Conclusion

Ilkhanid ruling system, structurally, had double nature of half Iranian and half Mongolian. Balancing was not simple task but Ilkhans such as Kazan, Oljaito, and Abusaeid succeeded to. When Mongolian centrifugal forces lost the opportunity of uprising and arbitrariness, urban organizations found chance of development and flourish. Developing Azerbaijan urban centers during the 7th and 8th AH centuries owed to overcome urban elements to tribal Mongolian features. In the field of urbanization, Mongols acquired Iranian earlier legacy and played role in development and establishment of cities, considering ecological, commercial, economical, and even political conditions of Azerbaijan. Strategically, Azerbaijan, comparing to other regions of Iran, had a chance of witnessing formation and advance of significant cities. Tabriz, Maragheh, and Soltanieh were among important Ilkhanid cities, whereas Ujan was residence and passage of many Iranian, Chinese, Roman, and Turk caravans, and eastwardly it was closest residence of travelers and merchants, before entering Tabriz. After conquest lkhans differed administration. Firstly, they began educational and research centers, an obvious example is Maragheh Observatory dated to the early phase of Ilkhanids.

Later, there were more civil and educational centers including Rab' Rashîdî, Shanb-i-Kazan. Tomb of Soltanieh is the most significant and biggest. Comparing to other Ilkhanid cities, Soltanieh is the most important city and capital of Ilkhanids, because it was a new establishment and followed Ilkhanid style, which differed to other capitals that were capital earlier than Ilkhanid era. Comparing to other Ilkhanid structures at Azerbaijan, one can deduce, because of exploitation of stone at Ujan, more reliable conclusions about seljuqs influence on later Ilkhanid structures. Because of kilned mud-brick in the construction of Rab' Rashidi, it has been damaged and destroyed over time, therefore it is not possible to have more reliable archaeological deduction. However, one can understand more independent style of Soltanieh, because it was constructed of brick and stone. Whatever said for Ujan is not available for the structures of Maragheh, because the latter, characteristically, has more similarity to Soltanieh. Bricks in the debris of Ujan indicate construction of public buildings with the same material. Generally, there are similarities in material, planning architectural spaces, construction, and renovation of Ilkhanid cities, including using pebbles with half-kiln lime mortar, Sârûj, brick, characteristic Ilkhanid tiles, fortifications, and citadel as the common features of Ilkhanid cities. Archaeological expedition recognizes two types of architecture architectural remains of Ujan. Laying walls with uncut pebbles and half-kiln lime usually found lower rows structures. Considering history and comparison, probably the remains are from the foundation of the city at Seljuqs era. Laying walls with cut square or rectangular stones and a mix mortar of half-kiln lime and sand that led to more consolidate and regular layout, can be dated to Ilkhanid period. Therefore, lower levels of the citadel date to the Seljuq period, while the upper levels date to the Ilkhanids era. All historians of Ilkhanid period correctly confirm that the main characteristics of Ilkhanid architecture a combination and compilation of seljuqs architectural achievements. Apparently, seljuqs architecture is

synthesis of four earlier centuries. However, it means that Iranian architecture during Ilkhanid period presents modern point. Political and military nature of cities of the period necessarily imposed several aspects. Acceleration in the construction of cities and places did not let transportation of material from neighboring regions, therefore, the main material at Shanb-i-kazan and Rab' Rashidi was mudbrick, whereas it destroyed fast over time and there is no Ilkhanid architectural debris site. However, a mixture of stone, lime, and mudbrick were used in Soltanieh and Ujan. Other architectural characteristics of Ilkhanids, for example at royal palace of Ujan, are polychrome plastering and decorative column and remarkable motifs, which are researchable considering taste of Ilkhans to magnificent structures. Therefore, Azerbaijan architecture during Mongolian period is compilation of seljuqs' legacy to imposing natural condition of Azerbaijan. However, they kept nomadic life style in other regions, where Ilkhans showed lower expansionism, local architecture followed earlier seljuqs tradition. Summarizing architectural characteristics of Ilkhanid period, one should declare to three elements: architectural seljuqs legacy and Ilkhans' taste, military and commercial-political conditions, and finally natural condition and special territory of Azerbaijan. Time-space condition of Ujan associated special architectural characteristics and dependent decorations as well, including geographical position of Ujan with a grassland at Sahand's northern slopes with fresh spring waters at east of the site that attracted Ilkhans to settle next to it. Another factor is location of the royal palace at the city center and higher than other structures as focal strategic point to monitor daily routines or control caravans and folks. Following researches, one could suggest it a royal city, because of courtyard and fortification of structures that connected to other buildings by gates and hidden underground corridors, which is indicated and confirmed by frontal corridors and fortifications of palace and citadel, with hidden underground corridors in between. Considering test trenches and defining area of the site, considering

archaeological standards, public, royal, and military constructions positioned higher than residence of folks, while they were interconnected, on the contrary, they connected to folks' residential area only from out of fortification. A Buddhist cave-temple on the west of the royal palace fortunately filled debris of developing Tabriz-Zanjan highway indicates the connections of courtiers and Mongolians nobles with the cave-temple. There are four great Ilkhanid cemeteries in the city including next to the royal palace, citadel, and folks' residential area, which covered by Ilkhanid square kilned mudbricks that followed Islamic and Mongolian methods. It indicates the difference between folks' worldview to intrinsic and extrinsic attitudes of Mongolian nobles. There has not caravanserai, public bath, or residences of folks in the findings of excavations, because they were probably constructed with cheap materials including mud brick and mud, not stone and lime. Architectural findings, including royal palace, citadel, Buddhist cave-temple, and traces of two towers generally are for nobles and courtiers. Security stations on surrounding heights of Ujan, 1-2 Km away, are the other notable characteristics of Ujan. The archaeological expedition discovered at least four same stations. Other notable characteristics, considering Metraqchi's drawing, is absence of modern villages during the Ilkhanid and Safavid periods. Metraqchi points to only a big village as "Turkman Kandi" at east of Ujan, of where remains only a cemetery in farming fields of southeast of Ujan, which indicates movement of people and foundation of city of Ujan.

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