

BULL RELIEFS IN ANATOLIAN SELJUK ARCHITECTURE

GÖNÜL ÖNEY

Bull reliefs have a prominent place in the rich figural art of Anatolian Seljuks. A typical characteristic of bull reliefs is that they always appear in combination with other figures, i. e. as bull-man, bull-lion, bull-eagle, bull-dragon, bull-rhinoceros compositions or they represent Sign of Zodiac and calendar animals. Anatolian Seljuk bull reliefs are grouped in this article with reference to above combinations.

I. BULL-MAN RELIEFS

Bull-man compositions are rare. The existing examples are described below :

- a) *Bull-Man Relief on the Outer Fortress at Diyarbakır* : (1088)
Fig. 1.

At the Outer Fortress of Diyarbakır, above the kufic inscription on the XXX. tower after Gabriel¹ (the first tower north of Ulubadan) there are two bull figures facing each other with a human figure sitting cross-legged in the niche in between and there is an eagle figure at the top. (The human figure is presently in a damaged condition.) The high reliefs are framed by a protruding bordure slightly profiled at the top. The bulls are shown stumbling over their front legs. The bodies are carved in full profile while the heads are turned so that they are almost shown in front view. The human figure sitting cross-legged in the niche wears a kaftan and his hands are clasped over his lap. The highly stylized eagle relief (presently in a worn state), shown in front view, indicates that a victorious ruler is represented. The human figure, i.e. the ruler, is surrounded by stumbling, defeated, bulls, just like those seen in animal fight scenes (presumably representing the enemy totem). However, the eagle figure

¹ Gabriel, A. *Voyages Archéologiques dans la Turquie Orientale*, I. II. Paris 1940. s. 164, Fig. 134. Pl. LXVIII, 3. Inscription No. 57.

above him representing light, dominance and protective power leaves no doubt that the ruler is the victor. A throne scene is evidently depicted together with the reliefs continuing below. The first line of the inscription is framed by lion reliefs and the second line is topped by game (antelope, deer) in the middle and human figures with falcons at the sides. It thus follows that throne and hunting scenes are combined here as it is the case with numerous works of Iranian Seljuk handcraft². Like the Iranian Seljuk examples, the lions are symbols of throne and might. According to the inscription, the reliefs date back to the time of Melikshah (1088).

b) *Bull-Man Relief on the Cizre Bridge*; (1164) Fig. 2

Among the Sign of Zodiac - Planet reliefs on the Cizre Bridge, there is, inside the second rectangle from left to right, a bull figure walking towards right with a human head inside a crescent on his back³. The human head is in a highly worn condition. It is beyond doubt that here the Sign of Zodiac Taurus has been represented together with the Planet moon. In Seljuk art, there are numerous examples where the moon and the sun are depicted by rosettes in the form of human heads⁴. The bridge has been built in the year 1164 by Cemaleddin⁵.

c) *Bull-Human Head Relief on the Tomb (Kümbet) of Emir Saltuk*: (12th Century) Fig. 3

Below the dome of the Emir Saltuk Kümbet in Erzurum, there are reliefs on top of the deep-cut triangular niches which have been explained as animals out of the Turco-Chinese animal calendar⁶. Inside one of the niches, there is a bull's head with a small human head between his horns. The calendar animals have not been shown in

² Öney, G. The Mounted Hunting Scenes in Anatolian Seljuk Art in Comparison With Iranian Seljuk Art. *Anatolia* XI, Ankara 1969.

³ Öney, G. Sun and Moon Rosettes in the Shape of Human Heads in Anatolian Seljuk Architecture. *Anatolica* III. *Annuaire international pour les civilisations de l'Asie entiere*. 1970 (in print). See also Hartner, W. The Pseudoplanetary Nodes of the Moon's Orbit in Hindu and Islamic Iconographies. *Ars Islamica* V, 2, 1938. p. 114.

⁴ Öney, G. Sun and Moon Rosettes

⁵ Ibn ül Ezrak, *Tarih ül Meyyafa-rikin ve Amid*. H. 572. Varak 187 b - 188 a.

⁶ Otto-Dorn, K. *Darstellungen des Turco-Chinesischen Tierzyklus in der Islamischen Kunst*. In *memorian Ernst Diez*. İstanbul 1963. s. 142.

full cycle on the tomb. We tend to conclude that this relief represents rather the combination of the Sign of Zodiac Taurus and the Planet moon, just like the Cizre Bridge example, and not a Turco-Chinese calendar animal.

d) *Bull - Man on Gutter at Karatayhan* : (1240) Fig. 4 a, b.

At Karatayhan's façade there is a bull-shaped gutter next to the lion-shaped gutter on the left of the entrance. This bull appears to hit a human figure with his horns. The measurements are 0.60 × 0.60 m. Fig. 4 a, b shows this gutter removed from the building. It has however been put back in its original place during restoration. On both sides of the gutter a bull's head is carved in high relief. Both bull heads are shown in front view and are identical. However, presently the figure on the right side of the gutter is in better shape. Pointed ears, large almond-shaped eye, large nose with big round nostrils are sharply emphasized. The short neck of the bull and part of his front leg which is slightly bent are also discernible. The human figure in front of the bull is shown in front view and in a kneeling posture with his legs set wide open. The head is broken. The figure is apparently holding something on his chest with his left hand. As the top part is broken, it is not possible to determine what he is holding. His right hand is set against his waist and he wears a kaftan and a şalvar. Most probably, a similar relief was placed to the right of the entrance where there is today a broken cantilevered arm. It is possible that in the above-described gutter the Sign of Zodiac Taurus has been shown together with the Planet moon represented by a kneeling human figure like the Cizre Bridge relief. We would draw a more clear-cut conclusion if we could discern what the figure is holding in his hand.

According to the inscription in the courtyard entrance, the gutter dates back to the time of Gıyaseddin Keyhusrev II (1240)⁷.

e) *Bull - Relief at Karatayhan* : (1240) Fig. 5

At the right of the courtyard entrance to Karatayhan, there is a stylized bull's head figure in front view above the column capital with lion reliefs. The bull's horns are carved against an arabesque background and they intermingle with plant motifs. Pointed ears

⁷ Erdmann, K. *Das Anatolische Karavansaray des 13. Jahrhunderts*. Berlin 1962. No. 32' p. 122.

extend sideways. The eyes are almond-shaped and large. Approximate measurements are : 0.30×0.30 m. Above the bull's head, there is a human head in the form of a rosette with arabesque background.⁸ We think that in this example too the Sign of Zodiac Taurus has been represented together with the Planet moon. Like the other Karatayhan examples, these reliefs date back to the time of Giyaseddin Keyhusrev II (1240).

Comparisons Related to Bull-Man Reliefs :

We do not see bull-man reliefs like the above in Islamic Art of earlier periods. Sasanid-influenced bull wrestling scene on the Cevsak'ül Hakani Palace frescos from the Abbasid Period (9 th Century) resemble our examples closest. However, it has nothing to do with Sign of Zodiac symbolism⁹.

Here, a kneeling human figure tries to defeat a bull by holding his horns. It is interesting to note that the same subject is encountered on the Achtamar Church reliefs (early 10th Century) where influence of Abbasid Art is evident¹⁰. Bull-man reliefs similar to Anatolian examples are found as Sign of Zodiac - Planet compositions in Iranian Seljuk handcraft. However, the Sign of Zodiac - Planet system is shown in full in Iranian examples¹¹.

Symbolism in Bull-Man Reliefs :

As the above examples indicate, bull-man reliefs represent Sign of Zodiac Taurus - Planet moon compositions with the exception of the Diyarbakır example where throne symbolism is more appropriate. The bull - man description on the Karatayhan gutter may be a Sign of Zodiac-Planet combination. However, this example may also represent the fight between two opposite principles (goodness versus evil, local populace versus the enemy) just like the bull-lion

⁸ Öney, G. Sun and Moon Rosettes. . . . Fig. 20.

⁹ Herzfeld, E. Die Malereien von Samarra. Die Ausgrabungen von Samarra Bd. III. 1927. Taf. V. VI. p. 16.

¹⁰ Otto-Dorn, K. Türkisch Islamisches Bildgut in den Figurenreliefs von Achtamar. Anatolia VI. Ankara 1961. Abb. 13. p. 25.

¹¹ Pope, A.U. A Survey of Persian Art. London-New York. 1938. Bd. V. Pl. 638, 656 A, 713. Bd. VI. Pl. 1301 A, B, 1311 C, D, 1312 D, E, 1314 A, 1317 A, 1328, 1331, 1334, 1336 A, B.

fight scenes described later. The broken hand makes it difficult to draw a conclusion.

The pair of lions below the Diyarbakır example, the presence of lion-man rosettes among the Sign of Zodiac descriptions at the Cizre Bridge, the lion-head gutters on both sides of the entrance to Karatayhan and the column capital with lion figures all indicate that the lion has a special place in these descriptions. As it is well known, the lion which represents might and power in throne scenes is at the same time symbol of the sun and light. In Seljuk art, there are plenty of examples where the Sign of Zodiac Leo is represented¹². The presence of lion figures backs up the assumption that the reliefs described above are used as Sign of Zodiac symbols.

II. BULL-LION RELIEFS

The lion-bull fight reliefs, which date back to the Achamenid Palaces from ancient East, form the most substantial group in Anatolian Seljuk works. In these reliefs, the bull is generally shown under the lion, i.e. in a defeated position.

a) *Bull-Lion Fight Scene at Ulu Cami of Diyarbakır*: (before 1178 - 1180) Fig. 6.

At the eastern entrance to the Ulu Cami of Diyarbakır, on the outer façade overlooking the square, there are symmetrically placed lion - bull fight scenes carved in high relief on both sides of the arch¹³. The measurements of the reliefs are 1.00 × 0.80 m. The reliefs are turned towards the inside of the arch. There is a thick kufic inscription bordure above them. The inscription refers to Abu'l Kasim Ali bin al Hasan, one of the Nisanoğlu viziers, who died circa. 1179 - 1180.¹⁴

The heads of the lions are shown in front view while the bodies are carved in profile. The typical characteristics of the Seljuk lions, i.e. pointed ears, large eyes, flattened, large nose and hanging cheeks are predominant. The lions have grabbed the backs of the bulls with their powerful fangs. The defeated hulls below are shown fully

¹² Same.

¹³ van Berchem, M.-Strzygowski, J. *Amida*. Heidelberg 1910. p. 67. Fig. 24. Pl. XVI. Inscription no. 24. See also. Hartner, W.-Ettinghausen, R. *The Conquering Lion, the Life Cycle of a Symbol*. Oriens 17. Leiden 1964. p. 165.

¹⁴ van Berchem, M.-Strzygowski, J. same.

in front view. The ornamental lines on the body and the neck remind us of the figures in Eurasian animal fight scenes. The bending of the front legs and one of the hind legs inward towards the belly further point out to the influence of Eurasian style¹⁵.

b) *Bull-Lion Fight Scene from Cizre*: (12th Century) Fig.7

On a basalt slab from Cizre, presently registered under Inv. no. 386 at Diyarbakır Museum, there is a similar animal fight scene. Measurements are 0.45 × 0.45 m; thickness of slab is 0.20 m. The low relief shows at the bottom a bull facing right and a lion facing left at the top. The lion whose head is shown in profile is biting the tail of the bull. The animal figures are highly stylized and reflect typical Seljuk form. The outer legs are pulled under the belly in conformity with Scythian animal style¹⁶.

A slightly protruding plain bordure runs along all four edges of the slab. At the right end face of slab there is a relief showing a standing human figure wearing a kaftan. (Fig. 8). The relationship between this rough-cut figure and the animal fight scene is difficult to determine. We think that this slab is from the 12th Century like the Diyarbakır example.

c) *Bull-Lion Fight Scene at the Inner Fortress*: (Süt Kalesi), Harput (12th Century) Fig. 9.

In the inner fortress of Harput there is a bull-lion fight scene in low relief on a stone slab placed later at the north tower. The measurements of the slab are 1.10 × 0.60 m. Both animals are shown in profile with the lion biting at the bull's neck. The lion's front leg runs across the bull's body at the middle and the tail extends back in a straight line. No details are carved on the body. The bull has his head turned back as if he is trying to get away from the lion. The horns point down. This posture too reminds us of Eurasian animal style. There is a slightly protruding bordure around the animals. Gabriel calls this scene erroneously an elephant-bull fight scene which is not an Islamic description¹⁷.

¹⁵ Rice, T. T. *The Scythians*. London 1957. Figs. 5, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 59, 61.

¹⁶ That the bull beaten by the lion at Cizre has political significance is indicated by the figures on an enamel bowl belonging to Orthokid Davud bin Sukman bin Artuk (presently in Innsbruck. (1114-1144). Hartner, W.-Ettinghausen, R. *The Conquering Lion...* p. 166.

¹⁷ Gabriel, A. *Voyages Archéologiques I*. p. 260, Fig. 193.

The fortress whose foundations date back to antic times has been re-built during the 12th Century. Like the previously mentioned examples, these reliefs are from the Orthokid Period.

The fortress was repaired by Ibrahim bin-i Abubekir in 1185 and later by Nizameddin Ibrahim in 1206¹⁸.

d) *Bull-Lion Fight Scene at the Inner Fortres of Diyarbakır* : (1207/8) Fig. 10.

On the so-called "Tigris" Gate or "Oğrun" Gate which separates the Inner Fortress from the Town, there is a rather worn bull-lion fighting scene in high relief at the end of the bordure of the portal arch. No doubt, a similar relief adorned the other support in earlier times. The measurements are 0.95 × 1.00 m. Like Ulu Cami example, the lion is the victorious animal at the top while the bull is shown in defeat below. The rough-cut animal figures are highly stylized and doubtless they had greater similarities to the Ulu Cami example in their undamaged state. The lion is attacking the bull and his head is close to the bull's head. However, presently both heads are in a damaged condition. This relief dates back to the time of Orthokid Sultan Mahmud. (1207/8)¹⁹.

e) *Bull-Lion Relief from Nuseybin* : (12th Century) Fig. 11

In the National Museum of Damascus on a stone slab in the stone works section there is a bull-lion combination in shallow relief with a bull figure in front and a half lion figure behind it. The measurements are 0.46 × 0.25 m. The figures are shown proceeding towards the left. The bull figure is presented in full profile and attracts attention with his front legs pulled under his belly. Thus, this characteristic of Eurasian animal style is repeated in Seljuk animal fight scenes. Vine-like ornamental lines are observed on the body of the bull.

The body of the lion which is following the bull is also given in profile but the head is shown in front view. The fat cheeks, flat nose and the stylized expression are in conformity with Seljuk style. The other slab with the second half of the body is missing. The reliefs

¹⁸ Sungurluoğlu, I. Harput Yollarında. Cilt. I. İstanbul 1958. pp. 262-266.

¹⁹ van Berchem, M.-Strzygowski, J. Amida. p. 376. Abb. 329. See also, Gabriel, A. Voyages Archéologiques. p. 153, Fig. 124. Inscription no. 75.

are surrounded by a slightly protruding flat bordure. Presumably, this stone, like the other Diyarbakır examples, is from the 12th Century.

f) *Bull-Lion Relief from Konya Fortres : (1221 ?) Fig. 12.*

In the Konya İnce Minareli Medrese Museum, there is a stone slab from Konya Fortress, registered under Inv. no. 891, with a bull figure (or other horned animal) in front and a lion at the back, both running towards the right²⁰. The measurements of slab are 1.50 × 0.77 m; the thickness is 0.34 m. The reliefs which are placed below a profiled canopy are rather worn.

Like the stuccos of Alaeddin Palace, the animals are in the form of a frieze with animals running after each other. The long, curved neck of the bull extending backwards is conspicuous. Due to the worn condition of the relief, no details are discernible on the lion relief. Only the contours are defined. We assume the slab belongs to the Period of Alaeddin Keykubad.

g) *Cantilever Arms Head with Bull's and Lion's Head : (12th Century) Fig. 13.*

At the inner face of the entrance portal to the Ulu Cami of Diyarbakır, there is a bull's head on the capital of the first column to the left. (Fig. 13) The measurements are approximately 0.15 × 0.15 m; the depth is 0.10 m. The horns, the small eyes and the slightly open mouth are easily discernible.²¹ At the right hand side of the portal there is a lion's head in similar fashion. At the middle of the main eyvan arch of the Mesudiye Medrese adjacent to the mosque, there is a bull's head similar to the one found at the mosque. In the courtyard of the mosque, at the eastern end of the western portico, there are two lion's heads, one on the fifth column and one on the sixth column. Thus, the bull-lion combination is repeated within the complex.

²⁰ Baer, E. A Group of Seljuk Figural Bas Reliefs. Oriens. 20. Leiden 1967. Pl. VIII, 1.

²¹ The bull's head on Bab-el Fütuh column capital from Fatimid Period (1087) is reminiscent of this example. Creswell, A. C. The Muslim Architecture of Egypt. I. Oxford 1952. Pl. 66, b.

Comparisons Related to Bull-Lion Reliefs

Bull-lion fight scenes are encountered mostly in the Ancient Eastern Arts (Achemenids, Assyrians, Sasanids) and in Antic Art.²² However, the fight scenes in Eurasian Animal Art bearing similarities in style to Anatolian Seljuk examples appear as lion-mountain goat or reindeer fight scenes.²³ However, these animals which replace the bull have been used with the same symbolic motivation²⁴. In our opinion, this symbolism has entered Islamic Art through Ancient Eastern Art and Eurasian Animal Figural Art. In style and detailing, Eurasian influence is pronounced as it is the case with Seljuk figural art in general.

The earliest example encountered in Islamic art is the gazelle-lion fight scene on the floor mozaic of the 8th Century Hirbet-al-Mafchir Palace from the Omayyad Period²⁵. Here, the influence of bull-lion descriptions from early Christian era is apparent in style²⁶. More stylized bull-lion compositions with greater similarities to Seljuk examples are encountered in greater numbers in Abbasid art. It is interesting to note that these examples are mostly found in Anatolia. Bull has been represented together with bird and lion figures in the niche next to Harput Gate of Diyarbakır Fortress²⁷. The reliefs are from the Period of Muktaḍir. (909). On a highly stylized relief from the same period, there is a lion and bull pair facing each other. (Fig. 14). Such highly stylized bull figures are encountered on a luster plate from the Abbasid period²⁸. (9th - 10th Centuries).

Bull-lion compositions presented in a coarse and stylized manner in Abbasid Art have most probably been introduced into Armenian and Georgian Arts in Eastern Anatolia. Achtamar Church reliefs constitute a significant example of eastern influence in figural reliefs

²² Hartner, W.-Ettinghausen, R. *The Conquering Lion*. pp. 161-164.

²³ Rice, T. T. *The Scythians*. London 1957. Figs. 3-5, 9, 40, 47, 50, 51, 53.

²⁴ Hartner, W.-Ettinghausen, R. same. p. 164.

²⁵ Hamilton, R. W.-Graber, O. *Khirbet al Mafjar*, Oxford 1959. pp. 228-232, Pl. LV. 1, 5.

²⁶ Hartner, W.-Ettinghausen, R. same. Fig. 7.

²⁷ Gabriel, A. *Voyages Archéologiques...* pp. 162, 163, Fig. 103. Vol. II. Pl. LXVIII, 4-6. see also, van Berchem, M.-Strzygowski, J. *Amida*. p. 17. Pl. III, 1.

²⁸ Otto-Dorn, K. *Die Kunst des Islam*. Baden-Baden. 1964. p. 33. 73, Fig.

of Armenian Art²⁹. In the portico of the 10th Century Haho Church, 12 km south of Tortum, the bull-lion fight scene to the left of the inner face of the portal bears resemblance to the Abbasid examples with its highly stylized and coarse workmanship. (Fig. 15)³⁰. On the north wall of the Ösk Church, in the vicinity of Tortum, also from the 10th Century, there is a bull-lion relief conforming to the same style (Fig. 16) On the west wall of the same church there is a bull-lion fight scene and griffons on top of the window arch. (Fig. 17) Bull reliefs at the 11th Century Nicorzinda Church³¹ and the 13th Century Macaravank Church³² and bull-lion fight scene at the 13th Century Geghard Church³³ are late examples which have similarities in style to Seljuk reliefs.

It is, however, in the ivory works of Fatimids (11th - 12th Centuries) that we find various animal fight scenes which bear great relationship to the Anatolian Seljuk bull-lion fight scenes. The ivory plaquettes in Berlin's Dahlem Museum with fight scenes are typical examples. (Fig. 18)³⁴. In architecture, the bull-fight scene in flat relief on the fortress walls in Mosul from the time of Bedreddin Lulu is a contemporary work similar to Anatolian Seljuk examples³⁵. Interesting bull-lion scenes are encountered on Iranian Seljuk stone slabs at the Haifa Museum, the Louvre in Paris and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York³⁶.

The above comparisons indicate that the bull-lion motif which has entered Islamic Art through the Ancient East, Antic and Eurasian Animal Arts has been used by the Anatolian Seljuks in a stylized form bearing marked influence of Eurasian animal style. Abbasid

²⁹ Otto-Dorn, K. *Türkisch Islamisches Bildgut in den Figuren-reliefs von Achtamar*

³⁰ Baltrusaitis, J. *Etudes sur l'art Médiéval en Géorgie et Arménie*. Paris 1929. Pl. LXIII.

³¹ Same. Fig. 80

³² Same. Fig. 75.

³³ Same. Pl. LXII, 97.

³⁴ My thanks go to Dr. J. Zick of Staatliche Museen, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin, who was kind enough to send me the photograph.

³⁵ Sarre, F.-Herzfeld, E. *Archäologische Reise in Euphrat und Tigris Gebiet II*. Berlin 1911. p. 213. Abb. 228.

³⁶ Baer, E. *A Group of Seljuq Figural Bas Reliefs* . . . Pl. III, 1. Pl. V, 2, Pl. VI.

and Armenian bull-lion descriptions with their more stylized and coarser form are noteworthy as intermediary examples influenced by the same source.

Symbolism in Bull-Lion Descriptions

As the above examples indicate, the bull-lion pair has been presented mostly in connection with fight scenes. Bull has been shown as the vanquished, chased animal. Bull, hare and other horned animals (particularly antelope) generally symbolize the moon.³⁷ Therefore, bulls shown on the reliefs presented above represent the moon or darkness and lose their battle with lions symbolizing the sun and daylight. We can extend the meaning of bull-lion fight symbolism to cover fight between good and evil forces or to represent the superiority of goodness over evil, of light over darkness, of native over enemy.

Since Persepolis (4,000 B.C.), during the times of Achemenids and Assyrians, Leo and Taurus (lion-bull) has been used to mark most important date of the Zoroastrian and Assyrian calendar, i.e. the commencement of the agricultural year (Nevrus).³⁸ With the entrance of the sun (lion) into the Sign of Zodiac (bull), the spring holiday, i.e. the agricultural year (Nevrus) starts. Symbolic representation of this astrological event takes the form of a fight scene between the two animals.

As stated earlier, this fight scene has been used in Islamic Art to represent various opposing forces or principles. According to Max van Berchem, the bull-lion fight scene at the Diyarbakır Fortress represents the victory of Nisanoğulları (lion) over Inanoğulları (bull).³⁹ In this case, lion represents the throne, political and military might while bull represents the opposing power. Central Asian shaman tribes which have generally influenced the figural art of the Seljuks had similar beliefs. The Yakut shamans used to dress themselves as animals when they fought with each other.⁴⁰

³⁷ Schmidt, W. *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee* 1949. p. 430.

³⁸ Hartner, W.-Ettinghausen, R. same. pp. 161-164.

³⁹ van Berchem, M.-Strzygowski, J. *Amida*. pp. 66-68.

⁴⁰ Eliade, M. *Schamanismus und Archaische Ekstasetechnik*. Zürich 1957, p. 161.

III. BULL - RHINOCEROS RELIEF.

from Konya Fortress (1221 ?) Fig. 19

There is a bull-rhinoceros composition in high relief on a marble slab brought to Konya İnce Minareli Medrese from Konya Fortress.⁴¹ The relief, carved in slanted cut technique, shows a single horned rhinoceros with a lion's body and wings. The measurements are 1.30 × 0.55 m. and the width of slab is 0.30 m. (Inv. no. 888) The reliefs are placed below a canopy profiled at the top. Both animals are running to the right with the rhinoceros chasing the bull. The bull figure in front has a pair of horns, a hump-like swelling on his back and a short tail. The volutes on the wings, the ornamental voluted line at the place where leg meets body, the termination of the tail with a dragon's head are typical characteristics of Eurasian animal style.

Comparisons Related to Bull-Rhinoceros Compositions

The style similarities are startling between the above-mentioned Seljuk bull-rhinoceros example and the rhinoceros representations encountered in the handicraft of Iran, Iraq and Syria during the Islamic Period after the middle of 12th Century. We see a rhinoceros figure on a 12th Century copper inlaid vessel from Iran.⁴² A rhinoceros chasing an elephant appears on 13th Century luster faience from Iranian Seljuks⁴³ (Berlin Dahlem Museum). This subject is repeated on another faience belonging to the same area and period.⁴⁴ On another Seljuk stone slab brought to the Konya İnce Minareli Museum from the Konya Fortress there is a rhinoceros chasing an elephant. (Inv. no. 887).

Other noteworthy examples are the rhinoceros chasing an elephant on a silver inlaid bronze bowl from Syria (the first half of 13th Century)⁴⁵; the rhinoceros chasing an elephant on a bowl from the same region and period, presently in the Hermitage Museum of Leningrad⁴⁶; the rhinoceros chasing an elephant on an inlaid bronze

⁴¹ Ettinghausen, R. *Studies in Muslim Iconography. I. The Unicorn*. Washington 1950. Pl. 3, 18.

⁴² Same, Pl. 4.

⁴³ Same. Pl. 18 top.

⁴⁴ Same. Pl. 19 bottom.

⁴⁵ Same. Pl. 3.

⁴⁶ Same. Pl. 18 middle.

bowl, so-called Saint Ludwig baptism bowl, from Syria (1300) presently in the Louvre Museum, Paris.⁴⁷

In all these examples, the rhinoceros has been presented as an imaginary animal, just like the Seljuk examples. This is not surprising as rhinoceros was not an animal found in those areas.

Symbolism in Bull-Rhinoceros Reliefs

In Islamic Art, rhinoceros has been presented as one of the mightiest and quick-tempered animals. It is evident that the bull-rhinoceros pair has been used with the same symbolic purpose as the bull-lion pair. Like the lion, the rhinoceros is a king in the animal world. It is even believed that the rhinoceros can triumph over the lion and the elephant.⁴⁸ In a work by Al-Kazvini (13th Century) the rhinoceros is frequently mentioned as a superior animal and the poison of its horns is described as having "winning and healing" powers⁴⁹. When rhinoceros appears in a dream, it symbolizes a strong and ruthless ruler; it foreshadows war and intrigue and represents devilish forces.⁵⁰

IV. BULL-EAGLE COMPOSITION.

On the Urfa Gate, at the western end of Diyarbakır Fortress, there is a deep-cut relief on top of the bow-like inscription above the portal showing an eagle sitting on a bull's head.⁵¹ (1183/84) Fig. 20. There is a ring below the bull. The measurements of the composition are 0.75 × 0.55 m. Both the eagle and the bull's head are shown in front view. According to the inscription, the relief was made during the time of Orthokid Mohammad, son of Karaarslan (1183/84). M. van Berchem asserts that the composition depicts the victory of Orthokids over Inaloğulları.⁵²

Comparisons Related to Bull-Eagle Compositions.

As noted above, there is only one example in Anatolian Seljuk art showing an eagle-bull fight scene. However, the same motif appe-

⁴⁷ Same Pl. 19 top.

⁴⁸ Same p. 29.

⁴⁹ Same pp. 58, 109.

⁵⁰ Same p. 58.

⁵¹ van Berchem, M.-Strzygowski, J. *Amida*. pp. 78, 82. Fig. 28. See also. Gabriel, A. *Voyages*. . . . I. pp. 144, 166. Fig. 136. Vol. II. Pl. LIII, 2. Inscription no. 66.

⁵² Same.

ars as eagle-horned animal fight scenes on 11th-12th Century Fatimid glass and ivory works. (Fig. 18) A similar eagle-antelope fight scene is encountered at Capella Palatina, Palermo (1140) where Fatimid influence is apparent.⁵³ (Fig. 21)

A highly stylized bird (eagle?) - horned animal (goat?) fight scene on a Nishapur plate from 9th - 10th Centuries constitutes a rare example in early Islamic Art.⁵⁴ (Fig. 22). On the frescos of Cevsakul Hakani Palace at Samarra (9th Century) an eagle attacks a hare with the same symbolic implication.⁵⁵ Although this motif was known since the times of the Hittites, the style of presentation is entirely different. It is interesting to note that eagle fight scenes used widely in Eurasian Animal Art have their most closely resembling counterparts in Seljuk Art.⁵⁶ For instance, the eagle-goat fight scene on gold found in Siberia (date unknown) is a typical example where the eagle figure has striking similarities to Anatolian Seljuk eagles with its fan-like, lobed tail, scaled body and pointed ears⁵⁷. (Fig. 23) The eagle holds the goat down with his talons while the goat pulls his legs under his body just like the Seljuk examples. The same theme is repeated especially in the finds related to the Pazirik Tombs in Mongolia (5th - 3rd Centuries B.C.)⁵⁸ Eagle-horned animal or hare fight scenes have passed on to Armenian and Georgian Arts in eastern Anatolia where they re-appear in a strikingly

⁵³ Monnered de Villard, U. *Le Pittura Musulmane Al Saffito Della Capella Palatina*. Palermo-Roma. 1950.

⁵⁴ The C. L. David Collection, Copenhagen. The diameter of the plate is 16 cm. My thanks go to Mr. Andre Léth, who was kind enough to send me the photograph.

⁵⁵ Herzfeld, E. -Sarre, F. *Die Malereien von Samarra...* Taf. XII, XIV.

⁵⁶ For Seljuk double-headed eagles see. Öney, G. *Die Figurenreliefs an der Hudavent Hatun Türbe in Niğde*. *Belleten*. XXXI, 122. Ankara 1967. pp. 148, 159-161. Öney, G. *Über eine Ortukidische Lebensbaum Darstellung*. *Vakıflar VII*. Istanbul 1968. Fig. 4. Öney, G. *Das Lebensbaum Motiv in der Seldschukschen Kunst in Anatolien*. *Belleten* XXXII, 125. Figs. 22-27, 29-32. Öney, G. *Tombstones with bird, double headed eagle, falcon and lion figures in Anatolia in the Seljuk tradition*. *Vakıflar VIII*. Ankara 1969 (in print). Öney, G. *Die Karree-Fliesen in Kobadabad Grossenpalast*. *Deutscher Archäologischer Anzeiger*. 1969. Berlin (in print).

⁵⁷ Rice, T. T. same. Fig. 46. p. 245.

⁵⁸ Same. pp. 163, 168. Figs. 27, 29, 55-60. See also. Phillips, E. D. *The Royal Hordes, Peoples of the Steppes*. London 1965. p. 84, Fig. 91.

similar style. Eagles attacking goats or hare appear at the 10th Century Haho (Hahoul) and Koutais Churches mentioned earlier⁵⁹.

The eagle-horned animal fight scene at the later St. Grégoire Church of Ani (1215) reflects the style of the Seljuk Animal Figural Art as do the other reliefs from the same church. (Fig. 24)

Outside the Fatimid examples, eagle-bull (horned animal) fight scenes are rare in pre-Seljuk Islamic Art. However, such scenes appear abundantly in Eurasian Animal Art with great similarities in style to Seljuk examples. In all probability, Eurasian Art is the source which has inspired the Seljuks whose figural art in general has been influenced by Eurasian style. It is possible that the Armenian examples in eastern Anatolia were also influenced by the same source.

Symbolism in Bull-Eagle Compositions

Bull-eagle compositions evidently represent the fight between two opposing concepts. Like the lion, eagle symbolizes light, might and power. The eagle is always shown victorious over the bull which represents the moon, darkness and the enemy.

V. BULL-DRAGON COMPOSITIONS

a) *Bull's Head-Dragon Reliefs from Ani Fortress: (1072 - 1110)*
Figs. 25, 26

At the northern end of Ani Fortress, on the tower to the left of the middle gate and on the tower to the left of the chequered gate, there is a pair of symmetrically placed dragons with a bull's head in between⁶⁰. The reliefs are placed on the towers at a height of two thirds from the ground. The bull's heads are shown in front view and the one next to the chequered gate has a ring in his mouth.

b) *Bull's Head-Dragon Reliefs from Kesikköprühan;*

At Kesikköprühan, 18 km south of Kırşehir, there is a bull's head

⁵⁹ Baltrusaitis, J. same. Figs. 83, 85, 86. Pl. XXXVIII, 1.

⁶⁰ Öney, G. Dragon Figures in Anatolian Seljuk Art. *Belleten* XXXIII, 130. Ankara 1969. pp. 183, 206. Figs. 28, 29. The fortress towers have been renewed by Abu-Shuca Menuchehr of the Shaddads who ruled at Ani between 1071 and 1110 on behalf of Alpaslan. The reliefs are dated to this period. The main foundations are from Simbad II of Bagrad. Menuchehr was a Shaddad himself but his mother was from Bagrad. Upon taking Ani over from Alpaslan in 1064, Menuchehr managed to remain in good terms with both powers. Kırzioğlu, F. *Kars Tarihi I*. Istanbul 1953. pp. 359, 362.

between a pair of dragons on the outer left façade⁶¹. The bull's head is shown in front view and the short bodies of the dragons terminate at the mouth of the bull. The whole relief is coarsely cut. The Han has been built by Nureddin Cebrail, Emir of Kırşehir and the son of Bahaddin Cacabey. (1268 - 69).

Comparisons Related to Bull-Dragon Compositions

Although eagle-dragon, lion-dragon compositions are more common in earlier Islamic periods, bull-dragon compositions have no such parallels. The dragon figure in the mouth of a bull-like animal (part with horns is broken) on an underglazed faience tile found at the Great Palace during the 1966 Kubadabad excavations is one of the rare examples. (Period of Alaeddin Keykubad, 1236)⁶².

The bull-dragon reliefs at Ani Fortress particularly remind us the relief at Talisman Gate of Bagdad with the Khalif sitting cross-legged, surrounded by dragons and suggest the possibility of similar symbolic purpose⁶³.

Symbolism in Bull-Dragon Compositons

As noted, bull's head-dragon compositions are rare in Anatolian Seljuk Art. It is interesting to note that, unlike the other combinations, bull is the victorious animal. The Kırşehir relief shows the dragons as being swallowed by the bull and one of the bulls at Ani holds a ring in his mouth, -a clear symbol of victory. The latter relief could symbolize the victory of Shaddads over enemy or evil? (dragon pair). One relief possibly shows the Shaddads under siege (bull without ring) while the other (bull with ring) symbolizes the victorious Shaddads. It is interesting to note the change in the symbolic element of the bull reliefs with respect to the animal they are shown together with. The use of the same figure with different symbolic purposes is common in Seljuk Art. In similar fashion, the principle animal of strong humans in shaman tribes of Central Asia is sometimes a

⁶¹ Öney, G. *Dragon Figures*. . . . pp. 184, 207, 208. Fig. 31. See also. Erdmann, K. *Das Anatolische Karavansaray*. . . . No. 21. pp. 75-77.

⁶² Otto-Dorn, K. *Zweiter Bericht Über Die Grabung Kubadabad*. *Archäologischer Anzeiger* 1969. Berlin (in print).

⁶³ Herzfeld, E.-Sarre, F. *Archäologische Reise*. . . II. Taf. X, 6. XI, Text Bd. I. p. 4. See also. Sarre, F. *Der Kiosk von Konia*. Berlin 1936. Abb. 26, p. 44.

blue spotted bull⁶⁴. The bull is also known as the symbol of farming tribes.⁶⁵ It is possible that these old traditions are continued in the Seljuk era.

VI. BULL AND ANIMALS OF THE ZODIAC

As it is noted in bull-man compositions, bull represents the Sign of Zodiac Taurus together with the planet moon. However, bull can also represent the Sign of Zodiac Taurus in compositions without human figures, f. inst. when shown together with various Sign of Zodiac animals. It is interesting to note that Sign of Zodiac - Planet combinations which have entered into Islamic Art through Iranian Seljuk handcrafts⁶⁶ are encountered rarely in Anatolian Seljuk Architecture. In Anatolia, Sign of Zodiac-Planet compositions do not show the full system.

a) *Bull Relief at Çardakhan* : (1230) Fig. 28

At Çardakhan near the village Çardak along the Denizli-Dinar road, there is a bull's head in shallow relief along the center aisle in the covered section under the column capital at the first support to the right.⁶⁷ The measurements are 0.30 × 0.25 m. The roughly cut head is shown in front view. On the capital of the third column a pair of fish⁶⁸ and on the capital of the fifth column a sheep's head symbolize animals of the Zodiac. Çardakhan was built by Abdullah al Şihaboğlu Emir Reşideddin İyaz, one of the soldiers of Alaeddin Keykubad, in 1230⁶⁹.

⁶⁴ Findeisen, H. same. pp. 29, 30.

⁶⁵ Strzygowski, J. *Asiens Bildende Kunst*. Augsburg 1930 p. 300.

⁶⁶ Pope, A. U. *A Survey of Persian Art*. Bd. V. Pl. 638, 656 A, 713 B. Bd. VI. Pl. 1301 A, B. 1311 C, D. 1312 D, E. 1314 A, 1317 A, 1328, 1331, 1334, 1336 A, B.

⁶⁷ In Islamic Art, examples where bull is represented only with his head are rare outside those connected with Signs of Zodiac. One such rare example is the stylized bull's head on a "Gabri" vase from the Samanid Dynasty in Iran (9th - 10th Centuries), presently in the Louvre Museum, Paris. Kühnel, E. *Islamische Kleinkunst*. Braunschweig 1963, p. 103, Fig. 58. Bull's head has also been used in connection with metal work from Seljuk Period in Iran. Pope, A. U. *A Survey*. Bd. VI. Pl. 1280 C.

⁶⁸ Öney, G. *The Fish Motif in Anatolian Seljuk Art*. *Sanat Tarihi Araştırmaları II*. İstanbul Edebiyat Fakültesi. İstanbul 1968. pp. 147-162.

⁶⁹ Erdmann, K. *Das Anatolische Karavansaray*. . . . No. 15. p. 61.

b) *Bull on Tombstone from Kırk Kızlar Cemetery, Malatya: (14th Century) Fig. 29*

On a tombstone brought to the courtyard of Ulu Cami of Malatya from Kırk Kızlar Cemetery there are, from left to right, representations of the Signs of Zodiac Taurus, Aries and Pisces⁷⁰.

The measurements of the tombstone are $1.57 \times 0.30 \times 0.51$ m. The animals have been shown in profile inside whirlpool rosettes.

VII. TURCO-CHINESE CALENDAR WITH TWELVE ANIMALS AND BULL

In the rich world of Anatolian Seljuk figural art, bull is also represented in connection with the twelve animals of the Turco-Chinese calendar. In Islamic Art in general and especially in Iranian Seljuk handcrafts, there are numerous examples with compositions related to Turco-Chinese animal calendar⁷¹. Such descriptions are also encountered in Ghaznavid Art⁷². In Anatolian Seljuk examples, the calendar animals are not shown all together as a complete calendar⁷³.

In Turco-Chinese animal calendar, bull is the second animal. According to ancient belief, wars increase during the bull's year as he is a fighting animal, disease and intrigue abound, in short, it is a bad and hard year⁷⁴.

a) Bull as Calendar Animal at Karatayhan, Kayseri (1240)
Fig. 30.

On top of the portal of the türbe belonging to Karatayhan, there are various animal reliefs from the Turco-Chinese animal calendar inside the mukarnas frieze to the left upon entrance through the main portal. The length of the stucco frieze with animal figures

⁷⁰ Öney, G. The Fish Motif. . . . pp. 149, 150, 163. Fig. 12.

⁷¹ Pope, A. U. A Survey. . . . Bd. V. Pl. 702 C, Bd. VI. Pl. 1336. See also Herzfeld, E. A Bronze Pen Case. *Ars Islamica* III. 1936. pp. 35-43. Abb. 1-9.

⁷² Al Buruni who lived in the Ghaznavid Palace during the 11th Century refers to the Turco-Chinese calendar with twelve animals in his chronology written in Curcan and Tabaristan. Otto-Dorn, K. *Darstellungen des Turco-Chinesischen*. . . . p. 138. The same calendar animals appear on the marble reliefs at the Ghaznavid Palace from the 11th Century. Bombaci, A. Introduction of the excavations at Ghazni. Rome 1959. *East and West*. Vol. 10, 1-2. p. 14. Fig. 12.

⁷³ Otto-Dorn, K. *Darstellungen des Turco Chinesischen*. . . . pp. 143, 144. Figs. 13-15.

⁷⁴ Turan, O. *Oniki Hayvanlı Türk Hayvan Takvimi*. Istanbul 1941, p. 91.

is 2.50 m. The twelfth figure from left to right is that of a bull readying himself to toss something with his head. The courtyard portal of the Han dates back to 1240⁷⁵. It is probable that the türbe portal too is from the same period.

b) *Bull as Calendar Animal at Akhan, Denizli* : (1253/54) Figs. 31, 32.

At the courtyard portal of Akhan, 7 kilometers north of Denizli, calendar animals appear inside square rosettes along the outer bordure⁷⁶. The size of the square rosettes are 0.12×0.12 m. As the upper part of the portal is presently in a ruined state, it is not possible to determine whether the same bordure continues up there or not. Bull figures appear at the right side of the portal inside the fourth and last rosettes from the bottom up. The lower bull relief is shown in profile, turned to the left. There is a crescent motif above his tail. (Fig. 31) The bull figure on the uppermost rosette to the right is shown as stumbling over his legs. (Fig. 32) The tail passes between the legs and terminates at the animal's back where stylized leaf motifs appear. The calendar animals have not been represented in full cycle on the portal. In between, there are various other rosettes and human head reliefs. It is interesting to note that at Akhan reliefs bull is once again combined with the moon symbol.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

As noted from the above, in Anatolian Seljuk figural art the bull either appears as part of a twosome representation symbolizing two opposing forces or principles or it is presented together with Zodiac or calendar animals. Anatolian Seljuk bull figures are highly stylized. When presented in twosome combinations, bull is usually the vanquished animal. Bull generally symbolizes the moon and the opposite force, i.e. the enemy but it may also represent power and dominance as f. inst. when paired with dragons. Characteristics of Eurasian animal style are reminiscent in subject matter, in symbolism, in form and in workmanship. Central Asian shaman tradition and Ancient Eastern Art have greatly influenced Seljuk bull figures.

⁷⁵ Erdmann, K. *Das Anatolische Karavansaray...* No. 32. p. 122.

⁷⁶ Same. No. 19, p. 72

The legs pulled under the body, the ornamental motifs on the body, the turning back of the head, use of slanted cut technique and the stylized form all point to Eurasian influence. The use of the Turco-Chinese calendar with twelve animals further underlines the ties between Seljuks and Central Asian traditions.

It is interesting to note that all bull reliefs - with the exception of the bull-lion relief at Ulu Cami of Diyarbakır and bull-human head relief at Emir Saltuk Kümbet-are found on civil architecture such as fortresses, hans and bridges. This is in conformity with the political symbolism connected to the bull, the lion, the dragon and the eagle.