

DRAGON FIGURES IN ANATOLIAN SELJUK ART

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Dragons, the typical animals of the Far East and the Chinese Art appear in Seljuk Art with a different style and with different symbols. Dragon figures are used extensively in Anatolian Seljuk Art, especially in stone and plaster reliefs. It is interesting to note that dragons are generally depicted in pairs, that they are shown at the end of the tails of lions and sphinxes or at the wing tips of double-headed eagles and that sometimes they are combined with human heads, bull's head or the life tree motif. Dragons used as calendar animals or as planet symbol form a more complex group.

A common typical characteristic of Seljuk dragon reliefs is the exaggerated length of the bodies in knotted form and the presence of a head at each end. In some examples the double head is replaced by two dragons facing each other. The Seljuk dragons all have heads with common features such as pointed ears, large almond eyes, open mouth and chins which extend in a helical twist. Pointed teeth and a forked tongue protrude from the open mouth. The actual head is the one not biting the body. Here a pair of feet and a wing are observed. The wing is connected to the body at the bottom where the legs are outlined with strong lines and the upper part of the wing ends in a volute¹. In some dragons a similar bordering line is observed at the back of the head ending in a volute. Seljuk dragons are found sometimes on arabesque and sometimes on plain background. However, in all reliefs they are shown in full profile.

Anatolian Seljuk dragons are found on civilian and religious works. They are particularly dominant in civilian structures such as fortresses, hans and darüşşifas (hospitals).

¹ Wings with curved tips and ornaments on the hips are characteristics encountered frequently in Scythian art. See Rice, T. T. *The Scythians*, London 1961. Figs. 25, 57-61, Plate 45. On a copper plaque from the Pazirik Tombs (5 th Century B. C.) there is a pair of dragons with voluted ornaments behind their heads. op. cit. p. 70.

Anatolian Seljuk dragon figures are presented in classified form below :

I. *Single Dragon Figures :*

1. Dragon from the Konya Fortress (1221)

This dragon figure carved on marble is presently in the Konya İnce Minareli Medrese Museum under inventory No. 890. The measurements are 0.90 × 0.60 m. with a thickness of 0.45 m. (Fig. 1). The dragon figure is rendered in slanted cut technique in high relief. The dragon faces left. The slightly curved thick profile at the top indicates that the stone was originally part of an arched structure. The body is shown in the form of a large knot with a head at each end. The rear head at the right is shown biting the tail end of the knot. The heads have pointed ears and almond shaped eyes. The chins are wide open and the noses are terminated with a volute. Behind the "front" head, there is a wing which emerges after a relatively short neck. The wing is ornamented by three volutes. The dragon has only legs at the front, i. e. on the left end of the relief. The outer leg extends outwards in a bent position while the inner leg is pulled in towards the body. The upper part of the stone-not shown in the photograph-is decorated by means of a vine motif with antic characteristics. It is observed that this stone was re-used by the Seljuks who carved the dragon relief on the face but left the earlier decorations on other parts intact.

² In Scythian animal figures carved on metal, wood and bone slanted cut technique was a typical characteristic. The first examples of this in Islamic art is found in Samarra stuccos (9 th Century) and in the Tulunoğlu wood works. The dragon head carved with slanted cut technique on wood found in the tomb of Bas-hadar II (4 th-6 th Centuries B. C.) have great similarities of style when compared with Seljuk examples. Also, the dragon relief on a belt fragment of bone and wood from the Turkish tombs of Kuray-Tuyuhta from the 7 th-8 th centuries bears marked resemblance to Seljuk examples with its knotted body, pointed ears and its head shape. See İnan, A. Altay Dağlarında bulunan Eski Türk Mezarları, Belleten XI, 43, Ankara, 1947, pp. 569-570, Fig. 3. In Orkhon valley at Kültigin's mausoleum four dragon masques made out of baked earth were found in the monument erected east of Ulanbator in honour of Tonjukuk, father-in-law of Bilge Kagan. See Jisl, L. Kültekin Anıtında 1958 de yapılan Arkeoloji Araştırmalarının Sonuçları, Belleten No. 107, Ankara 1963.

2. Second Dragon from the Konya Fortress (1221)

Another dragon figure carved on marble from the Konya Fortress is found in the Konya İnce Minareli Medrese Museum under inventory No. 1394. The measurements are 0.66×0.26 m., thickness : 0.30 m. (Fig. 2). The dragon figure shown against an arabesque background is facing right. It is carved in slanted cut technique². The body of the dragon forms a large knot at the middle of the relief and terminates in two heads both looking towards the right. The heads of the dragon have pointed ears and open mouths with a long forked tongue protruding. Pointed teeth are visible in the mouths. On the neck belonging to the head at the right there is an ornament forming a volute at the bottom. Such ornaments which form borders between various parts of the figure are encountered in numerous examples of Scythian animal figures³. Likewise, Central Anatolian style is clear in the case of wings⁴. The outer leg is extended forward while the inner leg is pulled towards the body.

3. Third Dragon from the Konya Fortress (1221)

This example is like the other ones from the Konya Fortress on a marble slab. Presently, it is in the İnce Minareli Museum of Konya, registered under inventory No. 889 (Fig. 3)⁵. The measurements of the slab are 0.90×0.32 m. thickness : 0.20 m. The dragon figure is framed by a protruding broad bordure broken at two ends. The dragon faces right and is carved with slanted cut technique. The body is knotted and terminates at both ends with a head. Both heads look towards the right. Both heads have pointed ears and open mouths with long forked tongues protruding. An ornament with a volute at the end adorns the wing and the hip. This common characteristic of the Konya dragons carries the Eurasian influence.

4. Dragon from the Ani Fortress (12 th Century)

We learn about the existence of a dragon relief at the Ani fortress reminiscent of the dragons from the Konya fortress⁶. This dragon

³ See foot note 1.

⁴ See foot note 1.

⁵ Otto-Dorn, K. *Die Kunst des Islam*. Baden-Baden 1964, Fig. 106, p. 164.

⁶ Marr, N. *Ani Knizhnaya Istorija Goroda, Raskopki na Meste Gorodihit Iras*, Leningrad-Moscow, 1934, Pl. 148, p. 71.

has a knotted body, and a head with pointed ears, open mouth, pointed teeth, voluted nose and forked tongue. At the present, it is not possible to locate this relief.

5. Dragons from the Alâeddin Palace of Konya (1220-1237)

On a stucco relief registered under inventory No. 580 at the İnce Minareli Museum of Konya two symmetrically placed dragons face each other (Fig. 4). This stucco piece, which measures 0.30×0.17 m. and is 0.03 m. thick, presumably comes from the Alâeddin Palace and dates back to the time when additions and repairs were made during the reign of Alâeddin Keykubad⁷. This piece was apparently part of an arch. Both sides are shaped in the form of a stepped arch stone. The dragons are placed vertically and have long bodies with a single knot. The heads are shown in profile and the ears are pointed. A forked tongue is visible inside the open mouth. The necks are adorned by mane-like undulated lines. A vine-like motif with palmettes runs between the dragon figures and there is a similar bordure on top of them.

On stucco fragments in the İnce Minareli Medrese Museum of Konya there are other dragon figures on arabesque background. These dragons which come from the same palace have no inventory numbers. The size of the larger piece with the dragon head is 0.14×0.09 m. and the size of the piece with only the knotted tail is 0.14×0.08 m. In the Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Museum of İstanbul, there are other dragon reliefs in the same style from the Alâeddin Palace of Konya (Inv. No. 2340).

6. Beyşehir Kubadabad Palace Dragons (1236)

During the excavation of 1966, a dragon figure hewn on rock has been found in the Great Palace of Kubadabad, the summer residence on the shore of the Beyşehir Lake⁸ (Fig. 5). During the excavation of 1967, an underglazed star shaped tile was found with a dragon figure⁹.

⁷ Önder, M. Ein Neugefundenes Rumseldschukisches Drachenrelief. Sonderdruck aus Archäologischer Anzeiger. Berlin 1961. p. p. 70-71. Abb. 3.

⁸ This dragon will be introduced by K. Otto-Dorn in the Kubadabad excavation report of 1966. Archäologischer Anzeiger 1969.

⁹ This dragon will be published by Mehmet Önder.

7. Dragon reliefs of Kayseri Sultanhanı (1232-36)

In the courtyard mescid of Sultanhan, built during the reign of Alâeddin Keykubad, there are various dragon reliefs¹⁰. The mescid sits on four legs connected with arches. The south and east arches are decorated with symmetrically placed dragon figures whose bodies form heart-shaped ornaments (Fig. 6, 7). The heads are in the middle of the arch. The bodies are terminated at the foot of the arch. The figures are carved in slanted cut technique in high relief. The span of the arch is 4.35 m. The dragon bodies are shown as a broad band bordered by a thin line. The two dragon heads facing each other in the middle of the arch have open mouths with pointed teeth. The upper jaw forms a volute by an upwards turn. The almond-shaped eyes are large and the ears pointed. The dragons on the eastern arch meet each other at the middle and form an inverted heart (Fig. 6). In this part, the body is ornamented with spots. On the southern façade, the dragons do not meet at the center (Fig. 7). Like the other examples, the heads face each other. On this arch, the tails are also terminated with dragon heads at the foot of the arch. (Fig. 7,a).

8. Dragons from the Darüşşifa of Çankırı (1235)

Only the left hand dragon remains from the dragon reliefs on the entrance to the Darüşşifa of Çankırı¹¹ (Fig. 8). The measurements of the relief are 1.00 × 0.25 m. Two dragon bodies intertwined with four double knots terminate on the left with two heads facing each other. The lower head is broken. The upper head has pointed ears, almond-shaped eyes and open mouth with pointed teeth. The end of the upper jaw is missing. Quite possibly the upper jaw or the nose ended with a volute, like the Konya examples, as the long curving extension of this part indicates. Like the nose, the end of the tongue is missing. It is quite probable that the tongue was forked at the end.

¹⁰ Erdmann, K. *Das Anatolische Karavansaray des 13. Jh. Teil I*, Berlin 1962, No. 26, Abb. 151.

¹¹ Önge, Y. *Çankırı Darüşşifası. Vakıflar Dergisi*, V. Ankara 1962, Fig. 5. Gabriel, A. *Voyages Archeologiques dans la Turqui Orientale*, Paris 1940, p. 166, Fig. 13, 137.

Dragons with knotted bodies bearing great similarities to the dragons presented here are found on a Raqqa plate. See Grube, E. *Raqqa Keramik in der Sammlung des Metropolitan Museums in New York. Kunst des Orients IV*, Wiesbaden 1963. Abb. 15.

The darüşşifa, which is presently in a rather poor condition, was originally built in 1235 by Atabey Cemaleddin Ferruh.

Among the above group of works, there is a stucco relief on the Keykâvus Darüşşifa of Sivas (1217) in very poor condition, showing a dragon (Fig. 9). The end of the tail which forms a spiral and the legs are discernible. In original form, these reliefs were probably showing a pair of dragons parallel to the arch.

9. Dragon Reliefs on Karatayhan (1240).

On the outer entrance to the kervansaray in the village of Karatay, 50 km. to the east of Kayseri, there are double dragon reliefs on the inner face overlooking the courtyard¹². The closed part of this han dates back to the reign of Alâeddin Keykubad. However, the completion date is 1240 when Gıyaseddin Keyhusrev II was the ruler. The outer entrance with the dragon relief and the courtyard are symmetrically placed over the arch and are together 4 m. long (Fig. 10). The bodies are intertwined forming three-ringed chains on both sides of the arch pinnacle, reminiscent of the Ayubid period portal decorations in Syria. The bodies are shown as bands with three lines which merge with the decorative three-lined bands of the arch. The dragons have small, pointed ears, open mouth and pointed teeth. The upper jaw extends upwards forming a spiral curve.

10. Dragons on the Ahlat Tombstones (End of 13 th Century).

A very interesting group comprises the four tombstones from Ahlat with symmetrically placed dragon reliefs. Studies are under way on these dragon figures which are partly destroyed¹³. (Fig. 11).

11. Dragon Reliefs from the Ak Cami of Anamur (1220-1237)

Underneath the inscription of Ak Cami in Anamur, there is a dragon relief on the left. The body is terminated with heads on both ends (Fig. 12 a, b). The tongues protruding from the open mouths and the large eyes are noteworthy aspects. The relief has simple but stylized workmanship¹⁴.

¹² Erdmann, K. op. cit., Teil I. No. 32, Abb. 226, 231, 232, p. 122.

¹³ Dr. Beyhan Karamağaralı is preparing a habilitation thesis on Ahlat Tombstones.

¹⁴ The inscription from the period of Alaeddin Keykubad has been re-used in the mosque which we think is from 15 th Century. The inscription reads as follows:

II. *Dragons Shown Together With Planets :*

1. Dragons of Susuzhan in Burdur (Middle of 13 th Century).

Along the Antalya - Burdur highway about 1000 m. away from the road, there are dragon figures on the entrance over the right and left mihrabiyes (Fig. 13). The relief on the right is more worn than the one on the left. On top of each dragon, there is an angel figure in high relief. The angels face each other and carry something with their hands which they extend towards each other. This object in the middle is presently completely destroyed and therefore not identifiable. The bodies of the dragons extend in the form of a bordure with alternately curved and pointed undulations. The heads with pointed ears meet in the middle of the arch and hold a human head in their open mouths. The human head is in rather poor condition. The curved wings which sprout just behind the back and the short legs are points of interest. The tails of the dragons terminate on the column capitals of the mihrabiyes. We think that the dragons have been presented together with a planet (sun) symbolized by a human head. In Seljuk art, there are numerous other examples where the sun has been represented by a human head¹⁵. (This subject will be

1. Fi eyyāmi devleti
2. Es-sultanni'l ga... (galib?) Alāid-dunya
3. Ve'd-dın Ebu'l-feth Keykubād
4. İbn Keyhusrev Burhāni emiri'l-mü'minin
5.
6.

I wish to express my thanks to Prof. Faruk Sümer who was kind enough to read the inscription.

¹⁵ The minaret of Silvan Ebul Muzaffereddin Mosque (1199-1210) has a sun rosette with human face. Diameter : 0.40 m. (The mosque is no longer in existence). Gabriel, A. op. cit. p. 228, Pl. LXXX, 3,5. In the Darüşşifa of Keykāvus in Sivas (1217), there are two rosettes with human head at each corner of the eyvan arch. One of the rosettes represents the sun and the other the moon. Gabriel, A. Monuments Turcs d'Anatolie, Paris 1931, p. 149, Fig. 93. Also see Otto-Dorn, K. op. cit. Figs. 89, 148. There are two human heads representing the sun at the portal of Alaeddin Mosque of Niğde. (1223). Gabriel, A. op. cit. Pl. XXXV. p. 121 The portal of Darüşşifa in Divriği has two human heads, presently in very poor condition, symbolizing the moon and the sun. (1231) Arel, H. Divriği Darüşşifası Gotik Portalı, Vakıflar V. Ankara 1962, p. 123, fig. 19. During the Kubadabad excavation of 1966, a luster tile was found with the picture of a masque in the shape of sun.

elaborated under the section on symbols). Another example which bears close relationship to this relief is encountered on the Bagdad Gate¹⁶. In this case, in place of a human head a full human figure wearing a crown and kaftan sits cross-legged holding the tongues of the dragons with his hands (Fig. 14). It can be said that the figures on this relief too represent opposite principles and that the figure in the middle symbolizes the sun. According to Erdmann, Susuzhan was built just before 1246 during the reign of Gıyaseddin Keyhusrev II¹⁷

2. Dragons of Susuzhan, Burdur (Middle of 13 th Century).

In the same han, on the broad bordure of geometrical patterns at the inner right hand side of the portal there is a star-shaped half rosette which contains a small dragon relief¹⁸ (Fig. 15 a, b). Measurements : 12 × 6 cm. The dragon is placed upside down. Noteworthy characteristics are its open mouth, a pair of legs extended outwards, the wing and the tail which forms a complex knot. Inside the same geometrical pattern there are other star-shaped rosettes and a human head at the top in the form of a rosette. This human head is in a very worn and poor condition. Similarly, on the left hand side of the portal, there are a number of star-shaped rosettes. In a half rosette of star-shape at the edge, there are two lion figures facing each other (Fig. 16). The size of the rosette containing these worn miniature reliefs is 0,15 × 0,10 m. We can assume that these reliefs represent various planets together with the planet symbol dragon (Cauzehir) and also the Sing of Zodiac : lion¹⁹. (See section on symbols).

¹⁶ The Talisman Gate of Bagdad built by the Abbasid Khalif Nasser has since been destroyed. See Sarre, F. Herzfeld, E. *Archeologische Reise in Euphrat und Tigris Gebiet*. Berlin 1911-1920, Bd. II, Taf. X, 6, XI, Text Bd. I, p. 4.

¹⁷ Erdmann, K. *op. cit.* Teil I, p. 113, Abb. 202, No. 30.

¹⁸ I wish to express my thanks to my student İlhami Bilgin who discovered these reliefs and showed them to me. In the inner fortress of Aleppo (1209), there is a pair of dragons with double heads facing each other on the gate built by Al Zahir during the Ayyubid period. These dragons are shown with similar rosettes. See. Strzygowski, J. *Asiens Bildende Kunst*, Augsburg 1930, p. 295, Fig. 285.

¹⁹ For planet and sign of Zodiac descriptions shown together with Cauzehir, see Öney, G. *The Fish Motif in Anatolian Seljuk Art*. Istanbul Sanat Tarihi Yıllığı 2. Istanbul 1968. pp. 142-168.

3. Dragons and Lion's Head on Door Knob from Ulu Cami of Cizre and similar Example in the Dahlem Museum of Berlin (12 th Century).

The bronze door knob from the Ulu Cami of Cizre has two symmetrically placed dragons with a lion's head in between (Fig. 17). The dragons are shown in profile with their heads turned back. They have pointed ears, large almond-shaped eyes, open mouths with pointed teeth and a spiral nose. The dragons are shown biting their wings. The legs of the two dragons meet. The wings join the body by means of a line ending in a spiral in the Seljuk tradition. The bodies have single knots and are decorated by scales or dots. The tails are terminated with eagle heads having pointed beaks in the Eurasian animal style²⁰. These heads are shown pecking on the tails. The dragons and the lion's head are worked in the slanted cut technique. There is a similar door knob in the Dahlem Museum of Berlin the origin of which is referred to Mesopotamia²¹. The measurements of the knob are 27,5 × 24 cm. (Fig. 18).

As it is well known, the lion besides being the symbol of domination and might is also a symbol of light, the sun and signs of Zodiac. The eagle too is the symbol of the sun apart from its manifold symbolic characteristics²². In the case of the door knobs, the dragons, symbols of darkness, are presented together with the opposite symbolism, i. e. the sun or the light. The human head seen in the Susuzhan example is replaced here by the lion's head. In the tails, eagle heads (light and the sun) are threatening the dragons (the moon and darkness).

²⁰ The presence of other animals on top of an animal figure or appearance of elements belonging to other animals is typical in Sychitian art. See Rice, T. T. op. cit., Pl. 5, 9, 24, 32.

²¹ The door knob in Berlin-Dahlem Museum has Inv. no. I. 2242. See Kühnel, E. op. cit. Abb. 130.

²² One of the finest examples which shows eagle as a symbol of light and the sun is found on a bronze mirror from the Orthokids. Here the eagle symbolizes the sun in the middle of twelve sign of Zodiac rosettes. Abb. 131. In Central Asia, there is a similar belief. The Yakuts believed that the eagle was the creator of the shaman and light. See. Eliade, M. *Shamanismus und Archaische Ekstasetechnik*. Zürich 1957. p. 80.

4. Afyon Tombstone (13 th Century)

On a tombstone brought to the Afyon Museum from Boyalıköy near Afyon and registered under inventory No. 213, there are highly stylized, coarse cut reliefs²³. (Fig. 19). These reliefs depict fight scenes between eagle and rabbit, lion and horned animal (?) as well as a running antelope and a big sun rosette with a hole in the middle. The rosette is framed by a pair of dragons whose bodies intertwine. The heads look towards each other and the mouths meet forming a lozenge-shaped motif. On top of the stone, a fleet of rabbits running after each other towards the right is noticeable. This bordure continues along the side and the bottom in a chequered motif. In this example, the pair of dragons (the moon) and the sun are presented together with a fight scene between animals related to the sun (eagle, lion) and animals related to the moon (rabbit, horned animal). The sun animals are the victors and the moon animals the vanquished (Please refer to the section on symbols).

III. *Dragons Shown Together With Signs of Zodiac :*

1. The Relief at Cizre Bridge (1164)

On the western foot of the Cezire ibni Umar or ibn Omar bridge to the south of Cizre there are in rectangular panels eight sign of Zodiac descriptions in high relief²⁴. The reliefs are on the upper part of the octagonal bridge pier. The bridge is made of basalt but the panels are in white limestone. The figures are easily discernible. The measurements of one panel are 1.20 × 1.00 m. The bridge is an Orthokid work built in 1164²⁵. The first panel from right to left has a dragon figure together with centaur (Fig. 20). The human body of the centaur is shown turned backwards with his bow stretched and his arrow aimed at the mouth of the dragon. The body of the dragon has one single big knot. The mouth is open and the upper jaw of the

²³ Otto-Dorn, K. *Türkische Grabsteine mit Figurenreliefs aus Kleinasien*. *Ars Orientalis* III, 1959. p. 80. Abb. 1-4.

²⁴ Hartner, W. *The Pseudoplanetary Nodes of the Moon's Orbit in Hindu and Islamic Iconographies*. *Ars Islamica* Vol. 2. 1938, p. 113. See also Öney, G. *The Fish Motif.....* Here eight signs of the Zodiac are mentioned but the first planet Saturn has inadvertently been omitted in the text.

²⁵ Tunçdağ, F. *Artukoğlu Sanatı*. Ankara 1963. Unpublished doctor's thesis, D. T. C. Fakültesi Ankara, pp. 109-113.

nose is curved outwards in a spiral. This relief depicts Sagittarius (the centaur) together with the planet Cauzehar. (Please refer to section on symbols). The same topic appears on Orthokid coins and also on an Orthokid mirror²⁶. The dragon is generally shown as the tail of the centaur.

2. A Seljuk Mirror (13 th Century).

An interesting example in handicraft is to be found in the Topkapı Palace Museum of Istanbul. On an iron mirror with inlaid silver ornaments, there is a hunting scene showing a hunter with a falcon. This mirror is registered under inventory No. 2/17892 and has a diameter of 21 cm. The overall length including the handle is 45,5 cm. A bordure with a pair of dragons and other animal figures runs along the circumference²⁷. (Fig. 21). From top to bottom, towards the handle of the mirror, the following symmetrically placed animals are observed in pairs : Dragons, deer, centaurs prepared to shoot their arrows, bears and griffons. The necks of the dragons cross each other and their bodies have single knots. The feet and wings are smallish. The above descriptions can be interpreted as follows : The pair of dragons symbolize the planet Cauzehar, the deer and the bears represent game and the centaurs stand for the sign of Zodiac Sagittarius. The griffons at the rear must be mythological animals bringing luck and protection to the hunters (as we have in the case of sphinxes and sirens)²⁸.

We note that the pair of dragons shown in conjunction with various animals of the signs of Zodiac is also connected with the subject of hunting. There are numerous examples of this in the Iranian Seljuk art²⁹. In Islamic art, mirrors may also be associated with spells and talismans. It is therefore possible that this mirror was expected to bring luck to the hunt under the protection of Cauzehar³⁰.

²⁶ Kühnel, E. *Islamische Kleinkunst*. Braunschweig. 1963. p. 170. Abb. 131.

²⁷ See. Öney, G. *Mounted Hunting Scenes in Anatolian Seljuks in Comparison with Iranian Seljuks*. *Anatolia XI*, in print, Pl. 32.

²⁸ In Iranian Seljuk Art, hunting scenes have, in many examples, been depicted together with fable animals. See Öney, G. *idem*.

²⁹ See foot note 28, During the Kubadabad excavations of 1966, tiles with sphinx and siren motifs were found alongside tiles with various game animals.

³⁰ Rice, D. S. *A Seljuk Mirror*, *First International Congress on Turkish Art*, Ankara 1962, pp. 330-332.

3. Dragon from the Medrese Of Obaköy (14th Century).

On the entrance to the Medrese of Obaköy in the vicinity of Alanya, there is a pair of dragons under the arch³¹. (Fig. 22). The bodies of the dragons are intertwined and they face each other with open mouths. The space between the bodies is ornamented by two fish figures and three rosettes³². Presumably, the planet Cauzchar symbolized by the pair of dragons is presented together with the sign of Zodiac fish and other planets (Please refer to the section on symbols).

IV. *Dragons Shown in Connection With the 12 Animals of the Turkish-Chinese Calendar.*

1. Reliefs from the Kümbet of Emir Saltuk (12 th Century).

On the upper part of the deep cut triangular niche at the top of the Emir Saltuk Kümbet of Erzurum, there are reliefs which may be interpreted as descriptions of the Turkish-Chinese calendar. The width of one niche is 0.88 m. Like in many other examples of Seljuk art, the calendar animals are not shown in full cycle. Apart from the dragon (snake) pair, we note the following animals : a pair of goats, bull, bird and eagle³³. The dragons are shown in vertical position with intertwined bodies. The dragons face each other with open mouths in a challenging posture (Fig. 23). There is an amazing resemblance between these dragons and the pair of dragons on top of the pointed niche at the southern façade of the St. Grégoir Church at Ani (1215) (Fig. 24). The forked tongues, noses ending with volutes, the head forms and the knotted bodies bear strong influence of the Seljuk dragons.

2. Reliefs at Karatayhan of Kayseri (1240).

On the portal of the Türbe of Karatayhan (at the left hand side upon entering through the main portal there are various reliefs representing animals of the Turkish-Chinese animal calendar³⁴.

³¹ Öney, G. The Fish Motif in Anatolian Seljuk Art. *ibid.* Also see Sözen, M. Oba Pazarı Çevresi ve Oba Medresesi. *Istanbul Sanat Tarihi Yıllığı*, I. Istanbul 1964-65. pp. 143-154.

³² Öney, G. *idem.*

³³ Otto-Dorn, K. *Darstellungen des Turco-Chinesischen Tierzyklus in der Islamischen Kunst. Diez Armağanı.* Istanbul 1963, p. 142.

³⁴ Otto-Dorn, K. *idem.* p. 143, 144. Fig. 13-15.

The length of the frieze with animals is 2.50 m. The following calendar animals are noticeable from left to right : bird (with fish in its mouth), dog, wild boar, chicken, bird, horse, lion, elephant (or wild boar), goat, lion, bull, hare, panther and finally dragon (Fig. 25). The dragon relief is rather detailed with its knotted body, pointed ears and open mouth. Like the other examples of Seljuk art, some calendar animals are repeated, some are not represented at all and some animal figures of the same kind vary³⁵.

3. Reliefs at the Portal of Gök Medrese at Sivas (1271-72).

The portal of Gök Medrese at Sivas has animal heads placed symmetrically on the key stones at both sides of the arch. Upon close inspection, it is noted that these are animals from the Turkish-Chinese animal calendar³⁶. The size of the panels are 0.45×0.40 m. The animal heads are carved in high relief and are interlocked in arabesque form (Fig. 26). A dragon's head is placed in the middle of the composite picture (Fig. 26). The open mouth, curved upper jaw, pointed ears, pointed teeth and forked tongue are typical. Heads of snake, horse, sheep, tiger, hare, mouse, bull, dog and elephant are discernible in the composition.

4. Reliefs from Sungurbey Mosque of Niğde (1335).

On the eastern portal of the Sungurbey Mosque in Niğde, the panel with geometrical pattern and star motifs along the two side walls of the eyvan-like recession is lined with a band containing calendar animals³⁷. In the 14 cm. wide band, the animals have been represented with their heads and they form a vine-like decoration. The animals which we can make out are the following : goat, horse, panther, antelope, dragon, bull, bird, mouse, hare, monkey, dog, lion, sheep and fish. It is especially interesting to note the repeated appearance of fish which is not a calendar animal³⁸. Most of the animal heads are in a poor condition. Moreover, the reliefs are highly

³⁵ Otto-Dorn, K. *ibid.* Also see Erdmann, K. *Das Anatolische Karavansaray.....* No. 32, p. 122, Abb. 226, 231.

³⁶ Diez, E. *The Zodiac Reliefs at the Portal of the Gök Medrese in Sivas. Artibus Asiae.* 12. p. 100. Also see Otto-Dorn, K. *Turco-Chinesischer Tierzyklus...* pp. 145, 146, Abb. 16, 17.

³⁷ Otto-Dorn, K. *idem.* p. 148, Abb. 18-20.

³⁸ Öney, G. *The Fish Motif....*

stylized making differentiation between various animals difficult. The dragon figures are, however, of interest with their curved noses (Fig. 27 a, b).

V. *Dragons Shown with Bull's Head :*

1. Dragon-Bull Reliefs from the Ani Fortress. (1072-1110) At the northern end of the Ani Fortress, there are symmetrically placed dragon figures with bull's head in between on the towers to the right of the chequered gate³⁹. (Fig. 28, 29). The reliefs are situated on the circular tower at a height of $\frac{2}{3}$ from the bottom. The dragons circle the round towers with their rope-like bodies. The tower itself has been built with red stones but dark grey stones mark the area where the dragon heads are placed. The relief to the left of the middle gate (Fig. 28) is in a better condition. The dragons have open mouths and pointed ears. The bull's head is shown in front view and holds a ring in his mouth. The dragons to the left of the chequered gate are also of the same type. However, here the bull's head does not have a ring in his mouth (Fig. 29). We know that ring is an old victory symbol. It is interesting to note the combination of the bull, which is a symbol of fortresses, with the ring motif. The towers of the fortress were rebuilt by Abu Sucha Menuchehr of the Shaddads who ruled in the Ani region between 1071 and 1110 on behalf of Alpaslan. The original foundations date back to the time of the Armenians when Simbad II of Bagrad was ruler. Menuchehr whose mother was from Bagrad was himself from Shaddad. He was therefore in good terms with both parties after taking over Ani from Alpaslan upon the latter's conquest in 1064⁴⁰. For the above reason, old Armenian inscriptions were re-used during the repair and renovation of the towers. For instance, the foremost tower contains a later Armenian inscription under the dragons towards the left.

It is possible that the bull represents the Shaddads as an old symbol of might. The bull's heads are shown between dragons which also represent darkness, underground forces and the enemy. (See also the section on symbols). The fact that one of the bull's heads are shown with a ring and the other without leads us to think that the

³⁹ Kırzioğlu, M. *Kars Tarihi I*. Istanbul 1953, pp. 359, 362.

⁴⁰ Barthold, W. *İslam Ansiklopedisi, Ani*. Vol. I. Istanbul 1965, p. 436.

former shows a victory scene while the latter depicts the threat of the enemy. However, it is impossible to make a conclusive statement due to lack of similar examples and other supporting evidence.

2. Dragon-Bull-Eagle Reliefs on the Urfa Gate, Diyarbakır (1183-84).

At the western end of Diyarbakır Fortress, on the Urfa Gate, there is a pictorial description cut in high relief on top of the inscription above the portal. Here an eagle is shown sitting on top of a bull's head under which there is a ring. On each side of the lower inscription, there is a dragon with a knotted body, an open mouth and spiralling wings. (Fig. 30 a, b). The inner front leg has been pulled towards the body. At the place where the wing meets the body, there is a line terminating with a volute. The head is also characteristic of Seljuk dragons. The eagle has a single head and is shown in front view. The bull's head, the lower part of which is broken has the same size as the eagle. According to the inscription, the relief has been made during the time of Orthokid Mohammad, son of Karaarslan (1183-84)⁴¹. Van Berchem asserts that this relief represents the victory of the Orthokids over the Inanids. It is quite evident that the pictorial description reflects a fight between two different entities. Like the Ani example, the bull with a ring in its mouth is a symbol of dominance and superiority. Together with the eagle which is also a symbol sovereignty, they represent victory over the dragons⁴². As the dragons are at the same time symbols of subterranean forces, darkness and the moon, they could as well represent the opposite element, i. e. the enemy. (Please refer to section on symbols).

3. Dragon-Bull Reliefs : Kesikköprühan (1268-69).

There is a bull's head between two dragons over the window on the left façade of Kesikköprü han which is situated 18 km. south of

⁴¹ Van Berchem, M. - Strzygowski, J. *Amida*. Heidelberg. 1910. pp. 78, 82. Fig. 28. Also see Gabriel, A. *Voyages....* Text Bd. p. 144, 166. Fig. 136. Bd. II, Pl. LIII, 2. Inscription No. 66, Pl. LIII.

⁴² According to Ibni Bibi, Seljuk rulers put up a tent with an eagle on top whenever they conquered some place. "The eagle of the ruler with its stretched wings and tail brought luck to the sun of the sultans and cast the shadow of might." See Erdmann, K. *Ibni Bibi als Kunsthistorische Quelle*. Nederlands Historisch-Archeologisch Institut. Istanbul 1962. pp. 7, 8.

Kırşehir along Kızılırmak River⁴³ (Fig. 31). On the coarsely cut relief, the dragons have been symmetrically placed with their open mouths pointing outwards. The short bodies terminate at the mouth of the bull. The han was built by the Emir of Kırşehir Nurettin Ceb-rail, son of Bahaeddin Cacabey. This corresponds to the time of Keyhusrev III.

It is quite possible that the bull, which is seemingly swallowing the dragons, represents might and dominance like the Ani example (See section on symbols).

VI. *Dragons Shown with Life Tree :*

Life Tree at the Çifte Minareli Medrese of Erzurum (end of 13 th Century).

At the portal of the Çifte Minareli Medrese of Erzurum, there is a relief of life tree on both side faces inside a high profiled rectangular frame (Fig. 32). On top of the tree, there is a doubleheaded eagle and a pair of dragons are placed underneath with their bodies merging with the trunk of the tree⁴⁴. The size of the panel is 1.10 × 2.6 m. It can be assumed that the medrese was built at the end of the 13 th Century⁴⁵. The dragons are connected with the tree by means of a crescent motif. The heads of the dragons are shown looking up and are similar to the examples discussed earlier. The bodies are ornamented with scale motifs and have single knots. There is an inverted palmette leaf between the bodies. It is possible that in this example the dragons symbolize the underground and darkness against the eagle on top of the tree. On the other hand, the dragons may represent the guardian animals protecting the life tree, like the lion figures in the Yakutiye Medrese of Erzurum. The figural art of the Seljuks is rather complicated and it is very difficult to define the motivation behind each pictorial representation in a conclusive way. (See section on symbols).

⁴³ Erdmann, K. Das Anatolische Karavansaray.... Teil I. No. pp. 75, 77.

⁴⁴ See. Öney, G. Das Lebensbaum Motiv in der Seldschukischen Kunst in Anatolien. Belleten XXXII, 125. Ankara 1968.

⁴⁵ The Medrese was dated correctly for the first time by Ruçhan Arık, Erzurum'da Türk Eserleri, unpublished doctor's thesis, Ankara 1964. Also see Ünsal, H. R. Les Monuments Islamiques Anciens de la ville d'Erzurum et sa Région. Paris 1968. Chapitre VII. pp. 58-101.

VII. *Dragons at the Wing Tips or Tail Ends of Double-Headed Eagles :*

It is interesting to note that the wing tips or tail ends of all double-headed eagles on arabesque background terminate with a dragon head. We can categorize these examples as follows : On the side portal of Ulu Cami of Divriği (1228-29) (Fig. 33); on the stucco work of Alâeddin Palace of Konya ⁴⁶ (1220-1237); on silken clothing from the Alâeddin period; at the Hüdavent Hatun Türbe ⁴⁷ (1312) and on the wooden window shutter of the Akşehir Kileci Mescid (15 th Century). These pictorial descriptions combining the dragon motif with double-headed eagle have been dealt with in detail in one of my earlier articles ⁴⁸. I will therefore not attempt to elaborate here. We presume that in these examples the life tree has been represented with the arabesque background in symbolic form. Like the example in the Museum of Çifte Minareli Medrese in Erzurum, the combination of life tree, double-headed eagle and dragon is represented here.

VIII. *Dragons at the Wing Tips or Tail Ends of Lions or Sphinxes :*

In Seljuk art, there are numerous examples where dragons are presented together with lions and sphinxes. The examples of this group can be cited as follows : Double lions on the Ulubadan tower of the outer Fortress of Diyarbakır (1208-1209) ⁴⁹; double lions brought to Diyarbakır Museum from Cizre (Fig. 34) ⁵⁰ (12 th Century); dragons merging with the arabesque motif on the back of the lion figures in the stucco reliefs of Alâeddin Palace of Konya

⁴⁶ By comparison to similar stuccos found during the 1966 Kubadabad excavations conducted under the direction of Prof. K. Otto-Dorn, we date the stuccos from Alâeddin Palace to the same period.

⁴⁷ Öney, G. Die Figurenreliefs an der Hudavent Hatun Türbe in Niğde, *Belleten XXXI*, 122. Ankara 1967. Also see *Das Lebensbaum Motiv in der Seldschukischen Kunst in Anatolien*, *Belleten XXXII*, 125. Ank. 1968.

⁴⁸ See foot note 47.

⁴⁹ Gabriel, A. *Voyages Archeologiques....* Text Bd. 118-119. Pl. LVIII. Insc. 74.

⁵⁰ These lions which have typical Seljuk characteristics are dated by the museum to the Seljuk period. However, Preusser asserts that these lions are Christian works. Preusser, C. *Nordmesopotamische Baudenkmäler Altchristlicher und Islamischer Zeit*, Leipzig 1911, Taf. 34.

(1220-1237)⁵¹; double lions at the Hüdavent Hatun Türbe of Niğde (1312)⁵²; double lions on the portal of the Patnos Türbe (Fig. 35) (15 th Century); double lions on the portal of Behrampaşa han of Sivas (16 th Century). It is interesting to note that this tradition continues in the later periods. These lions are generally shown in pairs and the dragons are connected to the lions as tails. Thus the body of the dragon becomes the tail of the lion which is generally shown sitting on its hind legs. The lion's head is shown in front view while the body is in profile. The dragons are shown in profile and appear to be threatening the lion with their open mouths. In fact, the dragons are shown biting the back of the lion in some cases. In the case of the examples from the Diyarbakır fortress, the lions have wings.

Sphinx-dragon combination is less common. An interesting example is the sphinx statuette brought to the Zincirliye Medrese museum from Dunaysır (13 th Century). It is noteworthy to observe that the wing tips as well as tail ends terminate with a dragon's head⁵³.

A marble slab in the Konya İnce Minareli Medrese museum (inventory No. 893) contains sphinx figures together with antelope and bird reliefs. These sphinxes have dragon's heads only at the end of their tails (13 th Century)⁵⁴. (Fig. 36). In Islam handicraft from Iranian and Syrian regions dating back to 12 th and 13 th centuries, there are many dragon-sphinx descriptions. (Fig. 37)⁵⁵. The dragon-lion and dragon-sphinx combinations carry strong influence from Central Asia. Most of these reliefs are made in the slanted cut technique, which is emphasized by the wing curves and the three-lobed crown of the sphinxes.

The combination of lion and sphinx which represent might, as well as the sun and light, with dragons, which symbolize darkness, subterranean elements and the moon is a remarkable phenomenon. Although it is difficult to arrive at a conclusive explanation, we believe that in these pictorial descriptions the animal fight scenes

⁵¹ van Berchem-Strzygowski, J. *Amida*. op. cit. p. 355, Fig. 301. Also see Kühnel, E. Ogan, A. *Istanbul Müzelerinde Şaheserler*. Berlin-Leipzig 1938, p. 17. Abb. 10.

⁵² Öney, G. *Die Figurenreliefs an der Hudavent Hatun....* Abb. 5 a, b.

which are widely encountered in Seljuk art⁵⁶ are presented in a more compact form with the lion or sphinx shown in a dominant and victorious position. The opposite concept represented may vary, i. e. goodness versus evil, light versus darkness, the sun versus the moon or local populace versus the enemy. (See section on symbols).

IX. *Dragons in Fight Scenes :*

Reliefs from the Alâeddin Palace of Konya (1220-1237).

The stucco reliefs from the Alâeddin Palace of Konya, presently in Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Museum of Istanbul (inventory No. 2902), contains two horsemen opposite each other. The horseman on the left is slaying a dragon with his sword while the horseman on the right is slaying a lion in similar fashion⁵⁷ (Fig. 38). The measurements of the panel are 0.29 × 0.58 m. thickness of slab is 0.04 m. According to our new dating, we can state that this relief, like the other examples in stucco, is from the Alâeddin Keykubad period. The background has arabesque ornamentation. Above the figures there is a broad bordure with star and octagonal motifs. The horseman on the left has thrust his long sword down the dragon's throat. The dragon has a

⁵³ Yetkin, Ş. Bir Tunç Sfenks. Türk Kültürü. Ankara 1964, Number 16. pp. 48-50, Fig. 1-3.

⁵⁴ Sarre, F. Seldschukische Kleinkunst. Leipzig 1909.

⁵⁵ On this Raqqa plate from 13 th Century, it is noteworthy that the sphinx has a fully depicted human body except for the front legs. The C. L. David Collection, Copenhagen. 54/1966. Diameter of Plate 29,5 cm. Also see Kühnel, E. Islamische Kleinkunst. pp. 176, 192, 233, 234.

⁵⁶ For lion-bull fight scenes in Seljuk architecture reference is made to the Ulu Cami Portal of Diyarbakır Fortress (1177-1185). (See Gabriel, A. Voyages Archeologiques... p. 188, Pl. LXXXII, 3, 4, 5), a stone from Cizre (12 th Century, Inv. No. 386), Harput Süt Kalesi (12 th Century) (See Gabriel, A. op. cit. Text I, p. 260, Fig. 193) and Oğrun Gate of Diyarbakır Fortress (1206-7). See Gabriel, A. op. cit., Text Bd. p. 153, Fig. 124). Lion-hare fight scene is encountered on only one example - a tombstone from Afyon, from 13 th Century (See Otto-Dorn, K. Türkische Grabsteine mit Figurenreliefs aus Kleinasien. Ars Orientalis III. 1959. p. 63, Abb. 1-4). Eagle-hare fight scenes are more common. Examples are found in Dışkale (Outer Fortress) of Diyarbakır (1208-9) See Gabriel, A, op. cit. p. 166, Fig. 135, Pl. LXVII, on tombstone mentioned earlier (Otto-Dorn, K. op. cit.), at Urfa Gate of Diyarbakır Fortress (1183-4) See Gabriel, A. op. cit. Text Bd. pp. 144, 166, Fig. 136. Bd. II, Pl. LIII, 2.). (The writer of this article is preparing another article on animal fight scenes in Anatolian Seljuk Art.).

snake-like body and pointed ears. This sort of description is rare in Islamic Art. A similar example is found on the ceiling of Capella Palatina in Palermo, built with Fatimid influence⁵⁸ (Fig. 39). This pictorial description, painted on the ceiling, is reminiscent of St. George's fight with the dragon which is a typical Christian motif. In the Konya example, the subject matter is enriched by the addition of the fight with the lion. Here the horsemen are shown victorious over the dragon and the lion, i. e. symbol of the moon and the symbol of the sun. It is possible that the intention was to demonstrate the dominance of these horsemen over the earth and the skies.

X. Gutters with Dragon Heads :

1. Ulu Cami of Divriği (1228).

At the eastern façade of the Ulu Cami of Divriği, there is a highly stylized gutter in the form of dragon's head between the şifahane and the mosque (Fig. 40). The measurements are $0.35 \times 0.35 \times 0.50$ m. The mouth of the dragon is closed. The gutter passes through the head and terminates in the mouth which is slightly turned up at the top. Ears and almond-shaped eye sockets are observed.

2. An example from Kayseri (13 th Century).

There is a gutter in the shape of dragon's head in a house in Kayseri. Almond shaped eyes, upper jaw curving in a spiral are typical Seljuk characteristics. Apparently, this piece from the Seljuk period has been re-used (Fig. 41).

3. Arapzade Mosque in Karaman (1374).

Arapzade or Araboğlu mosque in Karaman has nine gutters with dragon's head. Measurements of one gutter are $0.35 \times 0.25 \times 0.20$ m. These dragons show characteristics of the Seljuk tradition (Fig. 42 a, b). The heads are connected to the roof by means of a ring and have slightly open mouths, pointed teeth, upper jaw with a spiralling curve and round eyes with ornaments.

⁵⁷ Ogan, A. Kühnel, E. İstanbul Müzelerinde... p. 17. Fig. 10. See also Kühnel, E. Islamische Kleinkunst... p. 248, Abb. 205.

⁵⁸ Monnered de Villard, U. Le Pittura Musulmane Al Saffito Della Capella Palatina. Palermo-Roma. 1950, Figs. 153-155. In Persian and Mongol miniatures, we see in similar manner Rüstem or other heroes fighting with dragons. See Wilkinson, B. - Gray, B. Persian Miniature Painting, Pl. XXXII.

XI. *Discussion of Symbolic Use of Dragons :*

The figural art of the Seljuks is complex and many-sided. It is beyond doubt that dragons have been used with symbolic purposes. In fact, figures in a pictorial description may have been used with more than one symbolic meaning. These considerations are analysed in greater detail below :

1. Symbolism of Motion, Harmony or Universe.

According to old Central Asian belief, the universe is ruled by a pair of dragons who are responsible for its harmony and equilibrium. The yearly rotation of these stars are governed by this pair of dragons which lie knotted below the earth's axis under the seven planets in the "dome" of the universe. One of the dragons is male and the other female. The rotation is started by the call of a pair of angels, one being male and the other female. The dragon pair represent two opposite poles and forces; they also symbolize two principles of motion, i. e. astronomical and philosophical⁵⁹. With this belief as a premise, we can venture to suppose that in Seljuk art the dragon pairs presented alone or together with planet-sign of Zodiac symbols represent motion, harmony and even the universe. The dragon pairs encountered in fortresses, hans, palaces, darüssifas and even on tombstones may-according to place and conditions-symbolize motion, harmony, order or the universe. The dragon pair which start the motion of the universe upon the calling of two angels have been presented at Susuzhan of Burdur together with a pair of angels at the top and with the sun symbol (a masque) in their mouths. In the case of tombstones from Ahlat and Afyon, we think the purpose is to represent the universe. Especially, the large rosette at the back of the dragons reinforces this assumption.

2. Symbolism of Fight Against Darkness and Evil.

It is possible that the same dragon pairs alone or with planet and sign of Zodiac symbols represent at the same time fight against darkness and evil. In the Middle Ages dragon pairs were used to symbolize opposite concepts and also as a sun symbol⁶⁰. The knots

⁵⁹ Zykan, J. Zur Geisteswelt der Asiatischen Kunst. II. Die Verschlungenen Drachen. *Artibus Asiae* VII, 1-4. p. 178.

⁶⁰ Hartner, W. The Pseudoplanetary Nodes..... p. 131.

on the bodies of the dragons were astronomical signs symbolizing certain positions of the planets during eclipses of the sun and the moon⁶¹. According to mythology, eclipses occur when dragons swallow the sun or the moon⁶². Dragons shown with their mouths adjoining form a lozenge-shaped motif, like on the Afyon tombstone, which is a typical moon symbol⁶³. They are thus shown as swallowing the moon. It then follows that the dragons shown mouth to mouth eliminate the moon, symbol of the night, by swallowing it. This can further be interpreted as the victory of the sun, light and goodness. This concept is reinforced by the Afyon tombstone where the large sun rosette, i. e. light and animals related to the sun like lion and eagle are shown victorious over animals related to the moon such as hare and horned animals.

On the other hand, there are some examples where dragons do not represent evil forces, i. e. in *darüŝŝifas*. Also, words like "maristan", "bimaristan" have evolved from the word snake. Even today the symbol of medicine in Turkey is snake which has been the symbol of *asclepiums* since ancient Greeks. It is also possible that dragons were used at hans and palaces as a talisman to prevent the entry of enemy and sickness.

3. Symbolism of Underground and Darkness.

Contrary to the above, dragons are also used as negative symbols representing darkness, underground and hell. In such cases, they become symbols of enemy and evil. In the world of Islam it is assumed that the seas are underlain by fire which in turn is underlain by a snake called *Falak*⁶⁴. *Falak* is mighty enough to swallow the earth but fear of God deters him. God has put hell in *Falak*'s belly. Thus, *Falak* has become the guardian of the underground and hell as well.

Dragon pairs shown under the life tree-for instance, the dragons at the portal of *Çifte Minareli Medrese* of Erzurum may be considered symbols of underground and hell or at the same time guardians

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Otto-Dorn, K. *Türkische Grabsteine Mit Figurenreliefs aus Kleinasien*. *Ars Orientalis* III, 1959, p. 75.

⁶⁴ Diez, E. *Glaube und Welt des Islam*. Stuttgart 1941. pp. 61, 62. Also see in Koran sure of "Felak" CXIII.

protecting the life tree. In similar vein, the shaman robes of Tungus tribes from Central Asia have ribbons symbolizing snakes which accompany the shaman in his underground travels⁶⁵.

We can thus say that fight between astral mythological opposite forces are symbolized in lion-dragon, eagle-dragon, bull-dragon and man-dragon compositions. Symbols of goodness and evil, light and darkness, day and night, the sun and the moon, local populace and enemy are shown fighting, but the first ones are always victorious over the second. Bull-dragon composition from Ani Fortress is a typical example. The bull holding the ring of victory triumphs over the dragons which represent darkness, underground forces and evil.

4. Symbols of Cauzehir, i. e. Planets.

From the start of Hellenistic astrology, dragon has been considered as the eighth planet after Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Mercury, the moon and the sun. This eighth planet was called Cauzehir⁶⁶. Sometimes the tail of the dragon was counted separately increasing the number of planets to nine. In modern astrology the head of the dragon signifies the rising moon knot while the tail symbolizes the receding moon knot⁶⁷. Islam astrology too accepts these knots as planets. In descriptions where they are shown together with various planet and sign of Zodiac symbols dragons represent Cauzehir. We can cite as examples the dragons at Cizre Bridge and those on the outer façade of the Susuzhan portal, the Obaköy example at Alanya or the Seljuk mirror mentioned above. As the sign of Zodiac centaur (Sagittarius) keeps the planet Cauzehir under his influence, they are usually shown together. The centaur aims his arrow at the open mouth of the dragon. In Islamic art, there are many examples where the dragon, i. e. Cauzehir is shown as the tail of the centaur. Among our examples, the Cizre relief and the Seljuk mirror contain such combinations. However, in the Cizre example the dragon and the centaur are shown separately.

⁶⁵ Eliade, M. *Schamanismus und Archaische Ekstasetechnik*. Zurich 1957. p. 151.

⁶⁶ Hartner, W. *The Pseudoplanetary Nodes.....* op. cit. Also see. Sutter, H. *Djawzehir*. *Enzyklopadie des Islam*. A-D. p. 1075.

⁶⁷ See foot note 66.

5. The Dragon Year in the Turkish-Chinese Calendar with Twelve Animals :

Dragon and snake are animals of the Turkish-Chinese calendar used in China and by many Turkish and Mongol tribes after the Gök Turks. The dragon and the snake each represent a year, one followed by the other. During the dragon year, there is much rain bringing fertility and abundance; also, wars are made and plenty of blood is shed⁶⁸. On the other hand, the snake year is a bad year. There is much evil, intrigue, famine, cold and sickness⁶⁹. It is interesting to note that Seljuks revive this ancient calendar by using its symbols in their reliefs. Central Asian influence and traditions have strong marks on the style and technique of Seljuk figural art. It is remarkable to note the re-emergence of the same influence in this connection too.

6. Water Symbols.

In ancient China dragon symbolized the might of water and fluids⁷⁰. The gutters with dragon heads encountered in a couple of examples in Anatolia might be a continuation of this old belief coming from the Far East.

XII. *Conclusions* :

Seljuk dragons appear in many different compositions but they all have a common style. It is noteworthy to observe the marked influence of the Central Asian style, as it is the case in Seljuk figural art. These effects can be summarized as follows : Slanted cut technique, volutes at wing tips and tail ends, ornaments with volute on the hip, two different heads on the same body, heads at wing tips and tail ends. Furthermore, animal figural art of Eurasia have animal fight scenes which bear similarities to dragon fight scenes. The use of dragon in connection with Turkish-Chinese calendar shows the close ties between Seljuks and the traditions of the East.

The symbolic world of dragons is partly explained by Central Asian beliefs. Astral mythological beliefs as well as beliefs in connection with the underground and the universe and finally the shaman traditions help to make a rich but complex world of symbols.

⁶⁸ Turan, O. On iki Hayvanlı Türk Takvimi. İstanbul 1941. p. 93.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Strzygowski, J. Asiens Bildende Kunst. Augsburg 1930. p. 295.