



Architectural Features of Wooden Domed Semâhanes in Mevlevihanes, Cultural Heritage Sites of Mevlevism

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Abstract

Semâhanes, the central units of *Mevlevihanes*, cultural heritage sites of Mevlevism, serve as venues for the sacred *semâ* (ritual whirling) ceremony, known as Mevlevi Âyîn-i Şerif. This study focuses on the fundamental architectural characteristics of *semâhanes* constructed with *semâ meydans* (whirling spaces) covered by wooden domes, within the borders of the Ottoman Empire between the 17th and 19th centuries. The selected examples were examined through actual architectural examples, reconstructions, archival records, including engravings, paintings, and drawings created by visiting artists throughout history. First, the architectural elements shaping the *semâhanes* (such as the *semâ meydan*, *mesnevi* lectern, *mutrib*, and visitor *mahfils*) were expressed. Then, the types of wooden domed *semâhanes*, categorized as single-storied and those with a mezzanine floor were explained. Next the geometric forms of the *semâ meydans* which influence the design of the *semâhane*'s roof systems, were assessed as square, rectangular, 8-sided, 9-sided, 16-sided, and circular shapes. This led to an analysis of the types of wooden domes in *semâhanes* and the analysis identified those without drums as well as those supported by circular or octagonal drums. Additionally, the materials, construction techniques and decoration of wooden domes were determined as either plastered and painted over wooden laths or directly painted on wooden veneer, featuring wooden geometric slices or various motifs and calligraphic ornamentations. In conclusion, all the data collected were evaluated together. It is hoped that this study, focused on a limited number of wooden domed *semâhanes*—the heart of the *Mevlevihanes*—will contribute to the literature on *tekke* architecture.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Mevlevi Sufi order of dervishes, known in the West as the “Whirling Dervishes” or *Derviches tourneurs*, was founded based on the teachings of Mawlânâ Jalâluddin Rumi (1207–1273) in the late 13th century in the Anatolian city of Konya. The *mevlevihanes* (dervish lodges) and their activities along with those of sufi dervish orders, remained active until 1925, when they were legally prohibited following the founding of the Turkish Republic. By the time they were closed, over 150 *Mevlevihane* architectural complexes—active for over 600 years during the late Seljuk, Emirates, and Ottoman periods of Turkish history—were spread across the geographical areas once occupied by the Ottoman Empire including Middle East cities [1]. Especially during the 19th century, the *mevlevihanes* of Istanbul and cosmopolitan Cairo gained popularity among foreign visitors, who frequently documented them in their travelogues and paintings. Following their prohibition and closure within the borders of the Republic of Turkey, these structures fell into neglect. Maintenance and repair were largely abandoned and many were used for inappropriate functions. However, the declaration of the *Mevlevi Ayin-i Şerifi* (the Ritual Whirling Ceremony of the Mevlevi Dervish Order) with its complex composed music and *sema* (whirling movements) performance, as a Masterpiece of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2005 (accepted in

2005) by UNESCO¹ and 2007 as the International Year of Mevlâna, started an increase in studies about *mevlevihanes* and a wave of conservations and restorations, especially of their *semâhanes* [2][3].

Within the architectural complex of a *mevlevihane*, the *semâhane*—a large assembly whirling hall—served as the venue for the sacred *semâ* (the Mevlevi ritual whirling) ceremony, known as Mevlevî Âyîn-i Şerîf, traditionally performed in a designated central space called the *semâ meydan*.

By examining the upper covering systems of *semâhanes*—using literature research, archival documents, and in situ analysis of surviving examples—it was seen that a variety of materials (stone, brick, wood, etc.) and construction techniques (masonry or wooden skeleton systems) were employed. However, there was a specific and unique group of *semâhanes* with wooden hip roofs which shared common architectural characteristics. The *semâ meydan*s of these *semâhanes* were covered either by a wooden dome, vaulted ceiling, or caisson ceiling. These unique *semâhanes* were found in major cities such as Istanbul (including the *semâhanes* of Galata, Beşiktaş, Yenikapı, and Üsküdar *Mevlevihanes*), Cairo, Bursa, Kütahya, Gallipoli (Gelibolu), and Manisa, as well as in Central Anatolian towns like Tokat, Çankırı, Çorum, Samsun, and Ankara (Figure 1) [1].

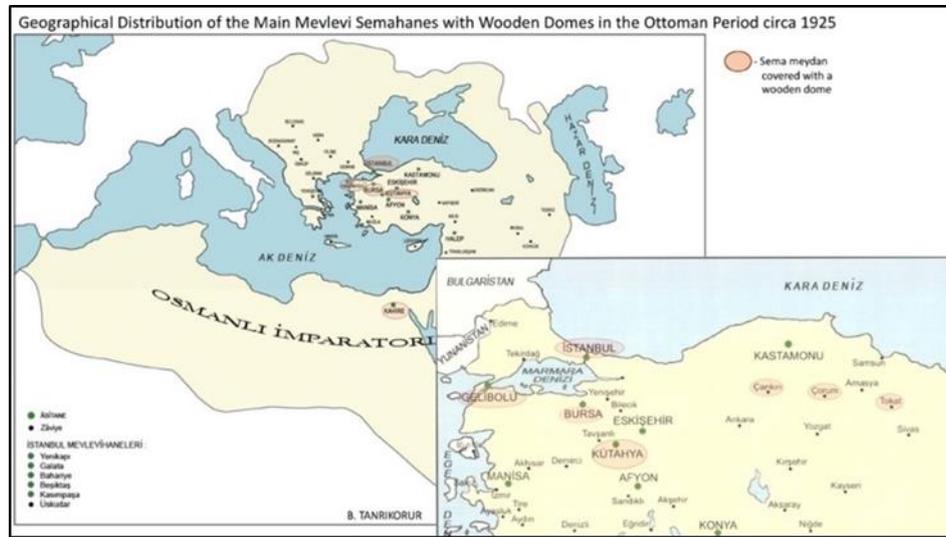


Figure 1. Geographical Distribution of the Main Mevlevi Semâhanes with Wooden Domes in the Ottoman Period circa 1925 [1]

Therefore, this study aimed to define the major architectural characteristics of this specific group of wooden domed *semâhanes*—including those in Beşiktaş (1622), Çorum (1896), Tokat (1825–1850), Yenikapı (1815–1816), 4th Galata (1791), Bursa (1820), Gelibolu (rebuilt 1899–1900), 2nd Galata (1608), 3rd Galata (1765), Çankırı (1850), Üsküdar (1912), Kütahya (rebuilt 1887–1889), and Cairo (1850). The methodology of the study was based on existing architectural examples, reconstructions, as well as representations of demolished 17th to 19th century of their predecessors, found in the paintings, engravings, and drawings of visiting artists [4]. As a result, the study identified the different types of *semâhanes* as those with a single-storey or a mezzanine floor or with square, rectangular, 8-sided, 9-sided, 16-sided, and circular geometric shaped *semâ meydan*s that influenced the design of their roofs. The different types of their wooden domes were identified as being with or without circular or octagonal drums, as well as by the materials, construction techniques and decoration features used in covering their *semâ meydan*s.

2. SEMÂHANES

Following the example of the mother *semâhane* at the Konya Mevlâna Dergâh, a Mevlevî *semâhane* was typically constructed adjacent to, or to incorporate the tomb area of the founding or leading shaykhs of

¹ Ş. B., Tanrikorur headed the preparation of Turkey's application to UNESCO for the declaration of the Mevlevî Âyîn-i Şerîf (Holy Ritual Ceremony of the Whirling Dervishes) as a Masterpiece of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2004.

the particular *mevlevihane*. Each *semâhane* contained a *Mathnawi* lectern and a *mihrab*, usually located on the wall opposite the main entrance. This placement was important because the *semâ* ceremony always began with the performance of one of the daily Muslim ritual prayers, followed by a brief lesson from Rumi's *Mathnawi Şerif*. In the center of the *semâhane* was the *semâ meydan*, the area designated exclusively to the performance of the ritual whirling *semâ* ceremony. On the wall opposite the *mihrab* was a raised, balcony-like lodge above the main entrance, known as the *mutrib* lodge. This space was reserved for the *mutrib* (dervish singers and instrumentalists) who accompanied the shaykh and the *semâzens* (whirling dervishes) during the ceremony [1].

2.1 Types of Semâhanes

In the examination of wooden domed *semâhanes*, it was observed that key architectural elements—such as the *semâ meydan*, audience *mahfils*, *mutrip maksura* opposite the *mihrab*, and other basic features—were consistently present. The primary difference in wooden domed *semâhanes* lies in the addition of a mezzanine floor in some examples, which included spaces like the foreign visitors' *mahfil*, the *hünkâr* (sultan's) *mahfil* and the women's *mahfil*, often located behind latticed screens on the mezzanine floor. Within this context, two types of *semâhanes* were identified in the group examined in this study. The first type, **Type 1**, is a single-storied structure with a *semâ meydan* of various geometric shapes, whose floor is lower than its surrounding areas. The *semâ meydan* is enclosed by a wooden railing with supporting rail post columns, which also support the wooden dome over the *meydan*. A raised, balcony-like *mutrib* lodge, typically accessed by a staircase, is usually located above the entrance door, opposite the *mihrab* (Figure 2). Archival documents provide the oldest data we have about single-storied wooden domed *semâhanes*. These include a miniature painting of the Beşiktaş Semâhane from the late 17th to early 18th centuries as well as an engraving of the 2nd Galata Semâhane by Ignace Mouradja d'Ohsson, circa 1787 (Figure 3).

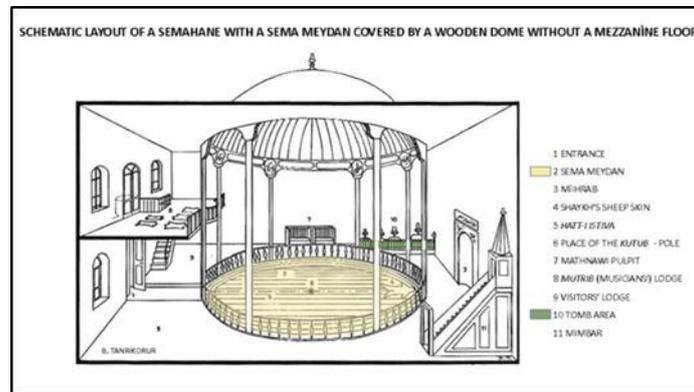


Figure 2. Schematic Layout of a *semâ meydan* covered by a wooden dome without a mezzanine floor [1]



Figure 3. (a) Miniature of the *Semâ Ceremony* in Beşiktaş Semâhane (circa 17th–18th century) in the Freer Gallery of Art, Pennsylvania [5]

(b) Engraving of the 2nd Galata Semâhane by Ignace Mouradja d'Ohsson (circa 1787) (published between 1787 and 1820) [6]

Although **Type 2** has a layout similar to **Type 1**, it features a mezzanine floor which is accessible via various staircases added to one or more sides of the *semâ meydan*. The first floor encircling the *semâ meydan* is located beneath the mezzanine floor and is reserved for male visitors and lacks front lattice screens. It is enclosed by a wooden railing with rail post columns, which support a wooden dome over the *meydan*. The flat ceiled mezzanine floor, includes a *mutrib* lodge facing the *mihrab*, as well as lattice-screened lodges for specific types of spectator visitors, such as the sultan, women, or foreigners. Almost all of the *semâhanes* examined in this study are variants of **Type 2** with a mezzanine floor (Figure 4).

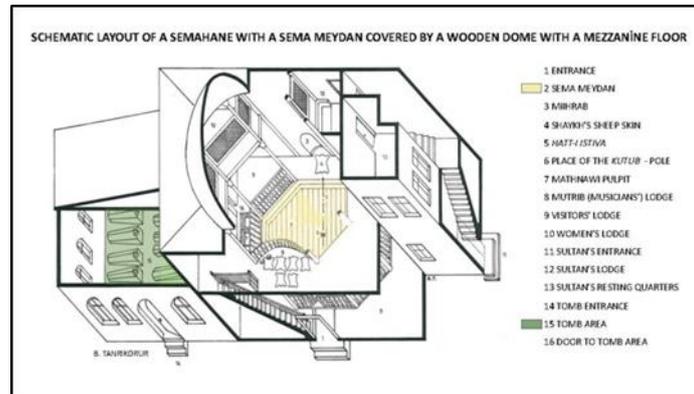


Figure 4. Schematic layout of a *semâ meydan* covered by a wooden dome with a mezzanine floor [1]

When analyzing the wooden domed *semâhanes*, it was observed that the Yenikapı Semâhane, 4th Galata Semâhane (in the engraving), Bursa Semâhane, Gelibolu Semâhane, Çankırı Semâhane, and Architect Kemaleddin's Üsküdar Semâhane drawing all featured mezzanine floors. However, their placement around the *semâ meydan* varied. In the Yenikapı Semâhane, the mezzanine floor extends around three sides of the *semâ meydan* but does not cover the area over the *mihrab*. In contrast, the mezzanine in the 4th Galata Semâhane is located only on one side of the *semâ meydan*, leaving the *mihrab* area uncovered whereas the mezzanine floor of the Bursa Semâhane surrounds the entire *semâ meydan* except for the *mihrab* (Figure 5 a). In the Gelibolu Semâhane, the mezzanine floor is present only on two sides of the *semâ meydan*. Whereas the octagonal-planned *semâhanes* of Çankırı and Üsküdar feature mezzanine floors surrounding all eight sides of their *semâ meydan*s, except over their *mihrabs* (Figure 5 b). Finally, the mezzanine floors of the Kütahya and Cairo Semâhanes, totally encircle their *semâ meydan*s (Figure 5 c).

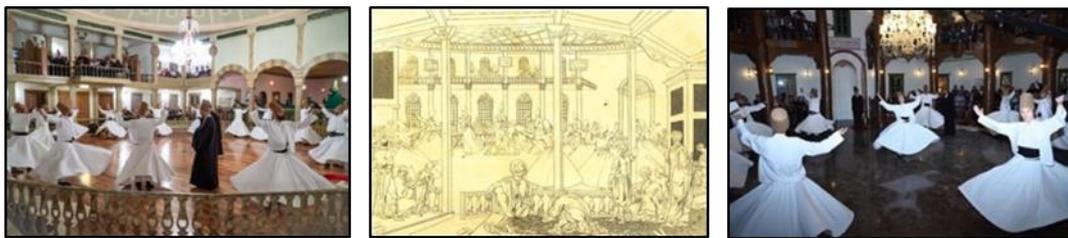


Figure 5. (a) Yenikapı Semâhane [7] 4th Galata Semâhane [8] and Bursa Semâhane [7]

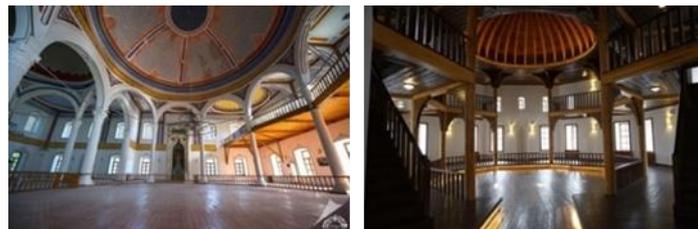


Figure 5. (b) Mezzanine floor views of Gelibolu Semâhane and Çankırı Semâhane [7]



Figure 5. (c) Mezzanine floor views of Kütahya Semâhane [9] and Cairo Semâhane [10]

2.2. Geometric Shapes of Semâ Meydan Floor Plans in Semâhanes

The circular-plans of *semâ meydan*s and those with geometric shapes closer to a circle are considered more appropriate for the performance of the *semâ* ceremony because they emphasize the circular movements of the *semâ* ritual. The four circular circumambulations of the *semâ meydan* performed at the beginning of the ceremony by the shaykh and dervishes in the First Selâm, followed by the continuous whirling movements of the *semâzens* throughout the ritual, are more effectively experienced by spectators when performed in a circular-planned *semâ meydan*. This configuration provides a deeper, more uplifting spiritual experience for the audience during the *semâ* ceremony. In the 19th century, this domed circular shape was most commonly used in *semâ meydan*s. In Anatolia, other different geometric shapes of *semâ meydan*s were to be found, including 4-sided (square and rectangular), 8-sided (octogonal), 9-sided, 16-sided, and circular shapes [1].

The *semâ meydan*s studied show noticeable variations in the geometric shapes of their floor plans. These range from square, rectangular plans, as seen in the Beşiktaş and Yenikapı Semâhanes; 8-sided or octagonal plans such as those in the 17th to 18th century *semâhanes* of Galata, Çorum, and Çankırı; 9-sided as in the Gelibolu Semâhane; 16-sided as seen in the Tokat Semâhane; to circular plans, like those seen in the Bursa, Cairo, and Kütahya Semâhanes (Figure 6) [4].

4-sided Rectangular	8-sided Octogonal	9-sided	16-sided	Circular
				
Beşiktaş Yenikapı	2nd, 3rd Galata Çorum Çankırı	Gelibolu	Tokat	Bursa Cairo Kütahya

Figure 6. Geometric Shapes of Semâ Meydan Floor Plans [4]

2.3. Wooden Domes Covering the Semâ Meydan of Semâhanes

On examining the wooden domes covering these *semâhanes* with *semâ meydan*s of various geometric shapes, it was observed that some domes were concealed by a hipped roof from the exterior, making them less noticeable from the outside [11], while others openly show a visible dome externally. Except for the lath and plaster, adobe dome of the Cairo Semâhane [10], most of the domes studied are hidden beneath a tiled, hipped roof and are not noticeable from the exterior. The *semâ meydan*s examined are all covered by variants of hemispherical wooden domes. These domes are either simple and unelevated or elevated on a drum with windows to allow light into the *semâ meydan* below. It was found that the domes with drums come in two forms: octagonal or round (Figure 7) [4].

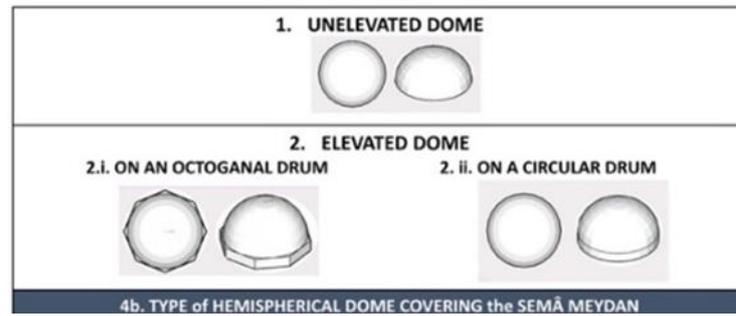


Figure 7. Type of Hemispherical Dome Covering the Semâ Meydan [4]

a) Unelevated, Hemispherical Wooden Dome:

It was determined that the *semâ meydan*s of the Beşiktaş, Çorum, Tokat, Yenikapı, 4th Galata, Bursa, Gelibolu Semâhanes were covered with wooden domes without drums. According to available data, the wooden dome of the Çorum Semâhane supported by 8 wooden columns has a diameter of approximately 5.5 meters and a height of 2.5 meters. The Tokat Semâhane supported by 16 wooden columns features a wooden dome with a diameter of about 7.5 meters and a height of 1.5 meters. The wooden dome of the Yenikapı Semâhane supported by 20 wooden columns, is part of this group and measures approximately 14 meters in diameter and 5 meters in height (Figure 8).

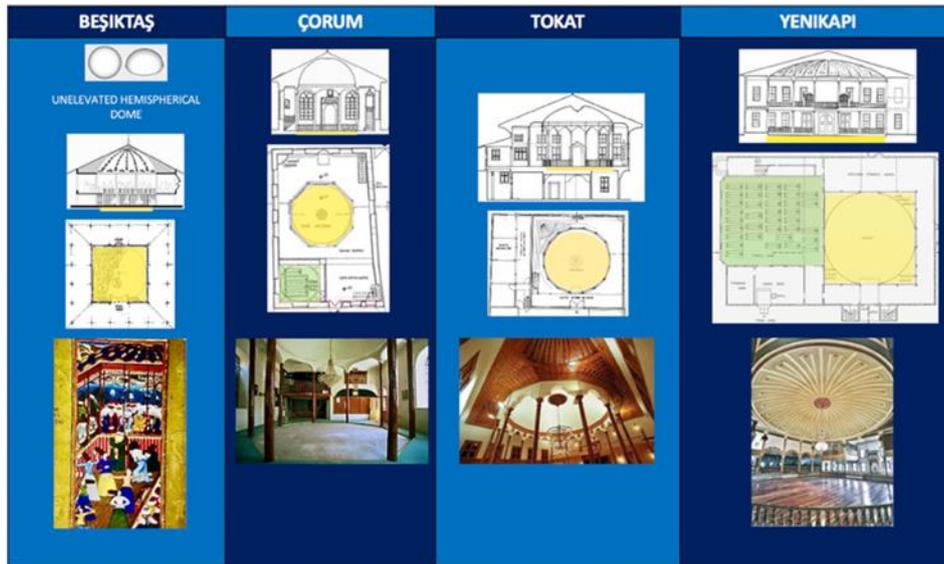


Figure 8. (a) Beşiktaş- section drawing (Proposed by Gökçen Pala Azsöz) [12], plan drawing (Proposed by Kayahan Türkuazöz) [12], Miniature of Semâ Ceremony in Beşiktaş Semâhane (circa 17th – 18th century) in the Pennsylvania Freer Gallery [5]
 (b) Çorum- Section and plan drawings [1], Photo [7]
 (c) Tokat- Section and plan drawings [1], Photo [7]
 (d) Yenikapı- Section and plan drawings [1], Photo [7]

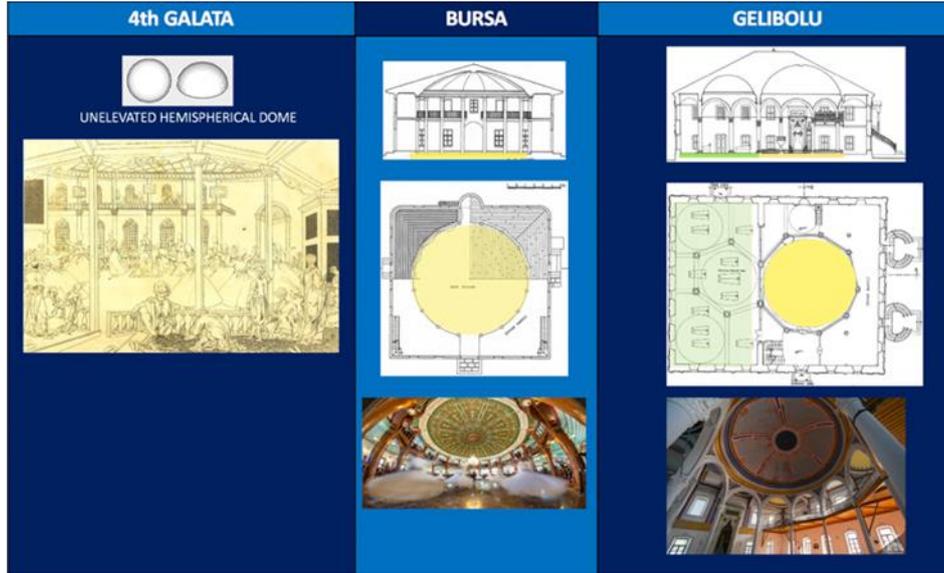


Figure 9. (a) 4 th Galata-Picture [8]
 (b) Bursa- Section and plan drawings [1], Photo [7]
 (c) Gelibolu- Section and plan drawings [1], Photo [7]

It was observed that wooden-domed *semâhanes* without drums were also present in 19th century examples. A picture drawn by the Russian painter E. Korneef (1774–1825) and engraved by E. Scotnikoff (1782–1842) [13] [8] shows that the dome of the 4th Galata Semâhane was without a drum. In addition, according to available data, the wooden dome of the Bursa Semâhane supported by 16 wooden columns had a diameter of 12.5 meters and a height of 2.5 meters. Whereas the wooden dome of the Gelibolu Semâhane supported by 9 stone columns measured 14 meters in diameter and 2 meters in height (Figure 9).

b) Elevated, Hemispherical Wooden Dome on a Drum:

The elevated hemispherical dome raised on an octagonal drum first appeared in the wooden domes of the 2nd and 3rd Galata Semâhanes, built around 1608 and after 1791. This design became popular and continued to be utilized throughout the 19th century, as seen in the Çankırı Semâhane constructed around 1850 and in Architect Kemaleddin's 1912 project design for the unbuilt Üsküdar Semâhane. According to available data, the wooden dome of Çankırı Semâhane was supported by 8 wooden columns and had a diameter of approximately 5.2 meters and a height of 2.5 meters. According to the drawings of Architect Kemaleddin, the wooden dome of the Üsküdar Semâhane supported by 8 wooden columns, was to have a diameter of 6.75 meters and a height of 5 meters (Figure 10).

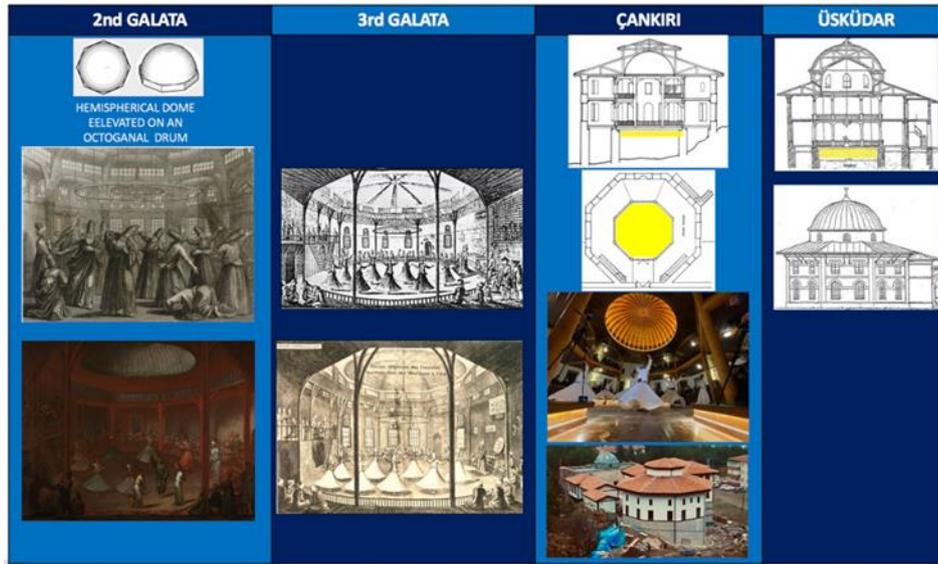


Figure 10. (a) 2 rd Galata- Engraving by Ignace Mouradja d' Ohsson, circa 1787 [6], 1700-1737 Oil painting by Jean-Baptiste van Mour [14]
 (b) 3 rd Galata-Engravings by Francis Smith, 1771 [15]
 (c) Çankırı- Section and plan drawings [1], Photos [16]
 (d) Üsküdar-Drawings by Architect Kemaleddin [1]

The most impressive hemispherical dome elevated on an external octagonal drum, was to be found in the Kütahya Semâhane, originally built in 1841–42 and rebuilt in 1887–89. Together with the elevated hemispherical dome on a cylindrical drum of the Cairo Semâhane, built around 1850, they represent the experiential climax witnessed in the *semâ* ceremony where spectators experienced the ceremony in a circular *semâ meydan* beneath a beautifully decorated wooden dome. According to available data, the wooden dome of the Kütahya Semâhane supported by 8 wooden columns has a diameter of approximately 9.75 meters and a height of 7.00 meters. In comparison, the wooden dome of the Cairo Semâhane supported by 12 wooden columns has a diameter of 10.65 meters and a height of 13 meters (Figure 11).



Figure 11. (a) Kütahya- Section and plan drawings [1] Exterior and interior photos [9]
 (b) Cairo- Section and plan drawings [17], Exterior and interior photos [10]

2.4. Materials & Techniques used in Wooden Domes Construction and Decoration of Semâhanes

The building materials and construction techniques used in these *semâhanes* directly reflect those employed in the secular architecture of their respective geographical regions [18]. For instance, the Istanbul waterfront *semâhanes* of Beşiktaş and Bahariye are architecturally similar to the *yalı* waterfront mansions of Istanbul [19]. Similarly, the Tokat Semâhane, with its lath-and-plaster construction and carved, hanging centerpiece in the *semâ meydan* dome, resembles the Tokat Latifoğlu mansion, which features an elliptical, hanging, wooden carved centerpiece [20]. The wooden domes of the *semâhanes* supported by columns within the *semâ meydan* are constructed using a wooden rib beam skeletal system (Figure 12). The wooden dome surfaces are crafted by sanding the laths and decorating them with paint. In contrast, the dome and rim surfaces constructed with lath and plaster were primarily decorated using paint (Figure 13).



Figure 12. The wooden dome restoration of Yenikapı Semâhane [21]

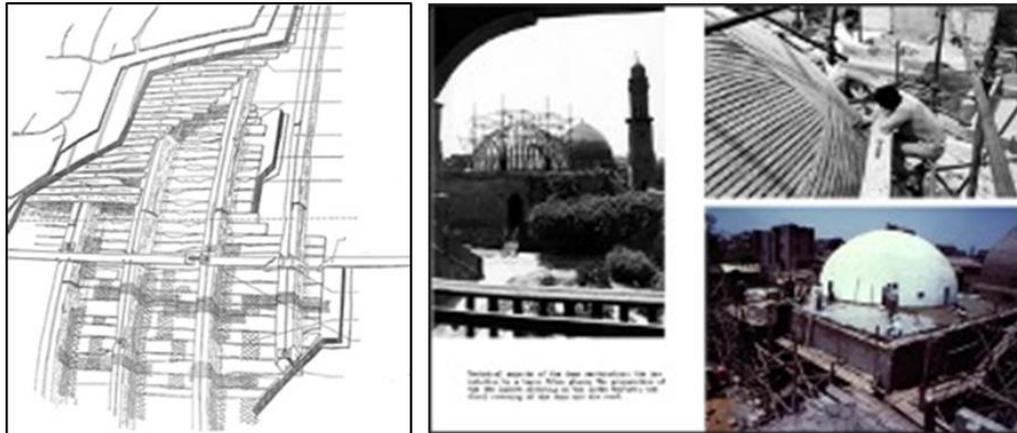


Figure 13. The wooden dome restoration of Cairo Semâhane [17]

The wooden domes examined, utilized very colorful decorative schemes to enhance the *semâ meydan* area in order to attract spectators' attention towards this central part of the *semâhane*. Some domes, like those of the Beşiktaş, Gelibolu and Yenikapı *semâ meydan*s, were divided simply into geometrical slices radiating from the center towards the rim of the dome [21][22] (Figure 14).



Figure 14. The division of the wooden dome into geometric slices starting from the centre towards the rim in Yenikapı and Gelibolu Semâhanes [7]

Whereas other domes, like those found in Cairo and Kütahya, feature large circular calligraphic compositions of Quranic verses. The Cairo dome's centerpiece contains circular calligraphic compositions with verses from two different chapters of the Quran, written on one smaller circle within a larger circle (Figure 15(a)) [17]. In Kütahya, the wooden dome's centerpiece displays the 112th chapter, Al-Ikhlâs, while the verse Al-Kursî (2:255) is inscribed in jali thuluth script around the rim of the dome (Figure 15(b)) [9].



Figure 15. (a) The circular, calligraphic compositions in centerpieces of Cairo's wooden dome [17]
(b) The calligraphic composition in the center and rim of Kütahya's wooden dome [9]

3. RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The analysis of historical data reveals that *semâhanes* with wooden domes, without drums, were notably present in various periods and locations. Specifically, the Beşiktaş Semâhane in the 17th century, the Galata Semâhane in the 18th century, and the *semâhanes* of Çorum, Tokat, Yenikapı, Bursa, and Gelibolu in the 19th century all feature this architectural element. The diameters of these wooden domes range from 5.5 to 14 meters, while their heights vary between 1.5 and 5 meters. The decorative aspects of the domes typically include wooden laths, which were either painted or plastered before being painted, reflecting the preferences of the period and the craftsmanship of local artisans. The structural support for these domes was provided by wooden columns ranging between 8 to 20 columns. This variation in the number of columns is attributed to the different plans of the *semâ meydan*s which ranged between rectangular or circular. Furthermore, it was observed that these domes were used to cover *semâ meydan*s with both single and mezzanine floors (Table 1) [4].

Table 1. Unelevated Simple Hemispherical Dome [4]

Mevlevihane	BEŞİKTAŞ	ÇORUM	TOKAT	YENIKAPI
Date	circa 1622	circa 1896	circa 1825-1850	1815-16 (Mahmud II)
Dome Diameter	??	approx. 5.5 m.	approx. 7.5 m.	approx. 14 m.
Dome Height	??	approx. 2.5 m.	approx. 1.5 m.	approx. 5 m.
Dome Surface	Lathed, painted	Lathed, plastered	Lathed, plastered	Lathed, paint + lath decor
Supporting Dome Columns	??	8	16-sided	20
Semâ Meydan Plan	Rectangular	8-sided	16-sided	Rectangular
Mezzanine Floor	None, lowered semâ meydan	None	None	On 3 sides of semâ meydan, not above mihrab

Table 1. Unelevated Simple Hemispherical Dome-continued [4]

Mevlevihane	4th GALATA	BURSA	GELIBOLU
Date	built 1791 (Selim III)	built 1820	1899-1900 (Abdülhamid II)
Dome Diameter	??	approx. 12.5 m.	approx. 14 m.
Dome Height	??	approx. 2.5 m.	approx. 2 m.
Dome Surface	Lathed, painted (?)	Lathed, paint decorated	Lathed, plastered + paint decorated
Supporting Dome Columns	??	16	9
Semâ Meydan Plan	(?) -gen	Circular	9-sided
Mezzanine Floor	On some sides of semâ meydan, not above mihrab	All around semâ meydan, not above mihrab	On 2 sides of semâ meydan, not above mihrab

This analysis reveals that wooden domes with 8-sided drums, covering octagonally-planned *semâ meydan*s, occurred in several historical examples. These include the 2nd Galata Semâhane from the 17th century, the 3rd Galata Semâhane from the 18th century and the Çankırı Semâhane from the 19th century as well as the proposed design by Architect Kemaleddin Bey for the Üsküdar Semâhane in the 20th century which was never constructed. Based on the available data, the diameters of these domes range between 5.2 to 6.75 meters, while their heights range between 2.5 to 5 meters. Note that specific measurements for the engravings of the 2nd and 3rd Galata Semâhane are not available. The decorative elements of these domes vary, reflecting either the period's preferences or the local craftsmen's choice between painting directly on wooden laths or applying plaster before painting. Each of these semâhanes features 8 wooden columns supporting the dome, in line with the octagonal plan of the *semâ meydan*. Additionally, it was noted that these domes were used to cover both single and mezzanine-floor *semâ meydan*s (Table 2) [4].

Table 2. Hemispherical Dome Elevated on an 8-sided Drum over an 8-sided Semâ Meydan [4]

Mevlevihane	2nd GALATA	3rd GALATA	ÇANKIRI	ÜSKÜDAR
Date	circa 1608	after 1765	circa 1850	1912 (Architect Kemaleddin)
Dome Diameter	??	??	approx. 5.2 m.	6.75 m.
Dome Height	??	??	approx. 2.5 m.	5 m.
Dome Surface	Lathed	Lathed, painted	??	??
Supporting Dome Columns	8	8 (?)	8	8
Semâ Meydan Plan	8-sided	8-sided (?)	8-sided	8-sided
Mezzanine Floor	None	??	On all 8 sides of semâ meydan, not above mihrab	On all 8 sides of semâ meydan, not above mihrab

The most remarkable examples of wooden dome architecture are to be found in the Kütahya and Cairo Semâhanes. These examples showcase the highest standards in terms of diameter, height, construction techniques, and decorative details of the domes. The 19th-century reconstructed wooden domes of the Kütahya Semâhane and Cairo Semâhane exhibit diameters ranging between 9.75 to 10.65 meters and heights between 7.00 to 13 meters. The dome decorations in both cases are characterized by plaster and

paint applied over wooden laths. Of these two semâhanes with circular *semâ meydans*, the Kütahya Semâhane dome is supported by 8 wooden columns, while the Cairo Semâhane dome is supported by 12 wooden columns. Both structures feature mezzanine floors that extend all around their entire *semâ meydâns* (Table 3) [4].

Table 3. Hemispherical Dome Elevated on a Drum over a Circular Semâ Meydan [4]

Mevlevihane	KÜTAHYA	CAIRO
Date	rebuilt 1887-89 (Abdülhamid II)	circa 1850
Dome Diameter	approx. 9.75 m.	approx. 10.65 m.
Dome Height	approx. 7.00 m.	approx. 13 m.
Dome Surface	Lathed, plastered+paint decorated	Lathed, plastered + paint decorated
Supporting Dome Columns	8	12
Semâ Meydan Plan	Circular	Circular
Mezzanine Floor	All around the semâ meydan	All around the semâ meydan

4. CONCLUSION

This study revealed the architectural features of *semâhanes* constructed with *semâ meydans* (whirling areas) covered by wooden domes, within the Ottoman Empire from the 17th to the 19th centuries. It is based on existing architectural examples, reconstructions, and archival resources including paintings, engravings, and drawings created by visiting artists throughout their history. In this context, two primary types of *semâhanes* with wooden domes were identified: those with a single-storey and those with a mezzanine floor. The plan of the mezzanine floor varied, encircling one, two, three or all sides of the *semâ meydan* area. The *semâ meydans* covered by wooden domes existed in various geometric shapes, including square, rectangular, 8-sided, 9-sided, 16-sided, and circular. Consequently, the number of supporting wooden columns also varied. This study distinguishes between two types of wooden domes based on their height and diameter: those without drums and those elevated on drums. Among the domes with drums, there are two subtypes: those elevated on an octagonal drum or on a circular drum. In terms of materials, construction techniques and decorations, it was found that the wooden domes were either covered with wooden laths and plaster with paint or solely wooden laths and paint. The wooden dome decorations commonly featured geometric slices or various motifs and calligraphic ornamentations. It is anticipated that this study, focusing on a relatively limited number of wooden-domed *semâhanes*—the core of the *mevlevihanes*—will make a significant contribution to the existing literature on tekke architecture.

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