

## Analysis Of The Situation Of Malek Mosque In Kerman And The Necessity Of Restoration Of This Seljuq Building<sup>1</sup>

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Received- Accepted: 07.02.2019-03.03.2019

Research Article

### Abstract

The Seljuq government of Kerman (433-583 A.H. / 1042-1188 A.D.) is of the governments less studied and researched by Iranian researchers and scholars and this can be found in a small reflection on Persian studies on this dynasty. While the cultural and civil conditions of this governments and the elements existing in this culture convince the researcher to take a step, beyond a simple identification and expression of political history, to analyze and explain how these cultural elements entered and what the reasons were and how can the Seljuq architecture be exalted in Kerman. Undoubtedly, one of the main cultural and developmental symbols of the Seljuk government of Kerman is the Turānshah Mosque (the Malek Mosque). Therefore, in the present study, it is tried to firstly explain how the Seljuq government was formed in Kerman and at the second and most important stage, to explain how Malek Mosque was constructed and how its situation is. Therefore, the main questions are: how is the current situation of Malek Mosque? And how does new urbanism affect its physical space? The results of the present study shows that this mosque has been constructed in the Seljuq era and like other architectural monuments of the Seljuq era, it has a lot of strength and beauties. In spite of its many beauties, today, the building is less paid attention and needs to be maintained better and restoration of it seems essential.

**Keywords:** Kerman, Seljuq, Malek mosque, Urbanism, Architecture, Restoration

## Kerman'daki Malik Camii'nin Durumunun Analizi ve Selçuklu Mimarisinin Restorasyonunun Gerekliği

### Öz

Kirman'daki Selçuklu Devleti (433-583), İranlı araştırmacı ve bilim insanları tarafından üzerinde az çalışılan ve araştırılan hükümetlerdendir. Bu, bu hanedanlık üzerine yapılan Farsça çalışmaların küçük bir yansımasıyla bulunabilir. Bu hükümetlerin kültürel ve medeni koşulları ve bu kültürde var olan unsurlar, araştırmacıyı, siyasi tarihin basit bir tanımlaması ve ifadesinin ötesinde, kültürel unsurların nasıl girdiğini, nedenlerini, nasıl olduğunu ve Selçuklu mimarisinin Kirman'da nasıl yüceltilebileceğini analiz etmek ve açıklamak için adım atmaya ikna eder. Şüphesiz, Kirman Selçuklu hükümetinin temel kültürel ve gelişim sembollerinden biri de Turanşah Camii'dir (Melek Camii). Bu sebeple, bu çalışmada, ilk olarak Selçuklu hükümetinin Kirman'da nasıl kurulduğu ve ikinci ve en önemli aşamada Melek Camii'nin nasıl inşa edildiği ve durumunun nasıl olduğu açıklanmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu nedenle, asıl sorular: Melek Camii'nin şu anki durumu nasıl? Bu yüzden, asıl sorular: Melek Camii'nin şu anki durumu nasıl? Ve yeni şehircilik fiziksel alanını nasıl etkiler? Bu çalışmanın sonuçları, bu caminin Selçuklular döneminde inşa edildiğini ve Selçuklular dönemindeki diğer mimari anıtlar gibi, çok güçlü ve güzel olduğunu göstermiştir. Birçok güzelliğine rağmen, bugün, binaya daha az dikkat edilmekte ve daha iyi muhafaza edilmesi ve restorasyonu gerekli gözükmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kirman, Selçuklu, Melek Camii, Şehircilik, Mimari, Restorasyon

<sup>1</sup>This article is analyzed by three reviewers and it is screened for the resemblance rate by the editor. (Bu makale üç hakem tarafından incelenmiş ve editör tarafından benzerlik oranı taramasından geçirilmiştir)

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## **Introduction**

The Seljuq Dynasty was a branch of the Turkmen which came into Transoxiana and then Khorasan at the end of the fourth and early of the fifth centuries A.H. In the middle of the fifth century, they dominated all the parts of Iran and created a powerful state. The state was founded under the name of the Great Seljuq with the reign of Sultan Tughril I in the first half of the fifth century and reached its peak power with the reign of the sultans such as Alp Arslan and Malek Shah. Due to the tribal structure of the Great Seljuq Dynasty, even when this government had its highest authority, some dynasty separated from the central government and created new governments in Persian Iraq, Kerman, Levant and Rome. separated from the central government and created new governments in Persian Iraq, Kerman, Levant and Rome. The Seljuq government in Kerman was one of these groups that ruled over the land of Kerman and its surrounding territories from 433 to 583 A.H. and eventually destroyed by the Turkmen of Oghuz. The founder of this government was Qavard ibn Chaghri Beg Ben ibn Mikail ibn Seljuq, who became ruler of Kerman in 433 AH thanks to his uncle named Tughril and conquered the surrounding areas and the rule continued in his family. After Qavard, thirteen of his descendants ruled in Kerman and created a semi-autonomous government. But after the death of one of Qavard's descendants named Tughril Shah in 561 A.H., successful wars between the claimants of power destroyed Kerman and eventually, the government ended by the attack of Malek Dinar Oghuz.

Although the early historians such as Afzal al-Din Abu Hamed Kermani (6th century A.H.), in his books such as "Badaye al-Azman fi Vaghaye Kerman" (1947) and "Aghd al-ola lelmoghofe al-A'ala" (1974) and Muhammad ibn Ibrahim, his book entitled "Seljuq Dynasty and Oghuz in Kerman" (1994), have expressed the political history of Kerman in the Seljuq era, there is little information about the situation of the Seljuq architecture and the buildings built by them in Kerman. A few books and articles have been written on the Seljuq Dynasty in Kerman in the contemporary era and the authors of them have tried more to explain the political history of this government and there is a little information on the architecture related to this dynasty. Some of these works are: 1- the book "The history of the Seljuq Dynasty in Kerman" written in 2008 by Mohsen Morsalpour and published by Kermanshenasi Center Press; 2- The article "An Analysis of the Position of the Ministry of Public Administration in the Seljuq Dynasty in Kerman", written by Jamshid Rosta and Mahdieh Mahmoud Abadi, and published in the Journal of the Department of History of Tehran University (Historical Studies, Spring and Summer 2013), Issue 5, No.1

Although the monuments provide a little information about the Seljuq architecture in Kerman, including the Malek mosque, it is a pleasure to see that some architectural books contain valuable information about the monuments of the Seljuq dynasty. Two of these books are "Iranian Islamic Architecture during the Seljuq Period" written by GholamAli Hatam (2000) and "History of Iranian Art and Architecture in the Islamic Period" by Mohammad Yousef Kiani (2009). Also, it should be noted that although the writers of these two valuable books have presented the monuments remained from various branches of the Seljuq governments and

some of the Seljuq governments in Kerman, such as Khaje Atabak Tomb, unfortunately, they have avoided to address the Malek mosque and its current situation. In addition to these two books, recently, an article entitled “A Study of the Stucco of the Mihrab in the Seljuq period from the perspective of Islamic Art (case study: Malek Mosque in Kerman)” by Yadollah Heidari Babakmal and his colleagues and published in the Journal of History of Islam studies, 23rd issue (winter; 2014, pp. 149-177). But the current situation of Malek Mosque was not mentioned in this valuable article. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out the present research on the current situation of this building which is abandoned in one of the old neighborhoods of Kerman. It is hoped that the present study can take a step towards the recognition of this monument.

### **Method**

In terms of objective, the present study is a basic research and in terms of nature and method, it is an analytical research. The data and information required were extracted from the early references and new researches and in order to achieve scientific results, qualitative analysis was carried out. Therefore, although the present study was conducted by library method, field study was performed and in addition to investigation of the current situation of one of the Seljuq monument in Kerman, it was photographed. In other words. The data was collected by the both library studies (documents and approved plans) and field studies (objective observation).

### **Brief introduction of the Seljuq government of Kerman**

The Seljuq Turkmen conquered Khorasan in 431 A.H. (1040 A.D.) after defeating the soldiers of Sultan Masoud Ghaznavid and began their journey to conquer the areas of Iran. Tughril ibn Mikail, who was at the head of the Seljuq, decided to divide the conquered points and entrust the conquest of the new points to his brothers and nephews so that he could firstly consolidate his dominance over the conquered points, and secondly, unconquered areas were quickly conquered. That is why “conquered areas were divided and each of the dignitaries was nominated for a part of areas. Chaghari Bek, who was the eldest brother, chose Merv as his capital and intended more to Khorasan and Mussa Yabqu was nominated for Bost, Herat and Sistan and its surroundings if he could conquer them and Qavard, who was the son of Mahin Chaghari Bek, was nominated for Tabasin and Kerman...” (Ravandi, 1984: p. 104.).

In this way, the conquest of Kerman and its surrounding areas was entrusted to Qavard ibn Chaghari Beg; but, there are different opinions about the arrival time of Qavard in Kerman and the formation of the Seljuq government in Kerman. According to some references, “Malek Qavard Seljuq set off to conquer Kerman in 433 A.H. (1042 A.D. by the order of his uncle, Tughril Beg” (Mirkhand, 1996: Vol.4, p. 698.). According to some other references, Malek Qavard set off to conquer Kerman in 442 A.H. (1050-51 A.D.) (Vaziri, 1991: p. 1, p. 343.) According to some historians such as Bondari, Malek Qavard set off to conquer Kerman in 447 A.H. (1055-56 A.D.) (Bondari Isfahani, 1976: p. 37). Although these views are very contradictory, but due to the fact that Malek Qavard died in 465 A.H. and the term of his rule was 32 years old, it seems that the first view, i.e. 433 A.H. (1042 A.D.) is closer to the reality (Helmi, 2004: p. 53.).

The question now arises: which state did dominate Kerman when Qavard invaded it? In order to answer this question, it should be stated that with the arrival of the Qavard in Kerman, it was governed by a branch of Dailamites, under the authority of Abu Kalijar. This king of Dailamites, whose center of government was in Shiraz, chose a man from Daylam, who was called "Bahram ibn Lashkarestan" as a ruler of Kerman (Kermani, 1947: p. 3.). With the presence of the Turkmen, who were in the service of Qavard, Bahram, the deputy of the Abu Kalijar, decided to make peace with Qavard and surrendered the government of Kerman to Qavard by giving poison to Abu Kalijar Deylami (Hafez Abro, 1947: p. 4.).

Qavard advanced to the South and conquered Kerman and Tabas Mountains. Tabas, an important fortress and commercial center, was on the way along the great salt desert and connected Khorasan to Kerman (Boyle, 2001; Vol.5, p. 55.). But with the defeat of Abu Kalijar, Kerman was not dominated by Qavard, because another tribe named "Kafes"<sup>4</sup> also dominated some parts of Kerman. According to some references, this tribe was a vicious tribe and provided a lot of troubles for Qavard, but Malek Qavard finally killed and looted the tribe by employing spies among them (Vaziri, 1991: 1, 346-347, Kermani, 1947: pp. 8-9.).

After overcoming the Dailamites and the Kafes and full dominance of Kerman, set off to conquer Oman and in this case, he asked the governor of Hurmoz to help him and provide the equipment for this trip but the governor of Oman- who was a man named Shahriyar ibn Tafil - was surrendered without resistance, and in that land, the sermon and coin were called Malek Qavard (Khabisy, 1993: p. 339.). After conquering Oman, the conquest of Kerman ended and Qavard seized the whole territory. Then, he sent his son "Amiranshah" to Sistan. Amiranshah fought Sajzian for almost six months (Kermani, 1947: p. 10.). But, he could not apparently conquer Sistan, because we would not later see Sistan in the hands of the Seljuq (Morsalpour, 2008, p.57).

One of the important political events in the Seljuq rule of Kerman is its relations with the Great Seljuq dynasty. According to the tribal structure of the Seljuq dynasty, the greatest person of the tribe succeed. So, Qavard, the eldest son of Chaqri Beg, considered himself worthy of succession (Bosworth, 2001, p.89). But the basic role of Alp Arslan, the younger brother of Qavard, in the early Seljuqs' conquests, had made him more acceptable to Tughril's succession. Although Qavard did not protest to the election of Alp Arslan for the monarchy at the beginning, but after the death of Tughril and on the throne of Alp Arslan, Qavard opposed Alp Arslan and invaded Fars and conquered it (Morsalpour, 2008, p.59). Alp Arslan, who could not do anything against this action, immediately fought against Kerman in 456 A.H. (1064 A.D.) He surrounded Kerman and Qavard didn't have the power to deal with his brother and surrendered to him and gave the rule of Fars to Alp Arslan (Hosseini,

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<sup>4</sup> Kafes (Kofej): the tribes that apparently resided in Jiroft and Bal Barez areas, and these were their properties. (Khabisy, p. 330). Kafes is the name of a mountain in Kerman, near the borders of Balochistan, the Kafes tribe, or mountainous nomadic tribes lived in the area. In this region of Kerman, two ancient tribes "Kuchma" and "Baloch" inhabit (Safi Nezhad, p. 107).

2003, p.68) and only the areas of Tarom and Forg<sup>5</sup> of the Fars Block became of Kerman (Vaziri, 1991, Vol.1, p.348-349).

With the throne of Malek Shah in 465 A.H. (1073 A.D.) Qavard decided to conquer the reign of Iraq and incite the rulers to conquer Ray and to dominate other lands, and eventually he became involved with Malek Shah. In this fight, in spite of the desire of the Malek Shah's army to Qavard, with Khaje Nezam al-Molk's tact, Qavard failed and escaped. He was arrested and killed. (Ravandi, p. 127; Ibn Athir, Vol.17, p. 54; Bondari, p. 156; Shabankarehei, 1984, p. 102; Khandmir, Vol.2; p. 537). But Malek Shah left the rule of Kerman in the hands of his children. Kerman had greatly advanced during the reign of Qavard's children and descendants and the cities such as Kerman, Bardsir and Jiroft were very active in terms of commerce. (Boyle, 2001, p.61)

### **Malek (Imam) mosque of Kerman and its current situation**

Malek mosque, now known as the Imam Mosque, is one of the architectural works of Kerman which is related to the Seljuq era. There is no doubt that the mosque was built or reconstructed in the Seljuq era<sup>6</sup>. Because in the first sources of Seljuq and Qara Khitai, something was stated about the mosque but there are different opinions about the exact time of construction or rebuild of this mosque or in other word, there are different opinions about the king who built it. Although E'temad al-Saltaneh, in his book "Mera'at al-Baladan", and Vaziri, in his book "History of Kerman", attributed Malek Mosque to the first Seljuq Sultan of Kerman, e.i. Qavar ibn Chaqari Beg, there is no doubt that these two great historians have mistaken. Because the author of the book "Samt al-a'ala lel-Hazrat al-Olia" attributed the construction of this beautiful building to Malek Turanshah of Seljuk, and wrote:

*"Malek Qavard ibn Chagari Beg Davood ibn Mikail conquered Kerman, Shiraz and Oman and ruled them, after him, his son, Sultan shah, became the ruler and ruled for 10 years. After he died, his brother Toran shah became the ruler. He was a benefactor man and made some buildings in Kerman and Toranshahi Caravanserai for the success of goodness and dignity and Malek Mosque is one of the buildings built by him...."* (Naser al-Din Monshi Kermani, 1983, p. 17.)

<sup>5</sup> Forg (Porg or Forj): it is of the 7 blocks of Fars. It is located in the East Darabgard, "the city is not big but it has a Jama mosque and Bathroom that is unique in this land. There is a hill in it that a fort built on it and also a river flows in it. Tarom: located on the border of Kerman. Its Jama mosque was built far from its market. A river flows in it. Many gardens, palm trees and honey can be found in it" (Moghadas, Ahsan al-Taqasim fi Marafat al-Aqalim; Vol. 2, p. 639).

<sup>6</sup> Some believe that the Seljuqs did not build a mosque in this place; Turan Shah has developed the works of a religious monument which was in this place and dating back to the early Islamic centuries. According to the researchers, before the Malek mosque was built, there was another mosque in this place which was built with a cob façade and a small shabistan. In addition, there was a mihrab on the qibla side which dates back to the second and third centuries. The mosque has been possibly developed by Buyid dynasty. The Seljuqs destroyed the mosque for further harmony with the western side, but did not destroy the mihrab. They built shabistan at two floors and used the upper floor in summer and used the lower floor in winter and sometimes used the lower floor for men and the upper one for women or vice versa (For more information, see: Yadollah Heydari Babakamal et al., "A Study of the Stucco of the Mihrab in the Seljuk period from the perspective of Islamic Art (case study: Malek Mosque in Kerman)", Journal of History of Islam studies (winter; 2014, pp. 156-157).

The author of the book “Seljuq and Oghuz in Kerman”, narrates a story about how this building was built at the time of Seljuq Toran shah, under the title of the building of the Malek Mosque, as follows: “. . . one of the story about the justice of this righteous king is that he liked mansion infinitely and professional guilds always worked in his mansion and he didn’t avoid to speak with professionals. In 478 A.H. (1085 A.D.) a carpenter worked in the town and had a student who was similar to the children of Turkmen. Malek asks a carpenter whether this child is of Turkmen or not. The carpenter said: This is the question that God asks you! The mother of this boy says that this boy was born from her. A Turkish man resides in my house as a descendant, perhaps the answer should be given to you. At that time, all the military officers lived in town and Rabaz (peripheral areas) had not been created, what the carpenter said, made Malek Turan shah anxious and so, he ordered that the engineers and masters of the building to be presented and ordered them to build his mansion in Rabaz and then, he ordered to build Jama mosque, school, khanqah, hospital, bathroom and many endowed buildings besides its mansion and then he ordered all the authorities of the state to live in Rabaz. Since the conversation between Malek and carpenter was on Tuesday and the buildings were constructed on the same day, the neighborhood was known as the “Tuesday neighborhood” and now, although it was destroyed, it is known with the same name and because of his justice, the Jama Mosque is still called as “Malek Mosque” after 150 years. . .” (Muhammad ibn Ibrahim, 1963: pp. 26-28.)

Thus, it can be found that this building was constructed during the Seljuq period and by Malek Turan shah and so, it is known as Malek Mosque or Turan shah Jama Mosque. Today, this mosque is located in the old texture of Kerman Town, on Imam Khomeini Street, in the southern part of Kerman Historical Market. For this reason, it is known as Imam Mosque (Figure1).



Figure 1. A view of Malek Mosque and its location beside Imam Khomeini St. (Derived from: [www.payamena.ir](http://www.payamena.ir))

Malek Turan shah’s Tomb was located near the Malek Mosque and the neighborhood “Shah Adel” (Adelshah), still known as the same name, is one of his memorials. There were four bathrooms around the

mosque that all of them, except for Sheikh al-Islam bathroom, were destroyed. About 40 years ago, there was a fountain with the depth of 4 meters in the middle of the mosque and “Masurah Water” passed through it and there was Lavabo but, unfortunately, the acceleration of urbanization in recent decades has changed the historical city of Kerman and in addition to changes in inner Sahn of the Malek mosque, it has resulted in the separation between the mosque and its surrounding areas from the main market (Heidari Babakamal, 2014, pp. 153-157). In the past, there was a strong link between the main market of the city and the Malek mosque but today, constructing long and wide streets and building personal housings and stores have led to the termination of the link. Passing through Imam Khomeini Street, it can be found that this street precisely passes across the old market of the city and the Malek Mosque and separates the link between the old townships and neighborhoods (This is well visible in the following pictures. The 9th Alley of Imam Khomeini Street, in fact, shows the continuation of the main market of the city that the street cut off its connection with the mosque) (Figures 2 and 3)



Figure 2: A view of entrance to the Ninth Alley of Imam Khomeini Street (Photo: Author)



Picture 3: A view of entrance to the Ninth Alley of Imam Khomeini Street, which is actually one of the entrances to the old market of the town (Photo: Author)

Malek mosque is a four-Iwan mosque and one of the largest mosques in Kerman. There are the brick tower on the northeastern side and three Mihrabs with Stucco and one of them is now located on the roof of the Imam Hassan Shabistan due to the changes made in this building. The width of Imam Mosque is more than 107 m and 4 Shabistans were built on its four sides. Its most famous Shabistan is Imam Hassan Shabistan. In the western part, there is a large Iwan coated by beautifully colored tiles. The Iwans of the mosques can be seen on the plan (Figure4).

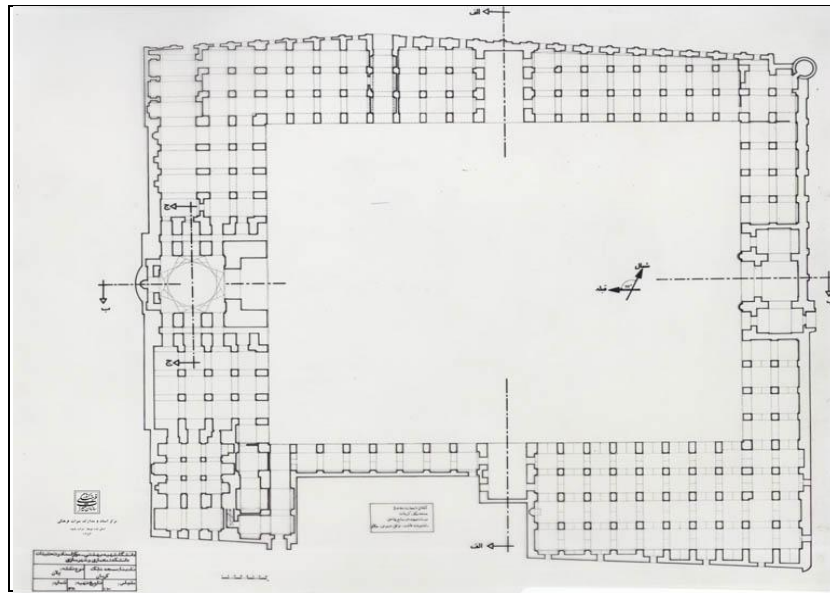


Figure 4. The plan of the Malek mosque of Kerman and the location of its Iwans (derived from [www.payamema.ir](http://www.payamema.ir))

By entering the main Sahn of the mosque, the magnificence and beauty of this Seljuq building can be seen. But with a careful look at the details of the building, one can find that unfortunately, erosion, destructions and many cracks have been made in different parts of this building. The cracks showed the complicated situation of the building which paid less attention. Undoubtedly, one of the most beautiful parts of this mosque are its magnificent and tall Iwans. For example, the big Qibla Iwan, located on the western side, is one of the most important parts remained from the Seljuq period and now it is the largest Iwan of the mosque. This Iwan represents the art of Iranian-Islamic architecture and elegant and fine bricks, which were common in the Seljuq period, were used in most of its facades, front part of the vaults and the cover of dome (Ibid, pp. 154-158.). Although this Iwan was repaired in 1285 A.H. (1868 A.D.) by Morteza Gholi Khan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vakil al-Malek<sup>7</sup>, today, it has been damaged seriously due to lack of maintain and exposure to natural factors such as wind and rain over time and required to be maintained further and principally restored. Following pictures, captured by the author, represent the sensitive and complicated situation of this building (figure5).

<sup>7</sup> The repairs ordered by Shahab al-Dawlah, ruler of Kerman during 1285 and 1286 A.H., can be mentioned as the repairs of this mosque (ref. Heidari Babakamal, 2014: 154).





Figure 5. A view of a huge gaps created in the buildings (Photo: Author)

In addition to the Iwans, other parts of the building also have sensitive and complicated situation and must be restored principally. Some of these parts are the tiles of the interior Sahn of the mosque, Moqamas and stuccoes as well as luscious bricks of the Minarets (Figures 6, 7 and 8).



Figure 6. A view of a destruction of the tiles of the interior Sahn of the mosque (Photo: Author)



Figure 7. An overview of the great gaps created in the beautiful Moqamas of the mosque and above the Mihrab (Photo: Author)

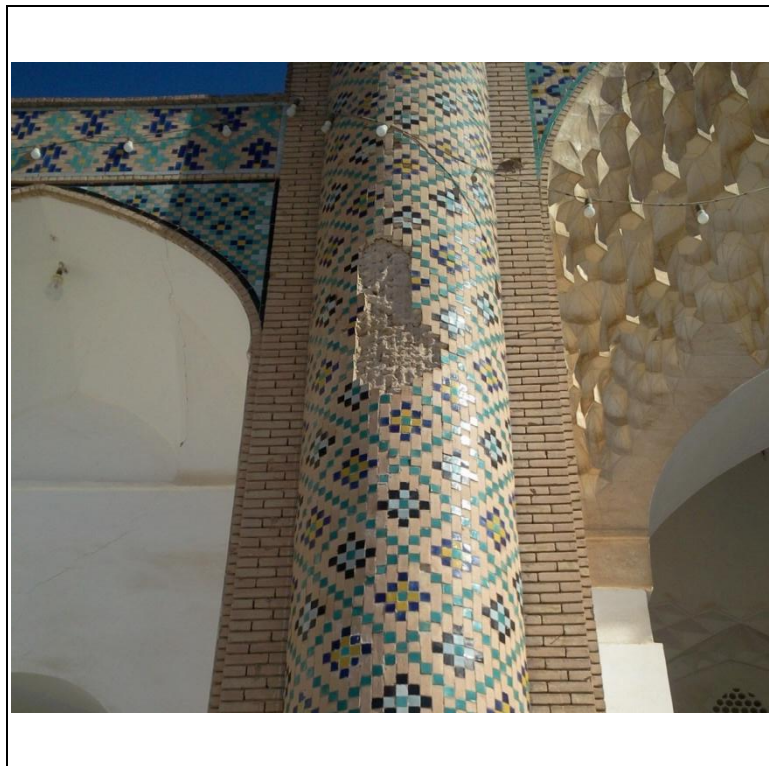


Figure 8. A view of a destruction of the beautiful bricks (Photo: Author)

## Conclusion

The present study aimed to firstly introduce the rule of Seljuq of Kerman and in the second and most important step, to introduce one of the monuments of the Seljuq Dynasty in Kerman in order to represent its current situation. The results of the present study are as follows:

1. The Seljuq of Kerman is a government that has been less favored by Iranian scholars and researchers while various aspects of political, social, and especially cultural and civil development of this government can provide a good opportunity to research and write valuable works. It is hoped that the necessary preparations for this important event will be made as soon as possible.
2. The buildings such as Turan shah Jama Mosque (Malek Mosque), Khaje Atabak Tomb, etc. are related to the Seljuq dynasty of Kerman. Although each of them has a lot of beauties, they are now less paid attention and neglected. Among these buildings, Malek Mosque has complicated situation while the most beautiful brick ornaments, stuccoes, geometric and plant designs, beautiful inscriptions and many other finely decorated items can be seen in it.
3. During the Seljuq period, Iranian art took a great step and the history of Iranian art spent one of its most brilliant periods in this era. At this time, the cities such as Kerman, Isfahan, Merv, Neyshabur, Herat and Ray, were the center of the arts and crafts community. The Seljuqs achieved the elements in architecture that allowed them to build a large mosque with a central courtyard and four Iwans and squared hall with dome. This style of building is the basis of the religious architecture, caravanserai and construction of school in Iran. At this time, the mosque possessed these features in its developed Iranian form. These designs can be seen in Turan shah Jama Mosque (Malek) in Kerman, Isfahan Jama Mosque, Zavvareh Jama Mosque located near Ardestan, Ardestan Jama Mosque, Qazvin Mosque and Golpayegan Jama Mosque. Each of these mosques has its own special beauties and it is suggested that the architectural details of these mosques and their current situations will be reviewed and analyzed by the Iranian students, researchers and scholars. It is hoped that present study could make clear the situation of this beautiful monument of the Seljuq period and provide an introduction for the officials and historians to pay attention to this building and so on.

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