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## Investigating Effective Factors on Formation, Development, and Collapse of Ojan Islamic city, according to Comparative Studies on Sources and Archaeological Excavations

Rahim Velayati\*

Homayon Rezvan\*\*

Ghader Ebrahimi\*\*\*

### Abstract

Present paper attempts to study, comparatively, urban spaces and archaeological findings of Ojan and Soltanieh in details. Early construction of Ojan dated to 5-6 AH centuries coinciding to Seljuqs, later it was an administration center of Ilkhanids during 7-8 AH centuries and flourished until late Safavid period. Firstly, Arqun (683-690 AH) founded Soltanieh, where Soltan Mohammad Khoda Bandeh (703-716 AH) developed and changed it to Ilkhanid capital. Ancient Ojan is among significant Ilkhanid urban centers (summer residence) that located at south of modern Bostan Abad, Eastern Azerbaijan, and reconstructed during Kazan Khan Ilkhanid ruler. Matrakçı Nasuh's miniature of Ojan from Süleymannâme (Book of Suleiman) that illustrate expedition of Suleyman the magnificent from Istanbul to western Iran is among evidences. Present paper attempts to compare urban spaces of Ojan and Soltanieh according to archaeological findings, reasons of construction of Soltanieh relying on preplanning, and documentation of urbanization during Ilkhanid period. the research methodologically based on bibliographic studies and field works. it increases our understanding toward social-political history of urban spaces, architecture, and cultural elements of Ojan and Soltanieh.

### Keywords

Ojan, Soltanieh, Seljuq, Ilkhanid, architecture.

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\*. Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Humanities, Corresponding author. University of Tehran. velayati@ut.ac.ir.

\*\* . Faculty of Humanities, University of Tehran, homayonrezvan@yahoo.com .

\*\*\*. Ph. D. Candidate in Archaeology, Department of Archaeology and History, Mohaghegh Ardabili University, ebrahimiqader@gmail.com .

## Introduction

Different factors involve and play significant role in formation of urban centers. Emergence and development of Iranian cities followed geographical, social, religious, defensive, administrative, and commercial conditions. Commercial routes and passages were effective and affected factors in formation of urbanization. Investigating such factors is effective in responding to location and reasons of emergence of a given city. Road networks were achievement of development during time, whereas dominated by various political, religious, security, and cultural elements. Reasons of abandonment and collapse of urban centers vary according to strategic and geographical position and function that divide to two natural and human factors. Generally, effective natural factors in abandonment of urban centers include earthquake, shift of rivers' bed, landslide, drought, and lack of natural defensive barriers. Human factors could accelerate abandonment of an urban center that include remoteness from main routes or even side roads, warfare, disease, administrative policy, lack of enclosures and secure defensive ramparts. Cheap and low quality materials are among other factors that cause collapse of a city. Every urban center have especial function that suggests foundation of the area accordingly; among them are mining cities, ports, industrial cities, administrative-political cities, tourism cities, and etcetera. Understanding factors and elements of formation and development of cities are among the most important discussions since earlier times that attracted scholarships and resulted to different theories and models to analyze urbanization.

## History of research

One should notify that archaeological researches in Azerbaijan initiated by Jacques De Morgan about 1311-1312, when he entered to Azerbaijan from north and Lahijan, and surveyed to Urmia Lake (Demorgan, 1905: 267-305). Then various German (Kroll, 1984: 12-14), American (Dyson et al.), and Iranian expeditions studied the region, however,

they focused on pre Islamic periods of the region (Masoomi 1383: 126). Kambakhsh Fard surveyed regions of Eastern Azerbaijan including Aras River, Arasbaran, Azar Shahr, Bonab, Maragheh, Sarab, Marand and different regions of Tabriz during 3 seasons at 1344-1346; they resulted to documenting regional bridges, caves, ancient mounds, cemeteries, inscriptions (Kambakhsh Fard 1380: 261). Studies on urbanization during Islamic period at Azerbaijan limited to excavations and surveys at Soltanieh (Kabiri and Tohidi 1365), scarce excavations at observatory of Maragheh (Varjavand 1366), and excavations at Arg-i-Alishah (Sarfaraz 1361). Bostan Abad has had the least share of surveys and excavations. There was only an article that involved in locating Ojan by Rahim Hoveida at Journal of Historic Surveys, at 1354, that introduced few districts of the city (Hoveida 1354). In this regard, the authors surveyed the region at 4 seasons during 1385, 1392, 1393, and 1395 that aimed to recognize Ojan; what happened during second season. Historic geographical sources imply a regional city during Islamic period. It was only in 1395 that the city archaeologically excavated and demarcated by the authors; present paper presents results of the fieldwork.

## Features of cities during Islamic period

Among features of Islamic urban centers were economic, social, military, and especially religious developments that played effective roles in formation and developments of urban centers even in earlier times. Islamic urbanization related to stability of government too, whereas emergence, development, and collapse of a city related to political circumstances. General studies on maps of Islamic cities indicate that many cities followed similar method and style of urbanization that shows probable common designer and architecture. Scholars also believe that designers and architectures planed maps before construction of buildings and constructed buildings and structures accordingly. In a miniature painting, dated to Babur reign, he points to a map in the hand of a man that designed it (Kiani

1365: 205). Islamic architectural thought in Islamic countries characteristically comprehended principles and generalities of civil programs then involved in details (Othman 1376: 27). In planning cities, there was emphasis on Jami and administrative buildings, where located public buildings in city center for public access. Tendency to privacy and peace in residential areas caused Iranian Islamic cities divide to two public and private parts, similar to pre Islamic urbanization. Bazar complex and extensions was pulses of urban life, where presented public and social activities. Residential area was private part of the city, where rest and peace dominated living atmosphere (Kheir Abadi 1376: 44). One can study urbanization according to different point of view. Scholar such as economists, politicians, historians, geographers, and philosophers investigate the subject from their point of view. There is not certain answer to relations between Islamic view and urbanization and their mutual effect. There are variations in effects on urban spaces and structural characteristics. According to Stern, urban life style followed earlier criteria after Islamic conquests, and it became Islamic in forms and generalities (Razavi 1387: 105-112). Cities are the most genuine center of civilization and cultural treasures, what should be recognized to make possibility to investigate evolutionary history of human life. Therefore, investigating cities that remained from earlier times play significant role in understanding political, social, administrative, economic, and cultural structures of societies that created them (Karimian 1384: 111-121). Papoli Yazdi, quoting from Hufer, says that city is relation among six aspects: economic structure (variation of activity), social structure (social classes), body structure (public buildings), geographical position, law position, and political life (Papoli Yazdi and Rajabi Sanajerdi 1387: 50). Main factors in emergence and development of urban settlements through Iranian history that undoubtedly meant the phenomenon summarized as

Culture: people's worldview organized according to culture that deeply effected on formation of living

centers such as urban centers (Yusefi Far 1385: 5). Different cultures create different economic systems, in other words, one could say that culture constructs economy, while economy itself creates technology, and technology indicates structure of the society (Ziary 1382: 97, 100, 101). Islamic cultural effects on urban formation and organization resulted from structures including Jami, Bazar, local mosques, madrasa, khanqahs, tombs, hoseiniehs and Tekiehs, sects, endowments, and encouraging people for charity (Soltanzadeh 1372: 42).

- Religion: religion and beliefs in Iran dominated various aspects of urban lives, social-political organization, and formation of several cities of Iran; among them holy Mashad (Kheir Abadi 1376: 61).
- Economy: economy forms interrelations of a society that administrate distribution of wealth, commodity circulation, consumption, and organizing relations with urban centers (Yusefi Far 1385: 5). Production and commercial urban centers are cities that consume large amount of labors in commerce and artisanship (Soltanzadeh 1365: 55).
- Environment: it is effective in defining environmental relations, regarding factors such as climate, smoothness and roughness, and other environmental elements. The effects on urbanization reveal heterogeneities in social-economic development of urban relations (Ibid: 5).
- Policy and administration: urbanization and locating administration and political buildings was by order of kings and rulers, where aimed to rule policy and administration. Therefore, urbanization was a political task that specialized to great rulers (Soltanzadeh 1365: 40-41).

### Geography of research

Bostan Abad as one of sixteen towns of eastern Azerbaijan at northwestern Iran covers about 2795 Km<sup>2</sup> area, 45 km away from Tabriz, located at 47-46 30 longitude and 38 to 37.3 latitude. The town limits northwardly to Haris, northwardly to Hashtrud, eastwardly to Mianeh and Sarab, and westwardly to Tabriz.

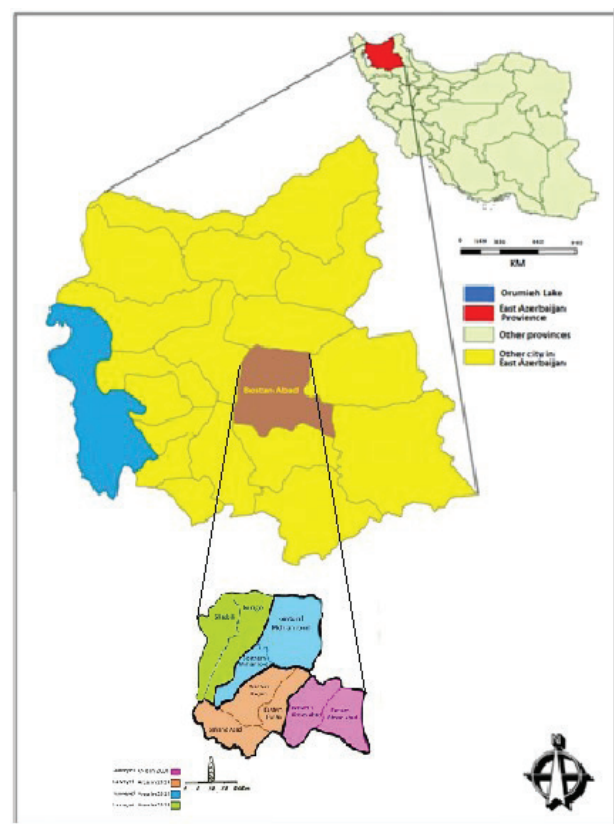
Bostan Abad is a mountainous region that southwardly covered by snow and northwardly is along with Bozqush Mountains, and westwardly along with Murd Dagħ in 2960 m height, whereas so-called Shebli għat is along with Murd dagħ and Takalti. Highest part of the region locates at west. Sahand summit, so-called Ghuch Goli Dagħ, is 3400 m high and eastern south mounds with 1750 m height are highest and lowest parts of the region. The most important flowing rivers of the region are Qaranquchai, Chinibolagħchai, and Ajichai (Kishavarz 1377: 17). Sahand foothills are residence of nomads, because of rich pastures. The most common business and profession of local people are farming, herding, apiculture, and handicrafts including carpets, rugs, and Jajim. Regional main route is Tabriz-Tehran highway that passes from the middle of the basin from east to west (Map 1).

Azerbaijan is among significant regions in archaeological studies of Iran, because of geographic unique location at commercial road of Caucasias, Turkey, Europe, and Far East. By emerging Ilkhanids, the region flourished more than earlier times including Tabriz, Ojan, Maragħeh, and Soltanieh as important centers. It is called Bostan Abad because of greenery and flourished Gardens. Bustan in Turkish language means the same meaning in Persian language. Modern Bostan Abad founded on ancient ruins of Ojan. Today, there is only scarce ruins of the urban center (Mir Ahmadi 1370 49). Ojan is a rural district under Bostan Abad city, where works as a commercial center for the rural district. Located at Silk Road passage with appropriate climatic condition, the region always populated and reported in historic sources as "Ojen" or "Ojan", as residence and passage of many Iranian, Chinese, Roman, and Turk caravans and merchants before Tabriz. It was eastwardly nearest residential area for passengers and merchants before Tabriz. During Ilkhanid period, Ilkhans highly considered Ojan because of strategic and commercial position, rich pastures and gardens at Sahand foothills, where they constructed administration building in the

central core of the city and endowed to Ilkhanid dynasty (Velaity et al., 1393: 84). Historic sources indicate that Ojan located near modern Bostan Abad and flourished during Ilkhanid period, however, it founded earlier, because sources report it at 5 and 6 AH centuries, what attested by archaeological data. Ojan maintained flourish later, especially during Timurid, Aqquyunlu, and Qara Qyunlu, however, it weakened since Qajar period and paved decline and fall (Ibid).

### Ojan, formation, flourish, and collapse according to historic sources

According to historic sources, Ojan was alive earlier than Ilkhanid period, especially during Seljuq era. It existed as a strategic and important urban center, following different events including earthquakes, and wars; it was only during Ilkhanid period that



Map1. Eastern Azerbaijan and Bostan Abad. Source: Geographical and historic context of formation, development, and collapse of Ojan

the city reached to summit and glory. Every given historic city or monument partially imply political, religious, and social conditions that consequently followed political evolution, therefore, emergence cities with architectural nature is among the most important social evolution of Ilkhanid period. Historic city of Ojan was among important Ilkhanid cities (summer residence) at south of modern Bostan Abad, eastern Azerbaijan, where reconstructed during Ghazan reign. Ojan is among the cities that constructed by Ilkhanid rulers, while their Iranian viziers Islamicated new urban centers. Endowed city of Ojan was the summit of flourish in construction of public, martial, and administrative structures, and throne of Ilkhanid princes. This small city, or on the other word township, was the most glorious throne and manifestation of magnificence of Ilkhanids, while reminding their political achievements in western Asia. Therefore, considering urbanization during Ilkhanid period, there is an attempt to investigate foundation and formation of Ojan, whereas there is an analysis on the effects of political organization on social and cultural conditions, relying on archaeological evidences. In this way, the authors involved to excavations and test trenching in the area to demarcate the city borders, at the same time, there were studies on profiles, earthworks, and results from archaeological surveys at Bostan Abad region.

### **Investigating formation, development, and collapse of Ojan, according to historians and adventurers**

According to Vassaf, Ojan constructed at 698 AH as "Ojan, city of Islam" by order of Ghazan Khan (Vassaf Alhazrat 1338: 231). Rashid Aldin Fazlollah pointed to Ojan for several times in his book, "Tarikh Mobarak Ghazani" [the auspicious history of Ghazan], while briefly reports great feast of Ghazan Khan at Ojan (Hamadani 1388: 137). In addition, Hamdollah Mostufi described Ojan with more details: "Bizhan bin Giv bin Gudarz [Bizhan son of Giv son of Gudarz] constructed it; and Ghazan Khan reconstructed, enclosed it by lime and stone,

called it city of Islam and Dar Almoluk [capital]. Its weather is cold and its water flows from Sahand Mountain; its harvest was cereals and legumes. Fruits of Ojan are from fourth region and counted as extension of Mehran rud region (Tabriz). People are white and believe in Shafei sect. Barue Ghazani [Ghazan's fortification] surrounds 3000 gam (2 km<sup>2</sup>) area. Its climate is cold and its water is from Sahand Mountain... and belongs to Ghazan's court with city's revenue..." (Mostufi 1381: 127). Ghiath aldin Hosseini in his Habib al Seyar reports, "There were important events in Ojan from 740 to 806 AH; then Emir Tamerlane rested few days in Ghazan's palace in his travel to Tabriz, when scholars, seyyeds, and sages from Tabriz visited him. Qara Yusuf Turkman died at Ojan at 823 AH. Timurid king Shahrokh endowed governorship of Ojan to Emir Jahanshah at 839 AH. Turkmen and Safavid rulers feasted in Ghazan's palace of Ojan (Khandemir 1333: 489). However, later events and battles caused destruction of Ojan and resulted to two modern eastern and western Ojan rural districts and Ojanchai River from earlier development and flourish. Turkish adventurer Olia Chalabi presented one of the most detailed descriptions of Ojan. He visited Azerbaijan at reign of King Safi and described Ojan as "it was great in ancient times, but by destructed the conquest of Holaku that caused migration of residents to Tabriz. Then Ghazan Khan renovated and reconstructed the city. There is a square castle at foothills of Ojan that covers 1.5 Km<sup>2</sup> areas. There is an iron gate at east. There are 3000 houses from mud, 7 mosques, 3 baths, 7 guesthouses, and 600 shops (Olia Chalabi 1314). Nasuh Metraghchi illustrated descriptions of King Soleiman's campaign from Istanbul to western Iran. He was calligrapher, painter, and historian (Metraghchi 1379: 77) (Fig. 1). The most important parts of his book are miniatures of the city that indicate how elements of the city interrelated to each other. Ojan's miniature is among illustration of Metraghchi's book (Fig. 1). Le Strange, western Geographer, points to Ojan in his book and says, "Ojan located at the bank of one of left branches



of Sarav Shahr River of Sarab...Ghazan Khan reconstructed it". Le Strange called it "Avjan" that is 60 Km away from Tabriz in the road of Mianeh to Tabriz (Le Strange 1374: 175) (Fig. 2).

Mongols governed Iran after collapse of Kharazmshahi dynasty and established peace and security, which provided basis to develop political and economic structure of Iran. Ilkhanid policy needed establishment of capital at northwest that accordingly located three centers of Maragheh, Tabriz, and Soltanieh. By reign of Arqun (683-690 AH) Ilkhanid and their correspondents tried to establish rule and overturn claimants. Therefore, they do not have opportunity to compensate predecessors' destructions until they established relative security. Historical information imply Arqun ordered to establish a city at region of "Shar va Yaaz", modern location of Soltanieh, which lasted to reign of Soltan Mohammad Khoda Bande (703-716 AH) when it was ready to populate (Rezvan and Karimian 1396: 17). According historic sources, by the time, there were constructed structures including Abwab al-Barr, Khanqah, Dar al-Shafa, Dar al-Ziafa, streets, shops and other urban facilities. It appears that it was not completed during reign of Oljaito, and his successor Abusaeid was not eager to follow constructions and left in incomplete (Isfahani and Khazaeli 1381: 67). Certainly, Soltanieh is among unique cities around the world, because, first, it is one of recent Islamic cities; second, as an Iranian urban center, it was among capitals of the empire that Ilkhanids developed; third, it is the only center at northwestern Iran that constructed after capital order and planning; fourth, it is an Islamic city that developed during Dark Age at Europe. Finally, investigating the center can reveal information about urbanization, culture, economy, social structure, and costumes during Ilkhanid period; at the same time, reciprocity to local Iranian people (Rezvan and Karimian 1396: 18). However, Ojan is more ancient than Soltanieh, near to Tabriz-Mianeh road, 3 Km to modern Bostan Abad. It flourished since 6th AH century and destroyed following Mongol invasion. According

historical sources, Kazan ordered to establish new city as "shahr-i-Islam". The area of the city of Kazan was "3000 Gam", where he founded a golden throne with appropriate facilities. Every nobles and courtiers constructed gardens, Ivans, and houses. They raised walls and bazars. The city temporarily was capital of Kazan, but gradually abandoned after Kazan death and following establishment of Soltanieh. Abolfada mentioned to Ojan as small city at 721 AH (Isfahani & Khazaeli 1381: 66).

### Investigating formation, development, and collapse of Ojan, according to archaeological findings

Recognizing location of Ojan was at 1392, according to archaeological surveys at Bostan Abad regions.

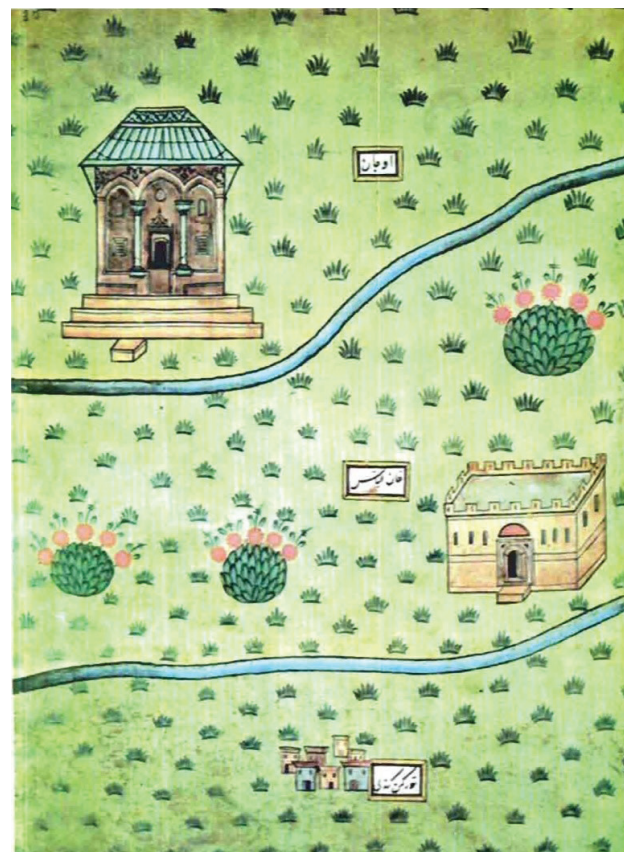


Fig. 1. Description of Ojan by Metraghchi. Source: Metraghchi 1379: 77; 1- Ghazan Khan pavilion 2-Ojan River flowing from Sahand Mountain 3- ruling castle 4- reservoirs

Historic and geographical descriptions of Ojan, especially Metraghchi's illustrations remarkably helped to recognize location of the lost city. Site of Qullar, Ashraf Abad village (part of ancient Ojan), at eastern Bank of Ojan Chai River locates at 46-49-25 latitude and 37-35-48 longitude, and 1787 m longitude. Site of Dali Dareh Si locates 1 km away from Qullar (Fig. 3). Constructing railway divided the area to two parts, and irrecoverably damaged the site (Velaiati 1385, 1392); (Fig. 2).

### Architecture and urbanization of Ojan

Ojan, same as other Iranian ancient cities consisted of governing center (citadel), suburbs, and city center that could be located following vast excavations. It appears that citadel had circular enclosure. It is a conic mound with oval section, about 10 m higher than peripheral area. Looting activities revealed remains of a brick-stone wall that was about 1 m thick (Fig. 4). Surficial remains indicate probable location of pavilion or palace at southwest, about 100 m away of citadel (Chalabi painted it at northwest

of the citadel). It appears that city and suburb are out of recognized area, where is ruined and leveled following cultivating activities. Even one could suggest location of modern Ashraf Abad village as probable location of city center and suburb. It seems suburb partially damaged for construction of village road (Velaiati et al., 1393: 84). Among portable remains and properties from archaeological excavations and surveys are stone and brick structures (Fig. 3) and various tiles. The tiles are brick-tiles and mosaic-tiles that are numerous available on the surface (Fig. 4).

### Ilkhanid cemeteries at east and west of the site

There are two great cemeteries at southern east and west of Ojan (Figs. 5 and 6). Unfortunately, both cemeteries seriously damaged and partially destroyed. The former hardly disturbed for construction of Tabriz-Zanjan highway, whereas the latter damaged by construction of an industrial park. They are both formally and structurally Ilkhanid.



Fig. 2. Location of Qullar, Dali Dareh si and Ashraf Abad Village. Source:





Burials are tumulus and constructed of square mud bricks; the form that typically was common in Iran during Ilkhanid period (Fig. 5,6), (Map 2).

### Architectural remains of two tomb towers at Ojan and one tomb tower at northwest

There were recovered two tomb towers with round bases at southeast and south of Ojan. There is another tomb tower 2 km away at northwest of modern Bostan Abad that discovered during 3rd phase of archaeological surveys at Bostan Abad. The three towers destroyed, while only catacombs remained (Figs. 7 and 8). The towers constructed of cobblestones from river and mortared with concrete. There is an opening on the floor of tower as entrance. Amounts of intact and fragmentary bricks and black and blue tiles around the towers indicate that they used in construction and decoration of towers. Dating the towers changed to hard task, because of present condition of the structure and appearance and needs more archaeological excavations to complete information about the city. One should notify that round tomb towers were common in the region during Islamic Middle Ages (Torabi Tabatabaei 1355), such as Gonbad Sorkh Maragheh (Kiani 1393), and Sheikh Safi's Gonbad Allah Allah.

### Ilkhanid coin discovered from Ojan

Among archaeological finds is a copper coin that recovered from Ojan during 2nd season of

archaeological survey. Curators of National Museum of Iran conserved and cleaned it and read it as Ilkhanid coin, dated to 7 and 8 AH centuries. Word of "Tabriz" engraved on the coin (1392: 922/749) (Figs. 9 and 10). Typology of Seljuq and Ilkhanid potteries of Ojan according to excavation and test trenching Seljuq recovered potteries are typically Sgraffito and Aqkand. Engraving on pottery was among basic and common techniques that Islamic potters developed during middle ages. The technique developed in various forms, from engraving thin lines body of vessel to engraving coating, or both. The result is a delicate and detailed outline, especially in vessels that needed outlined designs to contrast colors.

The first technique in old literature was Sgraffito that found in patched glaze of Abbasid period at Samarra, and then Sammanid potters of Nishabur and Samarqand applied it as a local method. Sgraffito changed to very beautiful and decorative motifs and reached to summit in Aqkand vessels (Grobet 1384: 101). Sgraffito derived from Italian "Sgraffire" meaning scraping and calls technique in Islamic potteries that covers vessels by a thin clay coat; then designs engraved before main glazing (Wilson 1383: 16). Considering studies, production centers of Sgraffito are Kangavar, Takht-i-Soleiman, Amol, Aqkand, Sogand Zanjan, Qazvin, and Hamidan (Tohidi 1999: 269). Aqkand is another type of Seljuq potteries. Aqkand is a village in a region among Zanjan, Tabriz, and Ardebil, where is origination of

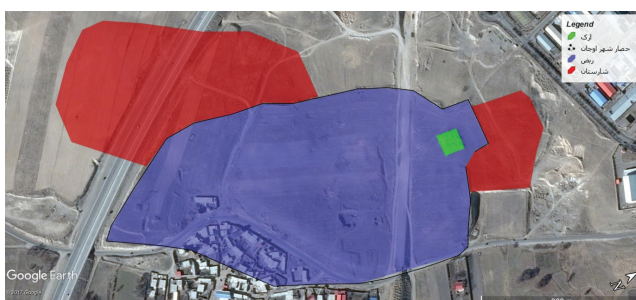


Fig. 3. Recovered mud brick structure. Source:







Fig. 4. Location of cemeteries around Ojan. Source:



Fig. 5. view of a tumulus burial at western section of Tabriz-zanjan highway. Source:

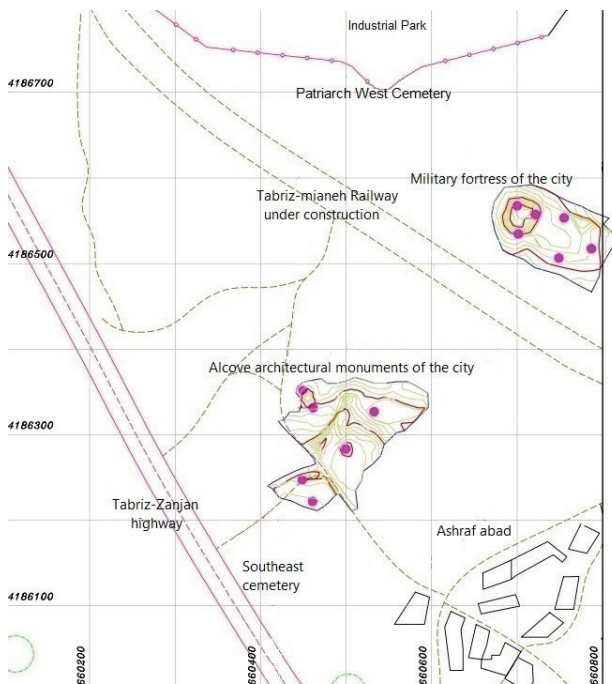



Fig. 6 stone, brick, and bones from western burials. Source:

groups of historic vessels of Islamic Iran. Aqkand pottery is an incised one that covered by thin clay coating, then engraved before main glazing. Decorations are mainly include big zooid motifs in the center and vegetal designs as background that decorated by leaden glaze in yellow, green, and brown colors. Fehervari points to a dated Aqkand potsherd, 528 AH, in his “The Islamic world, Islamic pottery ceramic” that maintained in Islamic Museum of Berlin. Aqkand incised types of pottery dated to

12th AD century (Fehervari 2000, 81); (Fig. 11). During Seljuq and Ilkhanid periods, a wheelmade unglazed brown average quality pottery emerged that was probably consuming pottery of Azerbaijan that is called “unglazed potteries of Atabakan Azerbaijan”. Aqkand potteries are highly frequented in middle Islamic sites of Azerbaijan. They are brown in outer and inner surfaces with incised designs on rim, handle, and shoulder of the former. There are augmented belted lines on the shoulder of vessels





Map 2. Topography of Ojan, cemeteries location, citadel, highway, and railway. Source: 

with hollow round designs by a distance of two centimeters (Khanali 1392: 97).

Molded clays are among characteristic potteries of



Fig. 7. Round structure of tomb towers at Ojan. Source: authors.

Ilkhanid period. Molding is an imitation of metal vessels on smaller unglazed vessels with semi spherical body (Tohidi, 1999: 259). Molded clays were among common potteries of 5th AH century (Ibid: 264) that continued to 6th and 7th AH centuries (Ibid: 271).

### Investigating urban spaces of Soltanieh in comparsion to Ojan

Soltanieh has its especial pattern that divided to inner, middle, and outer spaces. Inner space (Arg) was a complex consisted of Jami, Bazar, and other



Fig. 8 location of two Seljuq or Ilkhanid tomb towers at Ojan. Source: google earth.



Figs. 9 and 10: Ilkhanid coins, discovered from Qullar Ashraf Abad, significant for dating site. Source: Velaiaati, 1392: 380.

elements including madrasa and bath (Rezvan and arimian 1396: 140); (Fig. 10).

#### • fortification of Soltanieh

Wall and fortification of the city were the second protective element of the city, after suburban towers and castles. The travelers and adventurers who visited the city generally reported it without enclosure and fortification, including Klavikhu, Chardin, and Dellavaleh; However Olearius say, "... about half mile to the city at the right side of the road

to Hamadan, there is a stone tower and gate that may probably belong to the city". Derico from Italian archaeological expedition discovered remains of enclosure. One should define it as preplanning of the city with fortifications, however, it left incomplete after Oljaito death, while the raised parts destroyed following Tamerlane invasion (Ibid).

#### • Citadel (Arg)

Arg means a small castle within urban fortification or a castle in the middle of bigger castle. Construction of Arg of Soltanieh began by order of Arqun (683-690 AH). Oljayto, after Arqun, continued construction of the castle and city, while historians point to the castle and say, "... he established foundation at city center and around the square citadel.... There was an Abwab al-Barr in the citadel that consisted of different locations including madrasa, Khanqah, Dar-alshafa, Dar-alziafa, and Dar al-hoffaz. Therefore, there is a citadel in the middle of fortification of Soltanieh that is residence of Oljaito; the area is 2000 Gam" (Mostufi 1336: 60).

Plot of soltaniyeh citadel and part of city tower anf fort

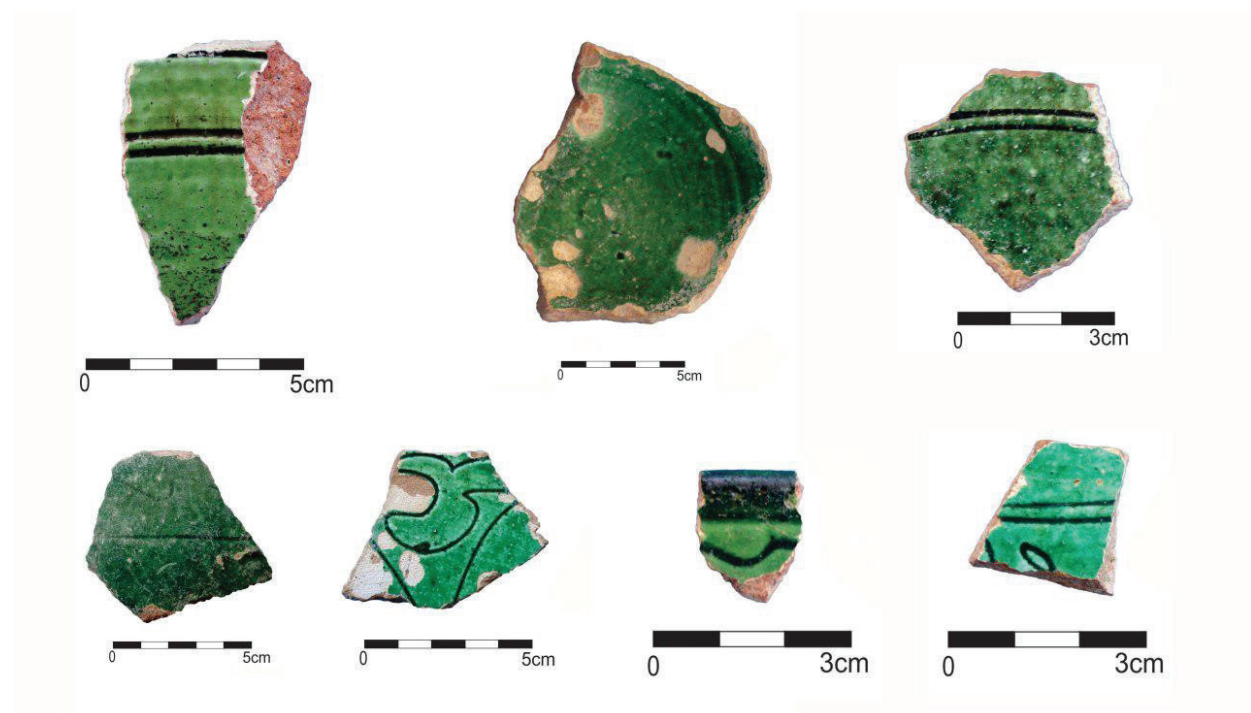


Fig. 10. Sample of the Sgraffito pottery from Ojan. Source: Velayati 2017.



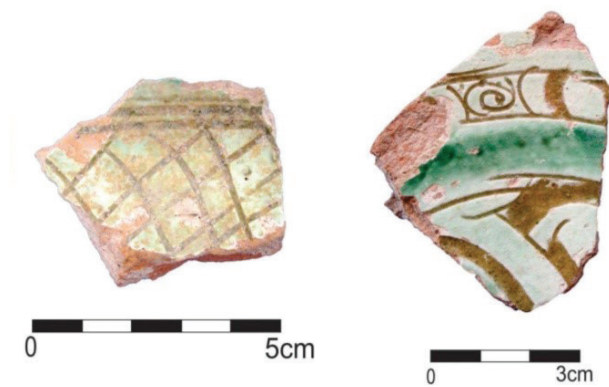


Fig. 11. Sample of Aq Kand pottery from Ojan. Source: Velayati 2017.

with cutted stone (Rezvan and Karimian 2017:145)

#### • Citadel of Soltanieh

it is a 291.5×319.5 m rectangular that covers circa 10 hectares area. There were recognized 16 surrounding towers, with four towers diagonally 23.1 m at each corner and the others 17.5 m. average distance between towers are 47 m. Metracchi relatively

present setting and landscape of the citadel, and also details including 1) towers are taller than walls, all with loopholes; 2) the walls internally decorated to false arches; 3) traces of tiles on façade of one of towers confirm historians' reports, at the same time, there have been recovered archaeologically some fragmentary tiles around the citadel; 4) water flows by canals in order to create beautiful landscape and water sources; 5) placing trees between buildings; 6) integrating building next to a dome that could be the same Abwab al-Barr (ibid) (Fig.13,14).

#### • ditch and gates of Soltanieh

As reported by historians and travelers, there was a surrounding ditch around the citadel. Excavating a 9×20×1 m trench at 1364, at south of Torbat Khaneh revealed traces of ditch (mud and sludge), while historical sources report a gate at northern side of the citadel; Metracchi also illustrated only one gate. However, archaeological excavations revealed two northern and southern parallel gates that dimensionally 22.3×12.1 m outlined in the middle of the southern



Fig. 12. Sample of Molded clays. Source: Velayati 1396.

and northern walls (Rezvan and Karimian 1396: 150).

### Comparison characteristics of Soltanieh to Ojan

Soltanieh preplanned in the region that was appropriately capable to Mongol lifestyle (Spuler 1384: 57). It was basically founded during Arqun reign, however, the construction operations stopped following his death. Oljaito, his successor, continued construction activities to perform one of Arqun's dreams and ordered to change capital from Tabriz to Soltanieh. He completed Soltanieh and hardly attempted to develop the center to satisfy public attention. However, the city declined after his death while there was only his magnificent tomb in Soltanieh Plain (Noghrehkar and others 1391: 59). Therefore, Soltanieh can be comparatively among the most important cities during Ilkhanid period, because it established at the summit of Ilkhanid period. It differed from other Ilkhanid capitals in urbanization with Mongul's city planning, not earlier centrality and later (Ilkhanid) additions, or new towns and counties. It is because Soltanieh significantly distinguished from other cities of the period; therefore, one can recognize urban elements and city structure during Ilkhanid period, following through studies of structure of Soltanieh and other urban centers

at Ilkhanid period (Talibnia and Najafi 1394). The grasslands of Soltanieh were among unique regions and ideal stations of Mongol pastorals. Oljaito was eagerly motivated to construct an Ilkhanid capital. He wanted to leave good everlasting name through construction of monumental structures (Noghrehkar et al., 1391: 55).

### Characteristics of urbanization of Ojan in comparison to Soltanieh

1- According historical sources, there was a Bazar at Ojan, where Yaqut and others reported affirmatively. Tarikh-i-Wassaf assigned the bazar to Kazan, which signals a commercial center before reconstruction of the city. According an Ottoman traveler, there were 600 shops out of citadel in addition to caravanserais and baths that imply commercial activities (Modarres 1384: 6).

2- Regarding location of Ojan at the junction of Iranian Central Plateau, Tabriz, Ardebil, and Maragheh, it was probably one of the most important commercial centers during Seljuq, and later, Ilkhanid periods. Exchanges usually were bartering and directly affected city life; accordingly, there are several reports of bazar, baths, and residential areas including caravanserais at Ojan (Fig. 13).



Fig. 13. Plot of soltaniyeh citadel and part of city tower and fort with cutted stone. Source: Rezvan and Karimian, 2017:145.

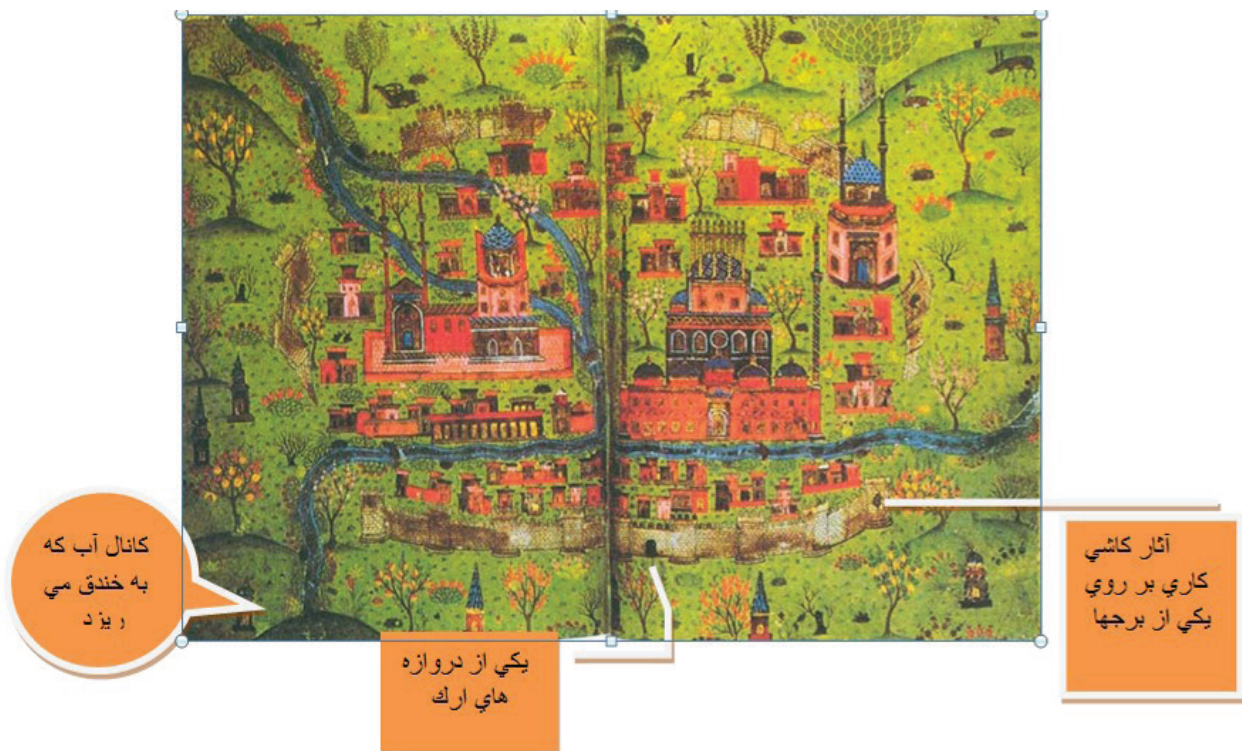


Fig. 14. Painting of Soltaniyeh. Source: Metraghchi 2000.

3- Kazan reconstructed Ojan at 698 AH and constructed new bazars and baths. The 13th narration of Jami al-Tawarikh Rashidi reports that King of Islam (Kazan) ordered skilled and glorious masters to construct a golden court and throne with appropriate facilities at Ojan. Many people were busy for three years and completed the city at 701 AH, where he constructed pavilions, towers, baths, and excellent

mansions; he reconstructed the city within a square (Keinezhad and Balali 1390: 186).

4- considering test trenches and regarding location of citadel and royal pavilion of Ojan, it limited to industrial city from north, eastwardly to a local asphalt road, southwardly to Tabriz-Zanjan highway, and westwardly to lower mounds of towers of modern city (Ibid) (Fig. 14).

### Conclusion of comparison of two city of Ojan and Soltanieh

- 1- Ojan dated to Seljuq period and reconstructed during Ilkhanid period in order to summer residence of royal family.
- 2- Soltanieh constructed at Ilkhanid period on preplanning as capital using skilled masters who experienced reconstruction Ojan and construction of Rabbi-Rashidi.
- 3- Soltanieh, as capital, was a facilitated religious, political, and economic city whereas Ojan was only a summer residence and regional commercial center.
- 4- Innovation of Abwab al-Barr at two citadels of two cities was significant characteristics of Ilkhanid urbanization.



5- there are similarities between architectural planning and material at these two cities, including cobbles, mortar, bricks, and tiles. Citadel of Soltanieh was square with surrounding ditch, while the same structure at Ojan was nearly circular. The two cities are fortified.

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