

SELJUQS HISTORY

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GOVERNMENT

Overview

According to the 11th century work *Diwan Lughat al-Turk* (ديوان لغات الترك, *Compendium of the Language of the Turks*) by Mahmud Kashgari, the Seljuqs were Oghuz Turks from the Qiniq (قنق) tribe. Little can be said with certainty about their early history; some accounts claim that the father of the Seljuqs' eponymous ancestor, Duqaq (also Dokak, Tukuk) was the *su bashi* (military commander) of the Oghuz *yabghu*. Other sources put Duqaq and his son Seljuq in the service of the Khazars. Either way, it appears that Seljuq was forced to flee his master around 985 and settled in the city of Jand, south of the Oghuz capital Yenikent, on the Syr Darya. It was here that Seljuq converted to Islam, and soon Seljuq and his tribesmen were involved in the struggles among the Samanids, Qarakhanids and Ghaznavids for control of Transoxiana.

In 1025 Seljuq's son Arslan Israil was captured by the Ghaznavids and sent into captivity in India as part of a struggle between the Ghaznavids and Qarakhanids. His tribesmen were sent into Khorasan and soon took up raiding to survive the difficult conditions there. These raids combined with the unsettled conditions created by previous Oghuz migrations into the region led to a confrontation with the Ghaznavids in 1040 at Dandanaqan outside of Merv. The Ghaznavids were routed and left all of Khorasan open to the Seljuqs.

The Seljuqs were quick to take advantage of their victory, assigning the conquest of different regions to members of the Seljuq clan. By 1047 the Seljuqs were in control of all lands along the Amu Darya from Tirmiz to Bukhara, and in late 1055 the Seljuq sultan Tughril entered Baghdad. In 1059 the Seljuqs and Ghaznavids agreed to set the border between their territories at the Hindu Kush Mountains.

Following Tughril's death in 1063 Alp Arslan became sultan and continued to expand the Seljuq state. In 1064 he campaigned in the Caucasus, then moved south and took the cities of Kars and Ani. Although there had been sporadic Seljuq raids into Byzantine territory since the early 11th century, this was the first conquest of any territory that had recently been under Byzantine rule. In 1071 at the Battle of Malazgirt (Manzikert) Alp Arslan defeated a larger Byzantine army led by the emperor Romanos IV Diogenes, who was taken captive. Although Alp Arslan had had no intentions to conquer Byzantine Anatolia, his victory at Malazgirt opened the way for further Seljuq conquests and Turkmen settlement in Anatolia. Nonetheless, even as Seljuqs and Turkmen expanded their territories in Anatolia at the expense of the Byzantines, the region was of limited interest to the Seljuq rulers in the years immediately after the Battle of Malazgirt.

The history of the Seljuqs in Anatolia distinct from the history of the Great Seljuqs has its origins in disputes within the ruling Seljuq clan, specifically between the descendants of two of Seljuq's sons, Arslan Israil and Mikail. Supreme over the Seljuq clan and its rapidly expanding territory had remained in the hands of Mikail's descendants: Tughril, his brother Chaghri; Chaghri's son Alp Arslan; and then Alp Arslan's son Malik Shah. Arslan Israil and his line had been less fortunate; Arslan Israil had been sent into captivity in India by the Ghaznavids around 1025, and his son Qutlumush was killed in a revolt against Alp Arslan in 1063. It is uncertain what had happened to Qutlumush's sons in this period, but some sources claim that they had been imprisoned by Alp Arslan somewhere along the Euphrates. After Alp Arslan's death they

reappear, but whether they were released by Malik Shah as a goodwill gesture, escaped from captivity, or simply came out of hiding is unknown as is the reason for two of the sons, Sulayman and Mansur, to move into Anatolia, or Rum, "the land of the Romans", as they called it. It is possible that Sulayman and Mansur had been sent by Malik Shah to expand the Seljuq conquests in Anatolia; it is equally possible that they simply saw an opportunity for themselves and their Türkmen followers to conquer lands for themselves in the confusion following the Battle of Malazgirt.

The early history of the Seljuqs in Anatolia is not well documented in Muslim sources; as a result most of the information about the events and developments in this period comes from Byzantine sources. What these sources depict is a complex picture of rapid Seljuq and Türkmen conquests of more and more Byzantine territory on one hand, as well as increasing Seljuq and Türkmen involvement in internal Byzantine conflicts by serving as mercenaries in Byzantine armies on the other. As Seljuq and Türkmen forces became an increasingly important element in these inter-Byzantine disputes, they were able to further their own interests by supporting whoever offered the most for their support for as long as it was to their advantage. This continuous strife among the Byzantines created a power vacuum in Anatolia, an important factor in the Seljuqs' rapid advance across Anatolia in the first years after Alp Arslan's victory at Malazgirt.

In 1075 Sulayman took the city of İznik (Nikaia) and it became his base of operations for the next few years. At this point Sulayman used the title *amir* (امير), "commander, governor", an indication that he must have, in principle at least, still recognized the authority of Malik Shah, the *sultan*. However, it seems that by 1078 Malik Shah wanted to reign in his relatives in Anatolia by sending a military force against them and ordering the Türkmen raiding in Anatolia to join his forces. Although Mansur appears to have been killed in this fighting, Sulayman survived and was able to maintain his hold on his lands. In 1082 Sulayman made a treaty with the new Byzantine emperor, Alexios I Komnenos, that set the border between their territories and was the first recognition of a Seljuq state in Anatolia.

Following this treaty with Alexios I, Sulayman was free to concentrate on expanding his control of Tarsus and the surrounding regions. In late 1084 Sulayman sent his Türkmen to besiege Malatya while he moved against Antioch (Antakya), which he conquered in January 1085. It also appears that it was at this point that Sulayman decided to rule his territories in Anatolia independent of the Great Seljuqs. According to Byzantine sources, prior to his departure for Antioch in 1084 Sulayman began to use the title *sultan* (سلطان), a clear challenge to Malik Shah's claims to be the supreme Seljuq ruler. Although Sulayman was killed near Aleppo in 1086 fighting against Malik Shah's forces and his sons Qilich Arslan I and Qulan Arslan were both captured and imprisoned, the state he established in Anatolia survived.

After Malik Shah's death in 1092 the Great Seljuqs would become occupied with bitter internal rivalries that caused them to forget about Anatolia. Qilich Arslan I (r. 1092-1107) was released or escaped from his captivity, returned to Anatolia, and began to gather his father's supporters around him. Like his father, Qilich Arslan I would make a treaty with Alexios I to regulate the relations between their states, and would have troubles with other Türks, in this case, the newly established Danishmend beylik to their east. However, Qilich Arslan I's attention would be turned to the west and a new, unexpected threat.

In 1095 Qilich Arslan I left his wife and treasury in his capital, İznik, believing that it was secure due to his treaty with Alexios I Komnenos, and set off to conduct campaigns against the Danishmends in the central Toros region where their territories met. The fighting continued into 1096 and kept Qilich Arslan I in the field and away from his capital. In September 1096 the Seljuqs encountered the first wave of westerners from the First Crusade. These were not the knights and foot soldiers who made up the crusader armies, but peasants from the "People's Crusade", followers of a monk, Peter the Hermit, who preached that God would open the road to Jerusalem to the faithful. Ignoring the emperor Alexios' advice to wait outside of Constantinople and not cross over into Anatolia until after the real crusader armies had arrived, Peter led his followers into Anatolia. Shortly after entering Seljuq territory the majority of the People's Crusade were either killed or taken captive; the small number of those who escaped from the Seljuq forces (including Peter the Hermit) returned to Constantinople to await the crusader armies. The fact that Qilich Arslan I was not summoned back to İznik following this incident may indicate that the Seljuqs' first encounter with westerners who were not soldiers may have given them a false sense of security, causing them to underestimate the crusaders' real military capabilities.

In the summer of 1097 the crusader armies crossed into Anatolia, surrounded the Seljuq capital at İznik, and besieged it. Although Qilich Arslan I returned rapidly from Malatya, the combined Byzantine and crusader forces prevented him from relieving İznik, and it was eventually taken. After the capture of İznik the Seljuqs attempted to drive back the crusaders at Dorylaeum, near modern Eskişehir, but were defeated. After this defeat the Seljuqs did not attempt to directly engage the crusader army, but resorted to scorched earth and hit-and-run tactics to harass the crusaders' passage across Anatolia. The crusader army eventually left Seljuq territory, but the Seljuqs' defeats at their hands allowed the Byzantines to retake some territory in northwestern and western Anatolia, evacuate the Christian population from territories that they could not hold, and create a no-man's-land between them and the Seljuqs. On the Seljuq side, Qilich Arslan I decided to move his capital to Konya, and he had gained experience in fighting western armies that would be put to good use. In 1101 Qilich Arslan I destroyed two crusader armies in central Anatolia with minimal losses to his own army.

In the same year Qilich Arslan I and Alexios I Komnenos made a new peace treaty, and Qilich Arslan again turned his attention to the east. In 1103 he went to war against the Danishmends and defeated them. Two years later he took the city of Malatya from the Danishmends, bringing their expansion to a halt. As Qilich Arslan I continued east, he was able to make a number of small Turkic states that had been vassals of the Great Seljuqs, switch allegiance to the Seljuqs of Rum. The result was that the Sultanate of Rum now bordered on the lands of the Great Seljuqs, and conflict between the two was inevitable.

In 1106 the Great Seljuqs took the city of Mosul and replaced the ruler who was loyal to Qilich Arslan I. The following year Qilich Arslan I retook Mosul, but shortly afterwards the Great Seljuqs brought an army to confront Qilich Arslan I. Outnumbered and badly affected by the summer heat in Iraq, Qilich Arslan I's army was defeated and he drowned in the Khabur River.

Qilij Arslān's death in 1107 marks the end of the first phase of the history of the Seljūqs of Rūm. Alp Arslān's victory at Malazgirt in 1071 had opened Anatolia to further conquest and settlement by the Seljūqs and their Türkmen followers. Sulaymān-Shāh had created a state independent of the Great Seljūqs and declared himself *sultan*; Qilij Arslān managed to defend and hold the state despite the First Crusade, Byzantine expansion in western Anatolia, and the Danishmends. In addition, after Qilij Arslān's death there would be no further major waves of Türkmen migration into Anatolia until just before the Mongol conquests in the 13th century.

Following Qilich Arslan I's death the issue of succession was not settled until 1109 when his son Shahanshah (also known as Malik Shah, r. 1109-1116), who had been captured by the Great Seljuqs in the same battle where his father died, was released to rule as Sultan in Konya. Shortly afterwards he began attacking and raiding the Byzantines at various points in western Anatolia. In 1116 Shahanshah was defeated by Alexios I Komnenos, and while making terms with the Emperor Shahanshah's brother Masud begins a revolt that results in Shahanshah's death.

The new ruler, Masud I (r. 1116-1156), in the first part of his reign was forced by circumstances to rely on both the Byzantines and the Danishmends, even marrying the daughter of the Danishmend ruler Gümüshtigin. During a revolt led by his brother in 1124 Masud I took refuge with the Byzantines, and was only able to return to power with help from the Byzantines and his father-in-law. However, after Gümüshtigin's death in 1134 Masud I began to take territory from the Danishmend, beginning the process of Danishmend decline. Later in his reign, in 1147-1148 Masud would confront the armies of the Second Crusade, defeating them at Dorylaeum in the autumn of 1147 and inflicting heavy losses on French forces near Denizli in early 1148.

Following Masud I's death in 1156, his son Qilich Arslan II (r. 1156-1186, d. 1192) took the throne amid internal strife and conflict with the Danishmends, conditions that convinced the Byzantine emperor Manuel I Komnenos that he could take a more aggressive approach in his dealings with the Seljuqs. In 1161 Qilich Arslan II's forces were defeated by the Byzantines, and to formalize the agreement made afterwards, the Sultan went to Constantinople in 1162 where he and his entourage were feted for 80 days. Despite this agreement in the following years relations between the two sides deteriorated to the point that Manuel planned a two-pronged attack against the Seljuqs in September of 1176. The first attack against Niksar ended in defeat, but the second, larger attack led by Manuel himself against Konya resulted in the hard-

fought Battle of Myriokephalon. The Byzantine army was forced to retreat, and this battle marked the last Byzantine offensive to attempt the reconquest of the interior of Anatolia.

Following his victory at Myriokephalon, Qilich Arslan II concentrated on the east, taking Malatya in 1177-78, effectively putting an end to the Danishmends. In 1188, for reasons that are still not fully understood, Qilich Arslan II divided the Seljuq state among his nine surviving sons, one brother and one nephew, with the capital, Konya, remaining in Qilich Arslan II's control.

Although it was not clear who Qilich Arslan II had intended to be his official heir, his son Kay Khusraw I (r. 1192-1196, 1205-1211) took the throne after his father's death until he was forced to take refuge in Constantinople following a power struggle with his brother Rukn al-Din II (r. 1196-1204). When Rukn al-Din II died unexpectedly in 1204, the Türkmén and other leading elements of Seljuq society called on Kay Khusraw I to take the throne again rather than put Rukn al-Din II's young son Qilich Arslan III in power.

Kay Khusraw I's return to power came at a moment when events would turn dramatically in favor of the Seljuqs. With the sack and occupation of Constantinople by the Venetians and the armies of the Fourth Crusade, and the subsequent establishment of the Latin Empire and Greek successor states (the Empire of Nicaea and the Empire of Trebizond in particular), the Seljuqs would be able to expand the territories dramatically and bring the Sultanate of Rum to its peak. The Empire of Nicaea, located between the Latin Empire the territories of the Seljuqs, was focused on regaining Byzantine territories lost to the Latins, and very early in its existence made a peace treaty with the Seljuqs. With his western borders secure, in 1207 Kay Khusraw I was able to take the city of Antalya, giving the Seljuqs access to the Mediterranean for the first time. The Seljuqs would now be able to exert greater influence over events in Cyprus, conduct direct trade with Egypt, and even make commercial agreements with Venice.

Following Kay Khusraw I's death in 1211, his son Kay Kavus I (r. 1211-1220) became Sultan. He was able to make commercial agreements with the Franks in Cyprus in 1213 and 1216. Another important development in his reign was the capture of Sinop in 1214, giving the Seljuqs access to Black Sea. In the process of taking Sinop, at the western edge of the Empire of Trebizond, the Seljuqs captured the ruler of the empire, Alexios Komnenos, who became a Seljuq vassal. When he died in 1220, Kay Kavus I left the Sultanate of Rum larger and more influential than he had found it at the start of his reign.

Kay Kavus I was followed by his son Kay Qubad I (r. 1220-1237), a well educated and talented man who is generally regarded as the greatest ruler of the Sultanate of Rum and its last fully independent ruler. During his reign the Sultanate of Rum would attain not only its greatest territorial extent, but also its greatest political and commercial influence. In 1221 he conquered the city of Kalonoros on the Mediterranean coast, and renames it Alaiye (today Alanya). The city would soon become a major Seljuq base and the rulers' winter residence. In 1225 Kay Qubad I took the city of Sudak in the Crimea, and established a Seljuq protectorate that may have continued as long as 1239. Five years later Kay Qubad I defended his territories against the incursions of the Khwarazm Shah, successfully defeating their larger army at Yassichemen. However, as a portent of what was on the horizon, shortly after his victory over the Khwarazm Shah, Kay Qubad I received news of the first Mongol raids in his territories. This news prompted him to campaign in Georgia, hoping to make it a buffer between himself and the Mongols. After conquering a number of Georgian towns, the Georgian queen negotiated a treaty with Kay Qubad I.

Kay Qubad I also successfully pushed back the Ayyubids from his lands in 1233, and followed this by taking more cities in northern Syria in 1234. However, two Mongol ambassadors arrived in 1236 to demand the establishment of regular tribute payments. Internal problems within the Mongol state meant that the demand was temporarily forgotten and Kay Qubad I died in 1237 without responding to the Mongol demand.

Kay Qubad I's successor was his son Kay Khusraw II (r. 1237-1246). His relatively short reign was marked by internal conflict, religious revolt and a showdown with the Mongols. The religious revolt, known as the Baba'i Revolt, was the result of the preaching of a local dervish called Baba Ishaq, who began to attract numerous followers among the recently arrived Türkmén who had fled the Mongols. Baba Ishaq's followers began attempting to take control of cities and lands in the Sultanate of Rum in 1240, and the Seljuqs would not completely put down the uprising until 1243. Shortly after the revolt had been put down, Kay Khusraw II received news that the Mongol army was approaching. The Seljuq and Mongol armies clashed at

Kösedağ in June 1243, with the Mongols the clear victors. Following their victory the Mongols occupied Sivas, sacked Kayseri, and then stopped their advance into Anatolia.

After their defeat at the hands of the Mongols at Kösedağ, the Sultanate of Rum would become a Mongol vassal. As time passed the degree of Mongol interference in internal Seljuq affairs increased, eventually resulting in an attempt to break free of the Mongols with help from the Mamluks in Egypt in 1277. This uprising failed and resulted in the Mongols not only reasserting their authority in Rum, but also attempting to drive rebellious Türkmen groups out of Seljuq territory between 1277-1279. The Seljuq state's authority had been reestablished with the help of Mongol arms, but Mongol interference in the day-to-day decisions of the state increased dramatically. As Mongol authority within the Seljuq state became more visible, it was Mongol officials, not members of the Seljuq dynasty that came to be seen as the real holders of power, further weakening the Seljuqs' control over their territories and their ability to collect taxes. Towards the end of the 13th century, the decline of the Mongol Ilkhanid state which controlled Rum added to the instability of the Sultanate. The last Seljuq Sultan of Rum, Masud II (r. 1284-1296, 1303-1306?) disappears from the historical record in 1306, with neither his death nor the appointment of a successor being mentioned in any contemporary source.

Government Structure - The Seljuqs

Government under the Great Seljuqs combined elements derived from three traditions – Islamic, Iranian and Turkic. As Muslim rulers the Seljuqs were expected to defend both Muslim territories and the Muslim community, to provide stability, and to rule according to the precepts of the *shari'a*. To emphasize their role as guardians of Sunni Islam early Seljuq sultans would receive a document from the Abbasi caliph in Baghdad that recognized and legitimized their position. Older Iranian political influence could be seen in the close relationship between the state and religion, the identification of social order with the state, and an absolute ruler who was the center of the political system. The final influence, Turkic tribal custom, was unwritten but its influence was visible in many aspects of the Seljuq state. The Seljuqs had risen to power with the support of other Oghuz tribes, and had maintained dominance over these tribes through a combination of military power and consultation. Although the majority of the Oghuz tribes acknowledged the authority of the Seljuq sultan, the Seljuqs were never able to bring the Oghuz under full control. Another aspect of Seljuq rule that reflects Turkic custom was the attitude that leadership over the Oghuz and the conquered territories was not the prerogative of an individual, but the Seljuq family as a whole. Initially, the senior ruler in the Seljuq clan was the Sultan, while other members of the family who administered parts of the Seljuq state used the title *malik* ("king"). However, as the Seljuqs evolved from being tribal leaders to being rulers of a territorial empire the character of the Seljuq government also changed. Although the Oghuz (generally referred to as Türkmen after their conversion to Islam) remained an important part of the Seljuqs' powerbase, the Seljuqs began to create a standing army of freedmen and slaves that would become their primary military force. In addition, there was a shift in the status of the sultan from being the primary ruler among a number of *maliks* who ruled by consultation and consensus to being an absolute monarch in the Persian tradition.

The Seljuq government was eventually organized with the sultan at the top, an absolute ruler whose power was (theoretically) limited only by the *shari'a*, Islamic law which all Muslims were subject to. Most of the various functions of the government were carried out by officials working in two bodies, the *dargah* (درگاه), court, and the *divan* (دیوان). The *dargah* was where ordinary subjects could bring their grievances to the sultan for redress, and was made up primarily of Turks, giving the *dargah* a decidedly military character. The *divan* was bureaucratic in nature, and most of its members were not Turks, but by other, generally indigenous peoples with long administrative experience.

The *dargah* was composed of officials whose duties were generally related to serving the sultan and handling court ceremonial. Seljuq sultans were often on the move, either conducting military campaigns or inspecting their territories, and the *dargah* travelled with the sultan wherever he went. Most of the members of the Seljuq *dargah* came from the military, either *amirs* (امیر) or *'askar* (عسکر), members of the standing army.

Originally, the chief official of the *dargah* was the *vakil-i dar* (وکیل در), a bureaucrat who acted as the intermediary between the sultan and the head of the *divan*, the vizier (وزیر), and was higher in rank than

the *hajibs* (حاجب), chamberlains. Later the *vakil-i dar* was replaced by a military official, the *amir hajib* (امير حاجب), who was responsible for both court ceremonial and maintaining military discipline. Specifically, the *amir hajib* carried the sultan's commands to the vizier and arranged audiences with the sultan. After the *amir hajib*, the two most important positions in the *dargah* were those of the *jandar* (جاندار), chief executioner, and the *amir haras* (امير حرس), chief of the guard. Two other officials of the *dargah* were the *akhur salar* (أخور سالار), and the *khwan salar* (خوان سالار). The *akhur salar*, master of the stable, was in charge the royal stables and care of the sultan's horses, while the *khwan salar*, master of the table, was responsible for the operation of the royal kitchens and feeding numerous people on a daily basis.

Bureaucratic functions of the Seljuq state were handled by the central *divan*, or *divan-i a'la* (ديوان اعلى), headed by the vizier. Most viziers rose through the ranks of the *divan*, sometimes entering the *divan-i a'la* after service in the *divan* of provincial *amirs* or Seljuq family members. The vizier was a bureaucrat who was not only in charge of the *divan-i a'la*, but also conducted the sultan's relations with both the caliphate and with foreign rulers. In addition, he was expected to accompany the sultan on his military expeditions. Viziers often acquired great wealth, but also were required to spend large sums to maintain their own courts and private forces, as well as to maintain the position against rivals to keep the sultan's favor. Although the post of vizier brought its holder great power, wealth and influence, it was extremely insecure. A vizier could be dismissed at any time, and many viziers suffered confiscation of property, imprisonment or even death at the hands of the sultan they served.

The *divan-i a'la* was, in turn, divided into four main branches: the *diwan al-insha wa'l tughra* (ديوان الانشاء), also known as the *divan-i rasa'il* (ديوان رسائل) or the *divan-i insha* (ديوان انشاء); the *diwan al-zamam wa'l istifa* (ديوان الزمام والاستيفا), or *divan-i istifa-yi mamalik* (ديوان استيفای ممالک); the *divan-i ishraf-i mamalik* (ديوان اشراف (ديوان عرض); and the *divan-i 'ard* (ديوان عرض).

The first division, the *diwan al-insha wa'l tughra*, supervised all incoming and outgoing official correspondence, and all certificates of appointment and was headed by an official with the title *tughra'i* (طغرائی). The *tughra'i* was expected not only to be a skilled calligrapher, but also skilled in the literary styles of different types of official correspondence. This position was clearly of considerable importance, since the *tughra'i* acted as deputy-vizier in his absence and the holder was frequently promoted to the post of vizier.

The responsibilities of both the *divan-i istifa-yi mamalik* and the *divan-i ishraf-i mamalik* were primarily financial. Headed by the *mustaufi al-mamalik* (مستوفی الممالک), the *divan-i istifa-yi mamalik* was responsible for preparing tax assessments, tax collection, revenue accounts, and expenditures. On the other hand, the *divan-i ishraf-i mamalik* had a supervisory role, auditing financial transactions, in particular the collections and distribution of taxes, under the direction of the *mushrif-i mamalik* (مشرف ممالک). This *divan's* supervisory duties were carried out not only at the level of the *divan-i a'la*, but also at the local level through district or provincial *mushrifs*.

The fourth branch, the *divan-i 'ard* was concerned with military matters and was headed by the *'arid al-jaish* (عارض الجيش), muster master, also called the *sahib-i divan-i 'ard* (صاحب ديوان عرض). This *divan* maintained all military registers, record of military land grants, and all records related to the pay of the *amirs* and the standing army. The *divan-i 'ard* was also responsible for recruiting, mustering and inspecting soldiers before the army set off on an expedition.

Some influential positions in the Seljuq state were outside both the *dargah* and the *divan*. One of these was unique to the Seljuq period, the *atabeg* (اتابك). An *atabeg* was generally an *amir* who was assigned to administer the territories of an underage Seljuq *malik*, and was often married to the mother of the *malik* under his responsibility. The *atabeg* had two primary responsibilities: the first was the education of the *malik*, the second was to prevent the *malik* from revolting against the sultan. Over time numerous *atabegs* were able to use their position to become extremely powerful actors in the politics of the Seljuq empire as well as the actual administrators of provinces in place of the *malik* in their charge.

The government of the Seljuq Sultanate of Rum was similar in many aspects to that of the Great Seljuqs. Although the founder of the independent Seljuq state Rum, Sulayman I initially used the title *amir*, indicating his subordinate status to the Sultan of the Great Seljuqs, according to Byzantine sources he began to use the title *sultan* around the year 1084. Although the use of the title *sultan* shows that Sulayman and

subsequent Seljuq rulers in Rum regarded themselves as sovereign rulers of an independent state, it is unclear whether this title was “official”, meaning that it had been granted or legitimized by the Abbasi caliph in Baghdad, or whether Sulayman had unilaterally adopted the title. The fact that contemporary Arabic and Persian sources rarely refer to the Seljuq rulers of Rum as *sultan*, preferring instead the title *malik* (“king”), may be an indication that the title was “unofficial”.

As in the administration of the Great Seljuqs, there was a division between those officials who served in the Sultan’s court in political/military positions, and those who held administrative positions in the bureaucracy, the *divan*. Military/political posts were held by the military class, generally Turkish, and very rarely from any other group. However, among the Seljuqs of Rum administrative posts were initially not held by indigenous peoples. This was due to the fact that in Seljuq Rūm, unlike in most other Muslim states, the majority of the indigenous population was Christian. Although some Christians did hold official posts in Seljuq Rūm, the local people’s greatest obstacle was not religion, but their ignorance of Arabic and Persian. As a result, numerous Iranian immigrants from Khorasan came to Rūm to make a career in the bureaucracy. Later, as Turks became part of the native population they began to enter into administrative and judicial careers.

Most positions in the court had Persian titles and were similar to positions in the court of the Great Seljuqs. Among these were the *amir-e jandar* (امیر جاندار), the Chief of the Guard; the *amir-e silah* (امیر سلاح), the Chief of Arms; and the *amir-e shekar* (امیر شکار), the Chief of the Hunt. Like the Great Seljuqs, the court of the Seljuqs of Rum had an *amir-e ahkur* (امیر آخور), the Chief of Horses/the Stable. However, perhaps reflecting the Anatolian Seljuqs’ interaction with westerners, the *amir-e akhur* was sometimes referred to as the *kundestabl* (کندهستبل), from the French *conestable* (Latin *comes stabuli*, English *constable*). Other positions in the court of the Seljuqs of Rum were the *ustazdar* (استاددار), Chief of the Palace; *amir-e majles* (امیر مجلس), Organizer of audiences, receptions, etc.; *chashnigir* (چاشنیگیر), Foodtaster; *sharabsalar* (شرابسالار), Cupbearer; *amir-e alam* (امیر علم), Standard bearer; *hajib al-hujjab* (حاجب الحجاب), Head Chamberlain.

However, there were two court positions that had no parallel in the court of the Great Seljuqs, the *na’ib* and the *pervane*. The *na’ib*, or *na’ib al-sultan* (نائب السلطان), was the Sultan’s deputy, but it is unclear whether the position of *na’ib* was permanent or temporary, filled only when the Sultan was absent from the capital or ill. The second position, that of *pervane* (پروانه) is known only from the Seljuqs of Rum and the Muslim Mongol states and was not an especially important post. The *pervane*’s main duty was to carry the Sultan’s messages, in effect, to distribute the Sultan’s favors.

Contemporary sources provide much less information regarding the bureaucracy, *divan*, of the Seljuq state in Anatolia than that of the Great Seljuqs. Nevertheless, what information is available suggests that it was likely to have been organized much as the *divan* of the Great Seljuqs. For example, although the subdivisions of the *divan* in Rum are not given in contemporary sources, the existence of officials in the *divan* of the Sultanate of Rum with titles found in the Great Seljuqs’ *divan* suggests that both *divans* were organized similarly.

Like the *divan* of the Great Seljuqs, the *divan* in Rum was headed by the *vezir* (وزیر), generally referred to by the title *shahib* (صاحب), a post that seems to have existed since the time of Süleyman b. Kutlumuş. Before the Mongol period Seljuq vezirs were not very powerful, and were limited to administrative duties.

The one subdivision of the *divan* of the Seljuqs of Rum that is known is the *divan al-insha’* (دیوان الانشاء). This was the office which drafted political correspondence and official documents. It was headed by the *Tughra’i* (طغرانی), the official who put the Sultan’s *tuğra* (official seal/signature) on state documents. The *divan al-insha’* normally drafted correspondence and official documents in Persian, but legal documents drafted by a *qaḍi* were written in Arabic, as were inscriptions on monuments, coins, and fiscal documents. Greek documents were drafted when needed to correspond with states or officials who would not know either Arabic or Persian. The most important source for the history of the Seljuqs of Rum, Ibn Bibi, mentioned officials he called *nūtar* (نوטר νωταρίοι, *notarioi*) in the Seljuq *divan*, apparently a reference to Greek clerks.

The existence of a subdivision of the *divan* similar to the Great Seljuqs’ *divan-i istifa-yi mamalik*, responsible for taxes and revenues, can be inferred from the mention of an official in Rum with the title *mustawfi*. As chief accountant, the *mustawfi* (مستوفی), or *shahib al-zimam* (صاحب الزمام), checked the returns of taxes and expenses, and was chosen by the *vezir*.

Another official found in both the *divan* of the Great Seljuqs and the Seljuqs of Rum is the *mushrif*. Under the Great Seljuqs the *mushrif-i mamalik* supervised tax and other financial matters as head of the *divan-i ishraf-i mamalik*, while in Rum the *mushrif* seems to have been the supervisor of royal lands. He may have been assisted in his duties by another official called the *nazir* (ناظر). These two positions are only known from the Mongol period and may be a Mongol innovation, or an innovation of Iranians working in the Seljuq state.

A parallel in the *divan* of the Seljuqs of Rum with the fourth division of the Great Seljuqs' *divan*, the *divan-i 'ard*, concerned with military matters, is implied by the existence of the *'arid* (عارض). The *'arid* inspected the army with the Sultan at reviews and distributed army pay at these events, but this office is only known from the period before the Mongols.

Finally, the position of *atabeg* was also found in the Sultanate of Rum. As among the Great Seljuqs, an *atabeg* acted as guardian and regent for an underage ruler. However, in contrast to Great Seljuq *atabegs*, in the lands of Rum no *atabeg* was ever able to use his position as a springboard for greater personal power and influence.

Policy - The Seljuqs

While the Great Seljuqs did not have an official government policy in the modern sense, there were certain objectives that they sought to achieve. Since the Seljuq sultans ruled predominantly Muslim lands as Muslim rulers they sought to legitimize their rule by having their position recognized by the Abbasi caliph in Baghdad. While such recognition was essentially symbolic, the sultan's allegiance to the caliph indicated that he acknowledged the shari'a as the basis of the Sunni community. In turn, the caliph acknowledged that as a legitimate Muslim ruler the sultan would defend Muslim territories and the Muslim community, allowing Muslims to live in peace.

Unofficially, territorial expansion was clearly a goal for many Great Seljuq rulers, generally at the expense of other Muslim states. While taking the territories of some states could be more easily justified (the conquest of the Shi'a Buyids' lands in Iran and Iraq, or the later conquests of lands in Byzantine Anatolia), other conquests (such as the Sunni Ghaznavids' lands in Khorasan) were clearly intended to simply expand the Seljuqs' holdings.

The Seljuqs of Rum were faced with different challenges due to the unique conditions of their lands in Anatolia. They too saw themselves as Sunni Muslim rulers, but unlike the Great Seljuqs whose lands were already predominantly Muslim, the Seljuqs of Rum had established their state in lands only recently won from the Byzantine Empire. As a result they ruled over a population that still had a significant number of Christian Greeks and Armenians, and Islamic institutions had to be established in lands where they had never existed.

Another difference was that the Seljuqs of Rum were faced with more complex political relations, since their territories were bordered by the remaining lands of the Byzantine Empire along the coasts of the Black and Mediterranean Seas, and in western Anatolia. To the west and southwest were various Muslim Turkic states, the most important being the Danishmends.

Territorial expansion was a clear aim, and was both opportunistic as well as for specific state goals. For example, the Seljuqs of Rum sought to take the cities of Antalya on the Mediterranean coast, and Sinop on the Black Sea coast from the Byzantines in order to be able to conduct direct maritime trade with other states. Similarly, conquests of territories held by Muslim rulers in eastern Anatolia were carried out in order to expand the Seljuq state to the borders of large, important Muslim states to the east and southeast. Once this had been accomplished the Seljuqs of Rum could play a more important, direct role in the affairs of the larger Muslim world.

Although the Seljuqs' relations with the Byzantines were conditioned by both the relative power at the two states at any given time, the Seljuqs' power relative to other Muslim Turkic states in Anatolia, and the priorities of the ruling sultan, the conquest of Byzantine territory as part of a larger struggle between Christianity and Islam does not seem to have been an element of Seljuq policy. This conclusion appears to

be supported by the titles used by Seljuq sultans. While Seljuq rulers employed numerous Islamic titles, they never used the Arabic title *ghazī* (غازی, “fighter for the faith”), although there are examples its use among the official titles of other contemporary Turkish rulers in Anatolia.

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Discussion Questions

How did the governments and policies of the Great Seljuqs and the Seljuqs of Rum differ and what were the reasons for these differences?

MILITARY

Military Composition

In the early period the Seljuq army, sometimes referred to as the “old” (قديم, *qadīm*) army, was composed almost entirely of semi-autonomous Türkmēn, who would continue to play a military role on the borders (sometimes acting on their own) throughout the history of the Seljuq state. However, in the 12th – 13th centuries a “new” (حديث, *hadīth*) Seljuq army developed that used slave-soldiers (*mamlūk*, مملوك, or *ghulām*, غلام) who were later freed, but in Rum the slaves were primarily Greek captives taken in frontier raids and not Turkic slaves as was common in other parts of the Islamic world. Slaves were believed to be more loyal to the state and brought specialized military knowledge and techniques unknown to the Türkmēn as well.

In addition to the slave forces, there is some evidence that at least part of the forces that made up the Seljuq army in Rum were *muqṭaʿ* (مقطع), that is, holders of an *iqṭāʿ* (اقطاع). An *iqṭāʿ* was a grant of land by the sovereign to an individual, usually as a reward for extraordinary service, allowing that individual to collect the tax revenues from it in exchange for military service and/or a set number of soldiers. The *muqṭaʿ* had rights only to the revenue from his *iqṭāʿ*; the land remained the property of the sovereign. In addition, the *iqṭāʿ* was not automatically heritable; rights to the *iqṭāʿ* had to be confirmed by the sovereign before they could be passed on. The *iqṭāʿ* system was widely employed by the Great Seljuqs in Iran, Iraq and Syria, but the extent of its use in Anatolia is unclear. Some *iqṭāʿ* appear to have been given to Türkmēn, but most seem to have been granted to *ghulāms*.

By the 13th century the Seljuq army had acquired two elements unique among the Muslim armies of the Middle East. The first was class of men of mixed ethnic origin, called *mixobarbaroi* (μῆσοβάρβαροι, “semi-barbarians, half-breeds, half-castes”) by the Byzantines and *ikdiş* or *igdish* (اكدش) by the Seljuqs. These men were the children of Turkish fathers and non-Turkish mothers, generally Greeks. Anna Komnene, daughter of the Byzantine emperor Alexios I and author a history of his reign titled *The Alexiad*, mentions the *mixobarbaroi* in the Seljuq army taunting the Greeks in their own language during a battle.

The second distinctive element was foreign mercenaries. A large part of the army was made up of hired soldiers referred to as *jirā khvār* (جری خوار or جرا خوار) “receiving a wage”. These hired soldiers came from many different regions and consisted of both Muslims and Christians. In particular, the Seljuqs of Rum made wide use of Christian Frankish mercenaries (فرنگ, *firang*). The Franks were esteemed for their military abilities, and played an important role in defeating the followers of Baba Ishaq during the Baba’i Rebellion

in 1240 since they, unlike the Muslim Türkmén in the Seljuq army, did not attribute any supernatural powers or protection to Baba Ishaq and his followers, and attacked them without hesitation.

The last element in the pre-Mongol Seljuq army were the forces provided by vassal states. These forces varied in size and quality, but did add to the strength and numbers of the Sultan's army.

After the Mongol victory at the Battle of Köseadağ in 1243, the Sultanate of Rum became a Mongol vassal. In parallel with the increasing political decline of the Seljuq state in the following years, the army also began a process of decline. There was an increasing reliance on the *jirā khvār* forces, and the Türkmén tribes increasingly fell into this category. In addition, although the *ghulām* slave forces appear to have remained the core of the Seljuq army, the number of *muqṭa'* found in the army steadily declined as the institution of the *iqṭā'* itself fell into decline. Eventually, like the Seljuq sultans themselves, the army of the Seljuqs of Rum seems to have been disbanded or simply faded away.

Seljuq Military Titles

Historical sources relate a number of military titles from the army of the Seljuqs of Rum. Some of these titles have parallels with the army of the Great Seljuqs, but others are unique to Rum. The first is the position of *Beglerbegi* / *Beylerbeyi*. The exact role of this office is unclear in the pre-Mongol period. In the 12th century the *beylerbeyi* may have been the equivalent of the *archisatrapos* (ἀρχισατράππος), or the *ispahsālār* (اسپهسالار), or the *amīr kabīr* (امير كبير). In the 13th century he may have been the *amīr al-umarā'* (امير الامراء) or the *malik al-umarā'* (ملك الامراء). The *beylerbeyi* often seems to have been responsible for controlling the Türkmén whose leaders were called *bey*, but at least one member of the Komnēnoi family was a *beylerbeyi*.

The commander-in-chief of the army was titled either *subaşı* or *sarlashkar* (سرلشکر, "head of the army") in Persian. Lesser commanders were either *amīr* (امير) or *beg / bey* (بك), the latter often referring to a Türkmén commander, and the commander of a garrison was a *shihna* (شحنة). The "master of horses", *amīr al-akhūr* (امير الاخور) may have sometimes been referred to as the *kundestabl* (کندهستابل), from the French *contestable* (Latin *comes stabulī*, English *constable*). However, this post may have been a purely military position, distinct from the *amīr al-akhūr*. A similar position was found in the Byzantine Empire, the *kondostavlos* (κοντοστάβλος) or *konostavlos* (κονοστάβλος), and there is at least one reference to this position by the 12th century Arab historian Ibn al-Qalānisī, where it is written *qundiṣṭabl* (قندصطبل).

Seljuq Weapons and Tactics

The weapons and tactics of the Seljuq army in Rum were essentially the same as those of the Qarakhanid army. However, the use of foreign mercenaries, and the Frankish mercenaries in particular, provided the Seljuq army with a wider range of tactics and capabilities than those found in the armies of many of the Seljuq's neighbors. The strength of the Seljuq armies was proven by Seljuq victories in battles such as the Battle of Myriokephalon (1176) against the Byzantines, and the Battle of Yassıçemen (1230) against the combined forces of the Khwarezmshahs, the Empire of Trebizond, and Seljuq rebels. However, Seljuq forces proved inadequate in their encounter with the Mongols at Köseadağ in 1243.

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Discussion Questions

1. What characteristics of the Frankish mercenaries made them so valuable to the Seljuq army?

2. In what important ways did the army of the Seljuqs of Rum differ from the army of the Great Seljuqs?

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The Great Seljuks

In the lands that came under the rule of the Great Seljuqs, society came to be divided along both ethnic lines and by social status, and evolved over time. At the top was the Turkic, military class consisting of the the ruling Seljuq clan and their Türkmen tribal supporters whose support was maintained through a combination of military power and consultation. Initially, authority over both conquered territories and over the Türkmen was regarded as the privilege of the ruling Seljuq clan, with the most senior member being the Sultan, and lesser members holding the title of *malik* (king). However, as the Seljuqs moved from being tribal leaders to imperial rulers, the Sultan became more and more of an absolute ruler. Similarly, the Türkmen remained an important part of the Seljuqs' military might, but their dominant position in the Seljuq armies was taken by a standing army made up of slaves and freemen.

Below the ruling military class came the members of the royal bureaucracy. Positions in the bureaucracy were generally filled by educated members of the local population able to read, speak and write Arabic and/or Persian. Although bureaucrats were almost never able to enter the ranks of the ruling classes, high-ranking officials enjoyed great wealth and influence.

Religious scholars, the *ulama'* (علماء), and religious judges, *qadis* (قاضي) were another influential sector of the overwhelmingly Muslim society that the Great Seljuqs ruled. While such religious officials did not generally hold as prominent a place in society as royal officials and bureaucrats, they were a respected part of society.

The mass of ordinary citizens were craftsmen, merchants and farmers whose taxes supported the rulers and their officials. Although they were predominantly Muslim, there were communities of Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians in various parts of the Great Seljuqs' territory.

The Seljuks of Rum

Although the society and social classes that developed in the Sultanate of Rum shared many similarities with those in the territories of the Great Seljuqs, there were a number of features that made it distinctive. The ruling, Turkic military class consisted of the Seljuq clan, emirs and various Türkmen beys. As in the Great Seljuq lands the Türkmen tribes remained an important component of the Rum Seljuqs' military might, despite their relative autonomy. However, there was a military class in Rum whose status appears to have been just below that of the emirs, the *ikdish* (اكديش, Turkish *ikdiş*). The *ikdish*, referred to in the Byzantine sources as *mixobarbaroi* (μειοβάρβαροι, "mixed/half-barbarians"), were the children of Turkish (or other Muslim) fathers and local (generally Greek) mothers. In the Byzantine sources, due to their knowledge of both Greek and Turkish, Seljuq *mixobarbaroi* often appear in the role of translators and negotiators between the Seljuqs and the Byzantines. In Muslim sources, the *ikdish* appear as a military class who often carried out local military operations, or were involved urban administration, both roles that could be more efficiently carried out by people able to communicate with the predominantly non-Muslim, non-Turkic population.

Below the ruling military class came the bureaucrats responsible for administrative and financial functions. As in the Great Seljuq territories, the bureaucracy of the Sultanate of Rum was staffed almost entirely by non-Turkish officials, but the source of these bureaucrats in Rum differed from those in the Great Seljuq lands. The languages of administration in both states were Persian and, to a lesser degree, Arabic. Since these were the languages spoken and written by the peoples living in the Great Seljuq state, finding qualified people to staff the bureaucracy was relatively easy. However, in the newly conquered lands of the Sultanate of Rum, the majority of the population spoke Greek or Armenian. As a result, many bureaucratic posts were filled by immigrants, many from Khorasan, whose native languages were Persian or Arabic. To correspond with the non-Muslim powers in the region, a number of Greek-speaking officials worked in the royal chancellery.

Below these groups came the merchants, and then the artisans/craftsmen, both Muslim and non-Muslim. Very little is known about their organization in the towns or cities of Seljuq Rum, but considering that Iranian

Muslims who had emigrated to the lands of Rum filled many of the posts in the Seljuq administration, it is likely that artisans and craftsmen were organized in accordance with this group's ideas and traditions.

Brief mention should be made here about the non-Muslims in the Seljuq Sultanate of Rum. Although the Seljuqs of Rum were Muslim and worked to establish Islamic institutions in their lands, their relations with their non-Muslim subjects (who were likely still the majority) appear to have been quite good once the initial conquests were over and Seljuq rule established. The Seljuqs, having no interest in Christian sects, treated all Christian churches equally, although the Greek Orthodox Church may have initially had a more difficult time with their new rulers due to its close connection with the Byzantine state.

Relations with the non-Muslim population were close even in higher levels of Seljuq society. The mothers of the sultans Kay Khusraw I and Kay Khusraw II were both Greek, and the latter sultan's Greek uncles were said to have a great deal of influence with him. In addition, Greek aristocrats were frequently found in the sultans' entourage. Some held permanent positions, but others were Byzantine nobles who were out of favor and had taken refuge among the Seljuqs. Seljuq and other Turkish rulers in Anatolia also frequently sought refuge with the Byzantines when they were in difficulty.

The lowest free class was the peasantry. While sources of information on the state of the peasantry are limited, the picture that emerges from the surviving sources is one of grinding poverty in the regions through which the Byzantine, Seljuq and other Turkic armies passed. In these areas the destruction of crops and irrigation canals frequently left the peasants destitute. However, in more secure locations, such as in the vicinity of Konya, the high yields and variety of crops grown there stood in sharp contrast to the low yields and misery of the outlying territories.

At the bottom of society were the slaves. As with the peasantry, sources of information on the lives and conditions of slave in the Sultanate of Rum. Slaves fell into two broad categories, those who served as soldiers in the Sultan's army and domestic slaves. As in many contemporary Islamic armies, much of the armies' forces were made up of slaves (غلام *ghulām*, or مملوك *mamlūk*) who were considered to be more loyal to the sovereign. In Rum, most of these slave-soldiers were captives of Greek origin. Domestic slaves, both male and female, served in a number of roles in the palaces and homes of their wealthy owners.

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Discussion Questions

1. In the lands of the Great Seljuqs, what was the relationship between the ruling Seljuq dynasty and the settled Arab and Iranian populations?
2. What factors made the society ruled by the Seljuq Sultans of Rum noticeably different from the societies ruled by the Great Seljuqs?

GENDER RELATIONS

The Great Seljuqs

While most women during the Seljuq period would have led lives centered on the home and family and whose movements and behavior would have been circumscribed by the societal norms of the Islamic Middle Ages, it is clear that some women of high social status had more freedom of movement and were more active in society and politics.

One area in which elite Seljuq women seem to have been particularly noticeable is in the patronage of architecture. Inscriptions giving the names of women as patrons for construction or renovation have been found on mausoleums, caravanserais, madrasas and even mosques. For example, the name of Zumurrud Khatun, daughter of the Seljuq sultan Mahmud, is listed as the patron for the renovation of the Ali al-Rida mausoleum in Mashhad, Iran in 1118. Later, the wife of the Seljuq sultan Sanjar, Qutlugh Balka Sayyida Türkan, is listed as the patron for the repairs and renovation of the Ribat-i Sharaf caravanserai in Khorasan (*pictured left*) in 1154-55. The fact that the names of women appear so prominently on both secular and sacred structures indicates that women's patronage of such projects was considered not only socially acceptable, but even praiseworthy.



In addition to patronage of public or pious works, some elite Seljuq women had a role in the politics of the Great Seljuq state. Perhaps the most notable example was the wife of Sultan Malikshah, Terken Khatun. After the death of her husband, Terken Khatun put her own young son, Mahmud, on the throne. Despite her lack of an official position, Terken Khatun was the effective ruler of the Seljuq state until her death in 1094.

One of the main reasons that Seljuq women were able to finance the construction of various buildings or become involved in political maneuvering was their financial independence. Noble women generally received generous financial grants from their husbands or sons and had sizeable retinues of slaves and servants. This combination of wealth and loyal servant gave them the ability to influence the course of events, political and military, distribute alms, and finance construction.

The Seljuqs of Rum

The situation for women in the Seljuq state of Rum was little different from that of the Great Seljuqs. Most women's lives centered around the home and family, but some elite women had more freedom of movement or came to prominence due to their patronage of architecture, their involvement in politics, or their knowledge. Like noble women in the Great Seljuq Empire, upper class women in the Sultanate of Rum often had considerable personal wealth at their disposal.

The freedom of movement some elite women enjoyed is attested by the account of Ibn Jubayr, a Muslim from al-Andalus who traveled the Muslim world in the late 12th century. In his account he discusses three Turkish noblewomen (*khatun*, خاتون), among them Saljuqa (or Saljuqi) bint Mas'ud, daughter of Sultan Mas'ud (r. 1116-1156), who made the pilgrimage to Mecca accompanied only by their personal servants and retinue in 1183-85. Passing through Baghdad going to and returning from Mecca, she apparently caught the attention of the Abbasi Caliph al-Nasir, because eighteen months later he asked to marry her. They were married soon afterwards, and the surviving accounts indicate that it was a happy marriage until Saljuqa's death in 1188.

Building inscriptions indicate that a number of Rum Seljuq women were patrons of a number of different structures in the Sultanate of Rum. However, one woman stands out in particular, the wife of Sultan Kayqubad I (r. 1220-1237) and mother of Sultan Kaykhusraw II (r. 1237-1246), Mahperi Khatun (ماه پری). Also known as Mahpari Khatun (ماه پاری), Khand Khatun (خواند خاتون) or Hunat Khatun (هوناظ خاتون), Mahperi Khatun was the sponsor for the construction of one mosque, a mausoleum, a double bathhouse and five

madrasas in Kayseri, Turkey. In addition to these, she also financed the construction of two caravanserais, one near Tokat and the other near Yozgat.



The Hunat Hatun complex in Kayseri

Women noted for their learning are rare in the Sultanate of Rum, but one in particular stands out, Bibi Munajjima, “Bibi the Astrologer”. She was brought from Syria with her husband and son by Sultan Kayqubad I to the Rum Seljuq capital of Konya in 1231 and apparently served as the court astrologer. She was so respected that her son, Nasr al-Din Husayn (who later wrote the primary source for the history of the Sultanate of Rum) was known by the name Ibn Bibi (“son of Bibi”). This is unusual since names beginning with “ibn” are generally followed by the father’s name rather than the mother’s, and is indicative of her status.

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Discussion Questions

1. In what areas were Seljuq women most visible?
2. What factors made Seljuq women relatively independent actors in politics and society?

INNOVATIONS

Overview

As peoples who had only recently converted to Islam and were in the process of assimilating not only a new religion, but also the cultural legacy of the Islamic world at a time when the New Persian language was beginning to supplant Arabic as the language of administration and literature in the eastern regions, the Qarakhanids, Oghuz and Seljuqs were perhaps not yet in the best position to make their contributions to this culture. Nevertheless, the Qarakhanids and the Seljuqs of Rum did make their own unique contributions to Islamic civilization and culture.

The Seljuqs of Rum

In comparison to the Great Seljuqs, innovation is a more obvious feature of the culture, army and administration of the Seljuqs of Rum. This is primarily due to the fact that the Seljuqs of Rum were establishing a Muslim state in lands that had just been conquered from the Byzantines. Muslim rule was new to these lands, the majority of the population was Christian, architectural and artistic traditions were different from those of the Islamic world, knowledge of Arabic and Persian was practically non-existent, and, in many regions of Anatolia, the environment was quite different from that of Iraq and Syria. As a result, the Seljuqs were forced to innovate in the process of establishing their rule and creating a Muslim society in the lands of Rum.

Rum Seljuq architecture differs from Great Seljuq architecture in a number of ways. While certain elements of Great Seljuq architecture, such as *muqarnas*, are utilized in Rum Seljuq buildings, the most common building material in the lands of Rum was stone, rather than brick as in the Great Seljuq empire. This alone gives Rum Seljuq architecture a distinct appearance. In addition, the elaborate stone carving found around the entrances of mosques, madrasas, caravanserais, and on the exterior of many mausoleums is characteristic of Rum Seljuq architecture, but almost entirely absent in Great Seljuq architecture.

Another area of Rum Seljuq innovation is in the composition of their army. While the Rum Seljuq army had most of the elements of the Great Seljuq army, there were two unique elements in Rum. The first was the use of western, generally Frankish, mercenaries and the other was units of *igdish / mixobarbaroi*, men of mixed (generally Greek-Turkish) parentage. Such units were the result of the conditions in the Sultanate of Rum in the 11th-13th centuries, conditions not found in the Great Seljuq lands, and provided the Seljuq army with capabilities that its Turkmen units did not have.

In their bureaucracy, the Seljuqs of Rum faced challenges unknown in the Great Seljuq state. In both states the primary languages of administration were Persian and, to a lesser degree, Arabic. The Great Seljuqs could fill positions in their bureaucracy by simply seeking out educated local people, since both languages were the main languages spoken in their territories. However, these two languages were unknown to the Greeks and Armenians who made up the majority of the inhabitants in the Sultanate of Rum. As a result, positions in the bureaucracy were often filled by educated immigrants, many from Khorasan. On the other hand, the fact that the Seljuqs of Rum had commercial and political relations with Byzantines and western Europeans, meant that they did require officials in their chancellery capable of preparing documents and correspondence in a language they understood, Greek.

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Discussion Questions

1. What is the primary reason that innovation in a number of fields is seen more among the Seljuqs of Rum than the Great Seljuqs?

TRADE

Much like the Qarakhanids, information in written sources about the economy and trade of the Great Seljuq state is sketchy, and any conclusions regarding them are primarily reliant on indirect evidence such as coins and architecture. Their coinage indicates an active economy, and the extensive territories that they ruled, extending from Khorasan to Anatolia, gave them control over important trade routes. Their control over these routes that linked Central Asia with Eastern Europe, as well as China and India with Syrian ports on the Mediterranean, combined with the security and stability that the Seljuq Empire provided would have encouraged long-distance trade. The construction of caravanserais by the Seljuqs along these trade routes is both an indication of commercial activity as well as official encouragement of it. One example is the Ribat-i Sharaf (رباط شرف), a large Seljuq caravanserai located in Iran approximately halfway between Nishapur and Merv, Turkmenistan.

Paradoxically, despite the very limited number of written sources related to the history of the Seljuqs of Rum, information regarding their trade is more plentiful than for the Great Seljuqs. The economic life of the Sultanate of Rum can be divided into two distinct phases; the first beginning with the establishment of the independent sultanate in the late 11th century under Süleyman-shah and continuing to the end of the 12th – beginning of the 13th century. In this period the Sultanate of Rum was an inland state bordered by the Byzantines to the north, west and southwest, Armenian and Crusader states to the south, and Turkic principalities to the east, the most important of which was that of the Danishmends.

In this period Seljuq trade was overland trade conducted along the old trade routes that linked Constantinople with lands to the east. One route linked the city with Antioch and Aleppo; another passed through Malatya and then continued on to northern Iraq, Armenia and Iran. However, one route from Iran passed through Erzurum and terminated in Trabzon where goods were loaded onto ships to reach their final destination. With the establishment of the Sultanate of Rum this overland trade was now directed towards the Seljuq capital of Konya, with Seljuq merchants conducting the trade with the Byzantines in Constantinople.

With the destruction of the Danishmend state in 1178 this picture began change. Among the territories the Seljuqs took from the Danishmends was the city of Samsun on the Black Sea coast, giving the Seljuqs in Anatolia their first access to the sea. Although the degree of impact this had on Seljuq trade is unclear, the contemporary Arab historian Ibn al-Athir stated that before 1205-1206, Iraqi and Syrian merchants were meeting with Russian and Qipchak merchants in Sivas. Sivas soon became an important transit point, where goods coming from Syria and Iraq were delivered to Seljuq traders who then forwarded them to Sinop or Trabzon where they would be loaded onto ships to carry them to other Black Sea ports. Another development in the late 12th century indicating the expansion of trade was the construction of the first caravanserai on the Konya-Kayseri road during the reign of Qilij Arslan II (r. 1156-1192).

Events in the first two decades of the 13th century would have an even more profound impact on Seljuq trade. The first was the capture of Antalya, motivated in part by commercial considerations, in 1207 by Sultan Kayhusraw I (r. 1192-1196, 1205-1210). Antalya gave the Seljuqs access to the Mediterranean, and trade with Europeans soon followed. One of the first European states to make a commercial treaty and establish direct links with the Seljuqs of Rum was Venice. The first trade agreement was concluded during the reign of Kayhusraw I, and renewed during the reign of Kaykavus I (r. 1210-1219) and in 1220 under Kaykubad I (r. 1219-1236) a more detailed treaty was signed. In addition to the Venetians, other texts mention the presence of Pisans, Genoese and Provençal traders in Antalya.

Shortly after the first treaty with the Venetians was signed, the Franks in Cyprus also sought to establish regular trade relations with the Seljuqs in Antalya. The first treaty, drafted by the Seljuqs and written in Greek, was signed in 1213, and a more comprehensive treaty followed in 1216.

Overland trade also appears to have increased in volume in this period. Contemporary sources mention Iranian merchants in Konya and Sivas, as well as Italian merchants from Cyprus and Syria in Seljuq cities.

Another clear indication of the importance of overland trade in the Seljuq lands in the 13th century is the number of caravanserais that were built in this period. These rest-houses for travelling merchants and their animals (a large one was referred to as a *kervansaray* / کاروانسرای , a small one as a *han* / خان) provided free lodging for up to three days and were generally spaced approximately 30 kilometers apart, the typical distance covered in nine hours of travel by camel. Somewhere between 30 and 40 caravanserais were constructed along the major trade routes in Anatolia before the Mongol conquest in 1243, with a number of others added in the following years.

Contemporary sources indicate that the Anatolian Seljuqs themselves were also active participants in this long-distance trade. Although mentions of Seljuq traders are not numerous, one document dating from the first quarter of the 12th century found in the Cairo Genizah mentions “Oghuz traders” in Muslim Spain, while the 12th century Chinese chronicle the *History of Song* (*Song Shi* 宋史) makes mention of envoys sent to the imperial court by both the Great Seljuqs and the Seljuqs of Rum. The fact that these envoys arrived by land indicates that there were trade routes that linked Anatolia to China.

According to various contemporary sources the exports of the Sultanate of Rum were diverse. Among the agricultural products exported were wheat, dried fruits, nuts, and cotton. Livestock, particularly horses and mules, was also exported to neighboring regions. Silver, alum and rock salt were among the mineral resources traded to outsiders. The main manufactured goods were leather and leather goods, carpets, and textiles. Woolen, cotton and silk textiles were valued exports, and noted for both their vibrant colors and varied designs. Fine cotton and silk textiles interspersed with gold threads were especially sought after. Finally, slaves were valuable commodity, particularly Georgian slaves.

On the other hand, the Seljuqs actively imported a number of items, mostly luxury goods. Syrian textiles and glassware and western weapons were frequent imports, but trade with the Russians and Qipchaks provided some of their most valuable imports – honey, furs and slaves.

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Discussion Questions

1. How territorial expansion affect trade in the Seljuq Sultanate of Rum?
2. Why are sources about the external trade of the Sultanate of Rum more plentiful than those for either the Great Seljuqs or the Qarakhanids?



Portal of the Rabati Malik caravanserai, Uzbekistan (Wikicommons)



Ribat-i Sharaf Caravanserai, Iran (Wikicommons)



Interior courtyard of the Sultan Han, Aksaray, Turkey (Wikicommons)

RELIGION

The Great Seljuqs

Although all early sources of Seljuq history agree that Seljuq was the first of his tribe to become a Muslim, they are silent on the subject of Seljuq and his people's religious beliefs before his conversion to Islam. The only clue that might offer some insight on this topic is the names given to Seljuq's sons prior to his conversion – Mikail, Israil, Musa and Yunus and/or Yusuf. The first three names are found in all sources, while in some sources Yunus or Yusuf is given as the name of Seljuq's fourth son, and in one source Yunus and Yusuf are listed as Seljuq's fourth and fifth sons.

The first three names in particular have attracted scholars' attention since they could be Muslim, Christian or Jewish names. Those who argue that these are Muslim names have pointed out that in Iran, the first converts to Islam there tended to pick religiously ambiguous names that could be Muslim, Christian or Jewish, and only later did distinctively Muslim names become popular.

Other scholars have argued that the names of Seljuq's sons are evidence of Jewish Khazar influence. This argument is based on the information in some early sources that indicate that there was prolonged contact between the Khazars and the Seljuqs, and that, even if the Seljuqs did not convert to Judaism as the Khazars had, Seljuq chose names for his sons that reflected the Khazars' prestige.

Finally, there have been some scholars who believe that the names given to Seljuq's sons are the result of Nestorian Christian influence. They cite the widespread presence of Nestorian Christians in Central Asia and the accounts of Turkic groups who reportedly converted to Christianity, and argue that the early Seljuqs could have been among them. In addition, a review of the naming practices of late 9th – early 10th century Muslims, Jews and Christians in Central Asia has indicated that names of Seljuq's three sons most closely matches Christian naming practices in the region at that time. Nonetheless, each of these three views has its merits, and the issue the Seljuq's pre-Islamic religious beliefs remains an open question.

The Seljuqs became part of the Islamic world at the dawn of the 11th century, a century that was critical in shaping the interpretations of Islam that shape the faith today. Sunni Islam was beginning to achieve a distinctive identity that clearly distinguished it from the Shi'ism of the Fatimids in Egypt and the Ismailis in Iran and Syria. The three major Sunni schools of religious law (مذهب *madhhab*, pl. مذاهب *madhāhib*), the Maliki, Shafa'i and Hanafi, were joined by a fourth, the Hanbali. Finally, this century saw the appearance of the *madrasa*, centers of Muslim learning that first appeared in Central Asia but soon spread across the Islamic world.

This intense intellectual and theological upheaval was reflected in the society of the eastern Islamic world in particular, where factionalism (often Sunni – Shi'i, but not exclusively) and heated theological debates were characteristic. While genuine religious differences fueled some of the widespread strife, politics and power were often the real motives behind it.

The Seljuqs' attitudes and actions in regard to religion appear to reflect the complexities of this period. Although the Seljuqs have often be portrayed as the defenders of Sunnism in general, and the Hanafi *madhhab* in particular, a closer examination of the historical sources presents a very different picture. Instead of being the fanatic defenders of Sunni Islam and the Hanafi school, the Seljuqs are seen as rulers who were generally quite tolerant of other Sunni *madhahib*, and awarded positions of power and influence to talented people regardless of their *madhhab*. In addition, there are also indications in some sources that the Seljuqs were occasionally suspected of having Shi'i sympathies.

Finally, there are a few passages in some sources indicating that some pre-Islamic beliefs and practices continued to exist among the Türkmén, and that the outward Muslim identity of both the Türkmén and the Seljuqs was sometimes rather thin. However, neither of these would be surprising in a people who had only recently converted to Islam.

The Seljuqs of Rum

While there are many similarities in the characteristics and place of religion among the Seljuqs of Rum and the Great Seljuqs, the context of the larger society over which the Seljuqs ruled was very different. The Great Seljuqs came to power in lands that presented a very diverse and contentious religious landscape, but were also predominantly Muslim. The Seljuqs of Rum, on the other hand, ruled over newly-conquered lands that still had large non-Muslim populations, primarily Greek and Armenian Christians.

Like the Great Seljuqs, the Seljuqs of Rum were avowedly Sunni and adherents of the Hanafi *madhhab*, and the institutions of Sunni Islam of that period were brought to Anatolia with them. While in the early period, converted churches or modest structures were mostly likely used as mosques, as Islam expanded larger mosques began to be constructed in the mid 12th century. The center of religious learning particularly associated with the Great Seljuqs, the *madrasa*, made its appearance in Anatolia later, around the end of the 12th century.

Alongside the more public Islam of the mosque, the *madrasa*, and the religious scholars, the *ulama* (علماء), Islamic mysticism, Sufism, also made its appearance and flourished in Anatolia under the Seljuqs. Whatever strands of Sufism expressed in Persian coming from Iran and Khorasan that may have made their way to Anatolia in the 12th century were overshadowed in the 13th century by perhaps the most famous Sufi of all, Jalal al-Din Rumi (جلال الدين رومی) who taught and established his Sufi order, or *tariqa* (طريقة), the Mevlevi, in the Seljuq capital of Konya. Born in Balkh in 1207, Jalal al-Din's father, Baha al-Din Walad, also a noted scholar and mystic, left Balkh around 1215. After a long journey that passed through Nishapur, Baghdad, Mecca, Damascus, Malatya, Erzincan, and finally settled in Karaman in 1222. In 1228, at the insistence of the Seljuq sultan Ala' ad-Din Kayqobad I, Baha al-Din Walad took his family to Konya. Jalal al-Din would spend almost the rest of his life working, teaching and writing in Konya until his death in 1273.

While Rumi wrote almost entirely in Persian, another famous Sufi teacher who spent some time in the Sultanate of Rum, Ibn Arabi (ابن عربي), was one of the most influential representatives of Arab Sufism and wrote exclusively in Arabic. Originally, from al-Andalus, Ibn Arabi travelled to the lands of Rum three times. His first visit was to Malatya in 1205, and the second was a journey to Sivas and Konya (where he met Kay

Kavus I) in 1215. Ibn Arabi's final visit to the Seljuq state was an extended stay in Malatya between 1216-1218. Through his visits and the teaching of his followers Ibn Arabi gained students in Rum, the most famous of whom was Sadr al-Din Qunawi (صدر الدين قونوي, Sadreddin Konevi), an important and respected theologian.

While teachers such as Jalal al-Din Rumi and Ibn Arabi appealed to the inhabitants of towns and cities in Anatolia, people who had had more contact with and a greater appreciation of Islamic culture expressed in Persian and Arabic, such figures had little appeal to the Türkmén whose songs and poetry were entirely Turkish and did not understand Persian or Arabic. Although little information on the Türkmén's understanding and practice of Islam in Anatolia has come down to the present, dervishes, referred to as *baba* ("father"), appear to have influential religious figures among the Türkmén tribes. What the *babas* taught is unknown, but on at least one occasion a *baba* and his followers became the spark that ignited an uprising against the Seljuq state. Baba Ishaq, from Kafarsud in southeastern Anatolia, began teaching among the Türkmén around the year 1233. By 1240 he and his followers had created general unrest and rebellion in the region between Amasya, Malatya and Maraş. Although Baba Ishaq and many of his followers were killed in 1240, it would take until 1243 until the revolt was entirely crushed.

The 13th century also witnessed the development of new religious movements in Anatolia, and the spread of existing movements from other Islamic lands. One new movement was the Bektashi order, named after the man whose teachings inspired the movement, Haji Bektash Veli, who came to Anatolia from Khorasan in the 13th century. Among the groups that came to Anatolia in the latter part of the 13th century were the Rifa'iyya from Egypt and the Qalandariyya from Central Asia. While the teachings of Jalal al-Din Rumi and Ibn Arabi gained general acceptance from the major Sunni *madhhabs*, the teachings and practices of the Bektashis, Rifa'iyya and Qalandariyya were generally regarded as being heterodox and outside the limits of Sunni belief and practice.

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Discussion Questions

1. What challenges did the Seljuqs of Rum face in establishing a Muslim society in their territory?
2. How did the religious life of the urban sector and the Türkmén differ in the Sultanate of Rum?

ART

The Great Seljuqs

Architecture

The surviving examples of Great Seljuq architecture, mostly mosques, mausoleums, and a limited number of caravanserais, are found primarily in Iran and Turkmenistan. The almost universal building material is brick, and often high-quality baked bricks. These bricks were used not only as a building material, but, by altering recessed and protruding bricks as well as changing the orientation of the bricks, they could also be used to create complex decorative effects. Such brickwork could also be combined with glazed tiles in various colors and/or carved plaster or stucco decoration to achieve spectacular results.

Another distinctive feature of both Great Seljuk and Rum Seljuk architecture is the extensive use of *muqarnas* (مقرنص Arabic, مقرنس Persian), a form of ornamental vaulting sometimes referred to as “honeycomb vaulting” or “stalactite vaulting”. While the exact time and place of their origin is still debated, *muqarnas* became a popular form of decoration on vaults, domes, squinches and cornices (all zones of transition) across the Islamic world in the 11th century. *Muqarnas* could be constructed from stone, brick, stucco or wood and created a dazzling effect with the play of light and shadow on surfaces that would otherwise be bare and indistinct. These features can be seen in the Masjed-e Jam’e in Isfahan, Iran.



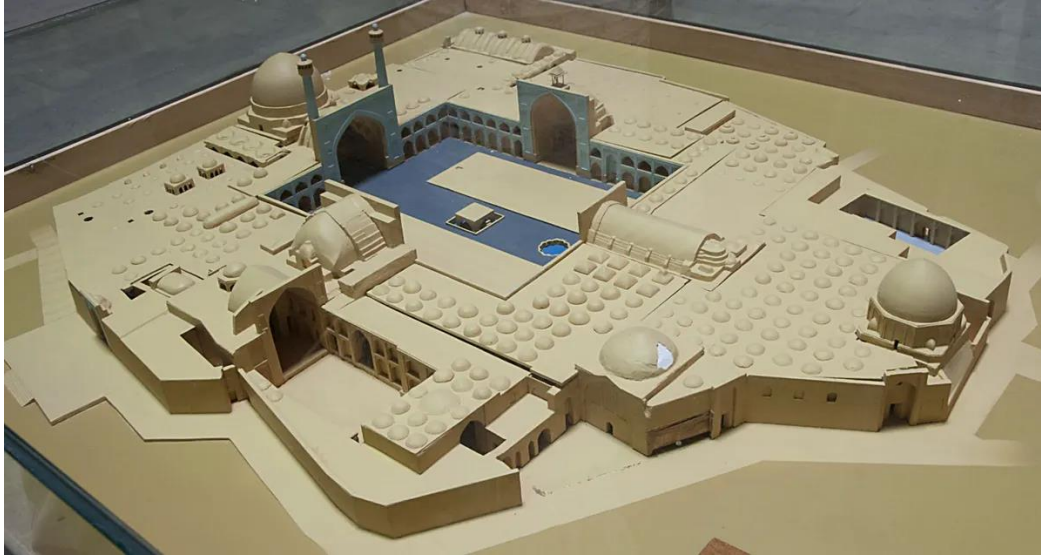
Muqarnas in the northeast iwan (Archnet)



Iwans and pishtaqs (Archnet)

Mosques

The Seljuq period witnessed the development and spread of what became the classic Iranian mosque, sometimes referred to as a “kiosk mosque”. This mosque plan consisted of four *iwans* (ایوان, Arabic *iwān*, Persian *ivān* / *eyvān* – a rectangular vaulted space walled in on three sides and open on the fourth) around a rectangular courtyard with the entrance aligned with the *ivan qibli* (the *ivan* aligned with the *qibla*, the direction of Mecca) and a large dome on this axis in front of the *mihrab* (the niche in the mosque indicating the *qibla*). The entrance to the mosque and the entrance to the *ivan qibli* often featured a *pishtaq* (پیشطاق), a formal gateway consisting of a flat brick or masonry structure that framed the two sides and top of the entrance. In addition, there were generally two smaller entrances at each end of the perpendicular axis. The minarets were generally tall, thin and cylindrical.



Model of the Masjed-e Jam'e in Isfahan showing the arrangement of four iwans around a rectangular central courtyard. (Archnet)

Mausoleums



A number of monumental mausoleums from the Seljuq period have survived to the present day. Like the mosques, the mausoleums were constructed from brick and used brickwork, colored tiles and carved stucco or plaster for decorative effect. Some were constructed in the earlier cylindrical "tower tomb" style.

Tughrul Tower, Rayy, Iran

However, during the Seljuq period a number of monumental mausoleums were constructed with square or polygon bases covered by a dome (گنبد, *gonbad*). Examples of this style of construction include the Sultan Sanjar mausoleum (*below right*) with a square base and the Kharragan Towers (*below left*), two mausoleums constructed with a polygonal base.



Kharragan Towers, Qazvin, Iran



Sultan Sanjar Mausoleum, Merv, Turkmenistan

Caravanserais

In addition to mosques and mausoleums, there are a limited number of examples of Seljuq caravanserais. One of the most famous is the Ribat-e Sharaf (*below*), constructed around 1114 on the road between Merv and Nishapur. The surrounding walls give it a distinctively fortress-like appearance, but the interior construction shows numerous features shared with contemporary mosques. Among these are brick construction, *pishtaqs*, four *iwans* surrounding a rectangular courtyard (in this case two courtyards, smaller *iwans* surrounding the courtyards, the use of small domes).



Minor Arts

The art of the Great Seljuqs is represented primarily by metalwork and ceramics with fewer examples of wood carving and book illustration. While based on Iranian models, Seljuq art combines Persian and Turkic elements in unique ways to create objects of great beauty and quality with a very high level of technical skill and craftsmanship. While decorative elements found in architecture such as interconnected star patterns, epigraphic bands and arabesques are used to cover surfaces, small objects also use elements not commonly found in architecture. The most distinctive of these are figural representations of mythical beasts, scenes from court life, astrological figures, and depictions of episodes from literary works such as the *Shahnama* by Firdawsi.

Metalwork

Bronze objects such as spoons, pen cases, oil lamps, bowls and ewers have survived in considerable numbers, and are display the skill and craftsmanship of their makers. Some are made from cast bronze, while later ones are often made from hammered sheet metal. The surfaces of these objects are often elaborately decorated, as seen in the 12th century objects below.



Bronze Bottle Fragment
(Museum für Islamische Kunst)



Ewer with calligraphic band
(Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Seljuk oil lamp
(Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe)

A decorative technique that was widely employed for metal objects in the Seljuq period was inlay, generally silver, although copper and other materials were sometimes used. An example of the use of silver and copper inlay is this early 13th century pen box.



Ceramics

Like metal objects, a fairly large number of Seljuq ceramics have come down to the present day. These pieces show that ceramic making was a major artform in the Seljuq era and that this period witnessed major innovations in shape, design, decoration and glazes. The Iranian city of Kashan (کاشان) was a major center of ceramic production, and the name of the city became the basis of the Persian word for “glazed tile”, *kashi* (کاشی).

Much of the ceramic ware from this period was made from **frit** (stone paste) that allowed the production of white, hard body ceramics that were much like Chinese porcelain. However, it was in the exterior decoration that the true sophistication and artistry of Seljuq ceramics was most obvious. In particular, ceramic artists of the Seljuq period excelled in two techniques in particular.

The first was the production of luster ware. Luster ware is made painting decorative elements on a light-colored ceramic piece with paints made with metal oxides. When the piece is baked in the kiln, the oxides return to their metallic state, producing reflective effects in the painted decoration.



Luster Bowl with Winged Horse, late 12th c



Side view of same bowl showing inscription

The second was the production of what is generally termed *Mina'i* (مینایی, "enameled" in Persian) ware, also called *haft rang* (هفت رنگ, "seven colors" in Persian). Produced between the late 12th and early 13th centuries, *Mina'i* ware employed several techniques in its production, but was the first to use **overglaze**, where the decoration is painted on a previously glazed and fired surface, and then fixed by firing the piece a second time, but at a lower temperature. Since the number of colors that could withstand the heat needed to fire ceramics was limited, this technique allowed the artists to use a much wider variety of colors in their decoration.



Mina'i ware bowl, late 12th-early 13th c



Lobed Mina'i ware bowl, early 13th c



In addition to the advances in glazing and decoration, ceramic artists in the Seljuq era also experimented in using other techniques to produce novel effects in their works. One example is this jug (left) dated to 1215-16 in the characteristic Seljuq blue-black color scheme whose outer surface has had sections cut away to make the figures and designs stand out. The pierced section has epigraphic bands above and below it.

Almost no large-scale painting from the Seljuq era and no miniature painting prior to the Mongol conquest has survived. As a result, the painted decoration on ceramics is a primary source of information on the styles and techniques of Seljuq painting and illustration. In addition, the depictions of people found on many of these pieces provide a wealth of information on the dress, ornaments, hair styles, customs and lives of the upper classes.

The Seljuqs of Rum

Architecture

Compared to the Great Seljuqs, the appearance of Rum Seljuq architecture came relatively late. Although the Seljuq conquest and settlement of Anatolia followed their victory over the Byzantines at the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, distinctive Seljuq structures only begin to appear in any number in the second half of the 12th century. This lag between conquest and construction is most likely due to the unsettled conditions and lack of economic stability in Seljuq territory in the late 11th and early 12th centuries. In fact, distinctive architecture was not the only thing that appeared relatively late in the Sultanate of Rum – the first Rum Seljuq coinage, dinars minted in Konya, only appeared in 1175-76.

The surviving architecture from the Seljuq Sultanate of Rum falls into three broad categories. The first is made up of large public buildings such as mosques, madrasas, hospitals and caravanserais. The second is mausoleums which served as both burial sites and monuments for members of the upper classes. The final category consists of the more limited number of surviving structures that fall outside of the first two groups. Among these structures are bridges, palaces, public baths, fortifications, and fountains.

Rum Seljuq architecture has a number of characteristics that distinguish it from the architecture of the Great Seljuqs. One of the most obvious differences is the primary building material – stone. While brick was the primary building material used in the Great Seljuq architecture of Iran and Transoxiana, Rum Seljuq buildings generally have outer walls constructed from large blocks of dressed stone, with brick mostly restricted to the construction of minarets. These surfaces of these stone structures are generally undecorated, with elaborate carved decoration concentrated around the main entrance, and, in the case of mosques, the *mihrab*. Less commonly, in addition to carved decoration, the technique of *ablaq* (البلق), alternating light and dark stone for a decorative effect is employed.



Susuz Han, on the Antalya-Burdur road, showing unadorned walls and entrance decorated with muqarnas and ablaq.

Mosques

Rum Seljuq congregational mosques (large mosques for communal Friday prayers known as a جامع *jāmi* ' or مسجد جامع *masjid jāmi* ' in Arabic and *cami* in Turkish) generally fall into two stylistic categories. The most common is a rectilinear, flat roofed hypostyle structure with a dome in front of the *mihrab*. Interior decoration, stone carving and ceramic tiles, is restricted to the *mihrab* and the dome. These features are all found in the Alaeddin Mosque in Konya, constructed in 1235.



Alaeddin Mosque, Konya, showing the hemispherical dome in front of the mihrab and the conical roofs of the royal mausoleums.



Interior of the Alaeddin Mosque, Konya, showing the hypostyle construction. Many of the columns are re-used Roman and Byzantine columns.



(Left) Mihrab and (right) restored dome of the Alaeddin Mosque, Konya.



Smaller mosques (Arabic, مَسْجِد, *masjid*; Turkish *mescit*) from the Seljuq period were generally constructed according to a simple plan of a square chamber topped by a dome, and the entrance opposite the *qibla*. An example of this type of structure is the 13th century Hoca Hasan mosque in Konya (*left*).

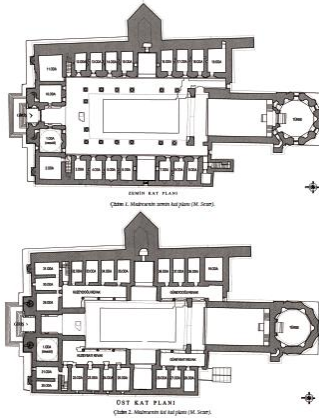
However, there is another category of small mosques from the 12th century, citadel mosques (Turkish, *kale mescidi*), that exhibit a more complex interior plan with interior arches and pillars. These features can be seen in the photographs of the citadel mosque in Erzurum.



Exterior of the Erzurum citadel mosque



Interior of the Erzurum citadel mosque



Madrasas

Like congregational mosques, Seljuq madrasas in Anatolia were generally constructed in one of two patterns. Large madrasas were built as rectilinear structures with a series of chambers that surrounded an open central courtyard, as in the Çifte Minareli Medrese in Erzurum and the Gök Medrese in the city of Sivas.

Plans of the upper and lower floors of the Çifte Minareli Medrese in Erzurum (drawings by M. Sezer, in H. Gündoğdu, "Erzurum Çifte Minareli Medrese'nin Son Restorasyonunda Ortaya Çıkan Yeni Bulgular." Restorasyon Yıllığı Dergisi, 10 (2015).

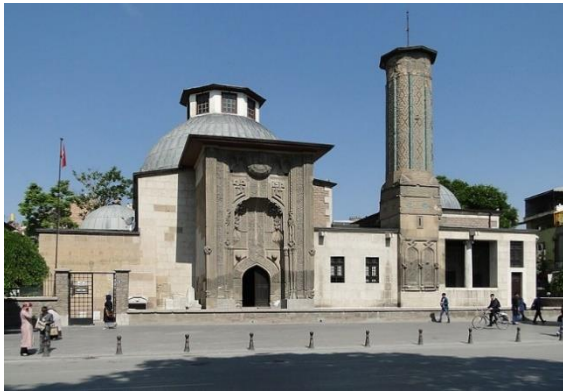


Exterior of the Çifte Minareli Medrese



Interior of the Çifte Minareli Medrese

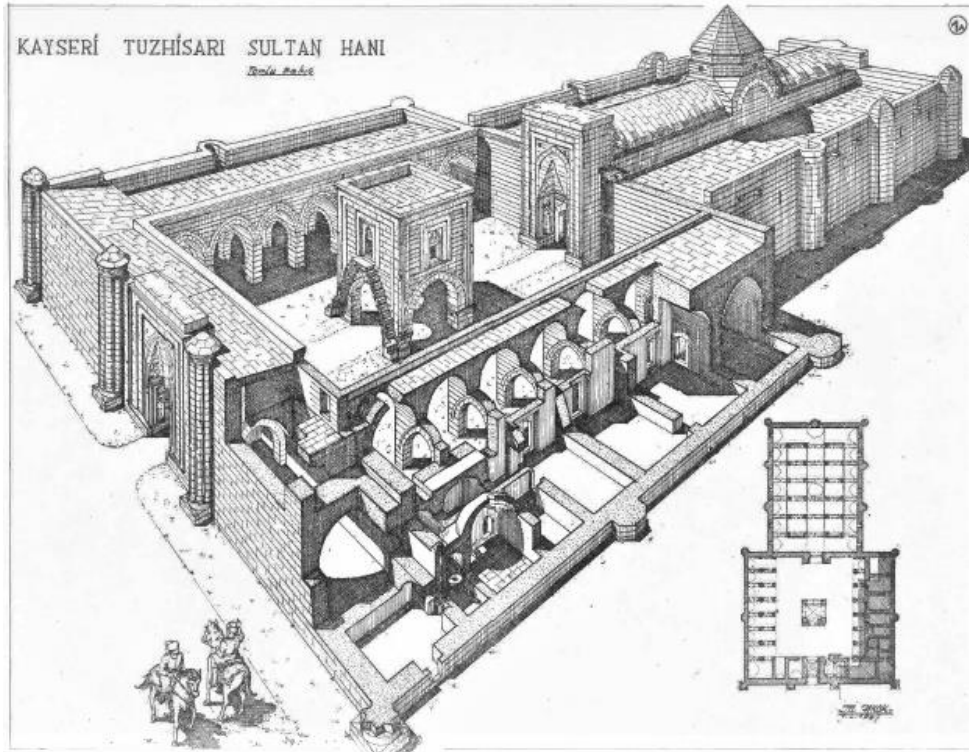
Smaller madrasas were also constructed around a central courtyard, but the courtyard was covered with either a dome or a vault. The İnce Minareli Medrese and the Karatay Medresesi, both in the city of Konya, are examples of madrasas constructed according to this plan.



Exterior of the İnce Minareli Medresesi



Interior of the İnce Minareli Medresesi



Cut-away drawing and plan of the Kayseri Tuzhisari Sultan Hanı (Mahmut Akok, Türk Arkeoloji Dergisi XVII/2 (1968))

Caravanserais

One of the most widespread Rum Seljuq structures is the caravanserai (کاروانسرای *kārvānsarāy* in Persian, *kervansaray* in Turkish), also referred to as a khan (خان *khān* in Persian, *han* in Turkish), particularly in an urban setting.



Caravanserais were intended to provide security for merchants, their animals, and their goods, and the features of these buildings reflects this. Rum Seljuq caravanserais were constructed with thick stone walls that were often crenellated, only one entrance and high, narrow slit windows. There was no exterior décor, except around the sole entrance, and the entrance to the covered hall.

Exterior walls and windows of the Alayhan, near Aksaray

The single entrance led into a rectangular courtyard surrounded by various chambers on two or three sides and a covered hall on the side opposite the entrance. In some caravanserais there was a small, raised mosque in the center of the courtyard. The covered hall had several aisles of columns and one dome. The floor in the interior of the covered hall was built on two levels; the lower one was for the animals, and the raised one for the men and their goods.



Interior of the Sultanhanı, Kayseri showing the two-level floor (Kayseri Valiliği)



Mausoleums

Mausoleums are another commonly found structure from the Seljuq era. Seljuq mausoleums (*kümbet* or *türbe* in Turkish) are generally either round or polygonal (octagonal plans are more typical) with a conical roof. Most have two levels; the lower one is the the actual burial site and may, or may not, have external access. The upper level, reached by external stairs, is a small *masjid* with a *qibla*.

A typical example of such Rum Seljuq mausoleum construction is the Döner Kümbet, constructed in Kayseri in 1276 as the burial site for Shah Jihan Hatun, daughter of Sultan Keykubad I. This cylindrical tomb is set on a square base and has double stairs leading up to the small prayer room situated above the grave, located in a small, square room below. The door is decorated with muqarnas, and the 12 exterior panels with a variety of geometric, vegetal and animal reliefs.

Bridges

One other class of structures that has survived from the Seljuq era is bridges. Following earlier Roman and Byzantine models, Seljuq bridges were either single-span or multi-span bridges, and the type of construction chosen was generally based on the depth and strength of the currents of the river. Rivers with weak currents could be crossed by multi-span bridges that used pointed or alternating pointed and rounded arches to form the spans create a relatively flat surface for traffic. Single-span bridges were constructed over rivers with strong currents or rivers where constructing a multi-span bridge was impractical. These bridges were almost always constructed with a pointed arch and a surface that ascended from each bank to meet at the highest point over the arch.



The multi-span Köprüpazar Bridge, 13th c.



The single-span Malabadi Bridge, 1146

Minor Arts

Compared to that of the Great Seljuqs, the quantity of surviving artwork and objects from the time of the Seljuqs of Rum is considerably less. Metalwork and ceramic objects in particular are poorly represented. However, stonework, woodwork, glazed ceramic tiles, and a unique example of manuscript illustration all provide a good indications of the style and sophistication of Rum Seljuq art.

Stonework

As previously mentioned, art carved as stone relief is an integral element of Rum Seljuq architectural décor, but the use of abstract designs, animal, human and vegetal figures, and epigraphic bands in architecture mirrors that found in other art forms. As an example of this mix of elements, the Döner Kümbet in Kayseri, built in 1276, uses abstract designs in some exterior panels, while animal and vegetal images predominate in others.



Décor of the exterior panels of the Döner Kümbet, 13th c, Kayseri, Turkey

Animal figures carved in relief are frequently used by themselves as elements of external décor. The example on the left from the Great Mosque in Diyarbakır shows a lion attacking a bull, one of a pair that flank the entrance to the mosque. The example on the right from the mosque in Divriği depicts a double-headed eagle, a design found in other forms of Rum Seljuq art.



Lion and bull, Great Mosque of Diyarbakır, 12th c



West portal of the Divriği Great Mosque, 13th c.



On a grander scale, the entrance to the İnce Minareli Medrese in Konya (left), constructed in the mid-13th century, has a unique combination of abstract designs, epigraphic bands and vegetal that is designed to fill the space, highlight the entrance and impress those who enter or even pass by.

Not found as an element of Great Seljuq architectural decor, human figures are the least common decorative element in Rum Seljuq architecture. The surviving examples are all from Konya, perhaps indicating that they were most popular in the Seljuq capital. One example, of uncertain provenance and now in Berlin, depicts a lute player carved in marble. Another, from the İnce Minareli Medrese, is one of a pair of winged angels that flanked an entrance.



Lute player, Konya, early 13th c

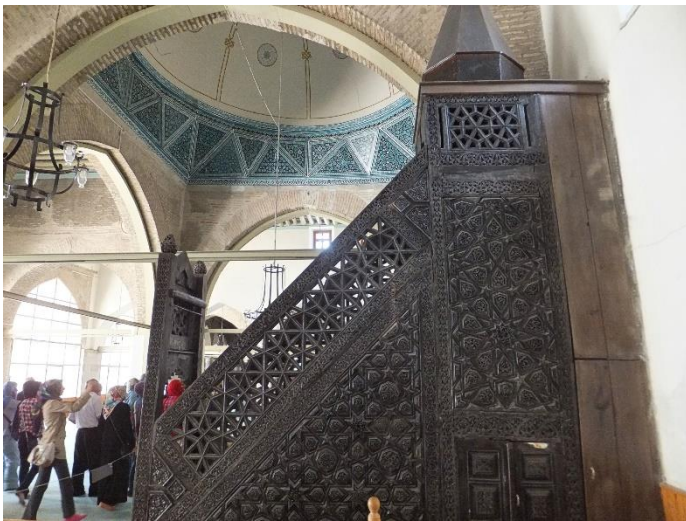


Winged angel, Konya, mid 13th c

Woodwork

The surviving examples of Rum Seljuq woodwork are limited primarily to doors and *minbars* (منبر), the pulpit in a Friday mosque from which the *imam* (إمام, prayer leader) stands to deliver his weekly *khutba* (خطبة), sermon or other talks. Unlike the pulpits in churches, the minbar consists of a doorway opening to a staircase topped by the “Prophet’s seat”. Although the Prophet Muhammad and the first caliphs after him delivered their sermons from the minbar’s seat, today it is left empty and the imam speaks standing a point approximately halfway up the stairs. Because of its association with the Prophet and the early caliphs, the minbar became a symbol of authority, and Muslim rulers often spent large sums to commission richly crafted minbars for the Friday mosques in their cities.

The Seljuq Sultans of Rum were no exception to this tradition and a number of exquisitely crafted minbars from the Seljuq era have survived. The minbar of the Alaeddin Mosque in Konya (below), dating to 1155-56, is a representative example of Seljuq woodwork. Like many minbars from this time it was constructed using the *kündekâri* technique. This means that the large side panels (at a minimum) were constructed of numerous, individually worked pieces that were then fitted together, like a mosaic, on an internal frame without the use of nails, glue or pins.



Minbar of the Alaeddin Mosque, Konya

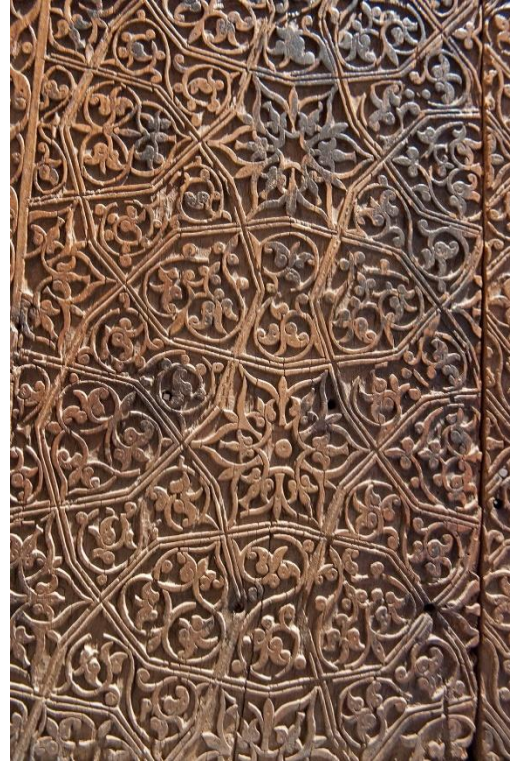


Kündekâri detail, Alaeddin Mosque, Konya

The designs used in the surviving examples of Seljuq woodworking are generally repeating, interlocked star designs similar to ones that were carved as surface decoration on stone structures. However, there are also examples of intricate, carved floral/vegetal designs used to cover the surface of window doors.



Minbar doors, Eşrefoğlu, Mosque, Konya



Window door, Eşrefoğlu Mosque, Konya, late 13th c.

Ceramics



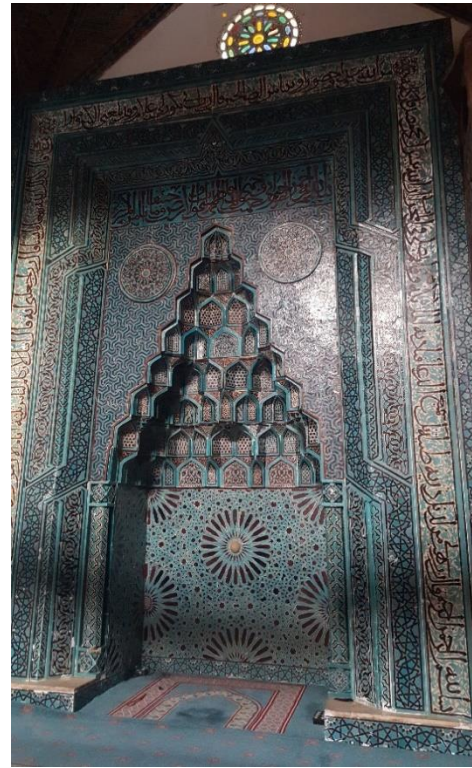
While numerous examples of ceramicware from the lands of the Great Seljuqs have survived to the present day, comparatively little ceramic ware has survived from the time of the Seljuqs of Rum. In design the Anatolian pieces show similarities with those from the Great Seljuqs, but the use of color and the style of decoration are more limited and less sophisticated. This green and black 13th century bowl from Anatolia (left), for example, is far simpler in its decoration than many Great Seljuq wares produced in the same period.

Although the surviving examples of Rum Seljuq ceramicware may suffer in comparison with Great Seljuq ceramicware, the true genius of ceramic artists in the land of Rum was in the production and use of glazed tiles as a decorative element of Seljuq architecture. Numerous examples of the use of decorated, glazed tiles, often in the blue and black color scheme that was so characteristic of Rum Seljuq ceramic decoration, can be found in place in Seljuq-era mosques, or have been found in archaeological excavations of Seljuq buildings.

The glazed tiles used to decorate the entrances and *mihrabs* of mosques often create designs that echo those carved in stone. Repeating geometric designs, repeating interlaced star designs and epigraphic bands in blues, black, yellow and white focus the attention on the entrances, domes and *mihrab*, and contrast sharply with the sparse décor of the walls.



Interior entrance, Eşrefoğlu Mosque, Beyşehir



Mihrab, Eşrefoğlu Mosque, Beyşehir

Secular architecture, such as palaces, also used glazed tiles to cover and decorate walls. While the tiles used in such structures could employ all the elements found in mosques, it could also include tiles with human and animal figures. Some of the finest and most varied examples of such decorative glazed tiles have been found at the site of Qubadabad Palace (Turkish, *Kubadabad Sarayı*), the summer palace of Sultan Kayqubad I (r. 1220-1237) located on the southwestern shore of Lake Beyşehir. Excavations that have been conducted there since the 1960s have revealed numerous tiles that once adorned the walls of the palace.

The majority of these tiles are painted in shades of blue, black and white, but some are painted in brown lusterware, while a few echo the *haft-rang* style of Great Seljuq ceramics. Numerous types of birds, a variety of animals, mythical creatures, men and women are all depicted on the tiles. Calligraphy is rare, but there are examples of both pure calligraphy and figures with calligraphy.



A peacock, horse, and harpy with two fish – Qubadabad Palace, 13th c.



Figure of a young man in lusterware, a hunter on horse with muse, and double-headed eagle with calligraphy.

These star-shaped tiles were separated by blue cross-shaped tiles decorated in a variety of floral, leaf and abstract patterns.





Miniature Painting

While no pre-Mongol miniature painting has survived from the lands of the Great Seljuqs, one manuscript of the epic poem, *Varqa and Golshah* (ورقه و گلشاه) in the İstanbul Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi (Hazine 841) may give some indication of the style of manuscript illustration in the Sultanate of Rum in the first half of the 13th century. Written in Persian by the poet Ayyuqi (عیوقی) in the early 11th century the manuscript of the romance of Varqa and Golshah in İstanbul contains 71 illustrations. In the sixty-first illustration there is an inscription attributing the artwork to Abd al-Mu'min bin Muhammad al-Naqqash al-Khuwi, a name also found in a document from Konya dating to 1253. This indicates that the illustrations were likely to have been done in the Seljuq capital in the mid-13th century.

Some similarities with book-painting in Fatimid Egypt have been noted, and comparisons with a 13th century Great Seljuq beaker from Iran depicting episodes from the *Shahnameh* have been made. However, the illustrations from the manuscript of *Varqa and Golshah* appear to have no connection to the style of book illustrations in Baghdad, nor does their

style of illustration appear to continue in slightly later Ilkhanid works.



Three miniatures from the romance of Varqa and Golshah

Readings

Canby, Sheila R., et al (eds.). *The Seljuqs and their Successors: Art, Culture and History*. Edinburgh, 2020.

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Discussion Questions

1. What influences can be seen in the art and architecture of the Great Seljuqs?
2. What factors made the art and architecture of the Sultanate of Rum different from that of the Great Seljuqs?

LITERATURE

The Great Seljuqs

When the Seljuqs defeated the Ghaznavids at the Battle of Dandanaqan in 1040 they not only became the heirs to Ghaznavid territories in Khorasan, but also to the Ghaznavid cultural and administrative legacy there. The Seljuqs had a long military tradition, but no experience in administering an empire and did not have a literary culture to compete with Persian. As a result, the Seljuqs employed administrators, officials and viziers of Iranian background to run the imperial bureaucracy, and adopted Persian not only as the language of administration but also the language of culture. Among the results of these policies was that the Seljuqs not only became patrons of a very active period of literary production in Persian, but also helped to spread Persian literature and culture, giving the language the status of the second major language of Islamic culture after Arabic.

However, the blossoming of Persian literary works in the 11th and 12th centuries was due to more than official Seljuq patronage or the patronage of other contemporary royal courts. The movement of poets and scholars from one court to another, the spread of Sufism and the eventful nature of this period also contributed to the development of new themes and new modes of literary expression. The *qasida* (قصيدة), a long ode on a single topic and generally containing between fifteen and eighty lines (although some were longer), continued to be employed, particularly for panegyric poetry. Similarly, poets also continued to write *ghazal* (غزل), shorter poems consisting of five to fifteen couplets, generally on the themes of love and separation, although mystical themes appeared with increasing frequency during the Seljuq era. While these two poetic forms had originated in Arabic poetry, they were adapted to Persian.

However, the poetic form that became the most characteristic of this period was a Persian poetic form generally known by its Arabic name, *ruba'i* (رباعي, plural *ruba'iyat* رباعيات), but is also known in Persian as *chahargana* (چهارگانه). The *ruba'i* is a four line / two couplet poem with a rhyme scheme of AABA or AAAA. Perhaps because it had developed outside of the tradition of Arabic poetry, the *ruba'i* came to be used for a number of themes, but particularly for philosophical or mystical themes. These themes predominate in the poems of the most famous composer of *ruba'iyat* in the English-speaking world, Omar Khayyam.

Three sultans of the Great Seljuqs in Iran were especially noted by contemporary sources as patrons of Persian literature – Alp Arslan, Malekshah and Sanjar. During Alp Arslan's reign (r. 1063-1072), several notable poets were associated with the Great Seljuq court, among them Abd al-Malik Borhani (عبد الملك برهانی) and 'Am'aq Bokhara'i (عمیق بخارانی). In reign of Malik Shah I (r. 1072-1091) his vizier Nizam al-Mulk composed his famous prose "mirror for princes" the *Siyasat-name*. In addition, the poet Mo'ezzi Nishaburi (معزی نیشابوری), the writer the *Chahar Maqala* (*Four Discourses*) Nizami Aruzi (نظامی عروضی), and the poet and scientist Omar Khayyam (known for his collection of quatrains, *The Ruba'iyat*) were all associated with the Seljuq court. During the reign of Sanjar (r. 1118-1157), the last of the Great Seljuq rulers, the court remained a center of learning and culture and attracted poets whose works are still appreciated throughout the Persian-speaking world – Anvari (انوری), Adib Saber (ادیب صابر), and the first woman poet in Persian whose works have survived in substantial quantity, Mahsati Ganjavi (مهستی گنجوی).

The Seljuqs of Rum

Despite its tumultuous history and more limited resources in comparison to the Great Seljuqs, the Seljuqs of Rum established a thriving Muslim literary culture in Arabic, to a limited degree, and Persian to a much greater degree. While some early works in Arabic on law and religion were composed in Anatolia, literary activity in Persian seems to have become prominent only in the late 12th century during the last years of the reign of Qilich Arslan II (r. 1156-1192) and the reigns of his sons in the early 13th century.

Contemporary sources mention an encyclopedic work written for Qilich Arslan II and his son Qutb al-Din with information on dream interpretation, *adab* (ادب, general culture), medicine, and astronomy written by an author from Tbilisi, Sharaf al-Din Hubaysh Tiflisi (شرف الدین حبیبش تفلسی). Another writer, Muhammad bin Ghazi (محمد بن غازی), composed a work for another of Qilich Arslan II's sons, Rukn al-Din (r. 1196-1204) titled *Rawzat al-'uqul* (روضت العقول). This work was an adaptation of an earlier Persian "mirror for princes" prose work, the *Marzban-nama* (مرزبان نامه). In the same period, a poet by the name of Abu Hanifa 'Abd al-Karim compiled a collection of *ruba'iyat* for a yet another of Qilich Arslan II's sons, Muhyi al-Din. In

addition to these, in the last decades of the 13th century the mystical-poetic masterpieces of Jalal al-Din Rumi, the *Divan* (ديوان) and the *Masnawi* (مثنوي), and a collection sayings entitled *Fihi ma fihi* (فيه ما فيه) all appeared.

While similar types of literature had been written in the courts of the Great Seljuqs, under the Seljuqs of Rum a genre that did not appear among the Great Seljuqs, historiography, accounts of the rulers and the events of their reigns appeared. Three major works were composed in Persian, all during or shortly after the last years of Seljuq rule in Anatolia, and while none provides detailed information on the early years of the Seljuqs in Rum, they all provide reliable information on the later periods.

The first work was written by a *munshi*, an official in the Seljuqs' secretariat, named Nasir al-Din Husayn (ناصر الدين حسين), but better known as "Ibn Bibi" (ابن بي بي) due to his mother Bibi Munajjima, a famous astrologer. Covering the years between 1188 to early 1281 the *al-Awamir al-'ala'iyya fi al-umur al-'ala'iyya* (الاورامر العلانية في الامور العلانية), "The Commands of Ala'i over Exalted Affairs") is a mix of Ibn Bibi's personal recollections and a history of the late Seljuq rulers in Rum. Ibn Bibi's style of Persian was elaborate and convoluted, making it difficult to read, despite its great historical value. As a result, during his lifetime an abridgement called the *Mukhtasar* (مختصر) appeared which eliminated most of overly literary passages. Due to its simpler style, many historians of the late Seljuq period in Rum have used the *Mukhtasar* rather than Ibn Bibi's longer and more difficult work as their source of information.

The second work was also written by *munshi*, Karim al-Din Aqsara'i (كريم الدين اقسراي) in 1323 and is titled *Musamarat al-akhbar wa Musayarat al-akhyar* (مسامرة الاخبار و مسايرة الاخيار, "Nighttime Narratives and Keeping up with the Good"). This work was arranged as a general history covering early Islamic history, but concentrating of the Seljuqs of Rum through the reign of Kay Khusraw II (r. 1237-1246), the various officials and minor rulers of the time, and the coming of the Mongols. Due to its later composition at a time when the Seljuqs of Rum were vassals of the Mongols, the *Musamarat al-akhbar* covers events and people beyond Rum. In addition, while in his section on the Seljuqs of Rum Aqsara'i follows almost the same sequence of events found in Ibn Bibi's chronicle, he includes additional information and details not found in Ibn Bibi.

The last work, the *Tarikh-i Al-i Saljuq* (تاريخ آل سلجوق), is an anonymous history completed in 1363. Although the book begins with the rise of the Seljuqs in the 11th century, it provides more detailed descriptions of events between 1277-1299, and then limited information on developments in the early 14th century up to 1341. Many of its sources of information are unknown, but it does provide details and interpretations of events that differ from both Ibn Bibi and Aqsara'i. In addition, in contrast to these two authors, the style of the *Tarikh-i Al-i Saljuq* is simpler and lacks the use of poetic excerpts or quotations from other works.

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Boyle, J.A. (ed.). *The Cambridge History of Iran, Vol. 5, The Saljuq and Mongol Periods*. Cambridge, 1968.

Cahen, Claude. *The Formation of Turkey: The Seljukid Sultanate of Rüm: Eleventh to Fourteenth Century*. Harlow, 2001.

Discussion Questions

1. What was the long-term historical significance of the Seljuqs' adoption of Persian as the language of administration and culture?
2. After the collapse of the Seljuqs of Rum, why was the Seljuq tradition of using Persian as the language of the court, the administration and culture not continued in Anatolia by the various Turkish beyliks and the Ottomans?

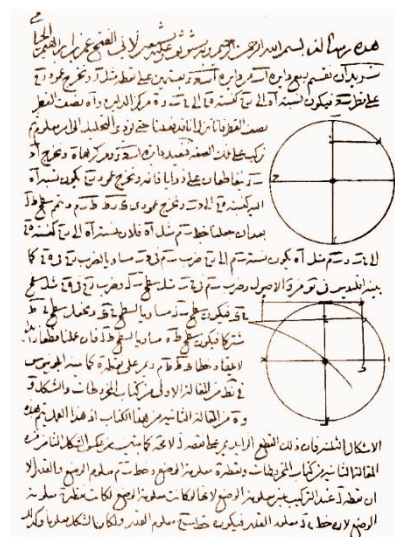
SCIENCE

Overview –

The 11th century conquests by the Great Seljuqs incorporated lands with a long scientific tradition such as Khorasan and Iran into their empire. As a result, the sciences, mathematics and astronomy in particular, continued to thrive and develop under Great Seljuq rule. The situation in the Sultanate of Rum, however, was quite different. The recently-conquered Byzantine lands in Anatolia had been unstable for centuries with the result that there was no tradition of scientific investigation comparable to the Great Seljuq Empire. Nonetheless, the Seljuqs of Rum welcomed visitors who came to their lands to conduct research and teach.

Great Seljuq Science

Three major scientists were active in the Great Seljuq Empire: Omar Khayyam (عمر الخيام), 'Abd al-Rahman al-Khazini (عبد الرحمن الخازني), and Sharaf al-Din al-Tusi (شرف الدين طوسي). While some were true polymaths with talents in a number of different fields, their main scientific contributions were in the fields of mathematics and astronomy.



Omar Khayyam (1048-1131) was a native of Nishapur who wrote a number of scientific treatises on different areas of mathematics. Among them were a commentary of Euclid's *Elements*, a treatise on cubic equations, a treatise on arithmetic, and a number of works related to algebra.

In the field of astronomy, he was commissioned by the Seljuq Sultan Malik to head a group to revise the Persian solar calendar. To conduct the astronomical observations necessary to determine the precise start and end of the solar year, Malik Shah had an observatory built for the group in Isfahan. The result was the Jalali calendar which was more accurate than the later Gregorian calendar. A by-product of Khayyam's work on the calendar revision was his *Astronomical Tables for Malik Shah* (*Zij Malik Shahi* / زيج ملك شاهي).

Page from a mathematical work by Omar Khayyam

In addition to these, Khayyam apparently also wrote at least two treatises on specific gravity that are included in the better-known work on this subject written by Khayyam's pupil, al-Khazini, and a work on musical theory. Later historians mention other works by Khayyam on natural sciences and geography, but texts of these works have not survived to the present day.

The second important scientist of the Great Seljuq era, 'Abd al-Rahman al-Khazini (fl. 1115-1130) is the also the one about whom the least information has survived. All that is known is that he was the young Greek slave of the treasurer at the Great Seljuq court in Marv and that his owner provided him with the best education he could. The only other information about al-Khazini is that he may have been a student of Omar Khayyam, he was noted for living a simple, pious life, he had some students, and that he was highly regarded at the Seljuq court.

Al-Khazini's three major surviving works are *The Balance of Wisdom* (*Mizan al-Hikma* / ميزان الحكمة), the *Treatise on Astronomical Wisdom* (*Risala fi'l-Alat* / رسالة في الآلات), and *The Astronomical Tables for Sanjar* (*Zij al-Mu'tabar al-Sanjari al-Sultani* / زيج المعتمد السنجري السلطاني). The first work, *The Balance of Wisdom*, is comprised of eight books divided into fifty chapters and is dedicated primarily to questions related to mechanics and hydrostatics. The remaining two works are both related to the field of astronomy. The *Treatise on Astronomical Wisdom* describes and discusses the uses of seven different instruments that were employed in making astronomical observations. The final work was a series of tables of astronomical information used in determining the dates of religious holidays, fasts, etc.

The last major scientist active in the Great Seljuq Empire was Sharaf al-Din al-Tusi (c.1135 – c. 1213), a mathematician and astronomer born in the city of Tus in northeastern Iran. Little is known of his life, but his surviving works are a work dedicated to the solutions of third-degree equations, *Kitab fi'l-Jabr wa'l-Muqabala* (كتاب في الجبر والمقابلة), and a number of writings, such as the *Treatise on the Linear Astrolabe* (رسالة في اللسطرلاب الخطي) on the linear astrolabe (sometimes referred to as “al-Tusi’s staff”) he invented. Al-Tusi claimed that his linear astrolabe was inexpensive and could be made by an amateur in about an hour. Despite this, al-Tusi’s linear astrolabe was less accurate than a standard astrolabe, and was less decorative; perhaps for these reasons it never gained widespread popularity.



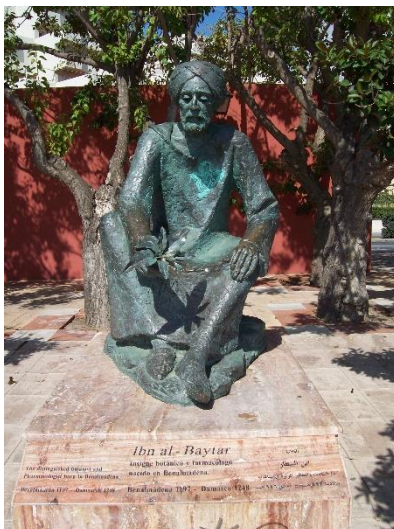
Modern reconstruction of al-Tusi’s linear astrolabe



Standard medieval brass astrolabe

Rum Seljuq Science

As a newly established state whose borders were in an almost constant state of flux for almost a century, and which was creating an Islamic society from the ground up, the Sultanate of Rum had neither established centers of Islamic learning nor the stability to create them in the 12th century. When the Seljuqs of Rum finally achieved the level of political stability and economic prosperity in the first half of the 13th century that might have allowed them to create such centers of learning, the Mongols defeated the Seljuq armies and made the Sultanate of Rum a vassal state. Nevertheless, at least two notable scientists of the early 13th century are known to have spent time in the Sultanate of Rum conducting research, studying and teaching: Ibn al-Baytar (ابن البيطار) and ‘Abd al-Rahim al-Jawbari (عبد الرحيم الجويري).



The son of a veterinarian, Ibn al-Baytar was born in Málaga, Spain in the 1190s and studied botany, pharmacology and medicine. Around 1220 he left Spain and traveled east across the North African coast and eventually reached Anatolia where he collected plants for a period of time. Ibn al-Baytar eventually went to Egypt and entered the service of the Ayyubid al-Kamil as his chief herbalist in 1224. Three years later when al-Kamil took control of Damascus, Ibn al-Baytar followed and continued his research and official duties there until his death in 1248.

Statue of Ibn al-Baytar in Spain

Ibn al-Baytar wrote a number of works, but his most famous work is his massive *Compendium on Simple Medicaments and Foods* (الجامع لمفردات الأدوية والأغذية), a pharmacopoeia that describes over 1400 different plants, animals and minerals and discusses their uses as foods or medicines. The information provided is based on Ibn al-Baytar’s own observations as well as the writings of approximately 150 other

sources, both ancient and contemporary. This work influenced the writers of later pharmacopoeias and remained a standard reference work until the modern era.

The other scholar known to have spent time in the Sultanate of Rum is one of the most unique figures in medieval Islamic science and literature, 'Abd al-Rahim al-Jawbari (fl. first half of the 13th c). Little is known about al-Jawbari outside of the information he provides in his writings. He was a Syrian from the town of Jawbar (today a suburb of Damascus), and appears to have been self-taught, primarily in the sciences. al-Jawbari claims to have traveled widely, and his travels took him to Anatolia where he spent time in both the Sultanate of Rum, and in territories ruled by the Hasankeyf branch of the Turkic Artuqid dynasty who ruled from Diyarbakır during al-Jawbari's time. At the urging of the Artuqid ruler Rukn al-Din Mawdud (r. 1222-1232), al-Jawbari wrote his one surviving work, *Book of the Selected Disclosure of Secrets (Kitab al-Mukhtar fi kashf al-asrar / كتاب المختار في كشف الأسرار)*. The book is an exposé of the tricks and methods used by the *Banu Sasan* (بنو ساسان), the name given to the medieval Islamic underworld of swindlers, false religious leaders, fake Sufis, beggars, storytellers, thieves, jugglers, fraudsters and con men. The approach that al-Jawbari takes to these groups and their tricks is one of skepticism – he refuses to believe that the tricks he sees are as they seem, and that they can be explained rationally through science. However, al-Jawbari's style is anything but cold and scientific. It varies from condemnation of some forms of deception, to near admiration for the cleverness of some of the tricks he describes. His detailed knowledge of fraud and deception has raised questions about the source of his knowledge, and it is still unclear to what degree he may have been personally involved in some of these shady activities. The style of language that al-Jawbari used varies from the standard literary language to Middle Arabic, the spoken form of medieval Arabic, and includes numerous slang expressions and jargon used by the groups he examines. The result is an entertaining mix of stories, exposé and a window on segments of medieval Islamic society that are generally ignored by contemporary chroniclers.

Readings

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Discussion Questions

1. Why did the Sultanate of Rum produce no scientists of its own, yet a number of prominent scientists came from the lands of the Great Seljuq Empire?

PHILOSOPHY

Overview

As the Turkic peoples of Central Asia converted to Islam, they both adopted and became patrons of the culture of the Islamic world expressed in Arabic and, increasingly, in Persian. In some cases, such as the Qarakhanids, conversion to Islam involved not just the ruling clan, but the majority of that state's inhabitants. As a result, the establishment of religious institutions and providing religious instruction to the people were priorities. While it is clear that the Qarakhanids took an interest in some elements of Islamic culture, such as architecture and literature, and even made their own contributions to it, philosophy was not a subject that captured the imagination of the Qarakhanids.

The series of conquests in the 11th century that stretched from Khorasan to Anatolia left the Seljuqs masters of regions like Iran and Iraq that had long been centers of Islamic culture as well as lands like Anatolia where the Seljuqs were the first Muslim rulers and Islamic culture was new. While the Seljuqs were relatively new to Islam and the culture of the Islamic world, they quickly took on the duties expected of a Muslim sovereign, and among these was patronage of culture. Seljuq sultans filled their courts with poets, religious scholars and scholars whose interests included philosophy. Although the Seljuqs themselves do not seem to have been involved in philosophical speculation and writing, the Great Seljuqs ruled over lands that produced some of the most important figures in Islamic philosophy. In the case of the Sultanate of Rum

where most of the population was still non-Muslim and Islamic culture was only beginning to be introduced, the sultans' courts still managed to attract some of the most influential thinkers of the time. However, the philosophers who are known to have spent at least part of their lives studying and/or teaching in both states are figures whose works are linked to both philosophy and religion.

Great Seljuqs

Three major thinkers exemplify the diversity of intellectual speculation that flourished in the Great Seljuq Empire: Omar Khayyam (عمر خیام), Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali (أبو حامد الغزالي), and 'Ayn al-Qudat Hamadani (عين القضات همداني). Each was an influential thinker in his own way, and each was connected in some way to the Great Seljuq court.

The first, Omar Khayyam (1048-1131), was from Nishapur, the city which served as the first Great Seljuq capital. Although primarily known in the west for his collection of poems, the *Ruba'iyat*, in his own time Khayyam was a polymath renowned as a mathematician, astronomer, philosopher and religious scholar, and it was his abilities in the first two fields that brought him into contact with the Great Seljuqs. In 1074-75 the Grand Vizier Nizam al-Mulk invited Khayyam to meet Sultan Malik Shah I in Marv. Shortly afterwards Khayyam was made the head of a group of scholars who were tasked with establishing an observatory in Isfahan in order to make the astronomical observations necessary for them to revise the Persian calendar. This project was carried out between 1076 – 1079 and resulted in the Jalali calendar which was adopted in 1079.

After the deaths of both Nizam al-Mulk, and Sultan Malik Shah I in 1092, Khayyam's popularity in the court declined and he left to perform the Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca. Eventually, Khayyam returned to Nishapur, but shortly afterwards was invited by Sultan Sanjar (r. 1118-1153) to come to Marv and serve as the court astrologer. Khayyam accepted and served for some years until health problems led to his resignation and return to Nishapur where he lived until his death in 1131 at the age of 83.

The next major thinker, Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali (c.1058-1111), was known primarily as a religious scholar, and was referred to as the *hujjat al-islam* (حجة الإسلام, "proof of Islam" or "authority on Islam") by his contemporaries, but he also wrote philosophical works which critiqued the teachings of Aristotle. He came to the notice of the Grand Vizier Nizam al-Mulk and was invited to join his court in 1085, during the reign of Sultan Malik Shah I. Nizam al-Mulk was clearly impressed with al-Ghazzali's learning because in 1091 he appointed al-Ghazzali to teach in the Nizamiyya Madrasa in Baghdad, a highly prestigious position. Despite his success as a teacher there, in 1095, as a result of a deep spiritual crisis al-Ghazzali resigned his position, ostensibly to perform the hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca. He disposed of much of his property, spent some time in Damascus and Jerusalem, visited to holy cities of Mecca and Medina in 1096, and returned to his hometown of Tus. There, he spent the next several years in semi-reclusion, but continued to write and teach in an unofficial capacity.

In 1106, al-Ghazzali was once again brought into the service of the Great Seljuqs when the vizier of the Seljuq ruler of Khorasan, Ahmad Sanjar (later Sultan Sanjar, r.1118-1157), persuaded al-Ghazzali to teach in the Nizamiyya Madrasa in Nishapur. However, his stay in Nishapur did not last long, and al-Ghazzali returned to Tus where he died in December 1111.

The careers of both Omar Khayyam and Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali show the on-again off-again relationship that many scholars, writers and artists had with the ruling Seljuq elite. However, these two men were able to leave their positions within the Seljuq administration before the negative consequences of court rivalries and jealousies became too severe. However, this would not be the case with the next thinker who put himself in opposition to Seljuq rule.

'Ayn al-Qudat Hamadani (also: 'Ayn/Ain al-Quzat Hamadani) was born in the western Iranian city of Hamedan in 1098. He studied the works of Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali and was a friend and student of his brother, Ahmad Ghazzali. A prolific writer and original thinker, 'Ayn al-Qudat defended aspects of Aristotelian philosophy as presented by Ibn Sina against the criticisms of Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali, but combined these with the emerging doctrines of Sufism. While his philosophical and religious writings earned

him staunch supporters, 'Ayn al-Qudat's harsh criticism of contemporary religious scholars and Seljuq rule gained him numerous enemies. Eventually, despite some supporters in the Seljuq administration, 'Ayn al-Qudat was caught up in court rivalries and, under circumstances that are not entirely clear, sentenced to death and executed in 1131. His tomb in Hamedan attracted numerous visitors until it was destroyed at some point in the Safavid era.

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Discussion Questions

1. Why did philosophers who served in the Great Seljuq administration often find their situations difficult?

Rum Seljuqs

Unlike the Great Seljuqs, the Seljuqs of Rum did not employ any well-known philosophers in any official position. However, scholars and philosophers were welcomed by the Seljuqs of Rum and were free to stay and teach as they wished. Two well-known thinkers in particular spent time studying and/or teaching in the Sultanate of Rum: Shihab al-Din Yahya ibn Habash Suhrawardi (بشهاب الدين بن حبش السهروردي) and Muhyi al-Din ibn 'Arabi (محيي الدين ابن عربي). In addition, the Sultanate of Rum would produce one influential philosopher and religious thinker, Sadr al-Din Qunawi (صدر الدين قونوي).

Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi (also Shihab ad-Din Sohrevardi, 1154-1191) was a Persian thinker and writer from the town of Sohrevard in northwestern Iran. After studying in nearby Maragheh and Isfahan, Suhrawardi traveled in the Sultanate of Rum for several years studying with teachers and Sufi masters such as Fakhr al-Din al-Mardini, and seeking patrons. In 1183 he settled in Aleppo where he became a well-known teacher and wrote his most famous work, *The Philosophy of Illumination (Hikmat al-Ishraq, حكمة الإشراف)*, completed in 1186. Suhrawardi's learning, disdainful attitude towards local scholars, and unorthodox ideas gained him a number of enemies who worked for his downfall. Eventually, he was charged with heresy and executed.

While Suhrawardi's links to the Sultanate of Rum were unofficial and mostly undocumented, the second philosopher and religious scholar whose name is linked with Rum, Muhyi al-Din ibn 'Arabi (1165-1240), visited several times left a number of influential students. Originally from Spain, and referred to as "the greatest sheikh" (*al-shaykh al-akbar, الشيخ الأكبر*) on the basis of his teachings, Ibn 'Arabi left Spain in 1200 to perform the *hajj*. He reached Mecca in 1202, and for the next two years divided his time between Mecca and Medina. In 1204 he traveled to Jerusalem, Baghdad and Mosul, and it was during these travels that he met an Iranian, Majd al-Din Ishaq bin Yusuf al-Rumi (مجد الدين إسحاق بن يوسف الرومي), from Malatya with connections to the Seljuq court in Konya, and the father of Sadr al-Din Qunawi would become one of Ibn 'Arabi's most important disciples. Majd al-Din took Ibn 'Arabi to Konya in 1205, but Ibn 'Arabi left later in the year. He would return to the Sultanate of Rum possibly in 1212, and certainly in 1216, when he came to first Sivas and then Malatya. Ibn 'Arabi remained in Malatya until some point between 1218-1221, when he left for Damascus where he would spend the rest of his life.

During Ibn 'Arabi's extended stay in Malatya he appears to have been on very good terms with Sultan Kaykavus I (r. 1211-1220), and to have married his friend Majd al-Din's widow, becoming Sadr al-Din's stepfather in the process. Sadr al-Din seems to have remained with Ibn 'Arabi until 1220, when he was entrusted the boy and his education to a close friend, Sheikh Awhad al-Din Kirmani. After Ibn 'Arabi's death in 1240, Sadr al-Din became the most prominent teacher and interpreter of Ibn 'Arabi's ideas and composed a number of original works; his commentary on the Qur'an *I'jaz al-Bayan fi Tafsir Umm al-Qur'an* (اعجاز البيان في تفسير أم القرآن) is generally regarded as his most important work. However, Sadr al-Din's larger significance to the development of Islamic philosophy and religious thought is that by writing

Persian commentaries and discussions of Ibn 'Arabi's Arabic works he and his students transmitted the ideas of Ibn 'Arabi to the eastern Islamic lands where Persian was far more widely understood than Arabic. As a result, Ibn 'Arabi's teachings are more widely spread than almost any other thinker from the Islamic west who wrote in Arabic.

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Discussion Questions

1. Why did non-conventional thinkers and teachers find welcome in the Sultanate of Rum?
2. What is the historical significance of Ibn 'Arabi's brief stay in the Sultanate of Rum for the history of Islamic philosophy and Sufism?