



# A survey of the role of Ghaznavid in evolution of great architecture in Seljuq dynasty

Dr. Seyed Hashem Hosseini<sup>1</sup>, Mohammad Hadi Zare<sup>2\*</sup>

1-Assistant Professor of archeology and art in Islamic era, Art University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran

E-mail: [H.hosseini@Aui.ac.ir](mailto:H.hosseini@Aui.ac.ir)

2- Master of archeology, department of archeology, faculty of Humanity, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, and Ardabil, Iran. E-mail: [zarehammadhadi@yahoo.com](mailto:zarehammadhadi@yahoo.com)

**Abstract:** Based on a logical principle, common arts in a specific period can be affected by the arts of previous periods. This is true about great art of Seljuq dynasty taking power after Ghaznavid. Regarding the art of Seljuq era, many arts including architecture, metal work, pottery, brick, etc. were dominant. One of the dominant arts in Seljuq dynasty was architecture. Most researchers don't give much consideration to progress of architecture in Islamic periods of Iran for pre- Seljuq era. This study attempts to evaluate architectural works of Ghaznavids and apply their literal and historical works namely Beihaghi history reflecting Ghaznavi era and refer a part of inspiration of Seljuq artists of rich architecture of Ghaznavids era. This issue has been ignored due to great art and architecture style of Seljuq.

**Keywords:** Ghaznavid architecture, Seljuq architecture, Islamic era, Beihaghi history

## Introduction

Although there are not many architectural works of Ghaznavid dynasty, there are a few buildings in this era compared to the next era, Seljuq, these few works of architecture well describe Ghaznavid era.

Iranian Cultural Revolution began in Samanid era and transferred as the architectural traditions and much interest in literature, science and art to the successors, Ghaznavids.

It seems that Ghaznavid architecture continued Samanid architecture but it had also specific properties as restricted to constructions in Soltan Mahmood and Masoud era. Mahmood Qaznavi as a fanatic warrior achieve great wealth of his occupations and he was interested in architecture and hired craftsmen from the entire country. His son, Masoud I followed the love to construction. He didn't rely only on palaces and gardens, he built new palaces and established a new capital as Goharshah Masoudi. The kings who took power after Sultan Masoud completed the previous works. Ghaznavid era in Khorasan and central Iran was short and unstable. They transferred the center of their activities to the south of Afghanistan and north of India under the pressure of Seljuq. After Seljuq took power and developed their government, a civilization called Silijug civilization was created with great importance on political, social and cultural history of our nature. In this era, not only architecture and industry were followed innovatively, the occupations of Seljuq , extended the industries of Iran to Mediterranean and even north Africa and Seljuq era had great position in terms of artistic style in Iran and this era is the great period of Iranian architecture. In this era, architecture art was developed and skillful artists and architects created many works.

Despite the views of most researchers who don't give much attention to periods before Seljuq in architecture and urbanization of Islamic era of Iran, Ghaznavids had important role in actualization of Persian literature called Khorasani style and were the most important founders of architecture and Iranian urbanization.

## The remaining works of Ghaznavid era

The only work of Ghaznavid era architecture in Iran country (Kiani, 206, 328) is the buildings of Sangbast. Sangbast is a village in Mashhad region of Khorasan in the distance 22 miles of south east of Mashhad beside the main road of Harat (staffs of ministry of war of England, 2001, 569). In a short distance of village, there was an extensive and important ancient yard as the remaining of Sangbast. The oldest building in Sangbast was a big and important Ribat. According to valid historical books, Ribat was built by Arsalan Jazeb, king of Tus in Mahmood Ghaznavi era and he was buried in the same Ribat (Libaf Khaniki, 1999, 43). The second building in Sangbast was the grave of Arsalan Jazeb (Figure 3). Soil and brick masses are beside the grave of Arsalan Jazeb as the remaining of famous Ribat of Sangbast (Labaf Khaniki, 1999, 43). Another building is Ayaz Minaret or Arsalan Jazeb. This minaret is made of brick and some attribute it to Arsalan Jazeb and others to Sultan Mahmood Qaznavi and he was interested in his slave, Ayaz and it was named after him (Kiani, 2006, 328).

Other works of Ghaznavid era are Chahe Ribat. This building is in 66km of east of Mashhad in Mashhad-Marv road and it is one of the best examples of architecture of Caravansary as established in Ghaznavid era (Figure 2). According to historians, when Sultan Mahmood Qhaznavi was regretful of hurting Ferdousi, great poet of Iran, sent him some gifts to Tus city. The gifts entered the city but the poet was dead and he was buried in the cemetery. The only daughter of Ferdousi didn't receive the gifts and as king soldiers insisted, and his daughter ordered to build Caravansary for passengers of Mashhad. Ribat or Chahe carbansary was built for the memorial of Ferdousi (Kiani , 2007:46).

The main manifestation of Sameri in architecture is found among Lashkari Bazar beside Hirmand River in the southwest of Afganistan between 4-6 Hijri Ghamari (Figure 1). A palace is not an issue here but some series are observed in irregular intervals in the margin of River (Helin Brand, 1998, 484). Lashkari Bazar is composed of a big central square, a wide palace, a wide central yard and some minor yards, a hall inspired by Apadana and Firoozabad palace, a mosque, market and many personal houses of court men and gardens and rivers and springs and all of them make a unit by which its urbanization map is provided already (Ayatollahi, 2001, 226).

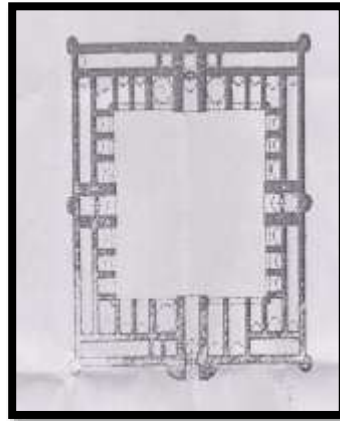
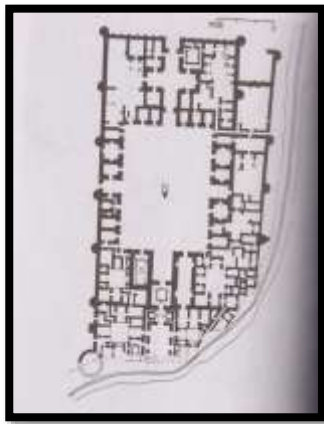
### **Ghaznavid architecture and its effect on Seljuq architecture**

Due to a few architectural works from Ghaznavid era, our recognition of architectural features of this era is low. Beside these works, we should refer to valuable literal and historical work of Ghaznavian era as Beihghi history and it had great role in our recognition to architecture of this period. Based on the remaining works of architecture of Ghaznavid era, we can investigate the architecture of this era better. Beside our recognition of the architecture of this era, we can investigate the major role of Ghaznavid architecture on next architecture, Seljuq.

#### **1- Using Four-Iwan plan**

Although Iwan was used before Islam, Iwan was used for the first time in the first century in Nesa Palace and Khaje Mountain but its revised example is observed in Party palace of Ashur. In this palace, beside two Iwans created before in central yard, in second century, two other Iwans were added to central yard making the building as four-Iwan (Firouzmani, 2007, 222).

It should be said that Iwan was not considered by architects in Partian and Sasanid era. With the advent of Islam to Iran, was most common in Islamic buildings and Iwan was used mostly in various plans as one-Iwan, Two-Iwan, and four-Iwan. Four-Iwan was used in most of public and religious places more than other locations and the reason was creating a good symmetry in buildings. The important point here is the exact time of four-Iwan plan in Islamic era? Most researchers attribute the application of four-Iwan plan in Islamic era from Seljuq time and the reason is the numerous works of this era and most of them are built by four-Iwan plan. The important point is that four-Iwan plan is used in the works remaining of pre- Seljuq era, Ghaznavid. In many important works of Ghaznavid era, Chahe caravansary and Lashkari Bazar palace (Figures 1, 2), both of them applied four-Iwan plan. The construction of these two works was in the era of initial kings of Ghaznavid era, namely Sultan Mahmood. Using this plan was common from the beginning of Ghaznavian era and the architects on that era were familiar with its features and applied this plan in construction of public buildings (Chahe Caravansary) and government buildings (Lashgari Bazar) but as there are not many works in Ghaznavid era, many researchers developed four-Iwan plan from Seljuq era as by mistake.



1 2

Figure 1- Lashkari Bazar plan (Etinghavezen, Grabar, 2007, 456)

Figure 2- Plan of Chahe Ribat (Kiani, Kilas, 1994, 270).

## 2- Construction of schools

Evolution of each educational space indicates a type of specialized activity in society and it needs learning definite education with planning. At the beginning of Islam, education was based on oral education and mosques were educational locations (Kiani, 2006, 118).

The construction of schools in Iran was considered from the beginning of Islam and in the early Islamic dynasties. In Seljuk era, Shafei religion had many followers and one of the famous ministers of Seljuk, Khaje Nezamolmolk as followers of Shafei religion established schools to propagate this religion and these schools were called Nezamie. The important point in Nezamie schools was the origin of these buildings. Was Nezamie schools construction planned or the formations of these buildings were special in Seljuk era?

The construction of schools with the features of Nezamie schools before Seljuk, in Ghaznavid was common and this is clarified in history of Beihaghi works.

According to Beihaghi works, some schools were built for great teachers of cities in Ghaznavid era to educate and teach. Ghaznavid kings had great respect to science and knowledge of this school. Teachers were also living in these schools. The greatest information regarding these schools is dedicated to Sultan Mahmoud era. He ordered to establish some schools for great teachers of a family as Tabani in various cities of that time and Beihaghi works refer to construction of two schools in Balkh, Qaznein cities for this family.

One of the schools were in Balkh and Zanbil Bafan and they were built by the order of Sultan Mahmoud for Busadegh Tabani and this great person taught in it (This school was established in Zanbil Bafan area for teaching] (Beihaghi, 2002, 255). Another school in Beihaghi history was located in Qaznein beside one of the gates of city toward Bost. This school was established by the order of Sultan Mahmoud for teaching for Busaleh Tabani [He sent to Qaznein to be an Imam of Buhanife and he was sent in Bostian for teaching] (Beihaghi, 2002, 245). The respect of teachers, namely Tabani family before Sultan Mahmoud was as he sent his minister for the death of one of the teachers :[ His respect was high as he said to Abolabas Esfarayni, the minister to go to the school of this teacher and mourn as he has no child to mourn ](Beihaghi, 2002, 245).

These items show that construction of Nezamie schools in Seljuk era for teachers was used to propagate Shafei religion and completed the schools of Ghaznavid and were affected by the schools of this era, with the difference that in Ghaznavid era, instead of Shafei religion, Hanafi religion was propagated. The construction of Nezamie schools was affected by the schools established with the same aim in Ghaznavid era namely in Sultan Mahmoud era in various cities on that time. Thus, the initial plan of construction of Nezamie schools is in Ghaznavid

schools as there is nothing of buildings of Ghaznavid schools to show this effect, the books of fBeihaghi history clarified many realities.

There are some differences among the schools of two eras and the most important of them are difference in advertising Shafei religion in Nezamie schools of Seljuk era and propagation of Hanafi religion in schools of Ghaznavid era. Also, naming the schools of Ghaznavid era despite Nezamie schools that Seljukian called them based on its supporter, Nezamolmolk as Nezamie, it was named after the teacher name.

Another point in schools of Seljukian and Ghaznavian schools is relationship with the term of school. According to the researchers, the first center as called school was a center established in Togrol era in Neishabour city (Hatam, 2011:76). This issue showed that the term school was used as a place for learning knowledge for the first time in Seljukian era and it is not true.

Regarding the school established in Neishabour in Toqrol era, Naserkhosro in a trip to Neishabour saw the school as under construction and referred to it in his trip log (Naserkhosro, 1984, 3). Its basis is planned in Ghaznavid era and its final stages were completed in Toqrol era. Although we cannot discuss about this issue vividly, Neishabour is one of the important cities in Ghaznavid era and its kings established many buildings in the city and at the beginning of Toqrol era, Neishabour was occupied by him but Sultan Masoud Ghaznavi released this city of Seljukian.

Regarding the use of the term school for the first time in Seljukian era, writing of Beihaghi history rejects this issues. In this book, the term school is used regarding construction of schools for the teachers of this era. This issue shows that the term school was common regarding the education locations in Ghaznavid era and it was not used for the first time in Seljuk era: [ Go to the school of this teacher and mourn for him as there is no child to mourn [ Beihaghi, 2002:245].

### 3- Wide application of dome

Like Iwan, using dome refers to pre-Islam era to Sasanid era. In Sassanid era, this architecture element was used mostly in buildings namely chartaqi. With the advent of Islam, dome was accepted as an architectural element since pre-Islam era and it entered Islamic architecture buildings. Religious buildings as mosques and tombs had great share in its application. Although there are not many works from the beginning of Islam, to investigate this issue whether dome was used from the beginning of Islam in Islamic buildings nor not? We can say dome was used as an architectural element in Islamic era since Seljukian era. This issue is not true, as in a few of works of periods before Seljukian, Samanian and Ghaznavian, wide use of dome is seen in buildings.

This issue is true not only in Arsalan Jazeb tomb as the only work of Ghaznavid era with dome (Figure 3), the history of Beihaghi supports it. In one of the stories, Beihaghi referred to some peacocks in a region as Zamin Davar and these peacocks were bringing child inside domes of houses [In a dome, some peacocks had children]( Beihaghi, 2002, 166).



Figure 3- Tomb of Arsalan

This issue shows that some of ceiling above the public houses

Jazeb (Labaf Khaniki, 1999, 46).

the houses of Ghaznavid era had dome that Beihaghi refers to the domed

ceiling of them. Inside the gardens of this era, beside some Kiosk, there were some houses for various seasons of year and these houses were called after the relevant season as winter or summer houses. Beihaghi in Kiosks of Sultan Masoud in Qaznein referred to the domed ceiling of winter house [There was a winter house and dome on its left side] (Beihaghi 2002, 724). This issue is generalized to other similar houses.

The researches show that most of kiosks of Ghaznavid era are built in two floors and we cannot say the ceiling of Kiosks of this era was dome form but using dome in public houses and in the houses around kiosks of this era for various seasons of year showed wide use of dome in the buildings of this era. Although dome was used for the first time in Sassanid era, it is not true that Seljukian were inspired by Sassanid era to use domes in their buildings. In recognized dome buildings of Sassanid era, transition of square form of building to circle one was fulfilled by curved surfaces (Godar, 2011, 94). In the dome of tomb of Arsalan Jazeb in Sang Bost, in chapiresasi, after Gushesazi, octagonal was turned into circle by Zhaghs and this was an advance form of Chapiresasi and it shows that this technique was not in primary stage (PIrnia, 2011, 173).

This issue showed the wide progress of dome in Ghaznavid era and with its interior decorations as brick work under dome is performed as Khofte and Raste. Most of Sasanid buildings are located in South West of Iran, a part of Iran less dominant under Seljuk dynasty, thus, the effect of Sassanid buildings on Seljuk works was decreased but central parts of Iran and namely great Khorasan in Ghaznavid era were the first parts under the dominance of Seljukian. Thus, the effect of Ghaznavid architecture on Seljuk works as general and partial was much more than the Sasanid architecture effect.

#### 4-Using minaret in buildings

Despite most of archeologists as Professor Godar who believed that Minaret was innovated by Arabs (Kiani, 2006, 326), Minaret is one of the buildings as independent in pre-Islam era. Beside roads of Iran namely in desert and forest trees, tall buildings as Minaret are found observed from a long distance. These buildings were built at first to guide passengers as most of them are turned in to tomb (Pirnia, 2011, 494) and sometimes it is a memorial building.

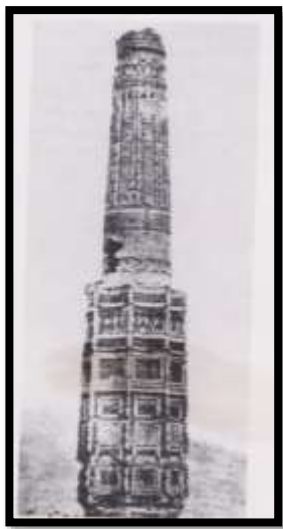
In Islamic era, Minaret had different applications. In addition, some applications as guiding Minaret and memorial building, the most important application of Minaret in Islam era were a decorative factor in religious buildings. In Islamic era, there were a few religious buildings as tombs, schools and namely mosques in which Minaret was not used to decorate building. The position of Minaret in Islamic era namely in mosques was different in various governments. Sometimes it was located above entrance Iwan to main Shabistan of mosque and sometimes the entrance door of mosques was decorated with Minaret. Sometimes, it was located in a short distance of mosques and sometimes it was beside entrance Iwan to the main entrance of Shabistan and not above it. Thus, a definite location is not found for it.

These items show that in Islamic era, Minaret was used to decorate building compared to pre-Islam era but other applications as guiding Minaret and memorial building was considered in Islam era. One of the Islamic governments giving much importance to Minaret in the buildings is Seljuk dynasty. In this era, Minaret was used considerably in buildings but the application of Minaret as a memorial building was mostly considered.

In different cities of Seljuk namely in their capital, Isfahan, there were many Minarets and most of them were memorial and their manufacturers established them for various goals as memorial of themselves and their families. Ghaznavid era considered Minaret as a memorial before Seljuk dynasty. Some of the Minarets were used not only to Say Azan for prayers, but also as memorial for the victory of Islam (Brand, 2004, 76). Famous brick towers of Ghaznavid in Ghaznein showed the stability of brick building and it was also transferred to other areas in Iran (Hatam, 2004, 173). There are some Minarets of Ghaznavid era and they show that Ghaznavid kings were interested to establish Minaret as memorial and they viewed it less as decorative building. The major decorative factor in Minarets of this era is an inscription of brick and the building itself was made by it. This issue showed that brick had the main role in Minaret in Ghaznavid era. The only Minarets of Ghaznavid era with decorations except Brick are Minaret of Sultan Masoud and Minaret of Bahram Shah in Ghaznein. The Minaret was mostly used as memorial in Ghaznavid era and this was continued in Seljukian era.

Another point regarding Ghaznavid minarets and Seljuk is the similarities between Minarets of Ghaznavid and Seljuk Minarets in terms of location of Minaret and in terms of forms. In addition, in Seljuk era, the building was inspired by Ghaznavid and Minaret was used as memorial and brick was used to construct Minaret as main material and it was most similarity between Minarets of Seljuk and Ghaznavid.

Most of Seljuk Minarets were cylinder form as being narrow from bottom to up. The best example is Minaret of Tarikhane of Damghan and based on Kufi inscription was added with the aid of Bakhtiar Massive Mosque Mohammad to Tarikhane house (Kiani, 2007, 42). The lower part of this Minaret was wide and as we go higher, its width is decreased. The plan of this Minaret is compared to Minarets of Sultan Masoud III and Minaret of Bahram Ghaznavid in Ghaznein (Figure 4, 5). These Minarets had wide lower part than its upper part and as we go higher, it becomes narrow. The Minarets of Sultan Masoud III and Bahram Shah Ghaznavid were older than Seljuk Minarets. This form of Minaret of Ghaznavid was transferred to Seljuk. An important point in forms in Seljuk Minarets and their imitation of Ghaznavid Minarets, we can refer to the bases of Minarets. The basis of some of Minarets of Ghaznavid namely Ghaznein Minarets (Sultan Masoud and Bahram Shah Minarets) were octagonal.



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Figure 4: Minaret of Masoud Ghaznavi (Brand 2004, 76)

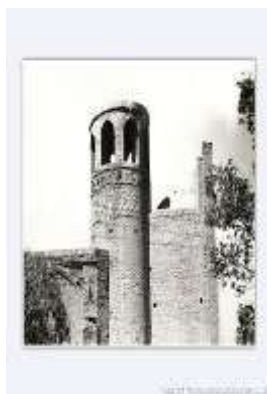
Figure5: - Minaret of Bahram Shah Hill, Grabar, 2007:74

This basic form was used in Seljuk era and namely those in capital, Isfahan and most of them had octagonal basis. One of the most important Minarets is Gar, Chehel Dokhtaran and Sareban Minarets.

The comparison of the location of Minaret is considerable in two government periods. Above using Minaret as memorial as built as single, location of Minaret outside of building and attached to external wall in both periods

is considerable. Such feature is observed in buildings of Ghaznavid era in Sang Bost. The Minaret in Sang Bost is a memorial building and some people attribute it to Sultan Mahmood Ghaznavid and due to high interest to their slave, Ayaz, it was established for his name (Kiani, 2006, 328). IN the southeast, wall works as relying on Minaret were observed and it was as the Minaret was attached to a building (Labaf Khaniki, 1999:44).

This feature was continued in primary works of Seljuk. One of the most important works is Minarets of Massive Mosque of Kashan, Minaret of Damghan Massive Mosque, Minaret of Save Massive Mosque and Minaret of Pamenar Zavare mosque (Figures 6, 7). In all these buildings, Minarets were outside the building and were attached to the external wall. Most of the Minarets were built in Toqrol and Alb Arsalan Seljuk kingdom and primary kings of Seljuk in construction of Minaret imitated Ghaznavid Minarets, the next kings of Seljuk performed some innovations in this regard and applied Minaret as a decorative building in buildings.



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Figure 6- Minaret of Saveh Massive Mosque (Hatam, 2011, 53)

Figure 7- Minaret of Massive Mosque of Kashan (Hatam, 2011, 54)

## 5-Plastery

Gypsum was not a decorative instrument in Seljuk era and only in some mosques of this era, Mihrabs were made of Gypsum as in Majid Jami of Nayin, its major part was dedicated to before Seljuk era, but in this era, basic changes were made and beautiful plaster was on mosque. After Islam, icon was not used but in plaster, a combination of faces is found and the artists attempt to revitalize the methods (Pirnia, 2011, 148).

Regarding plaster in Ghaznavid era, we can refer to the interest of kings of this dynasty to plaster and painting on plaster. This issue is proved by the remaining works of this period and based on Beihaghi history, a great discovery in Lashkari Bazar place in Bost, wall paintings of 44 Turkish guards on the lateral walls of court showed that based on Sultan Mahmood Ghasnavi tradition in festivals and in open space, they took the crown in the presence of four guards (Hilen Brand, 1998, 485). The bodies were full and feet profile. The faces were destroyed in fire of back areas and were in  $\frac{3}{4}$  of profile and with circle around their head. The bodies had short sleeve garment and only the neck was observed and there was a long garment as closed from the left side (Pakbaz, 2010, 51). Also, Beihaghi history refers to gypsum and painting on plaster in Ghaznavid era.

In one of the stories, Beihaghi referred to a palace in Harat city with Adnani palace and there was a special house for Sultan Masoud in a corner of Garden to welcome Sultan at noon. The entire house was full of symbols showing most of naked women and men. This house and its images were covered with plaster as Sultan Mahmoud found about them: [He order to cover the walls with plaster as there was no image before and they locked the house] (Beihaghi, 2002, 175).

## **Conclusion**

The remaining works of Ghaznavid era and historical writing of Beihaghi history showed a great architecture in Ghaznavid era. This architecture was not only unique but also it imitated most of architectural elements, Seljuk.

Great book of Beihaghi referred to construction of palaces, mosques, castles and gardens as built by two great kings in Ghaznavid era, Sultan Mahmoud and his son, Sultan Masoud. How a government like Seljuk before being an important government could progress in various artistic fields without any background. Ghaznavid event didn't permit the heads of Seljuk tribe in their government domain and according to Beihaghi history, Seljuk dynasty were obliged to exit the land by Sultan Mahmoud and Masoud. In the late Sultan Masoud government, due to the weakness of this Sultan, they could influence Ghaznavid government and they were influenced by the art of Ghaznavid in architecture and extended this art to west and center of Iran and even it influenced central Asia and it was combined with its art.

Despite similarities between architecture of Ghaznavid and Seljuk and the inspiration of Seljuk by Ghaznavid architecture, many researchers didn't give much importance for architecture and other Islamic era arts before Seljuk era and as we discuss about arts of Islamic era, its early or peak periods are in Seljuk era before Seljuk era, there were many important governments as Samanid and Ghaznavid and they played important role in formation of Islamic era art namely architecture. This role was ignored only due to the lack of adequate evidences of architecture of these periods and it had no effect.

What is stated about Ghaznavid architecture, we can say valuable architecture of Seljuk era reduced importance of architecture of Ghaznavid. In Seljuk era, a type of artistic revolution was formed and this government behaved in various arts to mislead future generation and the name of Seljuk remained in art in great history. We cannot ignore that in Seljuk era, there were great artists and art loving politicians and great kings supported these artists and sometimes the art itself caused that the ministers had conflicts with each other as in Massive Mosque of Isfahan, Nezamolmolk and Taj Molk domes were the result of competition of these two ministers. We cannot ignore architecture of Ghaznavid era and don't consider any effect on Seljuk architecture.

Most of the works of Ghaznavid are outside Iran borders and in current Afghanistan and due to civil war, they are not investigated and this caused that we don't have clear information of architecture.

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