



A Comparative Study of Yazd Jame Mosque and Tabriz Mozaffariyeh Mosque (Kabud Mosque) to Identify the Distinctions and Commonalities in Timurid and Turkmen Architecture

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Abstract

The Jameh Mosque of Yazd is a continuously evolving mosque that has taken shape in various historical periods, with the dome and main iwan decorations, as well as the construction of the eastern entrance portal and its tilework, attributed to the Timurid era. Many scholars consider the Jameh Mosque of Yazd as a prominent work of the Timurid period due to the distinctive features of Timurid architecture. Concurrently with the Timurid era, the Qara Qoyunlu Turkmen ruled in the western and central regions of Iran, and the Mozaffariyeh Mosque is one of the remaining structures from the Turkmen period, known for its unique structure, with different claims about its construction method.

Due to the limited surviving Turkmen architectural works, some scholars associate the Mozaffariyeh Mosque with Ottoman mosques, while others compare it to Timurid mausoleum mosques. There are few sources distinguishing Turkmen and Timurid architecture, and many Iranian and non-Iranian scholars have categorized Turkmen architecture as a subset of Timurid architecture. The inscription of "Jahanshah" on the eastern portal of the Jameh Mosque of Yazd indicates the influence of the Qara Qoyunlu rule in the city. Jahanshah Qaraqoyunlu, who once accepted the suzerainty of Shahrukh, seized Kerman, Fars, and its dependencies (Yazd) in 857 AH after Shahrukh's death, effectively limiting the Timurids' territory to eastern Iran. For a period, the successors of Timur paid tribute to the Qara Qoyunlu. In this article, the construction of the Mozaffariyeh Mosque from the Turkmen period and the Jameh Mosque of Yazd, with significant parts of its dome and eastern entrance portal decorations belonging to the Timurid era, have been comparatively studied.

The main reason for choosing these two mosques is their deviation from the architectural patterns of their time, unlike mosques such as the Jameh Mosque of Gowhar Shad in Herat and Bibi Khanum in Samarkand, which adhere to the old quad-iwan layout. The Jameh Mosque of Yazd and the Mozaffariyeh Mosque do not follow



this pattern, each possessing unique characteristics compared to other mosques of their era.

The aim of this comparative research is to answer the question of where the points of divergence and convergence between the Mozaffariyeh Mosque in Tabriz and the Jameh Mosque of Yazd are manifested. This study falls under the category of fundamental-theoretical research, conducted through a descriptive-analytical and comparative approach. The research hypothesis suggests that despite the formal and plan differences between the Mozaffariyeh Mosque in Tabriz and the Jameh Mosque of Yazd, given the simultaneous construction of the Mozaffariyeh Mosque alongside interventions in the construction and restoration of the Jameh Mosque of Yazd, common Iranian architectural and decorative features can be identified in these two mosques. This study aims to refute claims of non-Iranian architectural influence on the Mozaffariyeh Mosque, and through a comparison of the differences between these two mosques, it aims to elucidate the unique characteristics of Turkmen architecture compared to the Timurid style.

In the initial theoretical and descriptive-analytical stage, using written historical sources, the contemporaneity of the construction of the Mozaffariyeh Mosque and the interventions in the construction and restoration of the Jameh Mosque of Yazd were examined. In the second stage, employing an analytical and comparative method, the plan and structural features of the domes, decorations, and architecture of the two mosques were compared after gathering information through library research and field studies.

The research results indicate structural similarities in the plan and dome of the Mozaffariyeh Mosque and the Jameh Mosque of Yazd, revealing that this structure was common in Iranian dome architecture of that era. However, differences exist in these two mosques due to the variations between Timurid and Turkmen architecture. The deep iwan in front of the dome in the Jameh Mosque of Yazd follows the architectural style of Timurid mausoleums and quad-iwan mosques, featuring a vaulted ceiling directly opening into the dome. In contrast, the entrance portal of the Mozaffariyeh Mosque has less depth, initially leading to the north shabestan, with northern, eastern, and western shabestans connecting to the dome. This entrance arrangement, involving a hierarchy of entrance-shabestan-dome, is not observed in the Jameh Mosque of Yazd or in any of the Timurid mausoleums that theorists have compared to the Mozaffariyeh Mosque. This unique feature is considered characteristic of Turkmen architecture.

The typical plan of Timurid mosques features a central courtyard surrounded by four iwans, with central dome constructions found in mausoleums. However, the Mozaffariyeh Mosque has a dome-based plan, unlike Timurid mausoleums, which researchers have compared to it. The fluid plan of the Mozaffariyeh Mosque establishes a suitable spatial relationship between the shabestans and the dome, making it well-suited for use as a mosque. This dominance of the mosque function over the mausoleum function sets it apart from the compared examples.

In terms of decorations, the Mozaffariyeh Mosque exhibits the pinnacle of this art in Turkmen architecture, with predominant use of inlaid mosaic tilework, combining



Islamic geometric patterns against a lapis lazuli and brick background. This showcases the peak of artistic achievement in Turkmen architecture compared to the Timurid era, executed by Tabrizi tile artisans. In the Jameh Mosque of Yazd, despite the presence of inlaid tiles on a smaller scale and more geometric patterns, monochrome tilework with a predominant turquoise and beige color scheme takes precedence in the dome, reflecting the characteristics of Timurid tilework in this mosque.

Keywords: Tabriz Mozaffariyeh Mosque, Yazd Jame Mosque, Timurid Architecture, Turkmen Architecture.

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