



BORJ-E ʤŪĠROL

BORJ-E ʤŪĠROL, name commonly applied to a large tomb tower of the Saljuq period situated near Ray. Despite the loss of its probably conical roof, the tower's imposing bulk (ca. 20 m high, 16.6 m diameter) still dominates the surroundings. Its shaft is divided into twenty-two flanges which are topped by three tiers of large stalactites leading to a shallow cornice—a bold solution to a problem which bedeviled the architects of the many later tomb towers of stellar plan. Nineteenth-century drawings (Flandin, Coste) show that before the restoration of 1300/1882 a Kufic inscription (unfortunately illegible in the reproductions) was originally present above the cornice. The interior is now a completely bare cylinder. Two doorways lead into it. That commonly used at present, on the south, has bricks of a lighter hue than the main body of the mausoleum, and so may be a later addition. The opening of a staircase is visible at a height of ca. 7 m just above the north portal; this suggests that access to it from an adjacent roof was possible at the time of its erection, although from exactly which kind of building is a matter of speculation.

The most striking feature of the tower is that, unlike most medieval brick buildings of Iran, its architectural emphasis is on mass rather than decoration. This would make dating problematical were it not for the survival of an iron plaque, now in the Museum of Art at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. It has been ascertained that this plaque, which contains a craftsman's signature and the date Rajab, 534/March, 1140, was originally located over the door of the tower (Miles, p. 46). Whether it referred to the tower itself or its door alone is not clear, but as Hillenbrand remarks (p. 85), the date is well in keeping with



the form of the stalactite cornice. It may therefore, until better evidence emerges, be taken as the probable date of the lower itself, making unlikely any connection with either of the Saljuq sultans ȚoĖrel I (d. 455/1063) or ȚoĖrel II (d. 529/1134).

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