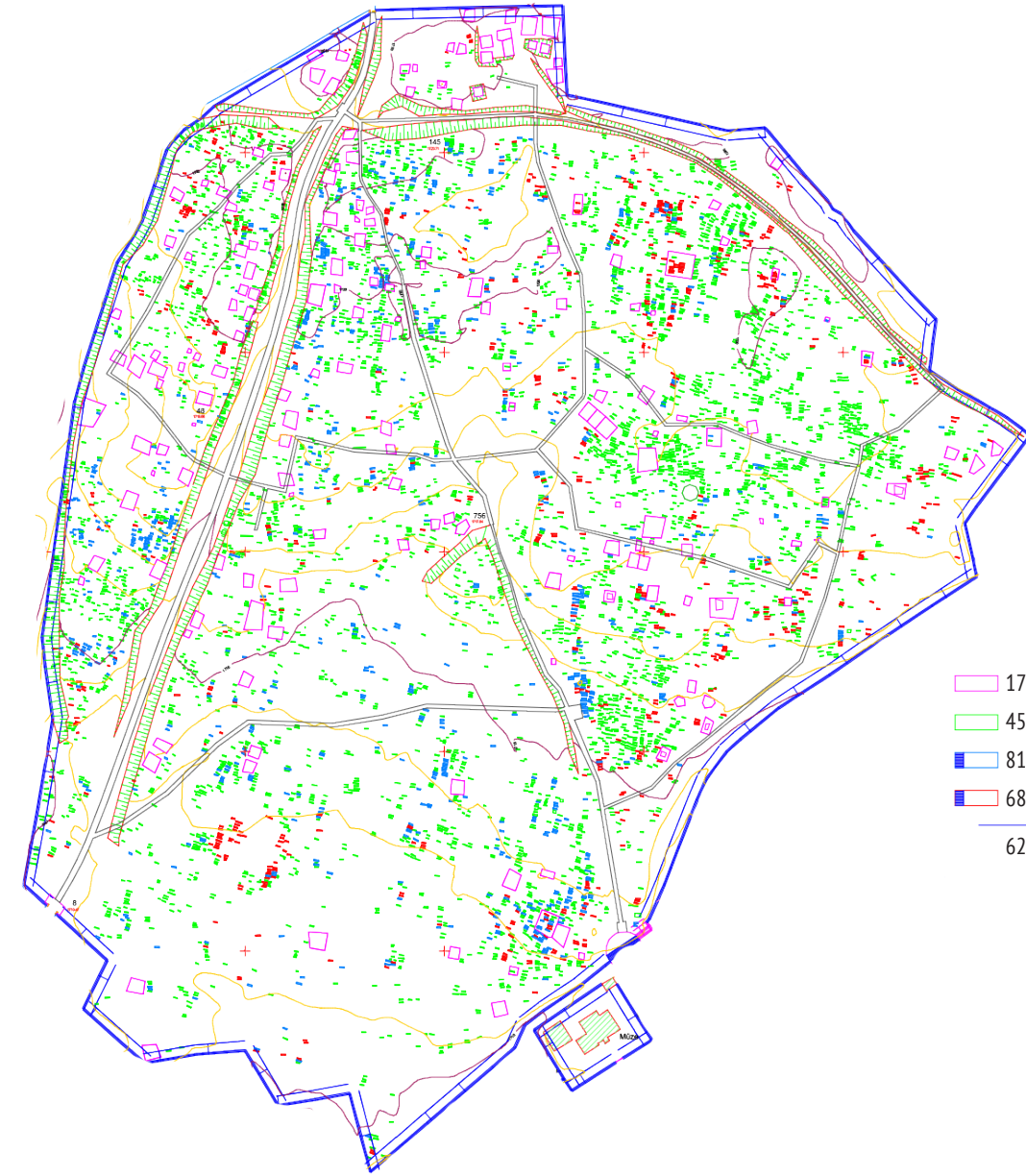
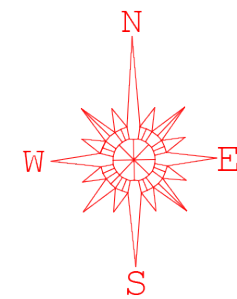


AHLAT SELJUK SQUARE CEMETERY RUINS LAYOUT PLAN



- 178 AKIT BURIAL GROUNDS
 - 4541 TOMBS
 - 818 TOMBS WITH TOMBSTONES
 - 680 TOMBS WITH BROKEN TOMBSTONES
- 6217 TOMBS IN TOTAL



Visiting Hours

Opening Time: 08:00
Closing Time: 19:00

Open everyday.

Address: İkkubbe Mahallesi, İyiler Mevkii, Devlet Bahçeli Bulvarı, Ahlat/BİTLİS

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AHLAT SELJUK SQUARE CEMETERY RUINS

THE WITNESSES OF HISTORY OF TURKS IN ANATOLIA

GENERAL DIRECTORATE FOR
CULTURAL ASSETS AND MUSEUMS





Ahlat Seljuk Cemetery



It is considered the largest Muslim Cemetery in the world after the Cennetül Bakî Cemetery, which is considered the largest burial ground in the Islamic world. The Ahlat Seljuk Cemetery, which has around 8000 tombstones on an area of 210 acres, is notable not only for its historical position, but also for the characteristic features and different themes of the tombstones.

The first detail that will draw your attention when you visit the cemetery will be couplets, lyric poems, some verses, geometric shapes and ornaments in different Arabic writing types on the front and back faces of the tombstones. The inscription called "Seljuk Sülüs", which was produced uniquely by the Anatolian Seljuk civilization, was used in tombstones as well as in many architectural works. The tombs, known as the Square Cemetery, and located in different places in different parts of Ahlat, are also full of original examples of this unique stone mastery and decoration art.

AHLAT

Ahlat... The gateway to Anatolia, the prelude to the ancient geography that embraced the Turks. It is the third center that forms the trivet of Islamic culture after Balkh and Bukhara, which is known as Kubbetül Islam. It has been home to countless civilizations, the history of which extends to the Hurrians and then to the Urartians, and finally reached the title of being the capital in the adventure of Sultan Alparslan, which was crowned with the Manzikert Victory. While the Turks were making Anatolia their homeland, Ahlat became the administrative center of the Seljuks and became the first page of the story that would last until the Ottoman Empire.

AHLAT STONE

Ahlat stone, which is the symbol of the typical architecture of the region and its characteristic structure identified with Ahlat, was used in the famous Ahlat cemetery as well as in the architecture of the region. The cupola and stone sarcophagi were meticulously made with Ahlat stones. The stone masters of the period presented unique examples with the competition of aesthetics and art. In fact, each tombstone contains a different story, and each motif and symbol used in tombstones talks about both the Seljuk culture and civilization and the people of the period.

Ahlat stone, which is included in the andesite tuff group due to the accumulation of volcanic ash and the combination of lava in its content, was easily shaped in the hands of the masters and was used quite extensively in architecture. Ahlat stonework is a craftsmanship that continues even today, and the owners of the works built from these stones used a "mason's mark" on the stones, which indicates that they belong to them.



When we look at the types of tombs in Ahlat, we find different types and examples with single tombstones, the cist type, the mass burial area called 'akıt' by the locals, and those with tombstones at both ends. Cupola type tomb buildings have also become the symbol of the Ahlat Seljuk Cemetery. Usta Şakird, Emir Bayındır Cupola Tomb arouses admiration both with its motifs and decorations and its architectural style.

Geometric decorations and intersected stars on some of the tombstones here depict the stages that symbolize the principle of Unity of the Body, such as the transition from unity to plurality, from plurality to unity, the birth of man into the world, and his approach to God. On some stones, there are inscriptions such as the name of the deceased person, the date of death, and asking forgiveness and mercy for him. There are verses on the stone placed on the head, called the şahide, or on the face of the cist, if any. Sometimes a short poem or couplet is written.

Maybe a government official, a soldier, a qadi, maybe a madrasa teacher, or a student who was martyred on the battlefield at a young age, or a girl at the age of wedding dress who succumbed to illness, or a son who was lost at an early age.

The struggle for dominance and existence that started with the sword and spear in the hand in Central Asia. An epic story that goes all the way to Anatolia, a march that evolves from a tent to a world empire, a trust that reaches from Metehan to Atilla, from Genghis Khan to Fatih...

You know, they say... If only stones could speak. Such a place waits for you here, who knows what Ahlat can tell in its own language...