



The Eight-Cornered Hat of Elaziğ in Anatolia: Origins Symbolism and Cultural Heritage

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Abstract

The Eight-Cornered Hat is a significant product that has emerged from the heart of Anatolia, representing an important cultural symbol of the city of Elaziğ. It is actually a variation of the traditional farmer and villager caps known since ancient times. However, it differs in terms of its content and geometric structure. This hat carries historical features reminiscent of the past and has a meaning that extends back to the Seljuk period. The design of the hat, inspiration was drawn from the triangular and hexagonal geometric shapes of the Seljuks and Anatolian Seljuks periods. Each of the eight corners of the hat embodies important non-material, traditional concepts of our culture. This article compiles and examines the eight-cornered hat produced in the city of Elaziğ, Turkey, from various perspectives. The purpose of the article is to examine the eight-cornered hat, an important part of local culture, in both its tangible and intangible aspects. In this context, it aims to explore the relationship between the eight-cornered hat and Anatolian architecture and culture. The study includes a literature review and utilizes the interview method. Within the scope of the article, the cultural values, human values, beliefs, and behavioral contexts represented by the geometric features of the traditional eight-cornered hat are identified.

Keywords: Anatolia culture, Cultural heritage, Eight-cornered hat, Material culture, Traditional headwear

1. INTRODUCTION

The eight-cornered hat is a valuable item with a significant place in Turkish culture, particularly within the city of Elaziğ. This traditional headgear, predominantly embraced and worn by the people of Elaziğ, reflects the collective identity of Turkish men and carries symbolic meanings that go beyond its material form. Each corner of the hat represents a facet of human identity: patriotism, generosity, bravery, honesty, hospitality, humility, valor and manliness. In this sense, the youths of Elaziğ are expected to embody these values, making the eight-cornered hat not only an article of clothing but also a symbolic code of ethical and social conduct. Such representations illustrate how material culture functions as a vehicle for the transmission of intangible cultural heritage across generations (Gazete Gerçek, 2024; UNESCO, 2003).




The eight-cornered hat also holds architectural and artistic associations. In Anatolian Seljuk art, octagonal patterns were used extensively in architectural ornamentation, including walls, portals, and decorative compositions. These patterns, sometimes filled with human, bird, and sphinx figures, symbolically alluded to concepts of cosmic order and spiritual harmony (Necipoğlu, 1995). The geometric precision of the octagon—with its sharper and more defined lines compared to the circle—provided a strong visual metaphor for order and cultural identity. It is therefore possible to suggest that the symbolism embedded in the eight-cornered hat resonates with the broader artistic and architectural traditions of Anatolia.

From a theoretical standpoint, cultural symbols such as the eight-cornered hat can be situated within wider discourses of identity construction, cultural symbolism, and heritage. According to Hall (1997), cultural symbols serve as key instruments for articulating and negotiating identities within a community. Similarly, Geertz (1973) emphasizes that symbols carry layered meanings embedded in social practices, acting as "texts" through which societies interpret themselves. The eight-cornered hat, therefore, is not merely a traditional accessory but a cultural signifier that embodies values, sustains identity, and connects the present to historical legacies.

Comparative studies reinforce this interpretation. Research has shown that octagonal motifs are widely used in Central Asian headgear, textile designs, and architectural details as markers of identity, protection, and cosmological symbolism (Esin, 2004). In both Anatolia and Central Asia, the octagon functions as a recurring cultural form, bridging tangible material culture with intangible meanings. By positioning the Elaziğ eight-cornered hat within this comparative framework, it is possible to underline its importance not only for local identity but also for its place in the broader transregional heritage of the Turkic world.

2. THE EIGHT-CORNERED HAT: CULTURAL AND FAITH-BASED ASPECTS

The octagon is a very significant and balanced geometry. The eight-cornered geometric shape has been a tradition since the Great Seljuks, and it developed during the Anatolian Seljuks period in Anatolia. The eight-cornered shape has been used as a highly meaningful decorative element in the portals and interior facades of various Seljuk buildings. "To be situated on lands where diverse cultures converge, such as Anatolia, has led the Seljuks to achieve a distinctive artistic synthesis. Generally, we observe that various tendencies and techniques have merged, resulting in Anatolian Turkish art acquiring an identity that sets it apart from other Islamic regions over time" (Öztürk & Türkoğlu, 2016; Kuban, 1972). For example, in the "Kubadâbâd Palace," a structure from the Anatolian Seljuk period located in Konya, eight-cornered geometric forms constitute the basis of the palace's tile decorations (Figure 1,2,3).

		
<p>Figure 1. Tiles of the Kubad Abad Palace with octagonal frames (Özdemir, 2021)</p>	<p>Figure 2. Tiles of the Kubad Abad Palace with human-bird motifs (Arik, 2001)</p>	<p>Figure 3. Tiles of the Kubad Abad Palace with human-siren motifs (Aslan& Cantürk, 2023)</p>

The Kubad Abad Palace is a complex of Anatolian Seljuk architecture situated on the shores of Lake Beyşehir in the Konya-Beyşehir District. "The richness of figures on the wall tiles of the Kubad Abad Palace is quite remarkable. The creators of the richly figurative tiles that adorn the walls of palaces, enriching the architecture with a world of symbols, have shaped the aesthetics of Seljuk painting" (Arik, 2007; Davun & Albayrak, 2021). In the tiles of the Kubad Abad Palace, predominantly at the outset, winged figures found in tomb depictions are featured. When these depictions feature a bird-headed female body, they are interpreted by scholars as references to Egyptian mythology. These depictions, known as Sirens (Seirens), are also found in Greek mythology. According to Homer, they are

associated with the sea and are depicted as sea nymphs with the upper body of a woman and the lower body of a fish. These depictions have also been used in Greek vase paintings.

The Kubad-Abad Palace, constructed in 1236 by the Anatolian Seljuk Sultan Alaeddin Keykubad, features octagonal geometric structures in its interior and exterior wall decorations. In these decorations, the faces of the Uyghur Turks, who are from Central Asia, are emphasized on the eight-cornered geometry.

Numerical symbolism emerged philosophically first with Pythagoras (6th–5th century BC) and subsequently developed with Pythagoreanism. In later stages, this movement influenced many cultures and religious beliefs (Yücel 2011).

The number eight is known to be present in myths, epics, and religious texts based on numerical symbolism. The number eight also exists in Turkish culture, where the concept of the 'eight heavens' is mentioned. Meanings attributed to the number eight can also be found in Hindu and Chinese beliefs. It is especially encountered in geometric decorations in Medieval Turkish-Islamic architecture. Pythagoras, also known as the "father of numbers," based his thinking on the concept of order. Pythagoras explains the harmony and order prevailing in the universe, the unity in opposites, and the mathematical and numerical relationships underlying everything. Pythagoras and his followers believed that the entire universe is composed of numbers and that all events, from physical phenomena to celestial bodies, are governed by numbers. With this belief, they formed an advanced form of numerical mysticism (Aslan& Duran, 2021; Yücel 2011).

The Eightfold Path, known as the "Noble Eightfold Path," is considered a schematic representation of the Buddhist way of life. Initially, this schema was known as a threefold path, but it was later expanded to include eight stages. "The sacred or noble 'Eightfold Path' is a schematic representation of Buddhist life. It has been suggested that this eightfold explanation of Buddhist life could be an expanded form of the threefold schema of Buddhist life. This threefold schema was as follows: 1. Faith (saddha) initially present, which eventually turns into wisdom (panna). 2. Morality (sila). 3. Concentration or meditation (samadhi). Each of these aspects has been further divided into sub-sections, thus faith leading to correct understanding and right thought; morality leading to right speech, right action, and right livelihood; and meditation leading to right intention, right thought, and right understanding (Güç & Sert, 2020). The concept originating from the eight-cornered idea, evolving through octagonal and balanced geometry, has culminated in the traditional eight-cornered hat.

3. THE EIGHT-CORNERED HAT IN ANATOLIAN CITY CULTURE

In Anatolia, the city of Elazığ and the Çarşamba District of Samsun Province have particularly distinctive traditions: the eight-cornered hat. The eight-cornered hat has been registered under the name "Çarşamba Eight-Cornered Cap" with registration number 571 and a geographical indication (origin mark) type. This hat, named the "Çarşamba Eight-Cornered Cap," is a tangible cultural item specific to the Çarşamba district, worn by men. It is produced from fabrics used in men's clothing. This hat has become a symbol of cultural and folkloric value for both the Çarşamba district and the province of Samsun (Türk Patent, 2024). In the city of Elazığ, the city of Samsun, and their surrounding districts, as well as in the eastern regions of Anatolia, the eight-cornered hat is widely used by men in their daily lives. Passed down from their grandfathers and fathers, influenced by the cultural processes and habits they have experienced, this hat has become a significant part of their identity as men use it in the fields, hills, and cities. "Each of the eight-cornered caps is individually crafted by hand. The cap serves as a souvenir of the region. Additionally, the attire completed with the region-specific 'egg heel shoes,' white socks, narrow-legged beige pants, vest, and eight-cornered hat has become the symbol of the Çarşamba District (Figure 4). It is believed that there is a different human quality at each corner of the eight

geometric shape. The hat is equipped with these qualities that make a person a real human (Türk Patent, 2024).

In the making of hats and caps, "Fabric selection, taking measurements, hat model, fabric cutting, sewing, and ironing" are all very important. "Wearing a hat is a sign of modernity." Like every craftsman and artisan, Master Akay also complains about not being able to find apprentices (Gazete Merhaba, 2024). Akay Master, who says "Wearing a hat is a sign of modernity," tells the story of the "Eight-Cornered Cap" as follows:

Fabric selection:

In the making of hats and caps, fabric selection is done according to the preferences of individuals. In fabric selection, color, pattern, thickness, and fineness of the fabric are important factors to consider. Additionally, attention is paid to the environment in which the hat will be worn, the attire it will be paired with, the age of the wearer and their skin tone.

		
Figure 4. The 'Eight-cornered cap' and cgg-heeled shoes of Elazığ and Çarşamba (Hedef Halk, 2024)	Figure 5. The shop where the eight-cornered cap is sold (Türkiye Kültür Portalı, 2013)	Figure 6. Hat master Muhittin Dağdelen preparing the hat fabric (Fırat Üniversitesi Fırat Haber, 2024)

Measurement:

For a hat to fit nicely, taking proper measurements is important. The length of the wearer's head is measured to ensure the hat fits well. According to Akay, there are different models of the eight-cornered hat that vary depending on the wearer's position, climate conditions, and the culture they belong to. Akay mentioned some of these models as kep, melon, captain, peasant, and Anatolian cap (Figure 5).

Fabric cutting:

Akay explained that the chosen fabric for hat making is prepared according to the selected model (Figure 6, 7). He mentioned using inner lining, canvas fabric, and sunshade curtain for the hat. Akay described how fabric pieces are cut to the appropriate measurements and then stitched together. "The model I choose is the eight-cornered one. I cut the fabric and lining in the shape of an octagon (with pointed corners) for the eight earflaps separately, then stitch them together. I cover the visor fabric in a crescent shape to fit the forehead. A thread is sewn along the joint line of the visor and the cap, then turned inside out, and buttons are attached. All seams are opened with an iron and then stitched together," he explained.

Akay emphasized that ironing is done on a wooden mold, which is placed inside and in the middle of the hat made of fabric. "The hat is placed in the steam chamber to ensure the necessary fabric tension. After ironing, the sweatband and buttons are sewn at ear level to complete the stitching process," he said.

Wearing the hat:

Akay stated that the way the eight-cornered hat is worn provides clues about a person's mood and behavior. He also emphasized that a dirty hat makes the person look disheveled. Akay explained that the initial posture of the hat reflects the inner feelings, saying, "A hat worn tilted to the sides with the visor raised backwards reflects rebellion and defiance, as well as emotions. Wearing the hat with the visor lowered over the eyebrows implies that our nature is mysterious. Wearing the hat straight parallel to the ground indicates balance and honesty," he said.



Figure 7. Preparing a hat pattern (Firat Üniversitesi Firat Haber, 2024)



Figure 8. Integrity of the attire worn with hat (Elazığ Yeni Haber, 2024)

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Wearing a hat is modernity:


Akay mentions the "Hat Law," which holds a separate place within the Atatürk reforms. He emphasizes the importance of the Hat Law in ensuring that our people appear modern. Akay also recalls Atatürk's statements regarding hats while explaining the clothing revolution in Kastamonu: "Civilized international attire is a secular attire for our nation. We will wear it. Standing, shoes or boots, trousers, vest, shirt, tie, jacket, and naturally, on top of them, a hat with a visor. I would like to emphasize that Atatürk said the name of this headgear is a hat" (Gazete Merhaba, 2024).

The eight-cornered hat of Elazığ embodies fundamental virtues that structure both individual morality and collective cultural identity. Each corner represents a specific value: patriotism, symbolizing loyalty to the homeland; generosity, the act of sharing and fostering solidarity; bravery and valor, representing courage and sacrifice; honesty, the foundation of trust in social relations; hospitality, a central element of Anatolian cultural identity; humility, the virtue of modesty; and manliness, denoting maturity, responsibility, and ethical behavior (CNN Türk, 2024; Türkiye Kültür Portalı, 2013; UNESCO, 2003) as shown in Figure 9.

These symbolic dimensions align with broader theoretical discussions on cultural symbolism, identity construction, and heritage, highlighting how material objects transmit social and moral values across generations (Hall, 1997).

The hat also resonates with the geometric and ornamental traditions of Anatolian Seljuk art, where octagonal patterns—often enclosing human, animal, or mythical figures—served

as metaphors of cosmic and social order (Necipoğlu, 1995). As emphasized by Mayor Şahin Şerifoğulları, the eight-cornered hat gains additional cultural coherence when paired with traditional egg-heeled shoes, underscoring its role within the complete attire of Elazığ's tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

	
The symbolic meaning of the hat's corner	
Patriotism	Symbolizes loyalty and devotion to the homeland. It embodies the idea that individuals must place the well-being and unity of their nation above personal interests. In the cultural context of Elazığ, patriotism reflects the community's strong sense of belonging and responsibility toward the land and its people.
Generosity	Refers to selflessness and the act of sharing material and spiritual wealth with others. Generosity is viewed not only as an individual virtue but as a communal obligation, ensuring solidarity and mutual support within society.
Bravery	Denotes courage in facing difficulties and resilience against adversity. For the people of Elazığ, bravery carries both historical and moral weight, reflecting the expectation that individuals uphold justice and protect their community when needed.
Honesty	Embodies truthfulness, transparency, and moral uprightness. Honesty in this cultural framework is more than personal integrity; it is the foundation of trust and cohesion within the community.
Hospitality	Represents warmth and the respectful treatment of guests. In Anatolian culture, hospitality has always been central to social life, serving as a reflection of generosity, kindness, and cultural pride.
Humility	Refers to modesty and the avoidance of arrogance. By valuing humility, the eight-cornered hat promotes an ideal of balanced character, where individuals remain grounded despite social or personal achievements.
Valor	Closely linked to bravery, valor emphasizes heroic action and the willingness to make sacrifices for higher ideals such as justice, honor, and community welfare. It highlights the cultural expectation of men to act with nobility and moral strength.
Manliness	Symbolizes maturity, responsibility, and moral authority. In the context of Elazığ tradition, manliness is not limited to physical strength but encompasses ethical behavior, reliability, and the capacity to serve as a role model within society.
Figure 9. The symbolic meaning of the hat's corner (Baskil, 2024)	

3.1. Sociological Aspect of The Eight Cornered Hat

Although historically significant, the everyday use of the eight-cornered hat has declined among younger generations due to modernization, globalization, and the availability of mass-produced clothing (Firat Üniversitesi Firat Haber, 2024; Smith, 2009). Older men may still wear it for cultural ceremonies, weddings, or folk performances, but it is rarely chosen as daily attire by youth (CNN Türk, 2024; Türkiye Kültür Portalı, 2013). Despite reduced daily use, the hat retains symbolic significance, appearing in festivals, folk dances, and heritage events, allowing younger generations to connect with tradition. In this way,

the hat functions both as a tangible cultural artifact and as an emblem of intangible heritage, mediating continuity between local customs and contemporary life.

3.2. Cultural Heritage and Preservation of The Eight Cornered Hat

The eight-cornered hat is recognized as a candidate for intangible cultural heritage due to its symbolic, moral and aesthetic values (CNN Türk, 2024; UNESCO, 2003). Local initiatives, including workshops, exhibitions, and folk dance performances organized by the Elazığ Municipality, cultural associations, and community groups, ensure the transmission of both the hat-making craft and its cultural meanings to future generations (CNN Türk, 2024; Elazığ Belediyesi, 2022). Furthermore, the geographical indication registration of the "Çarşamba Eight-Cornered Hat" provides legal protection and formal acknowledgment of its cultural importance (Kültür Portalı, 2024). By integrating the hat into tangible and intangible heritage frameworks, its role as a marker of local identity, morality, and tradition is preserved and promoted.

4. AN ANALYSIS OF THE PERCEPTUAL BELIEF AND HUMAN VALUES OF EIGHT CORNERED GEOMETRY

The article prepared based on the concept of the octagonal pavilion examined the numerical values of the concept, one of the world's most important religious centers, the artistic values left by a deep-rooted culture over the years, traditions, and behaviors. It looked at how all these features are reflected in clothing and in a helmet worn on the head mentioned in this article. Witnessing how they re-emerge as concrete and abstract data in human and societal identities. In this context, the human values of the octagonal hat were analyzed along with the conceptual dimension of the octagonal geometric shape.

Table 1. Geometric evaluation of the eight-cornered concept in worldly life

Eightcornered Octagon Concept	Based on Geometric Structures	In the belief foundation of the Eightfold Path	Based on the eight-cornered hat	General Evaluation
This world's life...				
Harmony Balance	The octagon is an extremely balanced and harmonious structure	The balance of the eight-fold path is important for the individual	The production of the hat in an octagonal shape is important for balance	The octagonal form is harmonious and balanced in number, structure, and belief
Unity Wholeness	The geometric structure has an octagonal integrity and stands alone as a unity	The road being divided into eight slices indicates its safety	The octagonality of the hat forms a holistic unity	The concepts of unity and integrity are dense in octagonal form
Eight paradises Peace Happiness	The number eight has been associated with the concept of heaven in belief systems, symbolizing the peace and happiness of the afterlife	Similarly, the eight-sliced road leads to tranquility and joy through human behavior	The hat through the behaviors it embodies with its eight corners, seeks a path to peace, happiness and heaven	In geometric structures, on the road, and in the hat, eight different thoughts lead to peace, happiness, and heaven.
Harmony, order, Numerical harmony	The eight-sided geometric structure has a numerical order and harmonious sections	Choosing eight slices for the road represents the harmony, order of life, belief	The eight corners of the hat are also in complete harmony	The concept of eight corners is orderly and harmonious in geometry, road, and structure
The beauty of eternal life	Scientifically, the octagonal geometric structure acknowledges an infinite life where balance is not disturbed	The eight slices of the road, this time, lead to the peace and beauty of life	The eight corners of the hat evoke thoughts of the eternity of life with their strength above the head	The geometric structure, road, and hat sought the beautiful life of infinity in the balance of the octagon



Table 2. Analyses of octagonal structure, eight-slice road, and eight-cornered hat in the context of faith and behavior

Eight Cornered Concept	Based on geometric structures, the Kubad-Abad Palace is examined	In terms of Buddhist belief, the analysis focuses on the Eightfold Path	The teachings of the eight-cornered hat form the basis of evaluation	General Evaluation
Belief & Behavior Context				
Truthful speech and behavior	The truthful speech and behavior directed towards the geometric structure only aligns with the balance of the structure	The eightfold path is like the main artery, where there's no deviation from truth in speech or action	The eight corners complete the truth in speech and behavior	In geometric structures, on the path and at the corners, there is no deviation from truth in speech or behavior
Right judgment and livelihood	A geometric structure, internally, remains a cohesive whole without overflowing in terms of mutual understanding and interaction	On the path to a moral conduct guided by faith, there's a continual development of judgment and the ability to understand one another	The teachings of the eight-cornered hat also require mutual understanding and the judgment of events	Whether in a geometric structure, on the path, or in an eight-cornered hat, the teaching is to exercise judgment and cultivate understanding
Right intention and mindfulness	The intention and oversight of a geometric structure are clearly evident and balanced	One of the eight segments of the path should also include good intentions and proper oversight	The intentions and ethical considerations at each of the eight corners of the hat are good	The solidity of the geometric structure harbors good intentions and proper oversight both on the path and above the head
Right thought and understanding	An eight-sided shape inherently represents correct understanding and thoughtfulness within itself	The path leading to good ethics naturally becomes thoughtful and understanding	Similarly, the teachings of the hat also emphasize the importance of correct thinking and understanding	The teachings of geometric structures, paths, and hats are all characterized by correct understanding and thoughtfulness
Honesty	Honesty is as inherent to geometric structures as it is unyielding.	Along the eight sections of the path to faith, honesty always prevails.	Each of the eight corners of the hat also embodies honesty.	In essence, honesty is inherent in the geometric structure, the path, and the hat worn on the head.
Humility	A geometric structure cannot be exaggerated within itself; it remains humble in its identity	One characteristic of the eight-sectioned path is humility. Besides many fundamental qualities, the hat also embodies humility	In addition to many fundamental qualities, the hat also embodies humility	The octagonal structure is such a fundamental one that it embodies the concept of humility at its ethical core
Bravery and manliness	Two corners of an octagonal structure feature valor and manliness	Advancing on the path of faith necessitates being honorable and acting like a true gentleman	Two of the eight corners of the hat demand both valor and gallantry	Valor and manliness are as robust identity traits as an octagonal structure
Patriotism and valor	To love one's homeland and to show valor for its sake is as sturdy as an octagonal structure	Advancing on the path of faith is possible with both valor and love for the homeland	The two most important corners of the hat are valor and love for one's homeland	The resilience of the octagonal structure, the path it follows, is synonymous with valor and love for the homeland
Generosity and Hospitality	Generosity and hospitality stem from loving all people. Just like the sturdiness of an octagonal structure	On the Buddhist path of faith, one also practices generosity and hospitality through love for humanity	Two of the corners of the hat are already generosity and the Turkish trait of hospitality	Generosity and hospitality are as sturdy traits as an octagonal geometric structure, and they



				are also Turkish characteristics
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The harmony, balance, unity, and integrity of life on this Earth are evaluated in terms of reaching the beauty of eternal life with peace and happiness within harmony and order, guided by the concept of eight heavens brought by faith, while describing the solidity of a geometric structure like the octagon.

This geometric form remains balanced in number, structure, harmony, and belief. The eight different behaviors and thoughts of the eight-slice road are also solid, orderly, and balanced, like a geometric structure. It provides a beauty of life that leads to eternity.

In the context of belief and behavior, this evaluation has examined the octagonal geometric structure, the eightfold path of Buddhist belief, and the eight-cornered hat. The analyses have considered both the teachings of the path of belief and the moral teachings of the eight-cornered hat. The solidity and balance of the geometric shape complement these moral subjects and encourage good judgment. The intentions, honesty, humility, courage, generosity, and especially patriotism are outstanding qualities associated with an octagonal geometric structure.

5. THE EIGHT CORNERED HAT: USAGE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE TODAY

In the past, the eight-cornered hat was one of the essential headpieces worn by men in daily life across many regions of Anatolia. Today, however, its field of use has narrowed. It is still used in Elazığ and Samsun-Çarşamba during folk dance performances, weddings, local festivals, and special occasions, but it is rarely preferred by younger generations in everyday life. The main reasons for this decline include the widespread adoption of modern clothing styles, the affordability and accessibility of mass-produced industrial hats, and the decreasing interest of younger generations in traditional attire (Kaya, 2018).

Nevertheless, the eight-cornered hat continues to hold value not merely as a clothing accessory but also as a symbol of local identity and cultural memory. In Elazığ, some associations, cultural houses, and folk dance groups preserve the hat as an inseparable part of folkloric costume. In Çarşamba, the "Çarşamba Eight-Cornered Cap" has been registered with a geographical indication, ensuring its recognition and protection as a cultural heritage element (Türk Patent, 2024).

The eight-cornered hat should also be regarded within the framework of intangible cultural heritage. Similar to many elements listed by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage, the hat is not only a material object but also carries meanings through its associated values, symbols, craftsmanship knowledge, and its role in the transmission of social identity (UNESCO, 2003).

Today, a few local craftsmen—for example, master hat-maker Akay in Elazığ and Muhittin Dağdelen in Çarşamba—continue to produce the hat by hand (Firat Üniversitesi Firat Haber, 2024). However, the lack of apprentices and the decline of craftsmanship pose a serious threat to the future of the eight-cornered hat. For this reason, it is crucial that local administrations, universities, and cultural heritage institutions collaborate to organize workshops, exhibitions, and educational projects.

With its power to represent cultural identity, the eight-cornered hat serves as a source of belonging and pride for the local community and as a means of connecting with the past for younger generations. In this sense, it should be emphasized that the hat is not only a legacy of the past but also a cultural richness for the future (Kaya, 2018).

5.1. Comparative Cultural Analysis of The Eight Cornered Hat in Çarşamba and Elazığ

The eight-cornered hat exhibits both regional variations and broader cultural parallels. In Anatolia, the *Çarşamba Eight-Cornered Cap* (*Çarşamba Sekiz Köşe Kasketi*) and the *Elazığ Eight-Cornered Hat* share a similar geometric form but differ in terms of material, ornamentation, and symbolic associations (Table 3). In Çarşamba, the hat is generally made of felt or cloth with a simpler design, reflecting the rural lifestyle and its official protection as a Geographical Indication product (Güç & Sert, 2020).

In Elazığ, by contrast, the hat is often more elaborate, sometimes adorned with patterned fabrics or embroidery, and is closely tied to local identity through its role in folk dances and wedding rituals (Kaya, 2018). While both hats symbolize local pride, their functions in community life vary, showing how a shared form can acquire regionally distinct cultural meanings.

Beyond Anatolia, the symbolism of the octagon has been widely recognized across different civilizations. In Buddhism, the Noble Eightfold Path (*Ashtanga Marga*) is often represented in an eight-spoked wheel (*Dharmachakra*), embodying balance and completeness (UNESCO, 2003). Similarly, in Christian sacred architecture, many baptismal fonts and baptisteries were designed as octagons, symbolizing rebirth and eternity (Krautheimer, 1965). These cross-cultural parallels suggest that the octagonal form is not only a practical design element but also a universal symbol of transition, identity, and spiritual continuity. Thus, the Anatolian eight-cornered hat can be situated within a wider symbolic geography where the octagon embodies both local identity and global archetypes. Its persistence in Elazığ and Çarşamba demonstrates how universal forms are reinterpreted in local contexts, bridging material culture, ritual and cosmology.

Table 3. Comparative features of the eight-cornered hat in Çarşamba and Elazığ

Feature	Çarşamba Eight-Cornered Cap	Elazığ Eight-Cornered Hat
Material	Felt or cloth	Mostly cloth, sometimes patterned or embroidered
Design	Simple and plain	More elaborate and decorative
Ornamentation	Generally absent	Use of patterned fabrics and embroidery
Cultural Connection	Reflects rural lifestyle	Strongly tied to local identity; used in folk dances and wedding rituals
Official Status	Protected as a Geographical Indication	No such registration
Symbolism	Represents local pride	Symbolizes local identity, ritual significance, and social belonging
Social Function	Associated with daily life and rural practices	Associated with ceremonies, weddings, and folkloric practices

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the main outcomes of the study, followed by their interpretation and final conclusions. The results summarize the symbolic, cultural, and historical significance of the eight-cornered hat of Elazığ, while the discussion elaborates on its meanings within architectural, artistic, and moral contexts. The conclusion highlights the broader implications for cultural heritage preservation and offers recommendations to ensure the transmission of this tradition to future generations.

6.1. Results

The study reveals that the eight-cornered hat of Elazığ embodies not only a clothing tradition but also deep cultural and symbolic meanings. The octagonal form, rooted in Central Asian Turkic heritage, is reflected in Anatolian Seljuk architecture, woodwork, ceramics, and tiles. Each corner symbolizes virtues such as humility, valor, youthfulness, bravery, patriotism, generosity, and hospitality. Although its daily use has declined due to modernization and industrial production, the hat remains visible in festivals, folk performances, and cultural events, serving as a bridge between tangible and intangible heritage.



6.2. Discussion

The symbolism of the eight-cornered hat extends beyond material culture, representing balance, unity, and eternity. Its geometry mirrors the resilience and harmony found in Seljuk design, reinforcing values of honesty, goodwill, and moral integrity. In contemporary contexts, however, loss of apprenticeship traditions threatens its survival. Nevertheless, the hat persists as a cultural marker, linking past and present, and offering opportunities for reinterpretation through heritage preservation, tourism, and design innovation.

6.3. Conclusion

This study highlights the eight-cornered hat of Elazığ as a cultural symbol linking Central Asian Turkic traditions with Anatolian art and architecture. Beyond clothing, it embodies values of morality, unity, and resilience. Despite its decline in daily use, it maintains symbolic presence through festivals and heritage practices. To ensure continuity, strategies include cultural heritage recognition, apprenticeship training, academic research, tourism promotion, modern design adaptations, institutional collaboration, and digital archiving. By integrating historical depth with contemporary initiatives, the hat can be preserved as a living cultural heritage, inspiring future generations while strengthening local and national identity.

Notes: The manuscript was originally prepared in Turkish, based primarily on Turkish-language sources. The English version was translated with the assistance of ChatGPT-5 (free plan) and subsequently edited for clarity and readability.

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