Architecture and Landscape in Medieval Anatolia, 1100–1500

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CHAPTER NINE

All Quiet on the Eastern Frontier? The Contemporaries of Early Ottoman Architecture in Eastern Anatolia

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Anatolian monuments built under the successor dynasties of the Ilkhanids in the mid-fourteenth to the mid-fifteenth century were close contemporaries to their early Ottoman counterparts. Patrons included the Eretnids, the Karamanids and the akitis in Ankara. In this post-Mongol context, architecture developed on a local scale, an element shared both by the principalities in eastern Anatolia and those to the west, including the Ottomans. The historiography of both Islamic and Ottoman architecture, however, presents these two sets of monuments in entirely different contexts. Early Ottoman architecture is shown as part of a linear narrative that leads directly from structures built in the late thirteenth century to the imperial mosques of Istanbul and Edirne conceived by master architect Sinan in the sixteenth century. Monuments in central and eastern Anatolia occupy a marginal existence within scholarship as provincial latecomers to what is constructed as an essentially Seljuk story, and for the most part have not been the object of detailed studies.¹

The same is true for the earliest period of Ottoman rule in the late thirteenth century; Ottoman architectural evidence from this time is extremely scarce and hence will not be the focus of this chapter. Rather, I will concentrate on several monuments in Ankara, Karaman, Kayseri, Konya and Sivas, built between the 1280s and the 1430s. The analysis of these monuments within their respective local contexts will elucidate the regional dynamics of patronage and construction in architecture in these areas after the fall of the Ilkhanid dynasty. A clearer understanding of this context will allow me to argue that the dynamics of local patronage and style were very similar in eastern and western Anatolia. For the latter region, scholars have argued that early Ottoman architecture was strongly rooted in the local – here, Byzantine – tradition of construction and that it was adapted to Ottoman needs and for the creation of an Ottoman visual identity.² It will become clear from the present study that this approach to construction was not specific to Ottoman architecture, but that
construction practices across Anatolia from the mid-thirteenth to the mid-fifteenth century were heavily reliant on local materials and styles in the absence of a unified imperial patronage. So, even though the strongly localised architectures of eastern Anatolia may seem idiosyncratic if considered within the established framework of the Ottoman rise to power, they are actually typical examples of the construction situation in post-Mongol Anatolia. This situation is shared by the Ottoman frontier regions as well as areas further east that had also been under direct Ilkhanid rule.

Elsewhere, I have discussed the extent to which regionalisms developed in Anatolia in the aftermath of the Mongol conquest, when centralised Seljuk patronage collapsed. After the 1330s, when Ilkhanid hold over the region collapsed and former governors, Sufi communities and local Turcoman tribes took over, these regionalisms continued. Thus, the situation in central and eastern Anatolia from the mid-fourteenth to the mid-fifteenth century presents a picture of architecture consistent with localisms that had been developed beginning in the mid-thirteenth century. While monuments constructed until 1300 have often been considered as a stylistic continuation of Seljuk architecture without actual sultanic patronage, it has become clear that these dynamics are much more complex than was previously thought as we now know that various actors – from former Seljuk notables to Ilkhanid absentee rulers and former governors – left their mark on the cityscapes of medieval Anatolia.

When considering some of the monuments in Anatolia that were built within the orbit of a disintegrating Ilkhanid Empire, from the 1330s to the 1350s, it becomes obvious that some of these buildings were exactly contemporary to the earliest extant Ottoman monuments. Yet in the existing literature (at least outside the chronological surveys of anything that might possibly fall into the category of ‘Turkish’ architecture) this point has never really been argued. The point here is not to suggest stylistic commonalities between the eastern and western constructions, but rather to argue that the dynamics of regional architectures, local styles and fragmented patronage processes that are observed in eastern and central Anatolia should be applied further west as well. In fact, I argue that these parallels explain much of the fundamental characteristics of early Ottoman architecture.

This chapter will show that the architectural programmes developed in both western and eastern Anatolia were the product of a larger, fragmented world within which connections persisted through both trade and conflict. No unified imperial patronage was available to level regional styles and use of materials, a phenomenon that continued into the late fifteenth century. In fact, it was only when the Ottomans conquered large parts of central and eastern Anatolia, following the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, that patronage and style began to shift. Thus, the post-Mongol context of
central and eastern Anatolia was long-lived, in part due to the break in Ottoman unification caused by Bayezid I’s defeat to the Central Asian conqueror Timur in 1402. The sultan’s defeat, capture and subsequent death led to civil war between his sons that lasted for a decade, until Mehmed I (r. 1413–21) emerged victorious in 1413. Even as Bayezid’s sons struggled for supremacy, and after Mehmed I had begun to rebuild his empire based in Bursa, the dynasties that emerged from the collapse of Mongol authority in eastern and central Anatolia continued to function within their own spaces, and to construct monuments in the cities that they held.

From this point of view, the eastern frontier of the Ottoman Empire was a vibrant space for patronage, just as it became part of an orbit that would be conquered by the Ottomans. This happened in two phases: first, once Bayezid I turned his attention eastwards in the 1390s, moving against Qadi Burhaneddin of Sivas. Unfortunately, nothing remains of the latter’s architectural patronage programme. Qadi Burhaneddin had, in turn, eliminated the descendants of the former Ilkhanid governor Eretna. (A few examples of the latter’s patronage will be studied later in this chapter.) The second phase of Ottoman conquests in this region followed Mehmed I’s victory over his brothers in 1413, and picked up in earnest in the second half of the fifteenth century after Mehmed II (r. 1451–81) had conquered Constantinople.

This later expansion of the Ottoman Empire has greatly influenced perspectives on architectural history. Viewed backwards from the sixteenth century, early Ottoman architecture appears to carry the beginnings of the imperial style solidified in the architect Sinan’s work during the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520–66). Once early Ottoman architecture is understood as a product of its own time, however, a different perspective emerges from the examples discussed in this chapter. Thus, Anatolia in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries abounds with examples of structures built under rulers who might have risen to power further were it not for the ultimate success of the Ottomans following the civil war of 1402–13. Effectively, the eventual establishment of the Ottoman Empire as sovereign of the Balkans, Anatolia and large parts of the Arab world gives it a stature that has often skewed perspectives in the history of architecture. Ultimately, this historical trajectory has encouraged scholars to seek for structural antecedents of the imperial grandeur embodied in the sixteenth-century mosques of Istanbul and Edirne.

**Geography and Historiography**

Although the idea of medieval Anatolia as a unified region was developed, in part, due to the historiographical traditions developed in modern Turkey, and as discussed in the Introduction, there is
some topographical truth to it. With seas on three sides, and the Taurus Mountains and the Caucasus as physical barriers, Anatolia does have some aspects of a contained space, within which people moved throughout the period under analysis in this chapter and the volume overall. Nevertheless, an emphasis on the unity of Anatolia – cultural, spatial and political – is rooted in the cultural framework established by intellectuals for the Republic of Turkey after its foundation in 1923. In the narrative established for the medieval Islamic architecture of the region (roughly from the late twelfth to the mid-fifteenth century), a clear division emerges. As discussed in the Introduction to this volume, while the monuments of central and eastern Anatolia are often seen as the last examples of Seljuk architecture, those of western Anatolia are said to foreshadow the rise of the Ottoman Empire. Even though these broad dividing lines have been questioned in recent studies, there is still a need for a close look at architecture across Anatolia, along with a revaluation of the permeable eastern frontier of the early Ottoman Empire, from 1300 to 1450. Such a re-examination will provide us with a better understanding of the broader regional context within which early Ottoman monuments were built, and of the architectural landscape outside Bithynia in the same period. Observations emerging from this study will further assert the wide range of regional styles present in Anatolia and their persistence into the late fifteenth – or even early sixteenth – century.

Political tendencies of the early republican era emphasised either the multicultural history of Anatolia as the central part of Turkey’s landmass or the overall importance of Turkish peoples as carriers of culture. These approaches were joined by studies focusing on the Seljuks as a Turkish (and Muslim, even though this factor was not initially central) dynasty. The Seljuks increasingly moved to the centre of the historical discourse, and became the object of numerous studies. Within this framework, Mongol rule in Anatolia was largely omitted, for reasons Scott Redford has outlined. Thus, eastern and central Anatolia was studied almost exclusively within the parameters of Seljuk rule, even for the period after the Mongol conquest.

To some extent, the genesis of this narrative is logical or, at least, understandable. When the Seljuks disappeared after the death of Ghiyath al-Din Masud II in 1308, the framework of Seljuk rule was no longer available for the writing of political history. By then, the Ottomans had established a notable principality in western Anatolia – notable mostly because of its later success and not necessarily because it was more prominent than other Beyliks at this stage. Thus, privileging the Ottomans after the Seljuk-centred earlier period was, on the one hand, the logical progression of a dynastic narrative and, on the other hand, a way of glossing over the rapidly changing complexities of post-Mongol Anatolia. Hence, the
Ottomans moved to the centre of a teleological narrative leading directly to the classical age of the sixteenth century. With the emergence of this Seljuk–Ottoman dichotomy, the architectural patronage of the rulers of central and eastern Anatolia from the 1330s to the 1460s nearly disappeared from view. If the Beyliks of western Anatolia fared somewhat better in this regard, it was perhaps only because they entered the Ottoman orbit earlier on, and fit within the ghazā framework of earlier Ottoman history. Thus, the western frontier with Byzantium – at a juncture between Christian and Islamic lands – is more easily explained than its eastern counterpart, located within the dār al-islām but also at the edge of the former reach of the Mongol Empire.

To this comes the added problem that studies on the Beyliks of central and eastern Anatolia are scarce: the standard work remains İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı’s study, first published in 1937. It is also the only book-length study to consider the successors of the Mongol Empire in central and eastern Anatolia together with the Aqquyunlu and Qaraquyunlu, who were to step into this role in Iran and the fringes of southeastern Anatolia in the fifteenth century. John Woods’ magisterial study of the Aqquyunlu focuses on the legitimacy and political history of this dynasty, and touches on Anatolia only occasionally. More recent studies by Jürgen Paul, Sara Nur Yıldız and Andrew C. S. Peacock have focused on expanding the source base, an essential element of the study of this period, as major chronicles remain unedited. A recent volume edited by Deniz Beyazit contains several studies of architecture that focus on southeastern Anatolia, and thus tie the study of Aqquyunlu and Mamluk presence in this region to the larger Anatolian context.

Reframing Architecture in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-century Anatolia: Cases

The reassessment of early Ottoman architecture in the past decade has brought to the fore the importance of Byzantine building practices, and the presence of Byzantine (for lack of a better term) masons and architects on the construction sites of the nascent empire. The work of Robert Ousterhout, Oya Pancaroğlu and Suna Çağaptay has clearly shown the importance of understanding early Ottoman architecture not as a product of Turko-Islamic culture, but rather within the context of a hybrid frontier that took hold in western Anatolia in the late thirteenth century.

Closely connected to Cemal Kafadar’s re-evaluation and critical assessment of the early Ottoman state, these studies show the complexities of cultural interaction and of the fluid identities of patrons and craftsmen in the realm of architecture in the 150 years leading up to the conquest of Constantinople in 1453. Thus, the view imposed by earlier studies of a trajectory of Ottoman architecture
that emerges with Osman (r. c. 1290–1326) – whose foundations, rather inconveniently, have not been preserved – and progresses towards great mosques built by Sinan, has been challenged.

In these studies, early Ottoman architecture is presented within the western Anatolian context of the Beylik period of the early to mid-fourteenth century. Thus, early Ottoman monuments appear to be firmly connected to the Byzantine heritage of western Anatolia, and particularly Bithynia, where the first Ottoman capital, Bursa, was located. The earliest extant Ottoman monuments, such as the Hacı Özbeck Mosque in Iznik (1333) and the Orhan Gazi Mosque in Bursa (1339), are particularly bound to the Byzantine tradition of the region. Even though these detailed studies have led to a much needed re-evaluation of early Ottoman architecture, the focus remains on Bithynia – rightly so because of the region’s central role in this period. Nevertheless, it is also important to consider what was built further east.

A look towards the diverse political and cultural landscape of central and eastern Anatolia from the mid-fourteenth to the mid-fifteenth century can provide a corrective to the linear view on early Ottoman architecture by adding other regional architectures to the picture. Main actors within this space were the Eretnids in Sivas and Kayseri, the Karamanids in Karaman and Konya, and the akhis in Ankara. Case studies to follow below will present examples of the monuments sponsored by these local actors from the mid-fourteenth to the mid-fifteenth century, and will show how local actors continued to support the work of craftsmen working in deeply engrained local styles that emerged in the aftermath of the Mongol conquest in the mid-thirteenth century.

The Akhis in Ankara

The first building to be considered here provides a connection between the late thirteenth-century monuments built in Anatolia and the further case studies built in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Aslanhane Mosque in Ankara (Figure 9.1; Plate 12) was most likely initially constructed in the 1220s, but substantially restored in 1298, as noted in an inscription on the mihrab that refers to the construction of the mosque itself, rather than just the furniture. The mosque is a hypostyle hall, covered by a wooden roof that is supported by wooden columns and stone capitals, the latter spolia from the Roman and Byzantine citadel. From this point of view, the Aslanhane Mosque is part of a group of such structures that have survived and include the Great Mosques of Afyon (1271–2) and Sivrihisar (1232), the Eşrefoğlu Mosque (1292) in Beyşehir and the Atabey Mosque in Kastamonu (1273).

Three portals lead into the mosque, constructed on a steep slope leading up to the citadel of Ankara: two of these lead directly into
the prayer hall on the eastern and western side of the building. The northern portal, built of stone elaborately decorated with *muqarnas*, leads into a loggia that covers about one-fourth of the depth of the prayer hall, at a height of 6 m off the lower floor level.

At the southern end of the prayer hall, a monumental *mihrâb* composed of tile mosaic, and with a large, stucco medallion at the centre of its upper section, is the focal point of the space (Plate 12). Based on stylistic connections to examples in Iran, it has been suggested that the *mihrâb* was part of the renovation of the mosque that took place at the end of the thirteenth century. Such stucco work is extremely rare in Anatolia and may point to renewed contacts to Iran in this period, a possibility supported by the way trade networks ran through Anatolia at this time. At the same time, the motifs used in this stucco medallion had made their way into Anatolia much earlier, through stone- and woodwork done at Ahlat in eastern Anatolia, and reached a peak in stonework in the Great Mosque and Hospital in Divriği (1228–9) and the Buruciye Medrese, Çifte Minareli Medrese and Gök Medrese in Sivas, all built in 1271–2. Thus, the stucco work – particularly in combination with the tile mosaic, widespread in central Anatolia in much of the thirteenth century, can been seen as the perpetuation of locally engrained traditions that became part of a regional vocabulary.
Plate 12. Detail of upper section of mihrab, Aslanhane, Ankara (photograph: Patricia Blessing)
Plate 13 Signature on portal, left side, Hatuniye Medrese, Karaman (photograph: Patricia Blessing)
Plate 14  View of Ibrahim Bey Imaret, Karaman (photograph: Patricia Blessing)
We do not know who commissioned the transformation of the Aslanhane, but according to an inscription on the minbar, two brothers were financially responsible for the entire project of restoring the mosque. The minbar was made by a man named Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr. Further clues relating to the patronage of this particular topic can be gained from a mausoleum nearby, referred to as Akhi Şerafeddin Mausoleum. This free-standing structure, on a square base with a conical roof, was built for the burial of Akhi Sharaf al-Din (d. 1351), but its foundation inscription is dated 1330. Hence, the two structures can be plausibly placed within the larger context of akhi communities, confraternities with loose ties to Sufism, who were powerful in Ankara during the decades of waning Ilkhanid rule. As Pancaroğlu has argued, Anatolian akhi communities also played an important role in accommodating travellers, even though the fourteenth-century Moroccan traveller Ibn Battuta’s account probably needs to be taken with a pinch of salt.

Even though the idea of an ‘akhi republic’ in Ankara was dismissed long ago, the importance of these communities as local leaders and patrons should not be underestimated, as İlkil Selçuk’s and Rachel Goshgarian’s chapters in this volume further explore (Chapters 4 and 5, respectively). Here, it suffices to say that the architectural traces of these communities are particularly strong in Ankara, and that their commissions fell into patterns akin to those in place in Sivas, Kayseri and Karaman in the decades during and after the collapse of Ilkhanid rule in Anatolia. As Ethel Sara Wolper has demonstrated, local Sufi and akhi communities in several Anatolian cities – including Amasya, Ankara, Sivas and Tokat – were crucial in the transformation of urban space in this period, as they sponsored shrines and zaviyes for the use of their communities.

Eretnid Monuments in Sivas and Kayseri

Former Ilkhanid governor Eretna (r. 1336–52) established his rule in Sivas and Kayseri. His successors persisted in the region until 1380, when Qadi Burhaneddin (r. 1380–98) took over entirely – although he had effectively been in control of the polity since 1365. Even though traces of Eretnid architectural patronage are limited, what we do have left of them fits into the picture in which patrons and craftsmen relied heavily upon local styles, showing us once again that architecture in Anatolia was increasingly localised after the Mongol conquest in the 1240s.

The Güdük Minare in Sivas, a mausoleum built in 1347–8, takes on the shape of tomb towers seen elsewhere in Anatolia, yet the construction of large parts of the monument in brick – rather than stone – is unusual (Figure 9.2). The brick and tile decoration on its upper section is an echo of tilework found in Konya and, more locally, on the minarets of the Çifte Minareli Medrese and the Gök
Figure 9.2 Güdük Minare in Sivas (after Max van Berchem and Halil Edhem (Eldem), Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum: Troisième Partie: Asie Mineure, Mémoires publiés par les membres de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale du Caire, vol. 29 (Cairo: Imprimerie de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale du Caire, 1917), pl. XXXII-1)
Medrese in Sivas, both built in 1271–2. The mausoleum is built on a square plan; the base is built of stone, the upper, cylindrical structure of brick. The transition between the two sections is composed of so-called ‘Turkish triangles’. In the interior, a single cenotaph is placed under a dome held on muqarnas pendentives. The exterior roof, flat in early photographs and conical nowadays, is not original; Albert Gabriel has suggested that it may have been built of brick. The earliest available photograph, published by Max van Berchem and Halil Edhem (Eldem) in 1917, shows the building without a roof; a photograph taken after the restoration and published next to it suggests that the repairs had been completed before the date of the two scholars’ visit in the early twentieth century. The date of the monument emerges from an inscription on the cenotaph, carved in white marble; it indicates the burial of Shaykh Hasan Beg, son of Sayf al-Dunya wa-l-Din Eretna, who died in Ramadan 748/December 1347–January 1348. The father of Shaykh Hasan Beg is better known as Ala al-Din Eretna; he ruled from 1327 to 1352, and was the first of his dynasty, which was to persist until 1380. It is clear that the monument was originally part of a larger complex, given the masonry joints that appear at its corners, yet what might have been the volume or quantity of neighbouring structures remains unknown. Given the propensity for multi-functional funerary complexes in Anatolia beginning in the mid-thirteenth century, it is possible that a mosque, madrasa or zawiya were joined to the monument, or perhaps a combination of these. Wolper has pertinently suggested that the location of the Güdük Minare near the Shams al-Din Sivasi complex drew attention to the latter building and that the mausoleum was, in fact, one of several structures in fourteenth-century Sivas that created multiple urban nodes beyond the traditional central citadel, the focus of earlier patronage. The limited number of extant monuments built during Eretnid rule makes it difficult to make a more detailed and comparative analysis of their architecture programme.

Of the few major Eretnid monuments that have been preserved, the Kösk Medrese (Figure 9.3) is also a combination of a mausoleum and another monument of unclear function. The structure was constructed in 1339 by Ala al-Din Eretna, also the patron of the Güdük Minare. As indicated in an inscription that is now lost (but used to be located on a wall of the mausoleum), the tomb was constructed for the patron’s wife, Suli Hatun. A tombstone, also no longer extant, indicated the burial of a son of Eretna, Muhammad, who died in 1365–6. Today located in the Gültepe neighbourhood of Kayseri, the building would originally have been on the outskirts of the city, about 3 km from the citadel. This is a little further than the distance between the Mevlana Complex and the citadel mound in
Konya (2 km), a site that was located *extra muros* at some distance from the city centre, perhaps pointing to a practice of encouraging urban expansion with the construction of funerary monuments.\(^4\) The building consists of a conical mausoleum that stands at the centre of a rectangular structure with a central courtyard, and inner arcades on all sides.\(^4\) From the outside, the complex with its single portal in the central axis has a fortified aspect, akin to a caravanserai. Only the pointed dome of the mausoleum, sticking out over the roofline of the surrounding structure, points to its funerary functions. This way of displaying the dome of a mausoleum within a larger structure towards the outside finds parallels in Kayseri, in the mausolea of the Çifte Medrese (1205) and the Mahperi Hatun Complex (1237–8). The surrounding structure was likely not founded as a madrasa, but rather as a *zāwiya*.\(^4\) Local traditions of building are strong in both monuments, and, effectively, the regional differences between Sivas and Kayseri that were in place in the mid-thirteenth century still continue in both construction technique and architectural decoration. Thus, the Köşk Medrese shows the same use of stone masonry and limited, mostly geometric,
decoration that were in place in the Mahperi Hatun Complex (c. 1237–8) and in the Sahibiye Medrese (1266) in central Kayseri. Even though the structure in itself is unique, the Gündük Minare, with its combination of brick and stone most closely evokes the way in which minarets built of brick were added to the stone facades of the Çifte Minareli Medrese and the Gök Medrese in this city, both built in 1271–2. Thus, as Richard McClary’s and Cinzia Tavernari’s chapters in this volume further discuss (Chapters 2 and 3, respectively), these monuments, in aspects of both their construction and style, point to the fact that construction practices engrained in local zones in the thirteenth century persisted long beyond the loss of central Seljuk control, and even beyond the fall of Ilkhanid power. Then, rather than considering the Ottoman case as a kind of exception, we see that the dynamics of early Ottoman architecture in Bithynia were actually ‘normal’ in comparison with practices in central and eastern Anatolia, with local building workshops and their traditions being integrated into new rulers’ commissions.

Karamanid Monuments in Konya and Karaman

The first half of the fifteenth century represented a moment of weakness for the Ottomans; after their crushing defeat to the Timurids at the battle of Ankara in 1405, they struggled to recover, allowing the Karamanids to rise to power unchecked. Eventually, the Karamanids would present a great challenge to the Ottomans for years after the death of the faltering Byzantine Empire. In the Karamanid capital, Karaman, monuments were built beginning in the late fourteenth century that by no means stand in the shadow of early Ottoman constructions further west, but rather express a strong local building industry and confident patronage by a principality that was not yet subject to the Ottomans.

The Hatuniye Medrese (also known as Nefise Sultan Medrese and Melek Hatun Medrese), built in 1381–2, displays a monumental marble portal (Figure 9.4) that is as much rooted in the local tradition of this region as buildings in Bursa are in that of Bithynia. Seen from the street, the large central portal dominates the façade of the monument; the muqarnas niche and the detailed carving of floral motives on its frames immediately evoke portals built in the region between Konya and Sivas in the mid-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth century, effectively continuing these local traditions that became further engrained under Mongol rule. The patron of the monument was a daughter of Ottoman sultan Murad I (r. 1359–89), and wife of Ala al-Din I, ruler of Karaman (r. 1357–98). This is one of the earliest documented Ottoman dynastic marriages and falls in a period when Ottoman princesses were still married off as part of political alliances.
These connections are clearly stated in the foundation inscription, written in Arabic, above the entrance:

[basmala, followed by Qur’an passage] it ordered the construction of this blessed and noble madrasa during the days of the rule of the great amir, supported by God and led to victory, Ala al-Dunya wa-l-Din Khalil, son of Muhammad, son of Qaraman, may God extend his rule, Khatun, daughter of Murad Khan son of Uthman, with the help of the people of faith, with the support of the Merciful, in the year 786.47

The building itself is closely tied to the architecture of Karaman and its region, including Konya. The signature of an architect appears on the portal, perhaps to be read as Nu‘man b. Khwaja Ahmad or Khwaja Ahmad b. Nu‘man in two hexagonal medallions in the spandrel of the portal [Plate 13].48 As it stands today, the portal was reassembled after a restoration during which, according to İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı, several inscriptions and other reliefs were lost.49 Moreover, large sections of the lateral walls were entirely rebuilt.

In terms of its plan, the building has an elongated central section that is now covered with a glass roof, added when the monument was turned into a restaurant and wedding venue, but was probably originally open [Figure 9.5].50 This section lies in line with a large īwān – a vaulted space open to one side, and a typical feature in
medieval madrasas across Anatolia and the Arab world – at the south end of the buildings. Arcades supported on spoliated columns and capitals are located on both long sides of the central section. They create a covered space in front of the entrances to side chambers – three square domed ones and one rectangular, vaulted one on each
Two larger domed chambers, located in the southeastern and southwestern corners of the monuments, are accessible from the central courtyard and from the īwān, through elaborately decorated doorways.\(^{52}\) One of the side rooms, to the left of the īwān, served as a mausoleum, although the cenotaph had already disappeared at the time of Michael Meinecke’s visits in 1964 and 1965.\(^{53}\) Few fragments of tile decoration were preserved when Meinecke visited, partially in sections of the building that are now inaccessible as it is used as a restaurant. Meinecke observed fragments of hexagonal turquoise glazed tiles in the main īwān, closed off by a black stripe; and a combination of hexagonal turquoise glazed tiles and black triangular tiles in the domed chambers to each side of the īwān.\(^{54}\)

Overall, the monument can be placed squarely within the tradition of monuments built in the region between Konya and Kayseri beginning in the late twelfth century. The term ‘Seljuk’, often used to refer to this type of architecture – characterised by its carefully prepared stone masonry, monumental muqarnas portals adorned with decorative frames carrying inscriptions, geometric and vegetal patterns, often extensive use of tile, and specific plan schemes – is of course problematic here. First, the Seljuks no longer existed as a ruling dynasty by the time the monument was built in the 1380s, thus making the term obsolete. Second, the Karamanids, with whose ruling house the patron was connected, were in rivalry with the Seljuks as early as the mid-thirteenth century and were contenders for power in central Anatolia under Mongol rule. Third, the patron was connected to the Ottomans, who at the time of construction were emerging dominantly from among one of several local dynasties in western Anatolia, which had risen from the fragments of Seljuk, Mongol and Byzantine rule in Anatolia. Thus, this monument once more emphasises the extent to which, in medieval Anatolia, architectural style was often more closely aligned with local customs and traditions, rather than politics. In this way, mechanisms that were consolidated in the mid-thirteenth century, following the collapse of central Seljuk rule and the beginning of the fragmentation of, first, patronage and, later, politics under Mongol rule, extended into the late fourteenth century. As the following discussion will show, the same dynamics remained in place into the fifteenth century and, in many parts of Anatolia, did not shift until after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, when Mehmed II once more turned his attention and conquering energies eastwards.

Also in Karaman, the Ibrahim Bey İmaret (Plate 14) is a larger structure dated 1432, well into a period of back-and-forth alliances and hostilities between the Ottomans and Karamanids. It is an example of the shifting dynamics in architecture in this period; many features of earlier traditions were maintained, but new elements emerged as well. The foundation inscription, in the large lunette over the entrance, inside the porch, reads:
[Qur’an XXXVIII: 49 and 50 in decorative kufic script] [it] built the great sultan, ruler of the necks of peoples and master of the Arabs and Persians and the establisher of rules of justice and of good deeds, the destroyer of the principles of injustice and tyranny and the killer of heretics and polytheists, the victor over the debauched and heretics, the protector ... Taj al-Dunya wa-l-Din Ibrahim, son of the late Muhammad son of Qaraman, may God double his power and his readiness to good deeds, this blessed ‘imāra for those who come and go [al-sādirin wa-l-wāridin] whichever among the Muslim people they may be from, in the month of Muharram, the holy, in the year 836.55

The building consists of a madrasa and mausoleum; in contrast to the Hatuniye Medrese, here the mausoleum (Figure 9.6) is not integrated inside the structure, but is attached to its western wall as a semi-independent structure with an external entrance and no direct access to the madrasa.56 With its conical roof and stairs to access an elevated entrance – leaving room for a crypt below – this structure is

Figure 9.6 View of mausoleum, Ibrahim Bey Imaret, Karaman (photograph: Patricia Blessing)
closely related to the royal Seljuk mausoleum in the courtyard of the Alaeddin Mosque in Konya (c. 1200) and repeats the shape of numerous medieval Islamic funerary structures across Anatolia.57

An open porch with three small domes precedes the portal that leads to a corridor connecting to a central courtyard covered with a large dome on Turkish triangles (Figure 9.7). The porch, however, is fully rebuilt: photographs published by Ernst Diez and Oktay Aslanapa in the 1950s show the building without this element, and it is unclear whether this element was part of the fifteenth-century structure or a later, Ottoman addition.58 The fact that many fifteenth-century Ottoman monuments, both built before and after 1453, have similar domed porches suggests a connection to Ottoman architecture – perhaps through the movements of craftsmen and architects who carried these elements with them – that may or may not have happened under Karamanid rule.59

In the interior, further hints at the place of this monument await. In the central axis, a large īwān used to hold the tiled miḥrāb; this is now preserved in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum as part of the tile and ceramic collection shown in the Çinili Köşk on the premises of Topkapı Palace.60 The īwān, executed in so-called cuerda seca, or more accurately black-line tile,61 leaving imprinted outlines to separate the different colour glazes, shows that the Karamanid ruler could afford top-of-the-line craftsmen to work on his foundation. This type of tilework appeared first in Anatolia in the Green Mosque and Green Mausoleum in Bursa, built for Mehmed I in 1419–24 (construction continued after the patron’s death in 1421).62 Mehmed I’s son, Murad II, used the same workshop in the construction of his foundations at both Bursa (1426–8) and Edirne (1435).63 The miḥrāb in Karaman is one of the rare examples of this technique beyond Ottoman borders and in central Anatolia. The black-line technique has been viewed as an example of Timurid influence: scholarship has suggested that the technique might have been carried into Anatolia by way of the western Iranian city of Tabriz and possibly communicated by craftsmen who had been Timur’s captives in Samarqand.64 In any case, the presence of this miḥrāb in Karaman shows the extent of the flexibility and mobility that could influence some elements of architecture. While this kind of miḥrāb was entirely new for its period, it also evokes the tile mosaics that were used frequently in thirteenth-century Konya. The plan of the madrasa, with its three īwāns opening into a large domed central courtyard, is the same as that employed in the Karatay Medrese (1251–2) and the İnce Minareli Medrese (c. 1265) in Konya. Ultimately, this plan is a far cry from the T-shaped plans that dominated Ottoman architecture in the early fifteenth century, and shows that the structures developed in Bursa and Edirne had not spread eastwards, either because craftsmen from Bithynia had not moved to Karaman or because Karamanid patrons were not interested in these specifically Ottoman structures.65
Figure 9.7 Ibrahim Bey Imaret, Karaman, portal (photograph: Patricia Blessing)
In the İbrahim Bey İmaret, two smaller īwāns connect to the corners of the domed courtyard (rather than its centre). Further subsidiary spaces are accessible from the courtyard, but not from the īwāns. The small mausoleum, covered with a conical roof, has its own entrance, accessible by a few steps, on its north façade; the crypt forms the lower level. A tall stone minaret with some tile decoration is connected to the west side of the porch.

Overall, the monument presents a hybrid solution at the juncture between the contemporary monuments built under Ottoman patronage in Bursa and Edirne – such as the Green Mosque in Bursa (1421–4), and the mosque complexes of Murad II in Edirne (1435) and Bursa (1426–8) – and existing building traditions of the region of Karaman and Konya. In the second quarter of the fifteenth century, this development may point to growing Ottoman influence, but also, perhaps more importantly, to the fact that some of the fragmentation of Anatolia that had been firmly in place over preceding centuries slowly gave way to more and more unified architectural regions that grew larger as political spheres expanded.

Nevertheless, architecture remained strongly consolidated at the local level, as the last example will show. The so-called Hasbey Darülhuffaz (Figure 9.8, built in 1421) in Konya, halfway between the citadel mound and the Sahib Ata Complex, is a small, free-standing domed structure, built of brick with the exception of the stone portal and the few steps, also built of stone, leading up to the entrance. The foundation inscription over the entrance reads as follows:

[it] built this building in the days of the reign of sultan Muhammad son of Ala al-Din, may God perpetuate his domain, the master of good deeds and munificence, Muhammad son of al-Hajj Khassbak al-Khutaybi, may God elevate his pleasure, and [he] made [the building] a dār al-huffāz, in the year 824.66

As noted in the inscription, this monument was built as a structure designated for huffāz, that is, those who were able to recite the Qur’an by heart. The life of the patron remains in the dark beyond this text, a waqf inscription from the dār al-huffāz now in the Konya museums, and the foundation inscription of a monument he sponsored in Meram near Konya.67 The crypt of the dār al-huffāz may have held the patron’s tomb.68 The monument, despite its small scale, was executed with much care, as the carefully carved marble foundation inscription and the detailed decoration on the doorway show. In the interior, moreover, a mihrāb composed of tile mosaic is one of the latest examples of a technique that peaked in Konya in the mid-thirteenth century with the extensive tile decoration on the Sirçalı Medrese (1243), the Karatay Medrese (1251–2) and the mausoleum of the Sahib Ata Complex (1258–84).69
Figure 9.8 Hasbey Darülhuffaz, Konya, view (photograph: Patricia Blessing)
This is another case of small, local structures commissioned by non-royal, locally prominent patrons, a phenomenon that began in the late thirteenth century. Thus, while monuments such as the İbrahim Bey Imaret in Karaman, rooted as they were in local building traditions, moved between new artistic connections to western Anatolia, but also to Iran and the broader Persianate world of the Timurid Iran, this was not a general development in the early fifteenth century. Much rather, patrons like Muhammad son of al-Hajj Khassbak al-Khutaybi followed in the footsteps of their earlier counterparts, such as akhi Sharaf al-Din Husayn, and built monuments within their local reach, relying on local expertise and taste, rather than on the (likely more costly) work craftsmen active in the main centres of the time, such as Bursa, Edirne and Tabriz.

Conclusion

Locally ingrained architectures were prevalent across Anatolia from the mid-thirteenth century into the mid-fifteenth century. This observation is as true for the Ottomans as much as it is for any of the contemporary dynasties with centres further east. Local building practices in these locations continued well into a period that we might refer to as early modern and, in some respects, until the sixteenth century, when Ottoman architecture was defined as an imperial enterprise with a closely connected style, carefully controlled by centralised planning and construction practices. Thus, the Ottomans from the late thirteenth to the early to mid-fifteenth centuries were not at all exceptional in their treatment of – and relationship to – local architecture and its producers. Much rather, Ottoman patronage practices – similar to Ottoman politics – must be considered as part of the organic and fluid frontier fabric of medieval Anatolia.

Notes

1. For studies on the patronage of the Karamanids and Dhu'l-Qadir, respectively, see Diez and Aslanapa, Karaman devri; Gündoğdu, Dulkadirli beyliği mimarisi; Göde, Eretnalilar, pp. 15–75. Monuments are also included in the broader surveys in van Berchem and Edhem, Matériaux (hereafter MCIA); Gabriel, Monuments turcs; Edhem, Kaysariye şehri; Gabriel, Voyages archéologique.
3. Blessing, Rebuilding Anatolia.
4. Kastritsis, Sons of Bayezid.
6. Redford, ‘“What Have You Done for Anatolia Today”?’, Pancaroğlu, ‘Formalism and the Academic Foundation of Turkish Art’; Bozdoğan and Necipoğlu, ‘Entangled Discourses’.
9. İnalcık, The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age.
10. Uzunçarşı, Anadolu beylikleri ve Akkoyunlu.
11. Yaşar Yücel’s more recent study focuses on Eretna, Qadi Burhaneddin and Mutahharten in Erzincan, see Yücel, Anadolu beylikleri hakkında araştırmalar.
14. Beyazit, At the Crossroads of Empires.
20. Otto-Dorn, ‘Der Mihrab der Arslan Hane Moschee’.
22. On Ahlat, see Pancaroğlu, ‘The Mosque–Hospital Complex at Divriği’, pp. 184–8; on the madrasas, see Blessing, Rebuilding Anatolia, pp. 69–121.
23. RCEA, Nos 4933 and 4934; Öney, Ankara Arslanhane Cami, pp. 6–8 and fig. 13; Konyalı, Anka ta camileri, pp. 26–1; Meinecke, Fayencedekorationen, vol. 2, pp. 67–9. The inscriptions are no longer in situ, and are held at the Ethnographic Museum in Ankara: Öney, Ankara Arslanhane Cami, p. 8.
27. Wolper, Cities and Saints.
30. For a plan, see MCIA, pl. II; Gabriel, Monuments turcs, vol. 2, fig. 105.
37. Other monuments with inscriptions include the Great Mosque of Develi Karahisar | see Meinecke, Fayencedekorationen, vol. 2, p. 455;
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RCEA, No. 6037; Göde, Eretnalilar, p. 158] and a mausoleum in Kayseri and two sites near Tokat [see Göde, Eretnalilar, pp. 158–60].


42. Section and plan in Gabriel, Monuments turcs, vol. 1, fig. 42.


44. On Ottoman history in this period, see Kastritsis, Sons of Bayezid.


46. The shift away from dynastic marriages and towards concubinage took place in the fifteenth century, see Peirce, Imperial Harem, pp. 28–39.

47. Oppenheim, Inschriften, pp. 117–19. The date is here given as 786 ah, corresponding to 1384. Meinecke, Fayencedekorationen, vol. 2, p. 165, suggests that the date 783 ah/1381–2, generally accepted in the literature, is correct. Nowadays, the left section of the inscription is too badly deteriorated for the date to be legible.

48. For a discussion of the different readings, see Meinecke, Fayencedekorationen, vol. 2, p. 165.

49. The date of the restoration is unclear. When Konyali published his history of Karaman and its monuments in 1967, the portal had been partially dismantled and rebuilding was planned, see Konyali, Karaman tarihi, pp. 467–8 and figs on pp. 463 and 468.

50. Diez and Aslanapa, Karaman devri, figs 78, 79, 80.

51. Plan in Diez and Aslanapa, Karaman devri, fig. 77.

52. Diez and Aslanapa, Karaman devri, figs 79 and 82–4.

53. Meinecke, Fayencedekorationen, vol. 2, p. 167; see the plan in Diez and Aslanapa, Karaman devri, fig. 77.

54. Meinecke, Fayencedekorationen, vol. 2, p. 166. No traces of the tiles in the main iwân are visible nowadays [visit on 26 July 2010].


58. Diez and Aslanapa, Karaman devri, figs 91 and 94. According to Konyali, Karaman tarihi, p. 407, the porch was destroyed in the 1920s and rebuilt in the 1960s.

59. Ottoman examples of such porches include the Rum Mehmed Pasha Mosque (1471) and the Mahmud Pasha Mosque (1462), both in Istanbul; the Muradiye Mosque in Edirne (1435); and the Muradiye Mosque in Bursa (1426–8), although the shape of the domes vary and the number of domes is either three or five.

60. Diez and Aslanapa, Karaman devri, p. 76. The mihrâb was taken to Istanbul in 1907, see Konyali, Karaman tarihi, pp. 409–10.


64. Necipoğlu, ‘From International Timurid to Ottoman’.
65. On T-shaped plans in Ottoman architecture, see overview in Kuran, The Mosque in Early Ottoman Architecture, p. 72; Oğuz, ‘Multi-Functional T-Shaped Zaviyes’. For an extensive discussion of the available literature and introduction of the term ‘multipurpose mosque’, see Salgılı, ‘Architectural Anatomy’, n. 27. For the madrasa in Konya, see Blessing, Rebuilding Anatolia, pp. 41–53.
66. Konyalı, Konya tarihi, p. 960; Diez and Aslanapa, Karaman devri, p. 128 and fig. 175.
68. Diez and Aslanapa, Karaman devri, p. 121.