



A Response to the Issue of Dating the Aksaray Zinciriye Madrasah

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ABSTRACT

Although it has no inscription to identify the builder or the construction date on the Aksaray Zinciriye Madrasah, the date of 1337 has been accepted – according to ebcad numerical calculations from Ayah inscription – by many historians for a structure constructed during the Karamanids' Seigniorship. Embarking by the doubt that there is no other example of a four-iwan madrasah plan scheme during the Karamanids, this work has been carried out. On the other hand, on the date which madrasah had been claimed to belong, Aksaray was under the auspices of Seigniorship of Eretnids. With a view to enlighten this dating dilemma, details of the plans, architectural elements and ornamental features of the madrasah, and the age it belonged to, has been questioned by making a comparison with Seljuk and Karamanid examples. By believing that the ornamental features will act as a guide, the monumental structures in and around Aksaray were reviewed first. Upon finding that the Zinciriye Madrasah's decorative ornamental features are quite similar to those in Kayseri Karatay Khan (1240–41), Kayseri Sahabiye Madrasah (1267), Aksaray Sultanhanı Caravanserai (1229) and especially the Aksaray Ağzıkarahan Caravanserai (Hoca Mesud Caravanserai) (1231–39), the probability that the structure belonged to the Seljuks not to the Seigniorship of Karamanids increased. Starting with this premise, the similarity of the plan and architectural elements of the Zinciriye Madrasah to other madrasahs constructed in the 13th century were investigated. All the study findings support the notion that the structure was an example of the late Seljuk period.

Keywords: Iwan (eyvan), Medieval Turkish Architecture, Anatolian Madrasah, Aksaray Zinciriye Madrasah, Ornaments.

1. THE DILEMMA OF DATING

From Altun (1988)'s statement (1988: 33-34), from the beginning of the 13th century, the Anatolian Seljuk State created a new Renaissance in the field of architecture in Anatolia. [1] This excitement caused by this surprised all the art historians, and created architectural thinking that spread to the farthest places. The stability attained during the reign of Ala'al-Din Keykubat I (1220-1237), generally regarded as the golden age of the Anatolian Seljuks, and was reflected in the art of the period (Ögel, 2008: 2). And the Mongolian invasion that immediately followed this, together with the subsequent collapse of the Seljuk state, though they obviously had an effect on art, did not succeed in extinguishing the passion for artistic creation that had gripped the whole of Anatolia. This was due as much to the powerful artistic environment that had been created in Anatolia as to the continued activity of the Anatolian viziers as patrons of art.

Aksaray derived its name from the white palace built by the Seljuk Sultan Kılıçarslan II (1156-1192) (Oral, 1962: 223). Aksaray was also called Dârü'zzafer, "the City of Victory," due to the fact that it served as headquarters of the Seljukid army during the Crusades. Kılıçarslan's building activity in Aksaray culminated in the rise of Aksaray as a center of culture during the Seljukid and the Karamanid periods. The Sultan Kılıçarslan II commissioned the building of mosques, caravanserais, and bedestans, a covered market for the sale of commodities, in order to make this town a center of trade and culture. He also invited scholars, artists and tradesmen from Azerbaijan (Bayram, 2008: 170). As consequence of fall of the Anatolian Seljuk sultanate in 1318, Aksaray was occupied by



İlkhaniids (Battûta, 2000) and immediately after in 1327–28 it came under the sovereignty of the Eretnids. Ibn Battuta, who visited Aksaray in 1333, visited the small dervish lodge of Şerif Hüseyin, the regent of the Amir Eretnids (Battûta, 2000). In 1366–67 Aksaray was added to Karamanids lands by Alaaddin Ali Bey (Sevim & Yücel, 1989). After the Eretnids, Aksaray was under the sovereignty of the Karamanids, and it was reconstructed during the Karamanids period by Mehmet Bey II (1402–24) and İbrahim Bey II (1424–63).^[ii] The Karamanids, who were one of the most important Turkoman seigniorities in Anatolia, was seen as the predecessor of the Anatolian Seljuks who had lost their power after the 1243 Köseadağ defeat (Kuran, 1969). Aksaray remained a part of the Karamanids until the Ottoman occupation of the Karamanid lands in 1468.

Although the historical background has been set out with documents and without any debate, there have still been questions from many historians about the ancient age to which some historical buildings located in the province belonged. For instance, the Ulu Mosque in Aksaray and the Zinciriye Madrasah ^[iii] in particular and some other historical buildings have been accepted as the work of the Karamanids by many historians. Afterwards, Konyalı (1974) who had created a huge two-binder literary work, which included all the villages of Aksaray, had joined these historians by considering the inscriptions he had investigated (Erdal, 2016). Erdal (2016) claims that there have been other researchers who found these reliable and showed them as resources. Oktay Aslanapa is one of these researchers and says:

"The Seljuk tradition in madrasahs was strongly maintained during the Karamanid dynasty.^{iv} Among these, the Zinciriye Madrasah (1336) in Aksaray attracts a great deal of attention with its courtyard containing four iwans and riwaqs, the qibla iwan where the tile mosaic trails can be seen and also for its oval domes on both sides. The monumental portal still retains Seljuk features" (Aslanapa, 1989).

On the other hand, some researchers, such as M. Sapançalı Hüsnü, claim that there is no inscription on the structure and the building was a work of Karaman since Cemâleddin-i Aksarayî (d. 791 H./1388-89) ^[v] taught here. It is thought that the Ayah inscription, situated on the portal, is from the 49th Ayah of the Surah of Enfal and gives the date 738 in the Hijri calendar, which corresponds to 1338 in the Gregorian calendar by ebced calculation. However, it is beneficial to evaluate some problematic points. This Ayah section is not only mentioned in the 49th Ayah of the Surah of Enfal, but also in the 3rd Ayah of the Surah of Talak. The related section of the Ayah means that "if anyone puts his trust in Allah, sufficient is (Allah) for him". First of all, taking only half of this part of the Ayah is doubtful based on ebced numerology. Moreover, an ebced calculation is applied accepting the Ayah as it is and when the kef letter is used once with dike (so in general, letters are considered to be in ebced order), the date is Hijri 728, not 738, which is 1328 in the Gregorian calendar. At that time, Bedreddin İbrahim Bey I was the head of the Karamanids Seigniory. However, as Erdal (2016) indicated, on this date – because the province was under the sovereignty of the Eretnids – claiming that the Karamanids had constructed a building here carries less significance. Because there are almost no other buildings in this region under the Seigniory of Eretnids, there is no other evidence to relate the Zinciriye Madrasah to this Seigniory.

This study has been carried out to illuminate the dilemma of dating the Aksaray Zinciriye Madrasah that is believed to be the work of Karamanids by many researchers and historians with respect to ebced (the calculation of date by numerical Arabic letters) of the Ayah inscription on the portal, and yet there is no inscription that shows the builder, the one who ordered it to be built, or the date of the construction. To this end, the research method will evaluate the four-iwan plan scheme and architectural elements in a detailed way and the similarities among the madrasahs corresponding to the Seljuk and Karamanids periods will be identified.^[vi]

2. THE AKSARAY ZİNCİRİYE MADRASAH AND THE FOUR-IWAN PLAN SCHEME

Semra Ögel claims that although historical resources provide information to us about various madrasahs that were built by the Seljuk Sultans in Aksaray, none of them has survived to present times (Ögel, 2008). Nevertheless, the Aksaray Zinciriye Madrasah plan type uses four-iwans, three-sided riwaqs and a symmetrical structure like Seljuk madrasahs. Through passing the main portal, the barrel vaulted iwan located in east to west direction is entered and then to the inner courtyard. In the entrance iwan there are two spaces on each side with a quadrangle plan, covered with a barrel vault. There is a main iwan situated in the west, exactly across from the entrance iwan. It is covered with a sharp pointed barrel vault and has rooms at both sides. Among these, the one in the south is covered with a prismatic transitive dome and the other one in the north is covered with a squinch transitive oval dome. The north- and south-side iwans of the madrasah are covered with sharp pointed barrel vaults and the other entrance iwan and all the rooms are covered with barrel vaults. At the south opening of the courtyard, inside the rectangular iwan, the tomb belonging to 'the Father Dinkoz' [vii] has been preserved. The courtyard is surrounded with sharp pointed, arched riwaqs on three sides. The doors and windows facing the courtyard are flattened arches. Among the riwaqs, the north and south corners of the eastern opening are covered with a dome, while the ones remaining at the south opening are covered with crosswise vaults (Figure 1, 2).

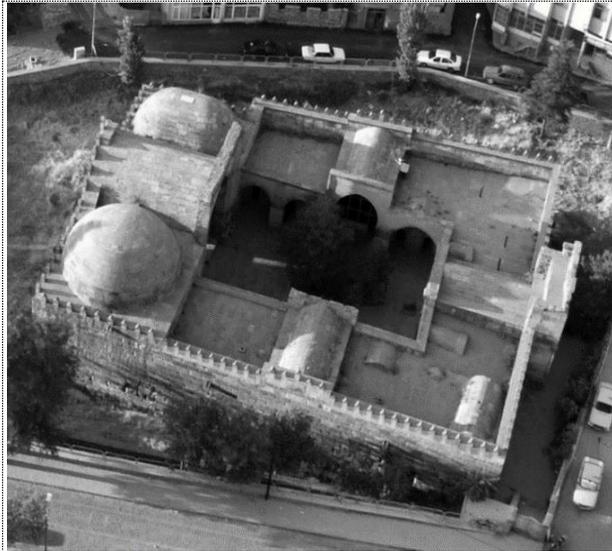


Figure 1. Aksaray Zinciriye Madrasah
(the archive of THK) (Kutlu, 2012)

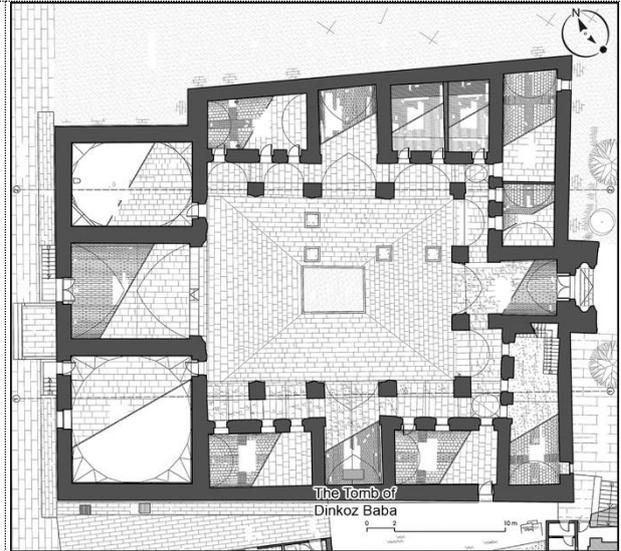


Figure 2. Planning
(the archive of H.A. Erdoğan, 2009)

Because no other examples of the four-iwan madrasah scheme that had been seen during the early 13th century – except for Zinciriye Madrasah – it has been believed that there were no other examples of that kind during the Karamanid period that survived and that has put the authors in doubt about the Karamanids. The samples of madrasahs belonging to the age of the Karamanids have two, or rarely, three iwans. These are Ermenek-Tol Madrasah (1339), Beyşehir-İsmail Aka Madrasah (1369/70), Alanya-Obaköy Madrasah (at the end of 14th century), Karaman-Hatuniye Madrasah (1381/82) and Niğde-Akmedrese (1408/10). Generally, in these samples, in the north of the courtyard on the same axis with the entrance iwan, there is a larger main iwan; the remaining iwans in the courtyard are of a smaller scale. The rooms located on both sides of the main iwan are domed (Figure 3).

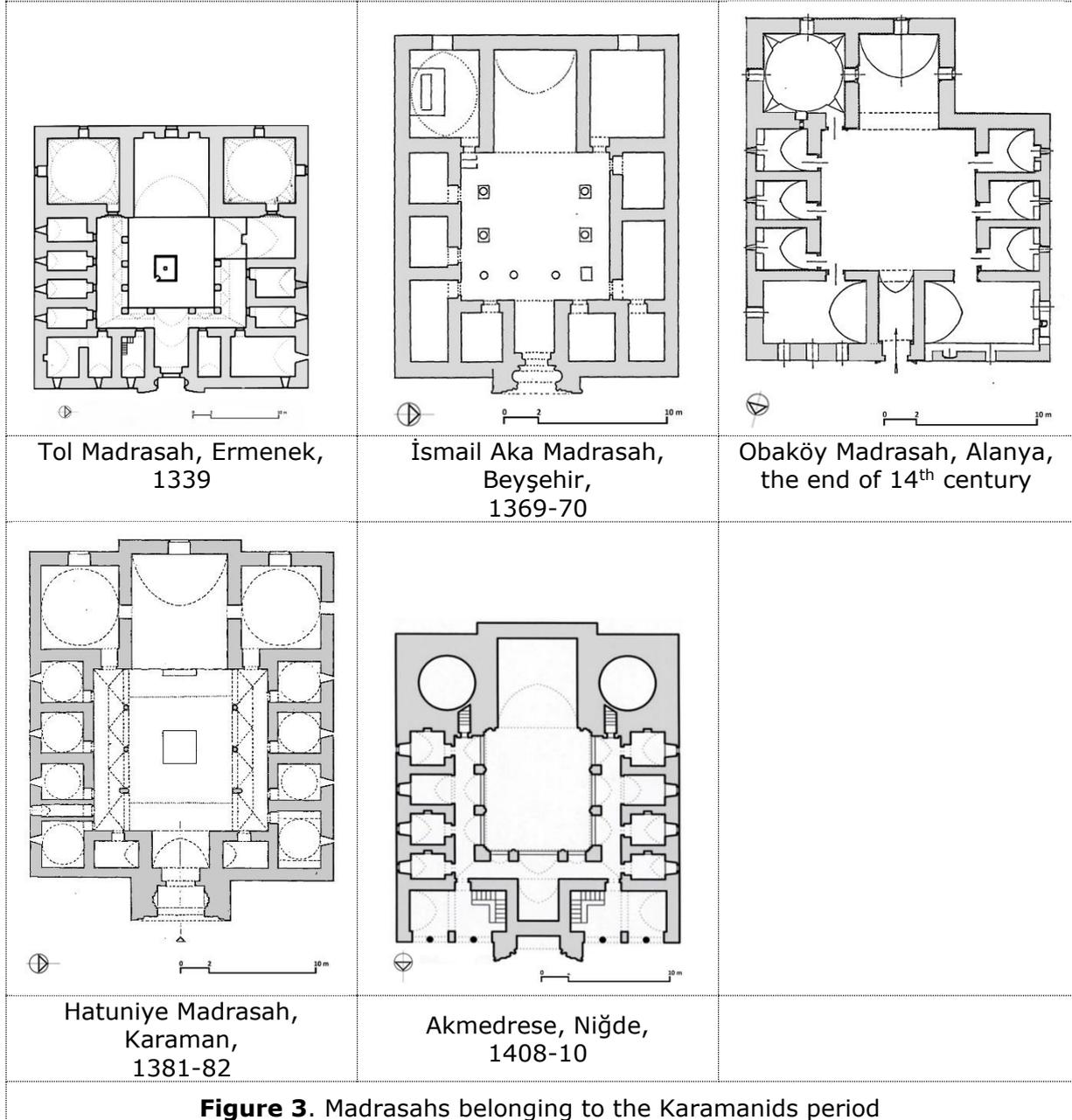


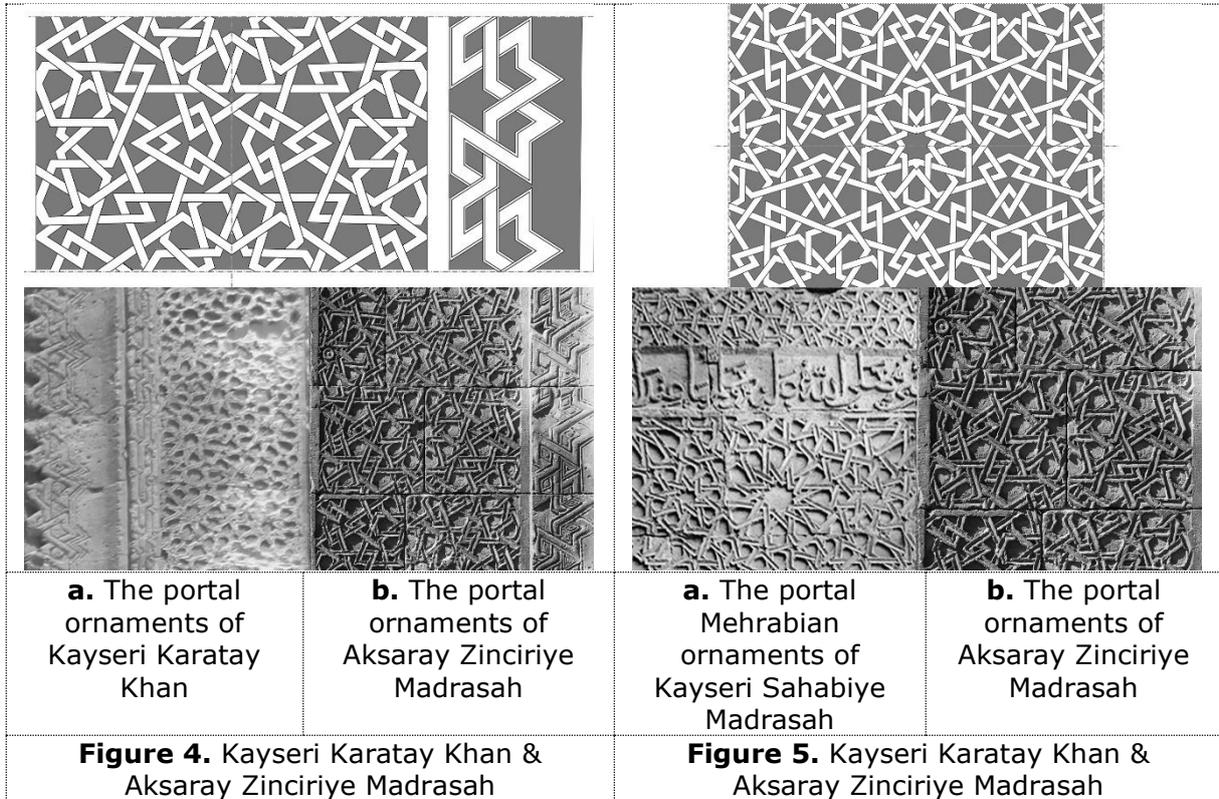
Figure 3. Madrasahs belonging to the Karamanids period

Considering that the stone building masters may have applied similar ornamentation details to other examples in the neighbourhood, a search for similar ornamentation examples to the Zinciriye Madrasah around the monumental building examples in and around Aksaray, and then matching them together has been the preferred method aiming to solve the historical uncertainty in dating.

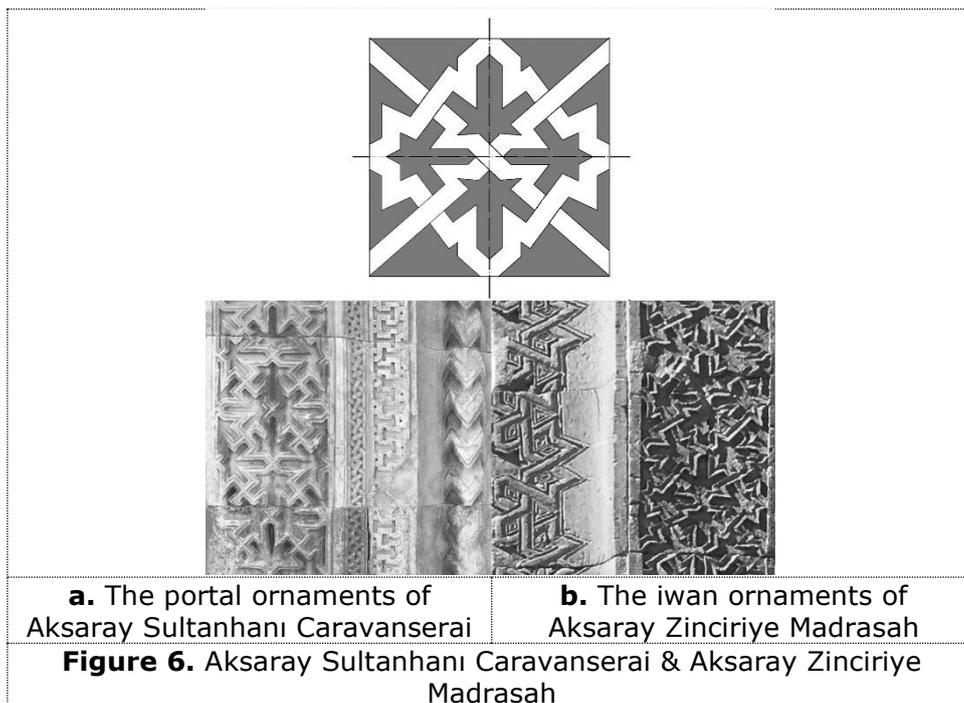
3. AKSARAY ZİNCİRİYE MADRASAH ORNAMENTATION DETAILS AND SIMILAR EXAMPLES AROUND AKSARAY

The ornamental elements in Zinciriye Madrasah are more intense on the outer portal, on the insides of the riwaqs, in the iwans, the doorjambs and on the window frames of the rooms. After a detailed scanning, quite similar ones to the decorative ornaments on the portal of Zinciriye Madrasah and on the base and frontals – on the wall – of the courtyard has been observed in the examples at Kayseri Karatay Khan (1240–41), Kayseri Sahabiye Madrasah (1267), Aksaray Sultanhanı Caravanserai (1229) and especially Aksaray Ağzıkarahan Caravanserai (Hoca Mesud Khan) (1231–39) (Figure 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8). The geometrical motif of the border on the portal ornaments of Aksaray Zinciriye

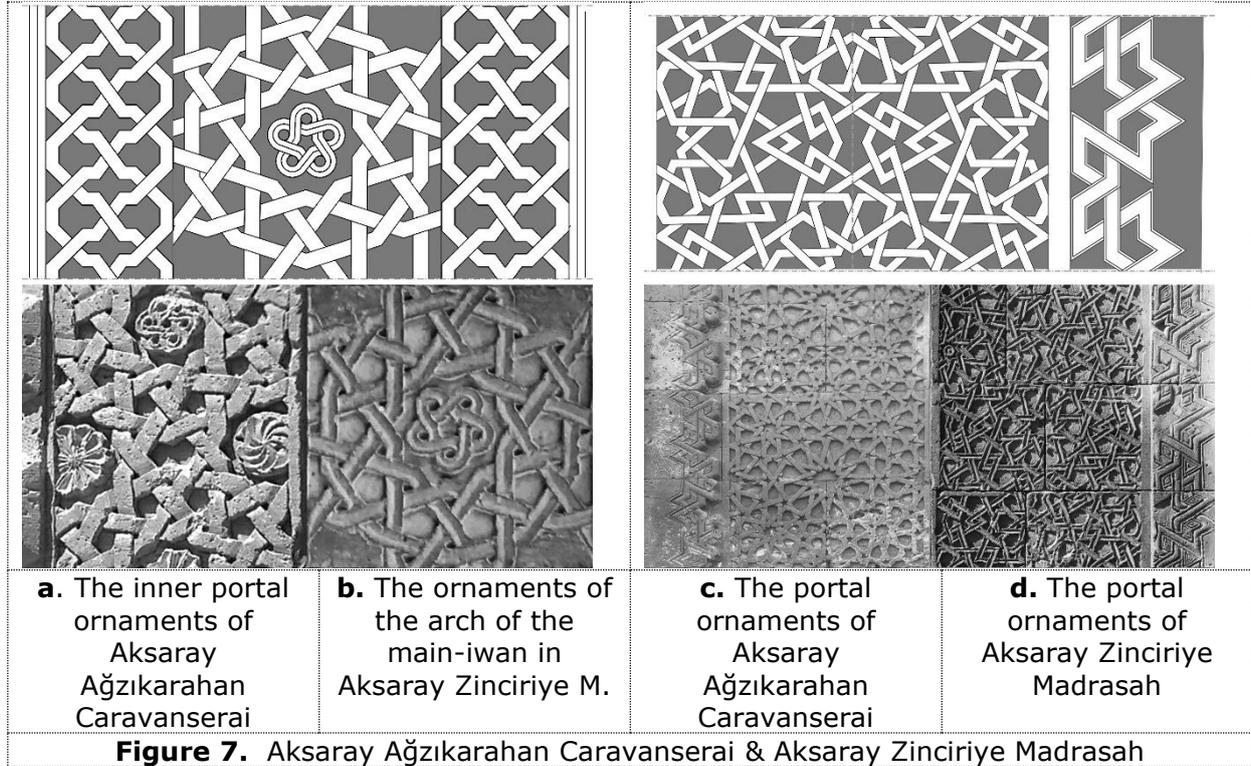
Madrasah resembles the one on Kayseri Karatay Khan (Figure 4). The motif (pattern) of the 'ten-armed-star' situated on the portal of the Aksaray Zinciriye Madrasah resembles the border ornaments on the mihrab (mehrabian) located in the interior space of the Kayseri Sahabiye Madrasah (Figure 5).



The ornamental 'arrowhead' on the main iwan of Aksaray Zinciriye Madrasah is similar to that on the portal of Aksaray Sultanhanı Caravanserai (Figure 6).



The main iwan decoration patterned 'ten-armed-star' in the Aksaray Zinciriye Madrasah is very similar to the decoration of the covered part of the portal of the Aksaray Ağzıkarahan Caravanserai (Figure 7). The geometrical border pattern in the portal decoration of the Aksaray Zinciriye Madrasah is similar to the portal ornamental features of the Aksaray Ağzıkarahan Caravanserai sequence of consecutive ornaments, and the general character of the portal is closely similar to the Zinciriye Madrasah (Figure 8).



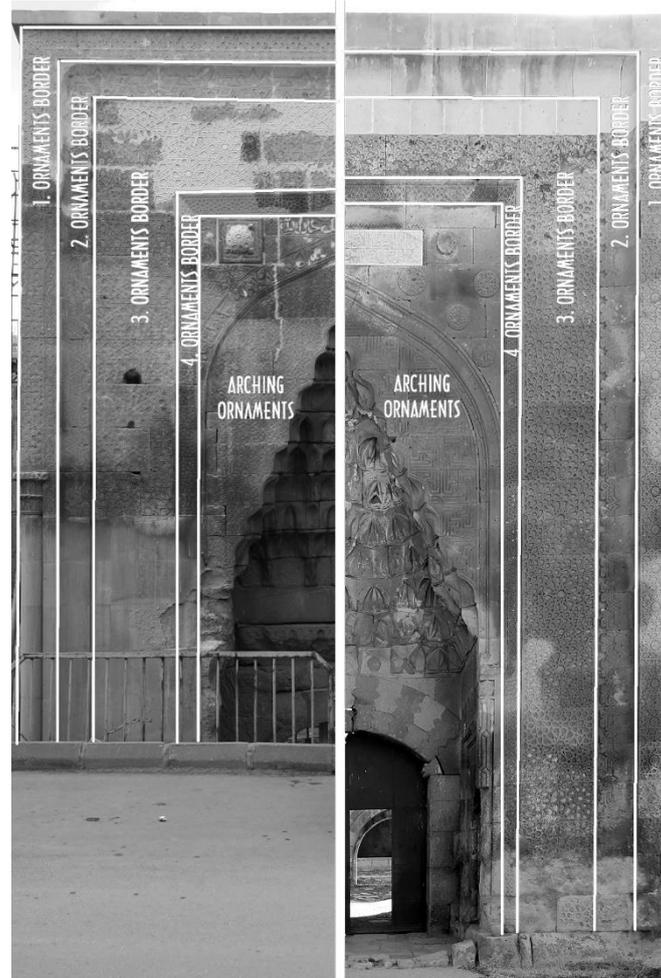
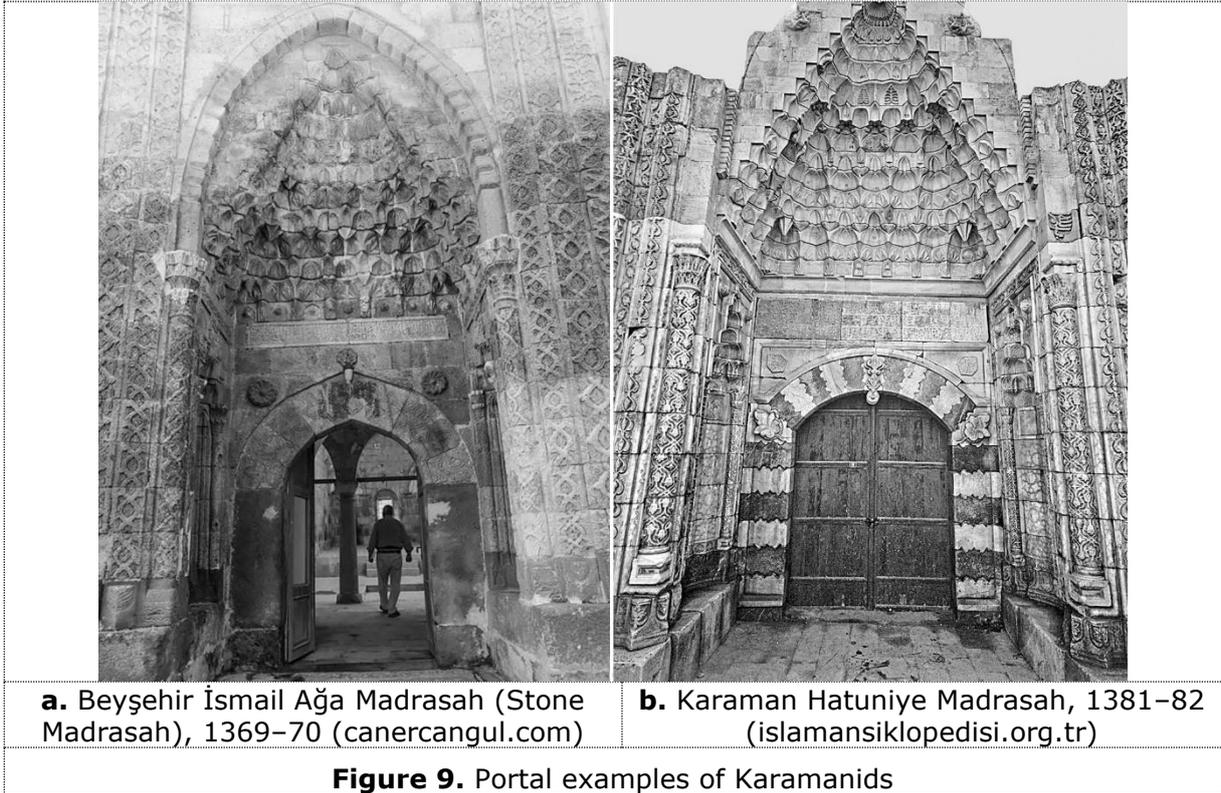


Figure 8. The strips of portal ornaments of Aksaray Ağzıkarahan Caravanserai & Aksaray Zinciriye Madrasah

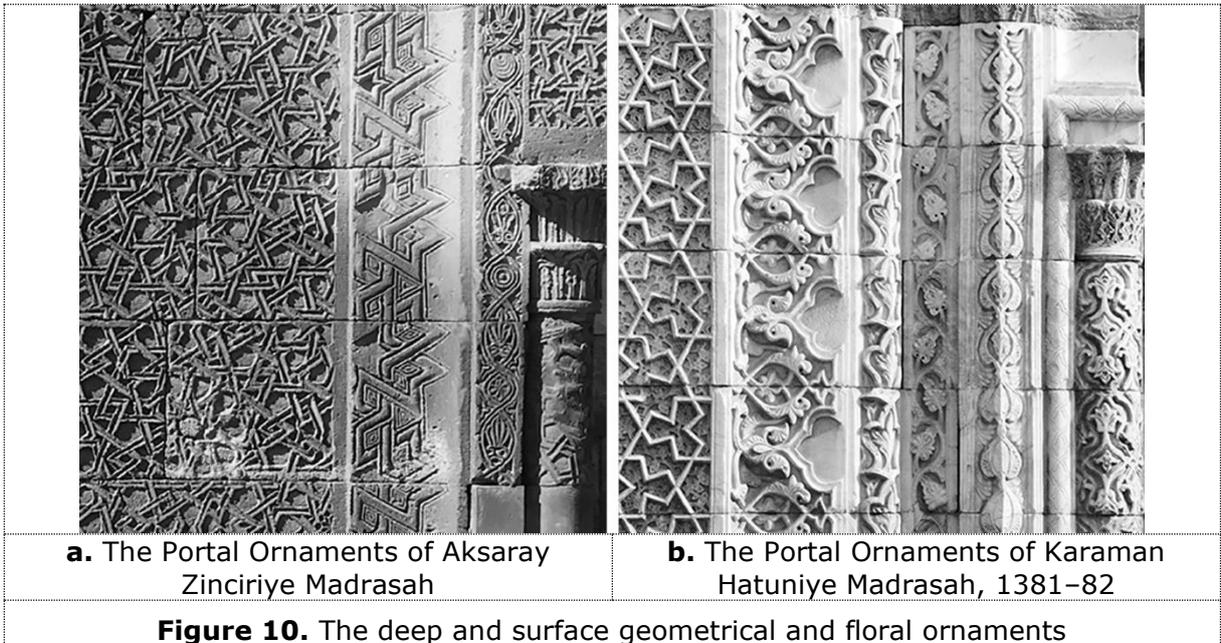
The similarities among the ornamental features in these structures, dated from 1229 to 1267, have once more supported the theory that the age the Zinciriye Madrasah belongs to was not that of the Karamanids, but belongs to the Seljuks. In terms of the artworks, there are significant differences between these two. As Ögel mentions, in Seljuk art, the main medium of expression lay in creating a world carved in stone, is to be regarded as something in the nature of pure expression rather than mere ostentation.^[viii] As a matter of fact, the political span of both Seljuk and Ottoman Empires can be observed in the art of the Karamanids indicating the Seljuk tradition alongside Ottoman, Gothic and Mameluk style effects (Tanman, 2001). For this reason, the period of the Karamanids was prosperous in terms of art, especially in the sense of ornamentation. Abdullah Kuran states that:

"In the architecture of the Karamanids, we observe that the Seljuk tradition resumes with regard to ornamentation as well. Compare to the simple and moderate Seljuk decoration art, in Karaman stone carving, the patterns were more rigid and glamorous, with more precise light and shadow play, and the geometric and floral motifs were mixed with a vibrant and rich ornamental style" (Kuran, 1969).

This corresponds to the statement of Tanman (2001) and Kuran (1969) that the portal ornaments of Beyşehir İsmailağa Madrasah (1369–70) and the Karaman Hatuniye Madrasah (1381–82) exhibit a mobile and prosperous style of masonry with keen-edged shadows (Figure 9).



According to Abdullah Kuran, the stonemasonry of the Seljuk period is superficial (such as the Kayseri Sahabiye Madrasah of 1267, and the Kayseri Seraceddin Madrasah (Huan Hatun Madrasah of 1238), and does not have deep carvings that allow light shadow plays (chiaroscuro) as in the examples of the Karamanids Seigniory (e.g. the Karaman Hatuniye Madrasah, 1381–82). The masonry work at Zinciriye Madrasah is superficial and the motifs do not have deep carvings (Figure 10).



Based on all this evidence, the similarity of the Zinciriye Madrasah plan type with four-iwan madrasas built in the 13th century has been included in the discussion.

4. AKSARAY ZİNCİRİYE MADRASAH AND THE MADRASAHS OF THE SELJUKS

In the Seljuk period, the plan type with four iwans is mainly to be seen in madrasahs with an open courtyard. The iwan directly opposite the entrance is the principal iwan and establishes one of the axes. The side iwans provide the balance in the four-iwan scheme. The porticos are generally found in front of the rooms on the two sides of the courtyard affording access from the chambers to the courtyard and to allow circulation. There is a garden in the centre with a pool and channels. Here, the centre and the four cardinal directions produce a cosmic diagram (Ögel, 2008). Among the Seljuk madrasahs, this plan scheme with four iwans [ix] and three-sided riwaqs is used in the Kayseri Sahabiye Madrasah, which was dated as early as 1267 and is the most similar example to the Aksaray Zinciriye Madrasah. Sivas Gök Madrasah (1271) and Sivas Buruciye Madrasah (1271–1272) built during this period also have four iwans; however, the courtyard has a sequence of riwaqs on both sides. (Figure 11).

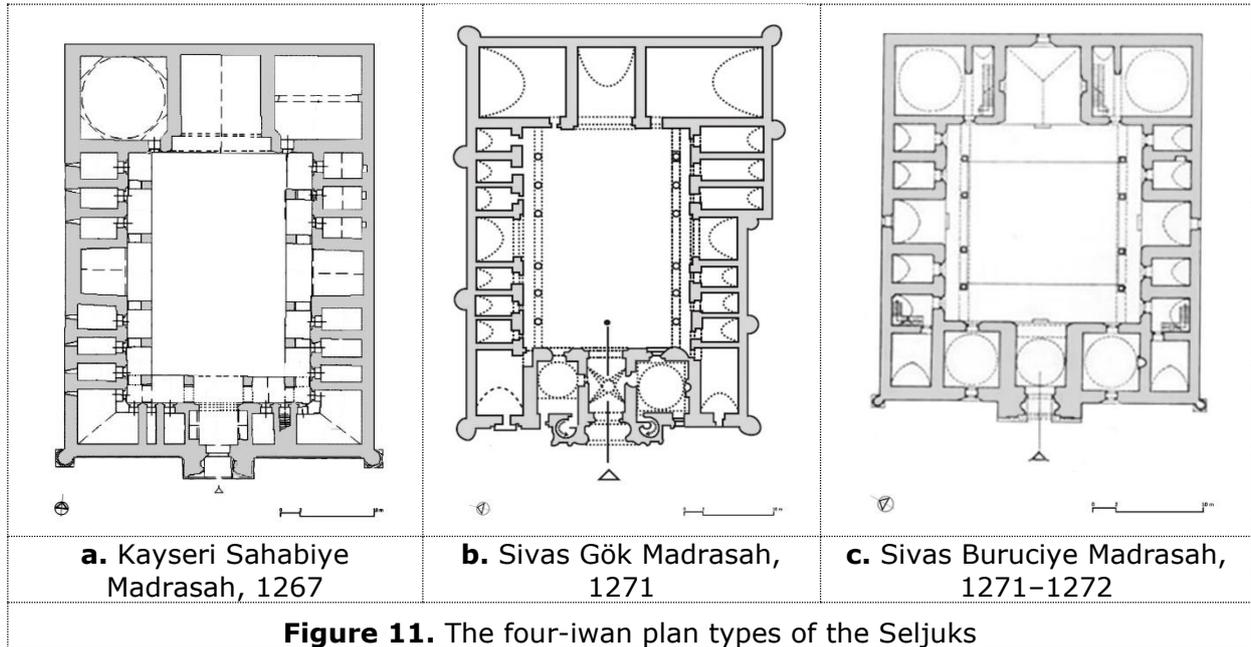


Figure 11. The four-iwan plan types of the Seljuks

The Seljuk madrasahs' plan schemes before this date generally had two iwans. These were the Kayseri Seraceddin Madrasah (Huand Hatun Madrasah) (1238), the Konya Sırçalı Madrasah (1242) and the Tokat Gök Madrasah (1257–1277) (Figure 12).

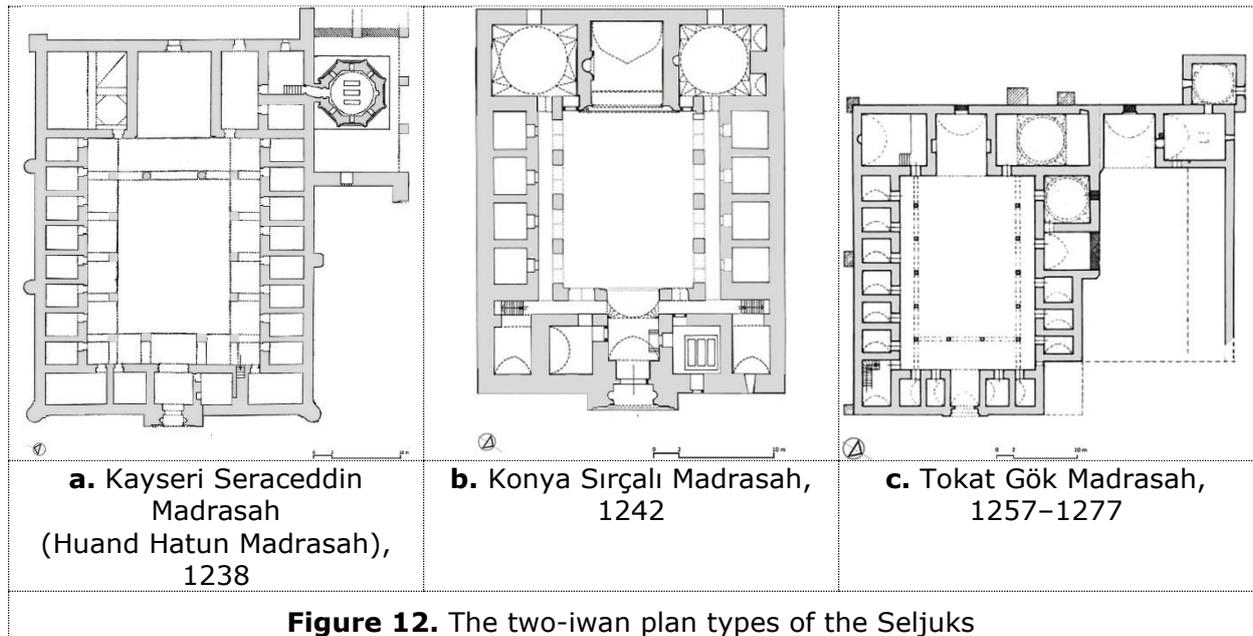


Figure 12. The two-iwan plan types of the Seljuks

Altun (1988) statement about the Tokat Gök Madrasah (dated 1257-1277): "*the idea of it being a madrasah of medicine with the additional building next to it*" has gained strength in recent years. As confirmed by Ara Altun, madrasahs with open courtyards were mainly built in most centres of Anatolia, especially in Kayseri, Sivas and Konya where they functioned as important institutions of the age as various educational branches (Altun, 1988). This education system functioning on a major campus scale formed by articulating the early examples of madrasahs, disappeared in later periods, and madrasah education was provided by examples with single structures. Although it has four-iwans, the angular construction of the north wall of the Zinciriye Madrasah indicates the existence of another structure attached to the wall.[x] This campus like construction is seen as another reason to support the madrasah belonging to the middle of the 13th century – even if it is a weak possibility.

According to Caner and Bakirer (2009), in the structures where the main iwan is functioning as a masjid, an axis stretches from the portal to the mehrabian niche and, in these cases, the portal points towards the north. In some other structures where the main iwan functioned as a masjid, the mehrabian niche is located on the side walls of the main iwan, and in this case the portal points towards the east or the west (e.g. Konya Sırçalı Madrasah, 1242). In buildings where the main iwan does not function as a masjid, a linear axis stretches to the main iwan from the portal. In this case, the portal points towards the south, east or west. In most madrasahs of the Seljuk period there is no mehrabian in the main iwan. In the Aksaray Zinciriye Madrasah, which has been considered to be a Seljuk work, the portal is directed towards the east and there isn't a mehrabian niche in the qibla. For this reason, it is obvious that the structure did not function as a masjid.

5. CONCLUSION

After this dating effort, it is thought that the Aksaray Zinciriye Madrasah, both because of its plan scheme, its architectural elements and ornamental details, is not the work of the Karamanids; it is a Seljuk work belonging to the late 13th century. The Madrasah is like a replication of the Kayseri Sahabiye Madrasah (1267) with its four-iwan scheme, the portal that can be entered from the eastern direction (a feature of the Seljuks where the main iwan does not function as a masjid (Caner & Bakirer, 2009), that it has domed rooms on two sides of the main iwan and because of the similarity of the ornamentation. Generally, in both structures, there are no deep shadows – stone craft ornamenting is conversely from the age of the Karamanids. As determined in Kuran (1969), they are

plain, scaled, superficial motifs. The similar ornamentation elements in the works of the Seljuk buildings close to the neighbourhood of Aksaray can be distinguished from the madrasahs of the Karamanids at first sight. For this reason, the structure is identified as a Seljuk work rather than being the work of the Karamanids.

As a consequence of the corresponding analyses done, this study will briefly mention the history of use and the established innovations related to the Aksaray Zinciriye Madrasah to help with the problem of dating it. Education and training had been performed there up to 1918; however, after that date the structure became unused and fell into poor repair. When it was decided to use it as a prison between the years 1930 to 1941, it had the most significant intervention when *dendans* were attached to the upper adjoining details of the outer wall structure.[xi] The madrasah was changed into the image of a sheltered castle by this intervention done by having the thought of to be the semantic supplementary of the contents of the function as a jail and contemporarily it has still been protecting its castle image.



Figure 13. The eastern facade of Zinciriye Madrasah (Konyalı, 1974).



Figure 14. The eastern facade of Zinciriye Madrasah, (The archive of Barış Mert KARASU, 2019)

In 1941, after the jail had been moved, the madrasah became more neglected. Zinciriye Madrasah, which had been restored in 1955, functioned as storage for a museum in Nigde in 1969 (the archives of the Municipality of Aksaray). After the year 1972, following various restorations, it functioned as a museum until 2006. In 2009, The Regional Directorate of Foundations of Konya restored Zinciriye Madrasah and in the same year, it was let out on hire to a private firm to be used as a cafe. During the restoration for use as a café, a steel suspended gallery floor was added to the room next to the main iwan to increase its capacity. In 2012, when it was no longer being used as a cafe, this gallery was removed.



Figure 15. The courtyard of Zinciriye Madrasah (from the archives of the Municipality of Aksaray)



Figure 16. The use of the southwest room of Zinciriye Madrasah as a library (The archive of B.M. Karasu, 2018)

This building, which had been hosting various uses for years, became a library in 2015, a function much closer to its original purpose. Its use in this way has required minimum intervention to its structure.

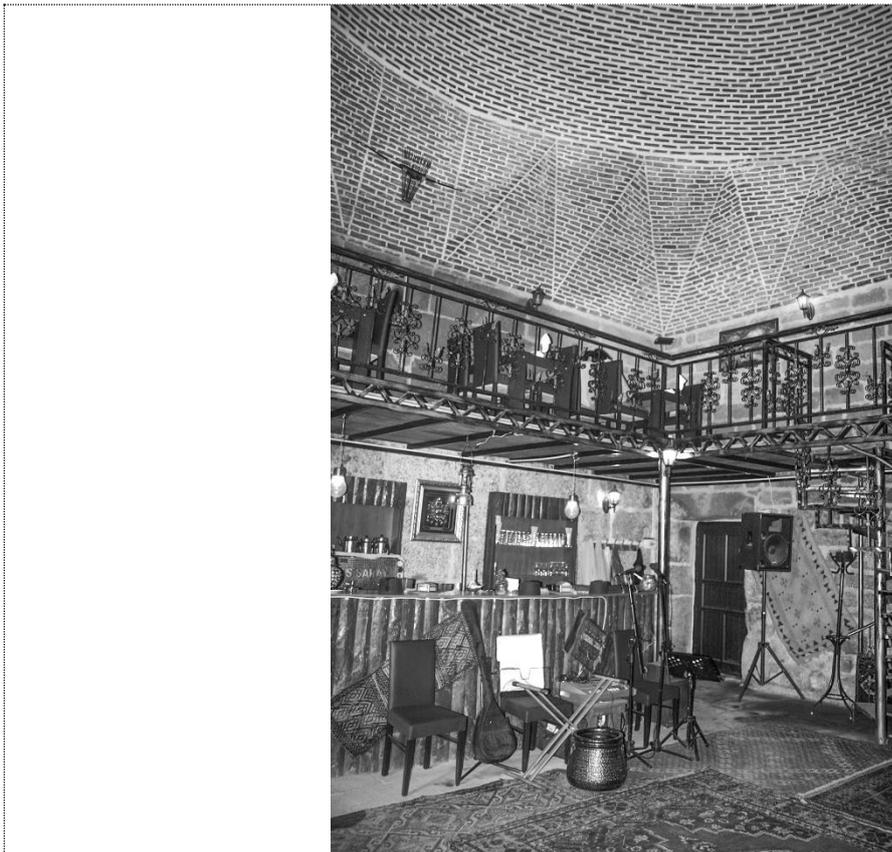


Figure 17. Zinciriye Madrasah used as a cafe in the southwest space (the archive of H.A. Erdoğan, 2009)

In order to determine the age that this structure belonged to, many historians/researchers who have witnessed its history over long periods have tried to date it, and through questioning it using the methods described, have come to appreciate that it could belong to the Seljuk age. It is thought that this study will at least bring some clarity to the uncertainty of its history.



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- <http://www.canercangul.com/8672/ismail-aga-medresesi-fotograflari-beysehir/>, date of Access: 22.04.2019

[ⁱ] Once the foundations of a settled way of life had been finally consolidated during the reign of Kılıçarslan II at the end of the 12th century, the Sultan embarked on building activity that was to create a characteristically Seljuk environment throughout Anatolia. As Ögel mentions, this development was much accelerated because of the economic prosperity of the 13th century, during the course of which the Seljuk sultans and viziers began to occupy a place among the greatest patrons in the Islamic world. (Ögel, 2008: 2)

[ⁱⁱ] During the early 20th century, by word of the travelers who came to Anatolia, the reason that Zinciriye Madrasah had been called İbrahim Bey (İbrahim Kadioğlu) Madrasah was because of the existence of an inscription from essential restoration work and modification done by İbrahim Bey II in Aksaray in the middle of the 15th century.

[ⁱⁱⁱ] According to the registrations in the Printing Record Book, there has been 10 madrasahs in the city of Aksaray (Temel & Küçükdağ, 2018) but today only two madrasahs survive: Kadioğlu Madrasah (Köhne and Bediriye Madrasahs) and Zinciriye Madrasah. Kadioğlu Madrasah, which has no inscriptions that have survived to the present time, was built by order of Bedreddin Yusuf – the governor of Aksaray from the Danismends in the district of Minarecik beyond the Cincıklı Masjid – during the reign of Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev I (1205–1211). İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı, who re-analysed the structure, wrote that the current madrasah was built in place of an older one, which had been demolished by Kadızade İbrahim Efendi in 1327/1909–10

[^{iv}] Inalcık (1995: 166) explains how the Ottoman madrasahs developed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and how was the role of Kayseri and Aksaray in the establishment of madrasah system in the Ottoman Empire: *When an Ottoman sultan wished to establish a new madrasah, he would invite scholars from the old Anatolian cultural centers, such as Konya, Kayseri or Aksaray, or from elsewhere in the Islamic world, from Persia, Turkestan, Egypt or Syria. In the reign of Murad II, Ali al-Dal of*



Tus (d. 1482) and Fakhr al-Dal, who had been brought from Persia, enhanced the reputation of the rapidly developing Ottoman madrasa. During the formative period of Ottoman culture in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Ottoman ulema traveled to Egypt, Persia or Turkestan to complete their education under the great scholars of those lands.

[^v] Cemâleddin-i Aksarayî (1388–89) served as the *müderris* / professor of Zinciriye Madrasa at Aksaray. He was the great grandson of Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî (1149-1209) whose school entered Anatolia through Sirâj al-Dîn of Urmiye during the Seljukid period. During the Karamanids period he was one of the towering figures among the Aksaray ulemâ religious scholars. Cemâleddin-i Aksarayî was important not only for the Karamanids but also for the Ottomans. He was known as "a Turkish philosopher, who was born and died at Aksaray" (Melikoff, 1983: 419). Aksarayî was the follower of Fahreddin Râzî, who had established a "more philosophical concept of Islam" through "the fusion of mysticism with the intellectual sciences." In this way, until the 17th century, among most of the ulamas and sufis, a public unity helped to keep peace and serenity (Bayraktar, 1986).

[^{vi}] The public improvements by the Eretnids, whose existence had lasted a short time in Anatolia, are too minor compared to their neighbours (Sümer, 1970). Because the inscriptions and pious foundations of the works have been lost, it has never been possible to determine the works of the Eretnalis (Göde, 1981). Köşk Madrasah is at the head of the rare works of the Eretnalis, which was built in 1339 with its square courtyard as a shrine with a tomb in the middle, but in later periods – because of its educational aspects – it is now known as a madrasah today. One other example of a madrasah belonging to the Eretnalis is Urgup Taskin Pasa Madrasah. This madrasah, which has been dated to 1350, has a square courtyard and is far beyond the type of Seljuk madrasah plan schemes with riwaqs and iwans. As this work was a shrine originally, and has no similarities with the Zinciriye Madrasah, the Eretnids works have not been compared in this study.

[^{vii}] There is unfortunately no information about the person who is known between the locals as Father Dingoz (Dinkoz-Tingoz) buried in the southern iwan of the Zinciriye Madrasah. In a note given by Mehmet Hamzakadı (researcher on the history of Aksaray) to İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı, it is stated that Dingoz Baba died in Hijri 887. According to this information, it can be assumed that this person who died in 1482 is one of the Fatih era professors.

[^{viii}] The motifs encountered in Seljuk designs and compositions are often striking and unusual, but they are never 'alien'; they are never at variance with the forms to which they are applied (Ögel, 2008) The single, cosmic unity behind all their appearance is the principal theme of mysticism. Muhyiddin ibn Al-Arabi (1165–1235), one of the greatest of the mystics and perhaps the most influential of the preachers of Vahdet-i Vucud (unity of the universe, the philosophical basis for monotheism) explains the layers of the universe by means of circular lines. The scheme he employs consists of circles interlacing and intersecting around a central point. This is the basic plan of our star systems and clearly shows how a link has been formed between geometrical forms and Sufi images. Several sources of inspiration shaped the art of the Anatolian Seljuk art. First, a strong influence came from Islamic Sufism. The art of Islam was powerfully influenced by Sufism, which regarded the material world of appearance, with its many varying aspects, as a reflection of divine will, recreated at every breath. Inspired by this trend of thought and spirituality, the Anatolian Seljuk art contributed its own interpretation. The conception of the universal order was most clearly represented in architectural stone decorations (Ögel, 2008) During this period in Anatolia, mysticism was represented by Sufis such as Muhyiddin ibn al-Arabi, Mevlana Jalal al-Din al-Rumi, Yunus Emre and Hacı Bektaş Veli (Ögel, 2008).

[^{ix}] According to Semra Ogel the four-iwan central courtyard plan, which has been interpreted as an image of the *çösmos*, is a spatial arrangement that can be traced back to a very distant past and is very closely connected with the Seljuks (Ögel, 2008). The significance of the four-iwan courtyard plan lies in its constituting a symbol of the *çösmos* as a symmetrical whole balanced around a central point. The iwans were placed in the four main directions on two axes intersecting at right angles (Ögel, 2008).

[^x] Today, the Zinciriye Madrasah is one of the earliest works in its neighborhood along with The Bridge of Debbağlar (19th century), the Paşa Turkish Bath (19th century, but still being used as a Turkish bath today), the older residence of the Governor (1930, used today as a House of Culture), the Azm-i Milli factory (1924, originally functioning as a flour plant factory and used today as a museum) are all located there. The Zinciriye Madrasah is quite closely located near the city center and the square.

[^{xi}] According to (Bayburtluoğlu, 1978) in Anatolia during the Turkish period, the construction work implemented in the cities, in a meaning which means the 'itself'd-for the city, the bastions and the walls of the castles where *den dans* were used identical to the modern buildings is a real issue to be handled in terms of Turkish art. In a deeper sense, it can be indicated that the artist's use of this motif has established his masterpiece as an element which completes the city. *Den dans* were used in the inns of open rural areas. Even though they are associated with protection, in urban structures it has being used in madrasahs, mosques and gradually in shrines, so that *den dans* have become part of the city-structure identity. In the second half of the 13th century, and the ones that have been seen mostly in the last thirty years, have been mostly ornamental in construction and completely different in terms of size. This awakened the idea that the use of *den dans* begun in the inns, but by the time they were used in and identified urban areas, they played a decorative role.