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ABSTRACT

The Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa (hospital) is a UNESCO World Heritage site, recognized as a singular example of stone carving in Turkestan and Anatolia. Built between 1228 and 1243 during the Anatolian Seljuk State-Mengücekli Principality period, this monumental complex was commissioned by Mengücekli Bey Ahmed Shah, his wife Melike Turan Melek, and his mother Fatima Hatun. The architect responsible was Ahlatlı Mughis son Hürrem Shah and his team. Evliya Çelebi, in his *Seyahatname*, described it with the words "Pens break and tongues become dumb to describe it," while Muhyiddin Arabi stated, "Arifs cannot describe their feelings." This unique structure is notable for being the only work from its period where a mosque and a *darüşşifa* are conjoined. It also stands out as the only historical work built by two women and one man, highlighting an era where equality prevailed and women were highly valued. Although initially a large complex, only the mosque and the *darüşşifa* remain today. The decorations on the building, which are said to carry the spirit of the region, appear symmetrical from a distance but are, in fact, asymmetrical, with each motif being distinct and unique. These intricate stone carvings, considered the finest of their time, are believed to connect the material and spiritual worlds, as well as the micro and macro worlds. Despite weathering and neglect over time, this architectural masterpiece continues to stand. Understanding its formation process requires extensive research into its historical context, tracing the path of Turks from Turkestan to Anatolia, and examining the contributions of the masters, architects, craftsmen, and artisans who built it. The emergence of this profoundly significant structure is a complex and demanding subject of study. This current compilation of information is a result of such ongoing research.

Key Words: Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa, History, Anatolian Seljuk Period, Architecture.

INTRODUCTION

Originating from Central Asia, historically known as Turkestan, Turkic peoples dispersed across vast geographical regions, establishing a presence on four continents, including parts of Asia, Africa, and Europe. This global expansion and influence of the Turks can be broadly categorized into distinct historical periods. The pre-Islamic era saw the rise of powerful entities such as the Hun Empires and the Göktürk Khaganate. Following their conversion to Islam, Turkic dominance continued through formidable states like the Great Seljuk Empire, the Anatolian Seljuk Empire, and the Ottoman Empire (Özkul, 2025).

Throughout their history, marked by numerous shifts in geography and a singular change in religious identity (Koca, 2019b), the Turks have consistently pioneered civilizational advancements. By revitalizing conquered territories and establishing new settlements, they left an indelible mark across centuries. The synthesis of pre-Islamic Turkic traditions, which profoundly influenced their culture, art, and architecture, with the core tenets of Islam – derived from the Quran, Hadith, and Islamic principles – gave rise to a rich and diverse spectrum of civilizations. In the regions touched by this expansive civilization, cities such as Andalusia, Alexandria, Baghdad, Isfahan, Jundishapur, Tabriz, Balkh, and Samarkand flourished as some of history's most cosmopolitan and esteemed urban centers. Within these hubs of culture, art, and civilization, a shared cultural environment, embracing people of all religions and nationalities, fostered the creation of significant works dedicated to the service of humanity (Kalın, 2022).

The Turks historically proved their multifaceted capabilities, excelling not only as formidable soldiers and warriors but also as pioneers in culture, art, aesthetics, literature, music, architecture, and science. Their enduring legacy is clearly evidenced by the architectural marvels, written records, and artifacts they left behind. Archaeological discoveries, including objects, remains, and wall paintings, further enrich our understanding of their settlements, structures, and daily lives (Özkul, 2025). The Turks seamlessly integrated past traditions with future aspirations, revitalizing the lands they inhabited and governing with a strong sense of justice, consistently breaking new ground in various fields.

The Fragmentation of the Great Seljuk Empire

The Great Seljuk Empire once fostered a vibrant intellectual environment, attracting numerous scholars, clerics (*ulema*), architects, artists, and scientists whose contributions continue to illuminate our present understanding of history. Following the death of Malik Shah, this vast empire fragmented into five distinct successor states: the Seljuks of Iran and Khorasan, the Seljuks of Syria, the Seljuks of Iraq, the Seljuks of Kerman, and notably, the Anatolian Seljuks (Büyükçanga, 2006).

The Anatolian Seljuk Empire: Rise and Decline

Established in Anatolia, the Anatolian Seljuk Empire forged a unique and significant architectural landscape that profoundly shaped the region's cultural and artistic identity. To fully grasp the trajectory of the Anatolian Seljuk Empire, from its foundation to its eventual collapse, one must consider its various facets holistically. This includes an integrated examination of their administration, politics, military, economy, societal organization, and their rich cultural and artistic expressions.

The empire's lifespan can be broadly divided into distinct phases. The period from the reign of Kutalmışoğlu Süleyman Shah leading up to the Battle of Myriokephalon during the rule of Alaeddin Keykubad II represents an era of considerable growth and consolidation. However, the subsequent period, particularly following Alaeddin Keykubad II's assassination, marked the beginning of the state's decline (Kuşçu, 2017).

During both their establishment and decline, the Turks achieved remarkable success in the Anatolian lands they conquered. While constantly defending their territories, they simultaneously focused on state administration, maintenance, and an ambitious construction program that yielded monumental works in many cities. Among these, the Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa stands out as a preeminent example. Located in the Divriği district of Sivas, which served as the second capital of the Mengücekoğulları dynasty during the Anatolian Seljuk period, this complex was built between 1228 and 1243. It was commissioned by Mengücekli Bey Ahmed Shah, his wife Melike Turan Melek, and Ahmed Shah's mother, Fatıma Hatun. The structure gained widespread renown for its exquisite stone carving techniques, which beautifully blend traditions from both Turkestan and Anatolia (Özkul, 2025).

The profound artistry of the Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa resonated deeply with observers across centuries. In the 13th century, the renowned mystic Muhyiddin Ibn al-Arabi eloquently captured its essence, stating, "Wise people express their feelings through symbols" (Ibn al-Arabi, 2013)—a sentiment perfectly embodied by the complex's intricate designs. Centuries later, in the 16th century, the celebrated traveler Evliya Çelebi, known for his comprehensive travelogue, referred to it as "Medrese-i Ulu Mosque" under the heading "Der-sitayiş-i darü't-tedris-i Divriği" (Çelebi, 1999). Çelebi's vivid description highlights its unparalleled craftsmanship:

"The marble craftsman put so much effort into this building, carving the walls and doors so beautifully, that neither the Sultan Yakub Mosque in Ayasuluk, nor the Yıldırım Han Ulu Mosque in Bursa, nor the pulpit carvings in Sinop, nor the Ebu'l Feth (Fatih) Mosque in Athens during the Byzantine Empire, nor the Estergon Castle Mosque on the Budin border can rival the craftsmanship here. In short, words are insufficient to praise this structure, and the pen breaks in this endeavor" (Çelebi, 2010).

This remarkable comparison with other significant structures of various civilizations underscores the Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa's unique and superior artistry. Similarly, the structure has earned the moniker "the Alhambra of Anatolia," drawing parallels with the iconic Alhambra Palace in Andalusia and effectively capturing the spirit of its geographical origins. Its decorations, comprising intricate plant and geometric motifs, inscriptions, and figures, create a distinctive style that masterfully transforms apparent symmetry into captivating asymmetry.

The intricate motifs of the Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa serve as a profound bridge between the material and spiritual realms, the macrocosm and the microcosm. The presence of lines and dots, often without complete detail, suggests that these motifs were individually applied to the stones after the building's construction, possibly indicating that the master craftsmen and artists may have passed away before their work was entirely finished. While Ögel (1966) proposed the use of patterned wooden molds on scaffolding, a closer examination of the highly detailed, asymmetrical nature of each motif, combined with the relatively short construction period, refutes this theory.

Even today, the thousands of symbolic motifs, potentially encrypted with information, remain largely unexplained, a point acknowledged by Erkman (2004) who noted, "The architectural tradition of the Anatolian Seljuk period, like other madrasa structures, reflects a symbolic spatial arrangement rather

than a functional one." As Hermes wisely stated, "O stone! The knowledge you possess will not only serve as a story and guide for future generations, but will also remain as a visual art." Indeed, a motif whose meaning cannot be fully deciphered ultimately functions as a visual work of art. Considering that each motif within the structure is applied in at least two layers, the images formed by the interplay of the whole and its individual layers likely convey a wealth of meaning and messages.

A Masterpiece of Islamic Architecture and Hospital History

The Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa, with its captivating decorative styles and symbolic expressions, offers a visual feast and is widely regarded as a masterpiece of Islamic architecture. While the original complex comprised a two-domed mosque, an adjacent hospital, a courtyard, porch, prayer hall, kitchen, bathhouse, guesthouse, *musalla* stones, well, and fountain, only the mosque and hospital have survived to the present day (Yetkin, 1965). This structure holds a unique place in history as the only known work where a mosque and a hospital were built in such a contiguous arrangement. Notably, its commission by two women and one man left an indelible mark on its own era and subsequent periods. The architect, Hürrem Şah, remarkably undertook no other known commissions before or after this monumental project.

Seljuk hospitals, including the Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa, are of immense significance in tracing the origins of world hospital history. They are crucial both as examples of early Islamic hospitals and for their active role during the Crusades, a period when Islamic culture exerted considerable influence in Europe. While many important Seljuk hospitals have not survived—such as the first Seljuk hospital and medical school established in Nishapur by Nizam al-Mulk, the vizier of Alparslan; the hospital in Samarkand founded by Tamgaç Buğra Khan; the Ghazni hospital mentioned by Biruni in his *Kitâbü's-Saydele*; and hospitals in Baghdad, Shiraz, Berdesir, Kashan, Ebher, Zanjan, Ganja, Harran, and Mardin (Terzioğlu, 1986)—several noteworthy examples remain.

Those that have survived include the Nureddin Hospital in Damascus, the Gevher Nesibe Darüşşifası and Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev Medical School in Kayseri, the Keykâvus Darüşşifası in Sivas, the Gök Medrese Pervane Bey Darüşşifası in Tokat, the Atabey Ferruh Hospital in Çankırı, and the Ali b. Pervane Hospital, alongside the Divriği Melike Turan Melek Hospital (Terzioğlu, 1986). The Divriği Great Mosque and Hospital, having undergone

numerous restorations, holds the distinction of being the first architectural structure in Turkey to be included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

POLITICAL AND CULTURAL STRUCTURE IN ANATOLIA DURING THE SELJUK PERIOD

As Bilge Khan famously stated, "Between the blue sky above and the black earth below, mankind was created; and over mankind ruled our ancestors Bumin Khan and Istemi Khan." This sentiment of destiny and dominion resonates through Seljuk history, which traces its origins back to the 10th century with the Oghuz Turks, recognized as direct ancestors of modern Turks. These Oghuz tribes inhabited the Turkestan region, east of the Syr Darya and the Caspian Sea, extending into the Aral Sea basin (Sümer, 2007).

The Seljuks emerged onto the historical stage through Seljuk Bey, a prominent member of the Kınık tribe, one of the 24 Oghuz tribal formations. Their strategic prowess enabled the Seljuks to expand from Turkestan into Azerbaijan, the South Caucasus, Iraq, Iran, and Syria, thereby laying the foundations of the formidable Great Seljuk Empire (Kuban, 2002). The aspiration to conquer Anatolia, transform it into a Turkish homeland, and subsequently protect and defend it, became a defining characteristic for successive Seljuk dynasties. This drive was rooted deeply in both Turkish tradition and Islamic ethos. For the Oghuz Turks, Anatolia symbolized the "Red Apple" (Kızıl Elma), a potent national ideological symbol representing the ideal of Turkish world domination (Özdemir, 2017). This profound philosophy was passed down through generations, notably influencing the descendants of Arslan Yabgu, particularly Süleyman Shah, son of Kutalmış, and subsequent dynasties, who continuously pursued this ideological objective with extraordinary dedication (Koca, 2019).

Two pivotal factors facilitated the conquest of Anatolia and the realization of the "Red Apple" ideal. Firstly, the hostile relations between the Byzantine authorities and various non-Orthodox Christian communities within Anatolia fostered a sense of alienation among the latter, leading them to refrain from supporting Byzantium and offering less resistance to the advancing Turks. Secondly, the Byzantines' ill-fated attempt to establish a defensive line against the Seljuk Turks by resettling Christian Turks from Anatolia and Pecheneg Turks from the Balkans back into the region backfired. Despite their Christian faith, these Turkic groups ultimately allied with their Seljuk kin against the Byzantines (Urfalı Mateos, 2000), playing a crucial role in the Seljuks' decisive victory at the Battle of Manzikert.

On August 26, 1071, capitalizing on internal power struggles and financial crises within the Byzantine Empire, Sultan Alp Arslan confronted Emperor

Romanos IV Diogenes, who had arrived at Manzikert from Constantinople with a formidable army intent on expelling the Turks from Anatolia and advancing towards the Seljuk capital. Sultan Alp Arslan secured a monumental victory, definitively defeating Diogenes (Çevik, et al., 2018). This triumph marked the Seljuk Turks' definitive return to ancestral lands, which, from the perspective of Proto-Turkic history, had always belonged to them.

Political and Cultural Structure in Anatolia During The Seljuk Period

Within the established historical framework, the earliest recorded Turkic presence in Anatolia dates back to the Western Huns. In 376 CE, they migrated from Turkestan, subsequently establishing the European Hun Empire north of the Black Sea. The awe-struck description by Bishop Ephraim of Edessa (Urfa) regarding the European Huns' Anatolian campaigns "They flew like storms on their tamed Ahal-Teke horses, and no one could stand against them" (Kafalı, 2002) is corroborated by Chinese sources. These sources further highlight the Turks' pioneering role in horse domestication, specifically the Ahal-Teke breed. Turkic affinity with horses was legendary; they were said to live, sleep, and even establish their states on horseback, with horses being metaphorically considered "the wings of the Turks."

Following the European Huns, the Sabar/Sibirs marked the second significant Turkic arrival in Anatolia (Sevim, 2000). Living under Hunnic rule in the regions west of the Tian Shan Mountains and between the Ili, Volga, Don, and Kuban rivers, the Sabar Turks expanded their influence, establishing an independent state in territories extending into Eastern Europe by 508 CE (Baştav, 1941).

In the early 7th century, the Khazar Turks, having reached the banks of the Aras River, launched raids into the Byzantine Empire, penetrating Anatolia between 683 and 686 CE and dismantling Arab emirates in the region (Güzel and Seferoğlu, 1986). Subsequently, Bulgarian Turks, arriving in Anatolia via the Balkans, settled in the Çoruh and upper Euphrates regions alongside the local population of Trabzon around 530 CE. Again, in 755 CE, Byzantine Emperor Constantine V strategically relocated Bulgarian Turks from the Balkans to Anatolia to combat the Arabs, stationing them in the Tohma and Ceyhan basins (Yinanç, 2009). This pattern of Christian Turkic migration from the Balkans to Anatolia continued, even up to the time of the Seljuk arrival at Manzikert (Kurat, 1937).

The Turks, having conquered numerous regions and consistently seeking to establish new states in their acquired territories, founded the Anatolian Seljuk State in Anatolia. This achievement was a culmination of their accumulated historical knowledge, robust organizational structure, and the collaborative efforts of their people (Kafesoğlu, 1955). The Anatolian Seljuk state evolved into a highly functional and fluid model, characterized by its administrative and bureaucratic efficiency, enabling swift decision-making and decisive interventions to maintain justice, economic stability, cultural vibrancy, artistic flourishing, and individual order. These strengthened values rendered the state structure exceptionally adaptable (Ayhan and İmga 2020). In this model, the populace served as both the founders and fundamental pillars of the state. Consequently, when faced with existential threats such as collapse, loss of future, or occupation (Koca, 2019b), the people, driven by their unwavering loyalty to their homeland and state, adopted a combative and warrior ethos. General Hamilton aptly summarized this spirit with the observation, "No other nation in the world has an army that can stand for so long. No soldier other than the Turkish soldier is ready to give his life for his religion and homeland" (Dikici, 2009).

Ultimately, the inherent martial spirit of the Turks is deeply ingrained; they are born soldiers, never shying away from battle, undaunted by defeat, and unafraid of death, knowing they will attain the esteemed rank of martyr. Ready to sacrifice their lives for their homeland, they have historically refused to accept defeat, emerging victorious in every just war fought and considering every inch of land where their blood has been shed as sacred territory. From this perspective, the nature and profound significance of the struggles and conquests undertaken by all Turkic dynasties, khans, and sultans throughout history are of immense importance within the broader context of both Turkish and world history (Özkul, 2025).

The Anatolian Seljuk Period and Political Structure

The foundation of the Anatolian Seljuk State marks a pivotal moment in Turkish history. Its first sultan, Kutalmışoğlu Süleyman Shah, spearheaded a westward expansion, capturing Nicaea from the Byzantines in 1075 and establishing it as his capital. He meticulously modeled the nascent state's organization and administrative system after the Great Seljuk Empire, consolidating control over central and western Anatolia with Nicaea as its strategic center (Koca, 2019b).

Süleyman Shah's policies were instrumental in a profound transformation. By uniting Turkmen tribes regardless of religious distinction and facilitating the large-scale settlement of Oghuz groups in Anatolia, he initiated a demographic and cultural shift that would endure for centuries (Koca, 2019b). This move was seen as the crucial first step towards establishing a powerful nation in a strategically vital land (Ülkü, 1977). The Byzantines formally recognized the Anatolian Seljuk State through the Treaty of Dragos Çayı in 1081 (Koca, 2006). However, this recognition was tenuous. In 1092, during the First Crusade, Kılıç Arslan I lost all coastal regions to the Byzantines and was compelled to retreat to Central Anatolia, establishing Konya as the new capital. Seizing this opportunity, Byzantine emperors launched successive military campaigns aimed at dismantling the Seljuk State.

Following Kılıç Arslan I's reign, his son Melik Shah ascended the throne in 1107. He successfully defended his state and territories, notably forcing Emperor Alexios to retreat at Akşehir in 1116. Mesud I, who became sultan in 1116, further solidified Seljuk control by defeating Manuel, who had laid siege to Konya, in 1146 (Koca, 2019b). Thanks to Sultan Mesud's nearly forty-year reign, characterized by patience and strategic intelligence, Anatolia transformed into a secure and prosperous homeland. It was during his rule that the term "Turkia" first appeared in historical sources to refer to the Anatolian lands (Turan, 2005).

After Sultan Mesud's death in 1155, his son Kılıç Arslan II continued the expansionist policy. His decisive victory over Manuel in the Battle of Myriokephalon in 1176 ensured the permanent presence of Turks in Anatolia (Koca, 2019b) and secured the western borders through a subsequent agreement with Manuel I (Koca, 2006). Beyond their Anatolian victories, the Seljuk sultans also played a crucial role in the Crusades to Palestine, effectively safeguarding Anatolia from invasions originating from both the west and the east (Koca, 2019).

Kılıç Arslan II stands as a pivotal figure in Seljuk history, his military and political genius matched by his significant contributions to administration, culture, and architecture (Koca, 2006). His accomplishments substantially elevated the power of both the Seljuk sultans and the state itself. With the permanence of the Turks in Anatolia now secured, the imperative shifted to establishing political unity and ensuring the state's sovereignty and defense across these lands (Koca, 2019b). To this end, and in order to consolidate control over the various Turkish beyliks that had formed independent

principalities after the Battle of Manzikert, Sultan Kılıç Arslan II systematically eliminated the Danişmentli Beyliği, which had posed a significant obstacle to political cohesion.

Following the death of Kılıç Arslan II, an intense struggle for the throne ensued among his sons. Ultimately, Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev I ascended to power in 1192, though his reign was brief before Süleyman Shah II took the throne in 1196 (Keskin, 2006). Süleyman Shah II, echoing the centralizing policies of his grandfather Kılıç Arslan II, also moved to dismantle rival principalities. He took decisive steps to unify Anatolia, annexing Niksar, Amasya, Elbistan, and Malatya from his brothers. When the Saltukids refused to join his campaign against Georgia, he conquered Erzurum, effectively ending the Saltukid Principality and integrating its territories into the Seljuk Empire (Koca, 2019b).

In 1204, Kılıç Arslan III, son of Süleyman Shah II, became sultan at a young age, but was compelled to cede the throne to Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev I in 1205, who thus began his second reign. This period coincided with the Fourth Crusade, which saw the capture of Constantinople by Crusaders, the establishment of the Latin Empire, and the relocation of the Byzantine capital to Nicaea (Turan, 1979).

Upon his second ascension to the throne, Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev I initiated two crucial reforms. Firstly, he abolished the tradition of fragmenting the country's lands among the princes (Keskin, 2006). Secondly, in 1206, he commissioned the Gevher Nesibe Hatun Darüşşifası in Kayseri. This establishment, considered the world's first medical university, marked a significant milestone in both medical history and the history of the Seljuk state (Özkul, 2020a).

Following the death of Sultan Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev I, his son İzzettin Keykavus I ascended to the throne in 1211. His reign was marked by significant economic, political, and military successes. During this period, the Anatolian economy became further integrated into international trade networks, and a large-scale reconstruction effort was undertaken across the Seljuk lands (Kuban, 2002). Recognizing the intellectual wealth of the Islamic world, İzzettin Keykavus I actively sought to protect scholars and *ulema* from the encroaching Mongol invasions by welcoming them to Anatolia. This policy profoundly contributed to the development of Sufism, *futuwwa* (chivalric organizations), and the flourishing of culture and art within the state (Karamağaralı et al., 2023).

In 1219, Alaeddin Keykubad I, the second son of Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev I, became sultan. He played a crucial role in establishing Turkish political unity in Anatolia by integrating several key entities into the Seljuk state, including the Erzincan Mengücek Beylik, the Harput Sökmenoğulları, the Empire of Trebizond, and the Cilician Armenian Baronage (Koca, 2019b). Like his brother İzzettin Keykavus I, Alaeddin Keykubad I not only achieved political triumphs but also vigorously pursued policies to enhance the country's economic and cultural prosperity. He notably oversaw the construction of numerous caravanserais to ensure the security of vital trade routes. Furthermore, he provided refuge to poets, artists, scholars, and scientists from Turkestan who were fleeing the destructive Mongol advance. While continuing extensive construction activities throughout Anatolia, he commissioned the majestic Kubadabad Palace on the shores of Lake Beyşehir and the Keykubadiye Palace near Kayseri (Kuban, 2002). He also actively supported the construction projects undertaken by the principalities operating under the Seljuk umbrella.

During the reign of Alaeddin Keykubad I, who was himself an accomplished architect, the Anatolian Seljuks experienced an era of unparalleled prosperity, glory, honor, and victory, characterized by widespread peace, security, and exceptional cultural and artistic achievements. Consequently, the Anatolian Turks reverently referred to Alaeddin Keykubad as "Uluğ Keykubad" (The Great Keykubad) (Turan, 1979).

Even the formidable Mongols, who had overturned vast empires, held deep respect for Alaeddin Keykubad I due to his power, acute political intelligence, and unwavering commitment to justice (Turan, 1979). However, his death marked a turning point. The subsequent reign of his son, Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev II, who ascended the throne in 1237, was plagued by ineffective and weak policies. Coupled with the destructive intrigues of his vizier, Saadettin Köpek, these internal weaknesses played a significant role in the eventual decline of the Anatolian Seljuk State.

During this period, internal rebellions, alongside relentless Mongol invasions, severely fractured unity and integrity across Anatolia. The Mongols, unified under the disciplined and ruthless authority of Genghis Khan, posed an existential threat to all other states due to their formidable military strength (Beksaç, 1988). In 1243, the Mongol army decisively defeated the Anatolian Seljuk forces at Köse Dağ. This catastrophic defeat plunged the Anatolian Seljuk State into a period of profound difficulty. Forced to submit to the

Mongols, the state's structure was significantly curtailed, effectively continuing as the Konya Seljuk State, albeit under Mongol suzerainty (Kuban, 2002). The period following Köse Dağ was marked by a succession of sultans, often with overlapping or contested reigns, reflecting the state's diminished authority and internal instability. The sultans during this tumultuous phase included:

- İzzettin Keykavus II (1246)
- Kılıç Arslan IV (1248)
- İzzettin Keykavus II, Kılıç Arslan IV, Alaeddin Keykubad II (1249-1257)
- İzzeddin Keykavus II (1257)
- Kılıç Arslan IV (1261)
- Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev III (1266)
- Mesud II (1281)
- Alaeddin Keykubad III (1297)
- Mesud II (1302)

A comprehensive summary of the sultans who ruled during the Anatolian Seljuk period;

Table 1: Names of the Sultans of the Anatolian Seljuk Period (Özkul, 2025).

Names of the Sultans	Dates of Birth and Death
Kutalmışoğlu Süleyman Şah	1075 ~ 1086
Süleyman Şah vekili Ebul Kasım	1085 ~ 1092
I. Kılıç Arslan	1092 ~ 1107
I. Kılıç Arslan'ın naibi Kayseri Selçuklu Emiri Hasan Bey	1109 ~ 1110
Şahin Şah	1110 ~ 1116
I. İzzeddin Mesud	1116 ~ 1155
II. İzzeddin Kılıç Arslan	1155 ~ 1192
I. Gıyâseddin Keyhüsrev (1. defa)	1192 ~ 1196
II. Rükneddin Süleyman Şah	1196 ~ 1204
III. İzzeddin Kılıç Arslan	1204 ~ 1205
I. Gıyâseddin Keyhüsrev (2. defa)	1205 ~ 1211
I. İzzeddin Keykâvus	1211 ~ 1220
I. Alâeddin Keykubad	1220 ~ 1237
II. Gıyâseddin Keyhüsrev	1237 ~ 1246
II. İzzeddin Keykâvus	1246 ~ 1249
II. Alâeddin Keykubad	1249 ~ 1254
II. İzzeddin Keykâvus (2. defa)	1254 ~ 1256
IV. Rükneddin Kılıç Arslan	1256 ~ 1257
II. İzzeddin Keykâvus, IV. Rükneddin Kılıç Arslan	1257 ~ 1262
IV. Rükneddin Kılıç Arslan (2. defa)	1262 ~ 1266
III. Gıyâseddin Keyhüsrev	1266 ~ 1284
II. Gıyâseddin Mesud (1. defa)	1284 ~ 1296
III. Alâeddin Keykubad	1298 ~ 1302
II. Gıyâseddin Mesud (2. defa)	1302 ~ 1308

In 1277, Turkmen communities launched a significant resistance against the Mongol advance, effectively halting their progress and refusing to yield. These resilient Turkmen forces successfully reconquered Western Anatolia and the Marmara region, subsequently establishing their own independent principalities (Aslanapa, 1977).

Following the demise of the Konya Seljuk State in 1308—a state where the very foundations of the Ottoman Empire were laid—all the emerging principalities were eventually unified under a single authority. This consolidation mirrored the earlier efforts of the Seljuk sultans, preventing a fragmented leadership (Koca, 2017). The essence of this territorial and cultural unification is beautifully encapsulated by Yahya Kemal Beyatlı's verses: "If there is true harmony between the climate, landscape, architecture, and people of a country, then the entire image of the homeland appears before the eyes" (Koca, 2019b).

From this perspective, the periods illustrating the transformation of a geography into a homeland for the Turks can be delineated as follows:

- The Oghuz Invasions and the Pre-Turkish States Period
- The Anatolian Seljuk State Period (1075–1308)
- The Konya Seljuk State and Anatolian Turkish Beyliks Period (1308–1515)
- The Ottoman Empire Period (1299–1922)
- The Republic of Turkey Period (1923–present) (Özkul, 2025).

Anatolian Turkish Principalities

The establishment of Turkish principalities by various princes was instrumental in the conquest and transformation of Anatolia into a Turkish homeland. This process involved consolidating political sovereignty, settling Turkish communities in newly acquired territories to achieve demographic dominance, and consistently upholding Turkish cultural dominance alongside the pursuit of the "Red Apple" ideal (Koca, 2019b).

Recognizing these crucial objectives, immediately following the Battle of Manzikert, Sultan Alparslan directed his Turkish commanders and beys to advance into the Anatolian interior. Their mandate was to establish their own principalities in the regions they conquered, secure the borders, institute law and order, and actively engage in cultural development (Koca, 2019b). Consequently, Seljuk commanders and beys fanned out across Anatolia, settling and consolidating their control over the territories they subdued.

For a state's sovereignty to be continuous and permanent, military power alone is insufficient; it must be complemented by robust administrative organization and vibrant cultural activities. Therefore, the Turks who founded the Anatolian Seljuk State meticulously developed administrative systems and fostered extensive cultural and artistic endeavors. These efforts were vital in ensuring the state's comprehensive administrative, military, and political functionality (Koca, 2019b).

The Turkish principalities that emerged in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia are categorized as the First Period Anatolian Principalities (Table 2) (Koca, 2017). Conversely, the principalities that arose after the weakening and eventual collapse of the Anatolian Seljuk State are referred to as the Second Period Anatolian Principalities (Table 3) (Kayapınar, et al., 2017).

Table 2. First Period Anatolian Principalities (Özkul, 2025)

Beylikler	**Tarihleri**
Danişmentli Beyliği	1071~1178
Dilmaçoğulları Beyliği	1085~1192
Saltukoğulları Beyliği	1071~1202
Çubukoğulları Beyliği	1086~1113
Mengücekoğulları Beyliği	1071~1277
İnaloğulları (Yinaloğulları) Beyliği	1095~1183
Tanrıvermiş Beyliği	1074~1098
Ahlatşahlar (Sökmenliler) Beyliği	1100~1207
Çaka Beyliği	1081~1093
Artukoğulları Beyliği	1102~1409

Mengücekoğulları Principality: History, Political, and Cultural Structure

The Mengücekoğulları Principality (1071-1277) was founded by Mengücek Gazi and emerged as the third principality established in Anatolia, encompassing the regions of Erzincan, Kemah, Divriği, and Şebinkarahisar (Çevik et al., 2018). The Mengücekoğulları consistently pursued peaceful policies, which fostered the state's progress and facilitated significant advancements in social and cultural spheres. Their high artistic patronage earned the district of Divriği the appellation "Darül-Hayr," signifying an auspicious and beneficial homeland.

The Mengücekoğulları Principality eventually branched into two distinct lines. The Erzincan-Kemah branch was terminated by Alaeddin Keykubat I in 1228 (Sakaoğlu, 2017). The Divriği Mengücek Principality, however, continued until 1277, when it succumbed to Mongol attacks (Üçer and Pekşen, 2010). According to Abu Hamid's *Seljukname* and other historical sources, Emir Mengücek was a prominent commander under Sultan Alparslan during the pivotal Battle of Manzikert (Yinanç, 1944). Following this victory, Sultan Alparslan explicitly ordered Emir Mengücek Gazi to take control of and reside in the regions including Erzincan, Kemah, Divriği, and Şebinkarahisar (Evliya Çelebi, 1314).

While the precise date of Mengücek Gazi's death remains uncertain, he was succeeded by his son, Ishak Bey. Upon Ishak Bey's death in 1142, the Mengücekoğulları Principality formally divided into its two aforementioned branches: Erzincan-Kemah and Divriği (Sevim and Yücel, 1989). Davud Şah became the first bey of the Erzincan and Kemah branch, while Süleyman Şah assumed leadership of the Divriği branch (Sakaoğlu, 2012). A defining characteristic of the Mengücek beys was their consistent patronage of

scholars, *ulema* (religious scholars), and artisans, coupled with their unwavering protection of those in need.

Kemah-Erzincan Mengücekoğulları Principality

Following the death of Davud Shah, the ruler of Erzincan and Kemah, Fahreddin Behram Shah assumed leadership (Houtsma, 2021). During his tenure, Erzincan flourished as a center of science and culture, while Kemah maintained its historical importance as a strategic defensive stronghold (Sakaoğlu, 2012). This branch of the Mengücekoğulları principality ultimately ceased to exist in 1228 (Sakaoğlu, 2017).

Sivas Divriği Mengücekoğulları Principality

Upon the death of Süleyman Shah, the first lord of Divriği, his son Şahin Şah succeeded him, followed by his grandson Ahmet Şah, who then became the lord of Divriği (Özme, 2004). Divriği, part of Sivas—an important Anatolian city—benefited from its challenging natural conditions. These conditions not only deterred other states from encroaching on its sovereign territories but also fostered the integration of its populace, preventing outward dispersion (Öngül, 2021).

The Divriği branch of the Mengücekoğulları distinguished itself by actively welcoming, protecting, and supporting scholars and *ulema*. They established a consultative council and consistently adhered to its decisions. Consequently, the district of Divriği became known as Darül-Hayr, signifying an "auspicious and beneficial homeland" (Sakaoğlu, 2017).

Ahmet Shah, a key figure in the principality, embarked on an ambitious project to urbanize and develop Divriği by endowing it with significant architectural works. He notably commissioned the Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa, an enduring masterpiece of Anatolian architecture that stands as a powerful symbol of faith, health, art, and architectural prowess (Sakaoğlu, 2012).

The principality's existence came to an end in 1277 when the city was devastated by the Mongol ruler Abaka Khan. The historian Houtsma, recognizing their exceptional contributions, stated, "I consider Mengücekoğulları superior to other Anatolian principalities in terms of the importance they attach to fine arts and the value they give to science, and I consider it my duty to research their history." His subsequent research efforts

were indeed a testament to the high regard he held for the Mengücekoğulları (Houtsma, 2021).

The History of Sivas

Sivas, renowned as the location of the ancient city of Sarissa where the Kadesh Treaty between the Hittites and Egyptians was concluded, has been known by a multitude of names throughout its long history, including Sebaste, Sipas, Megalopolis, Kabira, Diaspolis (City of God), Talaurs, Danişment Province, Eyalet-i Rum, Eyalet-i Sivas, and finally, Sivas. It served as a significant center of civilization for the Anatolian Seljuk State, and archaeological research in the vicinity has revealed rock tombs, water channels, as well as castle and mound settlements (Engin, 2009).

Excavations and research indicate that Sivas boasts a deep historical timeline, with artifacts and remnants of houses and cities dating back to the Neolithic Period (5000-3000 BCE), Chalcolithic Period, and Early Bronze Age settlements (3000-2000 BCE). Throughout antiquity, Sivas and its surrounding areas experienced a succession of rulers: the Hittites (2000 BCE), Assyrians (710 BCE), Scythians from the Caucasus and Medes from Iran (676 BCE), Persians (550 BCE), Macedonian King Alexander the Great (334 BCE), Macedonian officer Sabistes, and Persian King Ariaretes I. In 17 CE, Roman Emperor Tiberius brought Sivas under Roman control.

During the Roman Empire, this region was designated as *Eyalet-i Rum*. Following the division of the Roman Empire in 395 CE, it became part of the Sebasteia Thema within the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire. Under the reign of Justinian I, Sivas was transformed into a crucial military center due to the strategic importance of the roads within its borders. A vital military road, crossing the Kızılırmak River via İznik, Eskişehir, and Sivrihisar, branched into two routes: one leading to Sivas and the other to Malatya via Kırşehir and Kayseri (Kazhdan, 1991). The Kayseri-Sivas road served as the Byzantine Empire's eastern gateway until 1071, prompting the Romans to construct numerous large and small castles in the rugged mountainous terrain of the region (Konargöçer, 2017).

Seljuk raids into Anatolia commenced in 1059 under the command of the Great Seljuk ruler, Sultan Tugrul Khan (Turan, 1998). Although Seljuk forces briefly occupied Sivas, they soon withdrew, and the city reverted to Byzantine rule. Recognizing the persistent threat of Turkish incursions, Byzantine

Emperor Constantine IX Doukas immediately ordered the repair of the city walls and castles to fortify Sivas (Koca, 2019b).

Sivas came definitively under Turkish rule with the conquest of Anatolia following the pivotal Battle of Manzikert in 1071 (Koca, 2019b). In 1075, Emir Danişmend, one of Sultan Alparslan's commanders, designated Sivas as the central city of the Danişmentli Principality. However, in the ensuing period, internal dynastic struggles among the Danişmend beys weakened the principality's power (Turan, 1999). Consequently, Mesud I captured Sivas in 1152, and the city was permanently annexed to the Anatolian Seljuk State by Kılıç Arslan II in 1175 (Turan, 1951).

Anatolia's geographical location, situated at the crossroads of intercontinental trade routes, provided a distinct advantage. Leveraging this, the economic and commercial policies of the Seljuk sultans transformed the region into a crucial hub for global trade. Sivas, strategically positioned on the Silk Road, became a premier cultural and commercial center in Anatolia, owing to its vibrant commercial activities and the particular interest shown by the Seljuk sultans (Akbulut, 2009). When Kılıç Arslan II integrated Sivas into the unified state he had established, he initiated extensive construction projects there, including charitable institutions, *zawiyas* (Sufi lodges), mosques, *masjids*, schools, caravanserais, and water cisterns (Turan, 1999).

Sivas, which served as the second capital (*payitaht*) for the Seljuk sultans after Konya, earned the title of "Dar'ül Ala" – a fertile land where scholars, intellectuals, and editors found nourishment. It achieved a level of prominence that rivaled Konya in every aspect (Turan, 1951). Having fostered thousands of prominent personalities, Sivas maintained its historical importance and solidified its identity as a leading educational center (Turan, 1993). The city witnessed the intense succession struggles among Kılıç Arslan II's sons and was a favored residence for both Kutbettin Melik Şah (Kılıç Arslan II's son) and İzzeddin Keykavus I. Reflecting his special affinity for Sivas, Alaeddin Keykubad I ascended to the throne there in 1220 (Turan, 1999).

The Mongols, instrumental in the eventual collapse of the Seljuk State, initiated their attacks on Sivas as early as 1232. In response to these incursions, Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev II mobilized the Seljuk army, leading to a direct confrontation with the Mongols at Köse Dağ, located between Zara and Suşehri. On July 3, 1243, the Seljuk forces suffered a devastating defeat, resulting in the subsequent plundering of Sivas by the Mongols (Öngül, 2014).

Despite undergoing various administrations throughout its history, Sivas experienced its most brilliant period under the Seljuks (Mahiroğulları, 2001). With the Seljuks' eventual withdrawal from the historical stage, Sivas once again fell under Mongol rule, governed by Mongol appointed governors. These governors made Sivas their regional center, constructing numerous palaces within the city and unfortunately, destroying many existing Seljuk works. However, no trace of these Mongol-era palaces remains today (Turan, 1999). Notably, the Mongols did address Sivas's water scarcity by constructing underground canals to supply water to various neighborhoods (Demir, 2005).

Due to its strategic geographical location, Sivas consistently changed hands for political, commercial, and military reasons. Finally, upon the death of Kadı Burhaneddin in 1398, the city's notables surrendered Sivas to Yıldırım Bayezid, seeking to integrate it into the burgeoning Ottoman Empire. Immediately following this development, Timur, who harbored ambitions of unifying Turkish, Mongolian, and Islamic lands under a single dominion and thus claimed Sivas for himself, captured the city in 1400 (Turan, 2016).

While some accounts suggest Timur massacred the people of Sivas during his conquest, Timur had actually promised not to shed blood if the city surrendered. He largely kept this promise after taking the city. However, he ordered the burial alive of 4,000 Armenian soldiers who had attacked his army during the siege (Kanat and Alican, 2022; Armenian Cultural Assets Sivas, 2018). The reason for this harsh action can be found in the first article of Timur's own *Tüzukat-ı Timur*, written in the Chagatai dialect, which states: "Live to glorify Turkishness, break the hand that raises a sword to the Turk." This command underscored his firm stance against anyone who would harm any Turk. Notably, Timur did not damage any historical buildings during the siege of Sivas, and he expressed his admiration for Seljuk works, particularly the Sivas Gök Madrasa with its distinctive blue tiles (Kaya, 2017).

Timur's full name was Temür Gürkani, with "Temür" meaning "iron" and "Gürkani" being an honorific title signifying "son-in-law" (referring to his marriage into the lineage of Genghis Khan). Timur was the formidable ruler of the Timurid Empire, known for his patronage of scholars and his founding of Samarkand, a renowned center of learning (Kaya, 2017). Describing himself as "the sword of Islam," Timur sought to establish himself as the sole ruler of the Turkish and Islamic world, demanding an oath of allegiance from Yıldırım Bayezid (Kaya, 2017).

When Yıldırım Bayezid refused this demand, the two powerful leaders confronted each other in the Battle of Ankara in 1402. In this devastating defeat for the Ottomans, Yıldırım Bayezid, known as "the Sultan of Battles," was taken prisoner. He subsequently fell ill from grief, and even Timur's own physicians could not cure him (İnalcık, 1992). Following Yıldırım Bayezid's death, the Ottoman Empire entered a tumultuous 11-year period known as the Interregnum (Başar, 1999). This event...

"Play, shepherd, play! Has your son died like Ertuğrul?
Has your castle been destroyed like Sivas?"

This couplet, recorded in history, serves as both a lament and an *abjad* calculation (Turan, 1951). Despite Sultan Çelebi Mehmet, the "second founder" of the Ottoman Empire, attempting to rebuild Sivas after ending the tumultuous Interregnum (Darkot, 1971), the city struggled to regain its former prominence. This was due to several factors, including the shift of major trade routes from the Mediterranean to the oceans and the subsequent decline in the creation of grand architectural works comparable to those of the Seljuk era (Turan, 1993). Another significant aspect contributing to Sivas's historical importance lies in its madrasas, which functioned as universities in the modern sense. While numerous madrasas were constructed in Sivas, particularly notable examples include:

- The Gök Madrasa (Özkul, 2020c)
- The Buruciye Madrasa, which offered instruction in positive sciences such as mathematics, physics, and biology.
- The Çifte Minareli Madrasa, specializing in Islamic law.
- The Şifaiye Madrasa, which stood as the largest of the Seljuk hospitals and medical centers in Anatolia (Özkul, 2020b).

"Is it not enough that the blessings of the Almighty are bestowed upon the people of this city, where the standard-bearer of the Prophet is buried?" These words refer to Sivas, the resting place of Abdulvahap Gazi, the standard-bearer of the Prophet Muhammad, who was martyred there (Üçer, 2017).

Throughout its long history of invasions and shifting administrations, Sivas has accumulated numerous evocative epithets: "Sebastia - City of Saints," "City that cannot be contained by the heavens," "City of Poets," "City of Saints," "City of Scholars," "City of Culture," "Heart of Anatolia," "Land of Heroes," and "Sultan City." Evliya Çelebi, the renowned Ottoman traveler, further bestowed upon it the title of "Mother of Cities" (Üçer, 2017).

Sivas (Aydın, 2017) has been a continuous witness to the journey of civilization, from the Seljuk Empire through the Ottoman Empire and into the modern Republic of Turkey. Its demographic makeup includes people from various Oghuz tribes, such as Alayuntlu, Avşar, Bayat, Bayındır, Beğdili, Büğdüz, Dodurga, Çavuldur, Eymür, Çepni, Döğer, Karaevli, Kayı, Karkın, Kınık, Kızık, Peçenek, Salur, Yüreğir, Yavu, and Yazır.

During the formative period of the Republic of Turkey, specifically from September 4 to 11, 1919, Sivas served as the crucial center for the merger meeting of the Anatolia and Rumelia Defence of Rights societies. This gathering marked a pivotal moment, representing the first decisive step towards victory in the Turkish National Struggle (Demirel, 2009). Furthermore, Sivas's importance and strategic priority were significantly elevated by the Islamic Conference held there in 1921 (Erarslan, 2009).

History of Divriği

Divriği, a district located 173 km from the center of Sivas, is nestled in a mountainous area within the Upper Euphrates Basin. This region is characterized by deep valleys and is situated on the banks of the Çaltı River. Divriği lies between two distinct mountain ranges: the volcanic Yama Mountains and the Sarıçiçek Mountain. The latter encompasses areas like Arguvan, Kemaliye, and Arapgiri, and its high peaks, including Demirli, Geyikli, and Katırlı, divide the branches of the Çaltı River before extending towards the Malatya region (Üçer and Pekşen, 2010).

Historically, the district has been identified by various names: "Apblike" in Greek sources, "Tephrike (Tefrike)" in Byzantine chronicles, "Abrik" or "Ebrık" in Arabic texts, "Divriği" in Ibn Bîbî's *Selcûḳnâme*, and "Divriği" or "Divrik" in Ottoman sources (Balgalmış, 1994). During the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) period, Divriği Castle and its environs were settled by the Paulicians. Arab and Eastern Roman chronicles began to mention Divriği frequently after this settlement. The Abbasids viewed the Paulicians as allies against the Eastern Romans, and Divriği consequently functioned as a buffer zone between the two empires (Koçak, 2022).

Recent surface research conducted in Gözecik village, located 40 km northwest of the district on a hilltop settlement, has dated the area's occupation back to the Late Hittite period and the Iron Age. Furthermore, the significant iron deposits found in Divriği and its surroundings have historically enhanced the region's importance. The area is rich in surface vegetation and abundant

underground resources, particularly iron. Even today, Divriği holds some of Anatolia's most substantial iron deposits, accounting for 40% of Turkey's total iron ore reserves (Hasdemir, 2020).

The arrival of the Turks profoundly shaped Divriği's destiny, leading to significant population growth during the Anatolian Seljuk and Beylik periods. The Mengücekoğulları Beylik, instrumental in the Turkification of the region, consciously refrained from extensive political entanglements, choosing instead to prioritize social services, culture, and art. Their efforts culminated in the construction of essential public amenities such as mosques and hospitals. As noted in Atatürk's notebooks from 1921, within the 10th General Staff Military History Archive, there's an entry on the second page of the 16th notebook stating: "Islamic Congress, Programme Declaration" (İnan, 1998). This focus on communal welfare extended to building bathhouses, roads, bridges, and educational institutions. Mengücek Gazi and his successors among the beys consistently prioritized peace over warfare, channeling their resources towards peaceful development and establishing numerous charitable foundations (Üçer and Pekşen, 2010). The construction of architectural marvels like the Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa complex during this era stands as the most compelling evidence of this commitment.

Evliya Çelebi, during his travels from Sivas to Diyarbakır in 1669, visited the Divriği Great Mosque and offered a remarkable description: "It is the oldest of all mosques, and the master marble craftsman has worked hard on this mosque, decorating all of its walls with chameleon-like patterns. Neither the Sultan Yakub Mosque in Ayasuluk, nor the Great Mosque of Yıldırım Han in Bursa, nor the pulpit carvings in Sinop, nor the Ebül Mosque in Athens in Diyar-ı Rum, nor the Kala-i Üsturgon Mosque in Budin Serhaddin can match the craftsmanship of this Divriği Mosque." Çelebi's fervent words about the Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa powerfully underscore the structure's unparalleled uniqueness and singularity (Kafescioğlu, 2011).

The Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa, recognized under the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, has been designated by UNESCO as a common heritage of humanity (Korkmaz, 2020). This monumental structure, resembling an abstract sculpture, holds a unique place in Turkish and Islamic architectural history. By showcasing natural and cultural assets of universal value, it fosters social awareness and appreciation. Ruskin, in describing the decorative style of this exquisite building—a fusion of countless traditions reflecting Turkish and

Islamic culture—remarked, "It is impossible not to admire the courage of the masters who have defied the three thousand years of authority and habit of societies and individuals" (Ruskin, 1956). This statement conveys not only his admiration for the architects and artists but also for the singular work of art itself.

The structure itself represents the culmination of a unique, distinctive, powerful, and highly original style and artistic language (Kuban, 2003). Embedded within its building blocks, which collectively form a geography, a city, and a culture, are tens of thousands of symbols, emblems, geometric shapes, numbers, verses, and hadiths. Each of these carries both its literal and its esoteric meaning, contributing to a vast and encrypted data system where the exoteric and esoteric knowledge of various civilizations intersect and merge (Özaygün, 2022). This structure boasts the world's most distinctive and elaborate decorative elements, both architecturally and ornamentally, leaving behind a remarkably rich decorative style unparalleled in both earlier and later periods. For the architects and artists involved, this structure became their "Hira" (Özaygün, 2004), a place of profound revelation and creation.

Cultural and Artistic Features of Sivas Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa

The genesis of the Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa is deeply rooted in a rich confluence of cultural exchange and artistic mastery. Ahmet Şah's grandfather, Mengüç Gazi, hailed from Turkestan, bringing with him a heritage that fostered a gathering of highly skilled masters, architects, artists, and craftsmen in Divriği. These individuals, nurtured by scholars proficient in diverse fields, enabled Ahmet Shah, the Mengücek ruler, to realize his vision of a magnificent and ornate monument (Özaygün, 2004).

Among those who converged on Divriği was the architect Hürrem Shah, who famously transferred patterns collected during his travels onto gazelle skin. Working in collaboration with scholars and scientists, Ahmet Shah and Melike Turan Melek—both avid proponents of reading, research, and knowledge, and deeply appreciative of the ancient manuscripts found in Divriği—collectively developed the aesthetic language and rich decorative style that defines the complex (BREND, 1975). This decorative style was meticulously crafted from cosmic thought, prevailing belief systems, and diverse aesthetic elements, resulting in an abundance of both concrete and abstract motifs. These motifs were imbued with metaphysical depth, seamlessly integrated with principles of unity and beauty (Burckhardt, 2019).

The profound influence of spiritual and intellectual giants who shaped their era and inspired future generations is undeniably present throughout the structure. The philosophical insights from Mevlana's *Masnavi*, the mystical thoughts of Muhyiddin Ibn al-Arabi, the scientific and poetic works of Omar

Khayyam and Ibn Sina, and the teachings of Hacı Bektaşi Veli left a significant impression on the builders, architects, and craftsmen of Divriği. Without examining, reading, and comprehending the works of these revered individuals, and without analyzing their intricate thought structures, a complete understanding of the Divriği complex remains elusive. Scholars and experts have broadly attributed the reasons for this profound connection to two main grounds.

Scholars and experts attribute the profound connection between the Divriği complex and the thought structures of historical figures to two primary reasons. Firstly, from a Sufi perspective, it is argued that contemporary observers lack the profound spiritual state attained by these individuals. This state involves a complete surrender to Allah, achieved through the purification of worldly desires and selfish ambitions, aligning oneself with the inherent nature of creation through divine blessings. Such exalted individuals are considered "people of secrets and truths," focused on devout service and making discoveries that resonate with the essence of creation (Özaygün, 2022).

Secondly, from a scholarly viewpoint, it is noted that since the dawn of humanity, countless civilizations have emerged and thrived by continuously questioning the world, the universe, and themselves. This process has led to an infinite accumulation of knowledge, culture, and beliefs. However, it is argued that contemporary society has either lost or been divested of this crucial spirit of inquiry, along with its ideals of research and application. Consequently, we struggle to adequately question or fully comprehend our own past (Özaygün, 2022).

Ziya Paşa's insightful words, "A person's mirror is their work; their intellect is revealed in their creations," aptly reflect the collaborative genius of Ahmet Şah, Melike Turan Melek, Fatma Hanım, Hürrem Şah, and their team. They meticulously combined their unique terminological methods with historically derived motifs, intricately "embroidering" them onto the stones. Nothing was left to chance; all the knowledge of their era was thoughtfully integrated into the work (Özaygün, 2004).

The chief architect, Hürrem Şah, like an orchestra conductor, directed the construction of the Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa. His vision, along with that of his team, transcended their own century, imbuing the *kufa* stone with a universal value that would resonate for centuries to come, creating a resonance that "would never be heard again." As Andı (2021) eloquently puts

it: "Stone speaks, the fire hidden within stone speaks, the companion who seeks the glow of that fire speaks, the confidant who carries its heat speaks... To be able to hear skill is to understand virtue." These words beautifully express the remarkable skill of civilizations that, centuries ago, understood the intrinsic spirit of stone and chose it as their medium of expression over written script. This profound stone carving technique boasts an ancient lineage, tracing back to the Sumerians in the pre-Islamic era, and even further back to the legendary Mu Civilization.

338 years after Evliya Çelebi, the German art historian Traugott Wöhrlin expressed his profound admiration for the Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa: "...it is necessary to sit in front of the building for weeks, months, even years, and be drawn into an introspective gaze. Perhaps this is the only way to unravel the mystery of the calm yet meaningful decorations that open and close like miraculous flowers... In Europe, perhaps the whole created by such rich and full forms could be called baroque. However, we lack a concept to describe what we see here... The miraculous flowers are depicted in layers upon layers." Wöhrlin further articulated his astonishment, stating, "The thoughts are in the form of large or small word bubbles, none of which resemble each other."

He vividly described the unique value and characteristics of the decorative elements that define the architecture of the Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa. This intricate decorative style encompasses an array of motifs: stripes, weaves, high reliefs, palmettes, geometric patterns, Rumi motifs, figurative shadow plays, small medallions, sunbursts, stars, cornices, waterways, pendants designed to create captivating light and shadow effects, protrusions resembling hanging lanterns on both sides, elaborate flower bouquets, friezes, cords, and panels. The use of Kufi and Naskh scripts, serving as a continuation of decorative elements from the Great Seljuk period and widely employed as Islamic ornamental features, constituted the primary decorative language of Anatolian Seljuk architectural structures (Özkul, 2025).

Furthermore, the Golden Ratio, a mathematical principle of aesthetics observed in numerous civilizations for centuries, is conspicuously present throughout the Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa, from its overarching architecture to its intricate motifs. This adherence to precise proportion finds resonance in the 49th verse of the Surah Al-Qamar (The Moon), which states". Indeed, all things We created with predestination" (Yazır, 2014). This verse

underscores the belief that Allah has created everything according to exact proportion and measure. Beyond the mathematical order governing the universe from the micro to the macro, an analogous order is also understood to exist in the legal and moral spheres (Özkul, 2025).

The Prophet Muhammad's saying, "I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is the gate of that city," underscores the paramount importance of revitalizing a city through knowledge before embarking on any physical construction. In this vein, Cansever's words, "Those who neglect to revive the generation while building the city will see that generation destroy the city they have built," powerfully reflect the understanding that science, knowledge, belief, and symbols are the fundamental building blocks that form a geography, a city, and a culture.

Typically, grand mosques are strategically located near commercial areas or city squares, while hospitals are placed in locations with clean air, away from dense residential zones. However, the Divriği Grand Mosque and Hospital deviates from this norm, having been built as a large complex with an adjacent layout, encompassing numerous other structures. The joint decision-making of the founders, scholars, architects, and artists was highly influential in determining its unique location. It is particularly noteworthy that the complex was constructed on a mountain rich in oxygen, clean air, and verdant green space, and that this mountain itself is abundant in iron.

Indeed, from the perspective of Turkish mountain beliefs and mythology, this location holds profound significance. Mountains are considered sacred, playing a crucial role in the emergence of the Göktürks—the first Turks—from Ergenekon by melting an iron mountain. For this reason, sacred mountains are often referred to as either "Kaf Dağı" or "Demir Dağ" (Iron Mountain) (Gökalp, 1923). This choice of location for the Divriği complex, therefore, subtly integrates deep-seated Turkic cultural and mythological elements into its very foundation.

Iron holds significant importance in Turkic tradition, particularly stemming from the Göktürks' emergence from Ergenekon, where they melted the "Iron Mountain" with fire, commemorating their liberation as a holiday (Gökalp, 1923). The narrative of a wolf guiding them from the Iron Mountain, interpreted as the emergence of Siriusian knowledge, is deeply ingrained. Turkic peoples, drawing from both Turkish tradition and Islamic morality, typically settled on mountain slopes. This strategic choice served multiple purposes: it prevented dwellings from blocking sunlight for others, secured

their backs against potential enemy forces, preserved plains for animal grazing, and offered advantageous viewpoints for observing and anticipating enemy movements. Furthermore, mountains provided greater safety against natural disasters like floods and earthquakes.

In this context, despite the Darüşşifa being located on an "iron mountain" and initially referred to as a "peaceful city," it faced attacks from the Ilkhanids and later the Eretna Beyliği in subsequent years. These assaults devastated the region, damaging numerous structures, including the Divriği complex. Although it was later incorporated into the Ottoman Empire for a period, it underwent renovations and was utilized as a madrasa (Küçükdağ, 2005). However, with the 1924 Law of Unification of Education, its affiliation shifted to the Ministry of Education, and madrasa education was officially discontinued (Sakaoğlu, 2017).

The magnificent structures erected by the Seljuks in various cities significantly influenced Europe during the Crusades. Architect and artist soldiers, exposed to these Seljuk architectural and decorative elements, brought their impact back to Europe. Consequently, striking similarities exist between Seljuk art and architecture and Roman art, particularly Romanesque architecture (Tanyeri, 1985). Indeed, Romanesque architecture and art can arguably be seen as a continuation of Seljuk art, with the primary distinction lying in the blending of architectural forms with the unique influences of their respective geographies and beliefs.

The Founders of Sivas Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa

Shortly after their conversion to Islam, the Oghuz Turks initiated a movement that would fundamentally reshape the global map. The rise of the Seljuks, direct descendants of the Oghuz, is rightly considered one of the foremost turning points in both Islamic and world history. This transformative movement culminated in the reconquest of Anatolia following the decisive victory at Manzikert, leading to the establishment of the state known as *Selâçıka-i Rum*, or the Anatolian Seljuk State.

This new state opened a pivotal chapter in Anatolian history. After initially establishing its capital in Nicaea, it later moved to Konya, symbolically paving the way for the rise of the Ottoman dynasty, which would eventually inherit its mantle. The Sirius Star, strongly associated with the Turks, is also known as *Demir Kazık* (Iron Stake). Both the famous "*Iron Mountain*" from Turkish mythology and the symbolic narrative of its melting are echoed in the Quran

(Candan, 2008). This powerful confluence of historical events and deep-rooted symbolism enabled a great power to emerge in Anatolia, giving birth to the Turkish and Islamic civilization that left an indelible mark on the world (Akkuş, 2021).

The Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa, standing as the preeminent representatives of this civilization, form a unified whole with their founders, architects, artists, masters, and apprentices. The revered founders of this architectural masterpiece are Alaeddin Keykubad, Ahmet Shah, Melike Turan Melek, and Fatma Hatun.

Alâeddin Keykubad

The lineage of strong Seljuk leadership, which began with Kılıç Arslan I saving the state from the tumultuous storm of the Crusades, reached its zenith during the reign of Alaeddin Keykubad I. Alaeddin Keykubad is considered a *Hatt-ı Balâ*—a figure embodying the highest characteristics of understanding and aesthetic discernment seen throughout Seljuk history (Tanpınar, 1987).

Confronting the formidable and imminent Mongol threat, Alaeddin Keykubad firmly allied himself with the Abbasid Caliph, who consistently upheld the banner of Islam. He meticulously implemented necessary precautions against the impending Mongol invasion in Anatolia (Gündar, 2021).[1] As a patron of knowledge and arts, he hosted numerous scholars, architects, artists, and poets—the very pride of the Islamic world.[2] He actively participated in their intellectual gatherings, providing both material and spiritual support, and regularly consulted with them to guide the state forward.[3] The scholars and *ulema* who benefited from Sultan Alaeddin Keykubad's keen interest and unwavering support taught at the leading centers of learning of the period (Zeki, 2016), playing a pivotal role in the intellectual and cultural development of the populace, as well as in advancements in art and culture.[4]

Beyond his reputation as a just and virtuous ruler, Alaeddin Keykubad was a skilled architect and an ardent art lover, leveraging the insights gained from his council of scientific advisors.[5] His talents extended to music, sculpture, carving, and jewelry, and he held a deep fondness for poetry and literature, even composing Persian poems himself. Fluent in Arabic and Greek, he had diligently read the works of prominent thinkers like Nizam al-Mulk and Ghazali.[6] He possessed a keen interest in history and political science, and in parallel with fostering civilizational and cultural movements, he significantly accelerated development in commercial and economic spheres. A far-sighted

sultan, he consistently demonstrated meticulous care for his army, always ensuring its readiness for war (Öngül, 2017).

Sultan Alaeddin Keykubad I, the Seljuk *Uluğsultan*, was a ruler deeply committed to his subjects, traversing Anatolia extensively to ensure their welfare. Despite enduring 17 years of exile—including 9 years in Byzantium and 18 years confined in the fortified castles of Malatya—he led his armies from east to west and north to south under the banner of Islam throughout his 17-year reign (Akkuş, 2021). This remarkable resolve profoundly impacted the political, social, economic, cultural, and religious life of 13th-century Anatolia. Architecturally, Alaeddin Keykubad's reign marked the most brilliant period of the era.

Alaeddin Keykubad commissioned his vizier, Sadettin Köpek, to construct a complex in Konya. This resulted in the Kubadabad Palace, a sprawling walled garden encompassing both a large and a small palace (İnalcık, 2018). The decorative elements within Kubadabad, particularly the eight-pointed stars, are now considered priceless works of art. The interiors of these stars feature compositions, painted with free and professional brush strokes, depicting the diverse animal repertoire found in the palace garden, the palace inhabitants, and various plant motifs. It is widely believed that a specific figure on these tiles represents Alaeddin Keykubad himself.

In addition to the Kubadabad Palace in Konya, Alaeddin Keykubad commissioned palaces in Kayseri and Alanya. These palaces were adorned with distinctive and free decorative motifs applied as tile art, including double-headed eagles, *huma* birds (mythical birds of fortune), fish, trees of life, and various mythical creatures (İnalcık, 2018). Today, these exquisite tiles are displayed in prominent institutions such as the Karatay Madrasa in Konya, the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum in Istanbul, and numerous other museums both within Turkey and internationally. The profound appreciation for culture, civilization, knowledge, and wisdom displayed by the Anatolian Seljuk sultans was a legacy directly inherited by the Ottoman dynasty. As Nizam al-Mulk asserts in his *Siyasetname*: "The times when just rulers reign are beautiful times," because through their dedication to construction and the arts, rulers demonstrate an extraordinary nature and power (Nizamül-Mülk, 1987).

In the context of the Divriği complex, the double-headed eagle symbolizes the Seljuk state and Alaeddin Keykubad, while the hawk figure represents the Mengücek Beylik. These motifs were incorporated not merely for their

symbolic value but to explicitly indicate that the work was a joint creation reflecting both Seljuk and Mengücek patronage (Eser, 2012).

Tragically, Alaeddin Keykubad, a true genius of his time renowned for his intelligent and astute political acumen, was poisoned at a banquet by his own son and vizier. Ibn-i Bibi lamented Alaeddin Keykubad's death, writing: "The state of the Roman lands has been thrown into chaos. In this beautiful homeland, which was a refuge for the poor and a haven for the needy, it was not possible to breathe a single breath without a thousand troubles and hardships." This poignant statement eloquently summarizes the immense struggle and profound loss resulting from Alaeddin Keykubad's untimely demise (Tanpınar, 1987).

Melik Ahmet Shah

If an assessment were to be made among the founders (*Banis*) of monumental works, Ahmet Shah, the fifth-generation grandson of Mengücek Gazi, would undoubtedly rank among the foremost Anatolian rulers (Sakaoğlu, 2017). Through the construction of the Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa, which he commissioned collaboratively with Sultan Alaeddin Keykubad, Ahmet Shah, the Mengücek ruler, demonstrated not only his profound faith and adherence to monotheism (*muhavvid*) (Sakaoğlu, 2017) but also his expansive vision in the cultural and artistic realms.

Considering the lifelong dedication and enthusiasm he invested in creating a singular structure that would be a wonder of the world, his deep appreciation for artists and architects, the intricate cosmological and mystical dimensions woven throughout the work, and his readiness to spare no expense in its realization, Ahmet Shah's sophisticated cultural and artistic sensibilities, alongside his humanistic outlook, become strikingly evident (Kuban, 1997). Indeed, he bore several significant titles, including *Rüknüd-Dünya Ved-Din Hüsam Emir-Ül Mü-Minin* (Pillar of the World and Religion, Sword of the Commander of the Faithful), *El-Adil* (The Just), *El-Melik* (The King), *Hüsamüd-Dünya Ved-Din* (Sword of the World and Religion), and *Ed-Dünya Ved-Din* (The World and Religion), which collectively signify his role as "the source of the world and religion" and "the sword of the caliph." Despite his monumental contributions, detailed information regarding the birth, accession, and death dates of Ahmet Shah, son of Süleyman Shah II, remains scarce, with most insights derived solely from inscriptions within his works (Sakaoğlu, 2017)

Melike Turan Melek

Melike Turan Melek was the third daughter of Fahreddin Behram Shah, the ruler of Erzincan, and his wife Ismeti Hatun, daughter of Kılıç Arslan II. She was bestowed the title *Meliketül-Adile*, signifying "the just ruler" (Sakaoğlu, 2017). Her joint patronage of this monumental structure with Ahmet Shah serves as a compelling example of the collaborative unity between women and men in society. Furthermore, their shared endeavor reflects the state's traditional understanding that "talent deserves praise" (*marifet iltifata tabidir*) (Eser, 2012). While her contributions are evident, precise dates for her birth and death remain unknown.

Fatıma Hatun

Although limited explicit information is available about Fatıma Hatun, her name is notably mentioned in the mosque's endowment deed (*waqfiyya*) established for the Sivas Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa (Sakaoğlu, 2017). This endowment deed, dated July 5, 1243, explicitly states: "Süleyman Shah's son Ahmed Shah and his mother Fatima Hatun reflected on the words of our Prophet: 'The world is the bread of the hereafter, and charity covers sins, saving those who give it from the ranks of the criminals in the hereafter. These are undoubtedly true...'" (Sakaoğlu, 2017). This passage clearly documents Fatıma Hatun's contribution to the *waqf* established by Ahmet Shah for the grand mosque's ongoing services.

Further archival evidence, specifically document number 1879, indicates Fatıma Hatun's active role in the *waqf* administration: "Fatma Hatun, also known as Ahmet Shah Mosque Sharif, was appointed as the administrator and supervisor of half of the endowment following the death of Ahmet Halife Ibn Mustafa, and until her son came of age, she was represented by Müftüzade Ali Zühdi Efendi Ibn Mehmed Efendi Ibn Ali Efendi, one of the endowment's heirs and a respected teacher (23 Rebiülevvel 1296)" (Sakaoğlu, 2017). Although her name is not physically inscribed within the mosque itself, these documents confirm Fatıma Hatun's significant administrative and supportive role in the endowment.

Architects and Artisans of Sivas Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa

The stable environment fostered by the Turkish settlement in Anatolia, coupled with advancements in the political, economic, and cultural spheres,

attracted skilled artisans specializing in stone, wood, and metalwork from Khorasan and Azerbaijan. A significant influx of these architects and artisans into Anatolia was also spurred by the Mongol invasions and the contemporaneous struggles with the Khwarazmian Shahs and Georgians. During these conflicts, regions such as Meraga, Tiflis, and Ahlat were plundered, Tiflis was burned, and its inhabitants were subjected to massacres (Sakaoğlu, 2017).

Research indicates that these architects and artists were multifaceted talents, often functioning as engineers, sculptors, and casters, as well as being highly educated scholars. This can be deduced from their elaborate work on walls and columns, as well as from the distinctive symbols, signatures, and hidden codes they inscribed on less visible parts of their creations. Their signatures frequently reference their origins: Meraga, located south of Tabriz; Tiflis, on the west bank of the Kura River in the Caucasus; and Ahlat, situated northwest of Lake Van. Tiflis was celebrated for its unique architectural style, while Ahlat was renowned for its exceptional stone carving traditions. Consequently, masters often signed their works indicating their origin, such as "Tiflisli" (from Tiflis) and "Ahlat'lı" (from Ahlat) (Sakaoğlu, 2017).

Hürrem Şah from Ahlat

Ahlat, renowned as a center of science, knowledge, culture, and art—and particularly famous for its easily workable stone, inscriptions, and decorations—is the birthplace and training ground of the architect and artist Hürrem Şah. Fleeing the Mongol invasion, Hürrem Şah sought refuge in Anatolia, where he found protection under the Mengücekoğulları. It was in Divriği that he bequeathed to posterity a magnificent work of art. The intricate motif dictionary, the distinctive door designs, and the masterful arrangement of decorations within the Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa all point to the hand of an exceptionally experienced and knowledgeable artist (Kuban, 2014).

Intriguingly, no other works by Hürrem Şah, from either his apprenticeship or master periods, have yet been discovered. He remains a mysterious figure who, it appears, poured the entirety of his vast imagination and knowledge into stone. Hürrem Şah perfectly embodies Gombrich's assertion: "There is no art, there are artists." He demonstrated that his immense imagination, foresight, and profound ability to analyze nature and the universe could be translated into artistic expression, creating magnificent motifs even in spaces

as small as one square centimeter within the structure. While some draw parallels between Hürrem Şah and Michelangelo, Doğan Kuban, who characterizes the building as an "encyclopaedic motif dictionary," offers this compelling description of its chief architect: "Hürrem Şah created all the motifs himself; there is no direct equivalent, but there is an equivalent to Michelangelo's sculptures." This analysis posits that Hürrem Şah's talent, imagination, and artistic comprehension elevate him to the status of the world's greatest sculptor (Yıldız, 2014).

Ibrahim Oğlu Amel-i Ahmed from Tiflis

Among the artisans who arrived from Tiflis, possibly in the wake of raids, was Ibrahim Oğlu Amel-i Ahmed from Tiflis. His name is notably inscribed on the *minbar* (pulpit) within a twelve-pointed star. Due to the remarkable harmony between his technique and the decorative style, it is widely believed that he also crafted the majestic Shah Gate (Grenard, 1901). This attribution is further supported by the unique motifs, reflecting the exquisite and rare craftsmanship characteristic of masters from both Ahlat and Tiflis, which have garnered and continue to attract worldwide admiration despite the passage of time and inevitable wear.

Ahmed Hürşad from Ahlat

While specific biographical details are scarce, Ahmed Hürşad from Ahlat, one of the artists responsible for constructing the mosque's Shah Gate, also inscribed his name on its keystone (Sakaoğlu, 2017).

Kâtib Mehmed

Kâtib Mehmed is identified as the artist who penned the inscriptions on the western surface of the *minbar*. Limited information is available regarding his life and work.

Mehmet Oğlu Ahmed

This master, whose name is found on the plaster of the *qibla* wall on the western side of the *minbar*, is believed to be the son of Kâtib Mehmed. No further details about him are available.

Ahmed Oğlu Kâtib İbrahim

It is hypothesized that Ahmed Oğlu Kâtib İbrahim was the master craftsman whose name appears on the retaining wall at the base of the minaret. No additional information about him has been discovered.

Ahmed Nakkaş El-Hilati

There is no information regarding the birth and death dates of Ahmed Nakkaş El-Hilati, one of the *nakkaş* (ornamentation artists) who served as an apprentice to Ahmet Şah. His name is mentioned in the inscription located between the *muqarnas* section of the east door portal and the door lintel (Sönmez, 1989).

Architectural features of Divriği Ulu Mosque and Darüşşifa in Sivas

Evliya Çelebi described it with these meaningful words: "This mosque is one of the oldest mosques. It has three doors and an exemplary minaret. It was built by the Seljuk sultan Alaeddin. Seven tons of mortar were used for this mosque. The master marble craftsman worked so hard on this mosque that he adorned its walls with such elegant patterns that neither the Sultan Yakup Mosque in Ayasuluğ, nor the Yıldırım Han Grand Mosque in Bursa, nor the minbar carvings in Sinop, nor the Ebu'l Feth (Fatih) Mosque in Athens, the mosque at the Estergon Castle on the Budin border, or the craftsmanship of the Divriği Mosque. In short, it cannot be praised in words" (Çelebi, 1314).

In addition to being the only structure built with an adjoining system during the Anatolian Seljuk period, it has gone down in history as the only monumental structure that was built through the collaboration of a woman and a man and has survived to this day (Özkul, 2019). In this context, the value that Turks place on women is clearly evident. Indeed, the mosque was built by Mengücekli Ahmet Shah, while the Darüşşifa (hospital) was built by Melike Turhan Melek, the daughter of Mengücekli Bey Fahrettin Behram Shah of Erzincan. The foundation was established by Fatıma Hanım, the mother of Ahmet Shah. Thus, they left their mark on history with their solidarity and collective spirit between men and women.

This collective solidarity was also supported by the sultan of the time, the architect Alaeddin Keykubad. Ibn-i Bibi described this collaboration as follows: “After the sultan and the king determined the location and agreed on the size, doors, and all other features of the building, the plans were drawn up,

and it was decided that part of the expenses would be covered by the treasury and the rest by the country's leading figures" (Sakaoğlu, 2017).

Anatolia has produced a fantastic and unique decorative style with its extraordinary Turkish art history. This style is a product of the deep meanings, complex dimensions, and visions of the patrons and builders of this structure, which has become the embodiment of the Islamic world (Kuban, 2003).

In the planning and measurement of the structure, since Darüşşifa was to be built together with a mosque and madrasa, the number of verses in the Holy Quran, 6666, was taken as the basis for its centre. By dividing the number of verses by pi, the estimated area that the mosque and madrasa would cover is calculated as 6666:22/7=2121.80 m² (Tellioğlu, 2015). When the area of the structure is calculated as ⅝ for the mosque, ⅜ for the Darüşşifa, and ⅓ for the mezzanine, the resulting square metres are shown in Table 4 (Sakaoğlu, 2017).

Table 4:The architectural details and basic characteristics of Divriği Ulu Mosque and Darüşşifa

Feature	**Specification**
Construction Dates	1228-1243
Construction Area	2,048 m²
Number of Buildings	3 (Mosque, Darüşşifa, and an unlisted third structure, like madrasa)
Founders	Alaeddin Keykubad, Ahmet Shah, Melike Turan Melek, Fatıma Hanım
Number of Inscriptions	41 items: 7 Construction Inscriptions, 7 Masters' Signatures, 27 *Besmele* (Basmala), Quranic Verses, Hadith, and Prayers
Number of Artisans	6 artisans: Ahlatlı Muğis oğlu Hürrem Şah Ahmed (East Door), Tiflisli Ahmed (minbar), Kâtip Mehmet (minbar), Mehmet oğlu Ahmet (south wall), Kâtip Ahmet oğlu İbrahim (minaret)
Wall Thickness	1.40 m
Mosque Dimensions	32.00 m x 40.00 m = 1,280 m² (Note: There might be a typo in the original calculation of 1 m²)
Mosque Height	9.50 m

Dome Height (Exterior)	25.00 m
Dome Height (Interior)	18.00 m
Dome Diameter	8.70 m
Number of Columns (Mosque)	16
Mihrab Height	9.00 m
Mihrab Width	8.50 m
Minbar Material	Ebony Wood
Minbar Height	6.70 m
Minbar Length	4.20 m
Minbar Width	1.30 m
Minbar Technical Carving	Carved Gallery (Dimensions: 5.45 m x 4.75 m = 25.88 m²)
Minaret Height	25.00 m
Darüşşifa Dimensions	24.00 m x 32.00 m = 768 m² (Note: There might be a typo in the original calculation of 7 m²)
Darüşşifa Height	13.00 m
Number of Columns (Darüşşifa)	4
Number of Iwans (Darüşşifa)	1 large, 2 small
Number of Rooms (Darüşşifa)	11 rooms: 7 patient rooms, 1 tomb, 3 doctor's offices
Number of Courtyards (Darüşşifa)	2

The Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa stand as an extraordinary legacy, a testament from the sultan of the state, the ruler of the principality, and their families. They transcended conventional notions to leave behind a work that offers lessons not just for their era, but for all future generations. Every element within this masterpiece is rooted in the entities of the universe, making it as unique and unrepeatable as a human retina or a fingerprint.

The crucial support provided by the patrons to the architects and artists was instrumental in bringing this vision to life. This collaborative approach also reflects the shared mindset and cultural values of Sultan Alaeddin Keykubad I and the patrons of that period (Kuban, 2003).

The structure itself has been designed with great care, taking into account its location, the geological structure of the region, and the materials used, and features proportional, balanced, and completely unique decorative elements

(Turan, 2022). The structure was built using a meticulous stone cladding and keystone system (Eser, 2017).

The precision and order inherent in this construction technique are consistent with verse 49 of Surah Al-Kahf: "Indeed, We have created everything in a predetermined manner." (Yazır, 2014), emphasizing that everything in the universe exists in a state of measure and balance.

Researchers like Hüseyin Güngör suggest that the building's location was deliberately chosen, noting the discovery of remnants of an earlier structure beneath it, implying it may have been built upon existing foundations. Erdal Eser echoes this sentiment, proposing that geometric irregularities observed in the building might be a result of its construction directly on the foundations of a previous edifice in the same area (Eser, 2017).

Turkish architectural structures, while initially favoring a square plan, evolved over time to incorporate rectangular layouts, adapting to terrain specifics and evolving architectural demands. Furthermore, settlement areas were meticulously chosen based on pre-calculated factors like physical structure, geographical features, and climate conditions. It was also common practice to build upon the remnants of previous civilizations. An architect's deep understanding of a site's location, geography, and climate is crucial for making sound conclusions regarding functionality and aesthetics (Durukan, 2002). Consequently, the stones, tools, and other materials used were selected with precision, reflecting the advanced technical knowledge of the era. Their work, indeed, illuminates both their own time and offers insights for the future (Döğen, 1995).

The primary stone used in the construction is a type of trachyte tuff, sourced from quarries in and around Sivas. Its color ranges from dirty yellow to dark red. These stones are known for their homogeneous composition, ease of workability, and soft texture (Önge et al., 1978). As Tanpınar (2000) eloquently describes the reverence our ancestors held for existence and their ability to transform raw materials into treasures: "Our ancestors did not build; they worshipped. Because they had a strong spirit, they imbued the stone with everything they wanted it to embody. The stone came to life in their hands and became a piece of their spirit."

The construction process demanded immense knowledge, skill, and experience. This included calculating the weight of walls crafted from cut stone blocks, designing foundations based on the loads the columns would bear, understanding the opening forces of vaults, domes, and arches,

determining optimal building thickness and dimensions, and meticulously shaping each stone (Arseven, 1946). The stones were laid in large blocks, measuring 150 cm from the ground level, and progressively decreased in size to 30 cm at the top. The walls were constructed using a system that minimized stone joints, leaving only mortar between them. These walls, measuring 140 cm in thickness, were covered using a vaulted roof technique. Rather than a random pattern, a regular and systematic arrangement was applied from the vaults to the columns (Sakaoğlu, 2017). The stones that have retained their original appearance were meticulously polished with fine chisels, exhibiting a homogeneous finish in the same direction (Images 2-3) (Kuban, 2003).



Image 2.Divriği Ulu Mosque and Darüşşifa, View from the West, (https://kulturenvanteri.com).

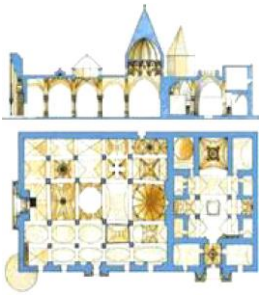

Image 3. Architectural plan of Divriği Ulu Mosque and Darüşşifa, (Kuban, 2010).

The Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa is a magnificent complex, representing the mature culmination of grand mosque, hospital, and madrasa typologies in Anatolia. Its distinguished decorative program, remarkable dimensional layouts, and intricate relief designs—applied to both its interior and exterior—have solidified its prominent place in the realms of art and architecture.

Beyond its aesthetic and structural brilliance, the complex's location was chosen with meticulous consideration. The specific mountain upon which it was built, the pristine air and abundant oxygen of the region, and its proximity to the river were all carefully factored in. As researcher Hüseyin Güngör highlights, "Mountains are also energy centers; even if there is no water around, they absorb moisture from the air, produce water within themselves, and facilitate water usage," underscoring the unique, life-giving characteristics inherent to mountainous terrain.

The Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa were strategically constructed in a tranquil area, precisely on what are known as ley lines. These invisible energy networks are believed to cleanse the earth, and it's a historical pattern that temples, hospitals, and open worship areas are often built on such locations. Certain global centers throughout history have acted as focal points for significant events, forming energetic triangles, with each city built at a corner of these triangles. These corner points are precisely what are referred to as ley lines (Çebi and Demirbağ, 2012).

This concept finds resonance in the Quran, specifically in verse 53 of the Surah Taha, which states, "Who has made for you the earth a cradle and made for you therein roads and sent down from the sky water. With it We have brought forth diverse kinds of plants (Yazır, 2014). The "paths" mentioned in this verse are interpreted as these very energy fields. These points, which we refer to as "positive areas," are described in Sufism as the "lights of Cemal and Celal." Notably, camels are among the animals most adept at detecting positive energy vibrations. This is why, when the Prophet Muhammad migrated from Mecca to Medina, he released a camel to roam the streets, allowing it to naturally determine the ideal location for the construction of the Mescid-i Nebevi (Prophet's Mosque) (Çebi and Demirbağ, 2012).

The Prophet's Mosque was built on such a spot, suggesting that ley lines were understood even in that era. Intriguingly, it's been determined that Piri Reis depicted these energy fields on his maps, as the "kerte lines" found on them align with these ley lines (Çebi and Demirbağ, 2012). The intersection points and energy flows illustrated on these ancient maps—created long before the concepts of latitude, longitude, parallels, and meridians existed—have, however, shifted over time (Candan, 2008). Significant global locations like Egypt, Delphi, Jerusalem, Mecca, Tibet, Mount Meru, the Himalayas, Mount Onfolos, Mount Sinai, Mount Hira, and Mount Olive are all situated along these lines (Çebi and Demirbağ, 2012).

Consequently, the scholars and *ulema* who thrived during the Great Seljuk period and continued their influence into the Anatolian Seljuk era profoundly impacted settlements, buildings, and their chosen locations. This was due to their close collaboration with the state's Shah, viziers, artists, and scientists. Looking back today, it's evident that many concepts recently "discovered" by modern scientists were already known and applied centuries ago (Özkul, 2025).

A distinctive architectural feature, the two triangular domes visible on the roof of the Divriği complex, represents an evolution from earlier forms. This design, initially applied to tents and burial mounds as a model of the "small universe," replaced the "Trump Dome" utilized by the Uyghur Turks. It became known as the Turkish Triangle, a crucial element of Turkish architecture that found its prominent place in Seljuk structures (Aslanapa, 1990).

The Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa has undergone numerous restorations throughout its history, resulting in significant alterations, particularly on its southern façade. While the lower rows of the wall retain their original stonework, the stone above the large, ornamentally damaged window on this façade was likely restored concurrently with the western portal and wall, as well as the southern footing of the hospital's portal (Kuban, 2003).

During the reign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent in the 16th century, a specialized detachment from his fortification and construction teams was dispatched to Divriği. Their task was to erect a minaret and a retaining wall, known as a *sedde*, in addition to existing structures. Subsequently, repairs were carried out on the mosque's columns and arches, along with the vaults and domes on the western side that had either collapsed or were in imminent danger of doing so. In the early 17th century, Vizier Melek İbrahim Paşa oversaw further necessary repairs. However, in the mid-17th century, Hacı İbrahim Ağa's renovation of the complex's wooden doors unfortunately led to the destruction of the original doors and window shutters (Sakaoğlu, 2017). The mosque underwent yet another renovation in the first half of the 18th century (Önge et al., 1978).

The 19th century saw Sultan Abdülhamit II initiate efforts to preserve Turkish and Islamic works of art across Anatolia. As a result, sections of the Divriği complex that were at risk of collapse underwent repair. Octagonal dome lanterns, reflecting contemporary civil architectural styles, were added to the openings of both the mosque and the Darüşşifa, and the roofs were covered with distinctive green tiles. Repairs, necessitated by an earthquake in 1904, continued until 1910. During these extensive repairs, craftsmen, architects, and artists were notably influenced to incorporate crescent and star motifs, inscriptions, and tool images onto the eaves, cartouches, and walls (Sakaoğlu, 2017).

In 1930, the Darüşşifa section of the complex was unfortunately converted into a grain storage facility (Cuinet, 1892). A decade later, in 1939, as World

War II intensified, palace furnishings and collections sent to Divriği for safekeeping were covered with lead roofing to protect them from potential damage (Sakaoğlu, 2017). In the same year, following the devastating Erzincan earthquake, architects attempted to lighten the structure and reduce pressure by removing the traditional clay pots and pumice soil from the roof, replacing them with lead. This intervention, however, inadvertently destabilized the building, causing it to shift from its original position and develop further cracks. In the 1940s, attempts were made to rectify this by refilling the roof with clay and pumice soil brought from Kayseri, but these efforts proved ineffective. Ultimately, none of the numerous repairs carried out provided a satisfactory long-term solution (Önge et al., 1978).

It's important to note that in Seljuk architecture, clay pots and soil were deliberately incorporated into roofs and between side walls. This technique served a dual purpose: balancing the structure on one hand, and providing crucial moisture prevention and thermal insulation on the other (Önge et al., 1978). This highlights a critical lesson: any intervention on such historical structures must be preceded by thorough research into their original construction principles. Uninformed actions, as demonstrated here, can cause irreversible damage. A striking example of such a loss is the heating system of the mosque and hospital, which utilized hot steam from the Bekir Çavuş bathhouse. This bathhouse existed until 1960 but has not survived to the present day. The pipes for this ingenious heating system were regrettably sealed during a renovation when new stones were laid on the floor (Unutmaz, 2014).

The late architect Doğan Kuban rightly criticized the repeated repairs at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, stating, "The Divriği Complex cannot be restored without a correct and analytical survey and static evaluation" (Sakaoğlu, 2017). Indeed, nearly every subsequent renovation project has inadvertently inflicted some degree of damage upon the structure, effectively eroding its historical integrity. For instance, between 1523 and 1524, the western wall was renovated, a round support wall was constructed at the northwestern corner, and a minaret was added on top (Eyice, 1978). The minaret's inscription confirms it was built in 1566 during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent. The mosque remained in active use both when the minaret was constructed and during Evliya Çelebi's visit to Divriği in the 17th century, when he so eloquently described it (Çelebi, 1314).

Crown gates, vital design elements in medieval Islamic architecture, hold an indispensable and prominent position in many structures, serving as their veritable calling cards. The tradition of constructing ornate and ostentatious crown gates in Turkish architecture originated during the Karahanid period. They were conceived as distinctive, massive, and elaborate features, symbolizing the architectural history and civilizations they represented (Ertunç, 2020).

These doors, meticulously designed in accordance with Islamic traditions, boast decorative elements that distinctly reflect their functionality. Though they appear to burst forth from their surroundings with exuberant ornamentation, the specific names given to these doors are not recorded in any endowments or historical documents. However, resembling *mihrabs* (prayer niches), these doors are commonly referred to based on their perceived function:

- Qibla Gate: Also known as the Gate of Paradise, North Gate, Main Gate, or Castle Gate (Image 4).
- West Gate: Referred to as the Men's Gate, Market Gate, Exit Gate, or Shaded Gate (Image 5).
- Shah Gate: Also called the Throne Gate (Image 6).
- Darüşşifa Gate: Simply named the Infirmary Gate (Image 7).

Historically, similar grand entrances, such as the Assyrians' "Gate of Heaven" (Baldwin, 1956) and the "Gate of Ishtar" (adorned with gold star motifs on a sky-blue background), or the Christians' "Gate of Heaven" (Baldwin, 1956) and the "Three Gates of Trust" in churches and cathedrals, have consistently highlighted the civilizations that built them. The Gate of Paradise, West Gate, Darüşşifa Gate, and Shah Gate in the Divriği Great Mosque and Hospital likewise underscore the remarkable civilization that produced them.

Crown gates served not only as the primary entrance to a building but also performed a crucial symbolic function, representing the building's identity and prestige. The intricate decorations and ornaments on these gates pioneered new stylistic trends, acting as fundamental design elements. Furthermore, the crown gates are meticulously arranged in a hierarchical order, evident in their sculptural dimensions. This deliberate hierarchical arrangement is a characteristic feature reflected in both the overall design and its intricate details (Kuban, 2003).

Each of Divriği's magnificent crown gates is meticulously composed within a rectangular frame. These arches are characterized by an intricate assembly of moldings, bands, corner columns, arch surrounds, decorative strips, rose decorations, medallions, *muqarnas* and vaults, a deep niche, a pointed arch, a *mihrab* (prayer niche) (Bayburtluoğlu, 1993), a lintel, inscribed bands, and side walls. Positioned as sculptural focal points, these elements command attention on the façade, irrespective of their individual size or function (Ünver, 1960).

Among these doors, the Shah Gate lies almost flush with the building's walls. In contrast, the West Gate projects forward, while both the Paradise Gate and the Darüşşifa Gate not only project forward but also rise upward. Each gate showcases a distinct decorative style: the Paradise Gate is adorned in a high-relief style, the Darüşşifa Gate features a columned and relief Gothic style, and both the West Gate and the Shah Gate are characterized by geometric patterns (Aslanapa, 1973).

Yunus Berkli highlights a significant point: "Although Western researchers refer to the northern gate as the Baroque gate and the Darüşşifa gate as the Gothic gate, the plastic decorations here contain metaphysical messages, unlike the decorations in the West." He explains that architects and artist-soldiers, influenced by Turkish and Islamic civilization during the Crusades, introduced these styles to Europe, subsequently naming them Baroque and Gothic (Eyice, 1978). This suggests that the distinctive decorative style of the Divriği complex served as a foundational example for subsequent architectural developments in the West.

The north gate of the Divriği complex offers a panoramic view, with the formidable castle on one side and the city sprawling on the other. The Shah gate is strategically oriented towards the direction from which the Shah would traditionally arrive from the castle. Meanwhile, both the west gate and the Darüşşifa gate face and symbolically embrace the city. Each of these gates boasts a unique architectural and decorative style.

Within their intricate carvings, they have masterfully depicted the macrocosm and microcosm of the universe in perfect harmony and balance. This is particularly evident through the pervasive application of the Golden Ratio (ϕ) (often cited in academic literature and symbolized by '27' in some contexts, as in your source, likely referring to a specific textual citation number), which is a recurring principle of measure and balance found throughout nature. From the helix of DNA to spirals in space, from the forms of snails and oyster shells

to the proportions of humans and animals, this mathematical order underpins countless natural entities (Tekkanat, 2006). This measurable structure, visibly manifested in works of art and architecture, has thus created a balanced form and a functionally optimized space.

This masterpiece (Kuban, 2003), which stands as the quintessential representation of the extraordinary artistic environment of Anatolian Turkish civilization, captivates with its unique decorations. These are often described as miraculous, possessing no direct precedent or successor in their distinctive style. Furthermore, while many architectural complexes combine a mosque, hospital, and madrasa, the unique coexistence and integration of the worship and health structures within the Divriği complex is considered particularly extraordinary (Kutlu, 2019).

CONCLUSION

The Quranic verse from Surah Al-Imran (3:137), "Many generations and civilizations have passed away before you. Travel through the earth and see what is the end of those who deny the truth" (Yazır, 2014), underscores the ephemeral nature of civilizations and invites reflection on their rise and fall. The Creator, through the intricate relationships between humanity, the divine, and nature, establishes the ontological character of civilizations. The very formation of civilization sees the Creator define the vertical axis through humanity's conception, the horizontal axis through the conception of animals, and both axes through the conception of nature itself.

Within this rich "pool of civilization," where the profound unity and similarity between the universe and human beings are metaphysically embodied, a tapestry of motifs replete with symbolic expressions unfolds. Turkish and Islamic civilization, building upon stages of conception, design, and realization, boasts an expansive perspective stretching from Turkestan to Africa, and from the Altai Mountains to the Danube, from Bukhara to Córdoba.

The Seljuks, Umayyads, Abbasids, and Ottomans, acting as the custodians of this vibrant Turkish and Islamic civilization, are distinguished by their unique lifestyles and state policies. Culturally and architecturally, this expansive legacy encompasses the grandeur of the Great Seljuk, Anatolian Seljuk, and Ottoman periods (Özkul, 2025).

The Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa, erected during the Anatolian Seljuk era, is celebrated as the "stone-domed seal" of Turkish and Islamic civilization in Anatolia. It stands as an unparalleled architectural example that not only glorifies the period of its creation but also casts light upon both the past and the future. Through its original designs, which synthesize the accumulated symbols of religion, language, customs, traditions, and civilization, it offers profound iconographic narratives. With its unique and unparalleled richness and originality of motifs, the Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa is more than a structure; it is a symbolic language wherein everything from the macrocosm to the microcosm is stylized and geometricized—a vast, coded library intricately engraved in stone.

One of the distinguishing features of the Divriği complex is the unique integration of the mosque and the *darüşşifa* (hospital). Another significant detail is the longitudinal positioning of the *darüşşifa* on an iron-rich mountain. In Turkish mythology, iron is believed to originate from the sky, consequently,

mountains containing iron are considered protective for the Turks. Furthermore, it is believed that the iron mountain is the convergence point of nine rivers on Earth (Bayat, 2017). For this reason, mountains with high iron content, particularly those surrounded by rivers, streams, and lakes, were held sacred.

This profound reverence for iron and specific mountain landscapes led the Turks who founded the Göktürk Empire to elevate the blacksmith, who melted the iron mountain in the Ergenekon saga, to the status of a savior. The passage created by the melted iron was seen as a "door of salvation," and the melted iron itself was considered sacred (Uraz, 1994).

Moreover, iron, when melted and tempered in fire, was used to forge swords, shields, and knives—weapons that were sworn upon and wielded in battle. After each victory, these iron implements were attributed with sacredness. Turks, who crafted their spears, arrowheads, swords, and shields from iron, also swore oaths on iron, proclaiming, "Let the sky go in, let the red come out." This essentially meant, "If you do not keep your word, let the sword shed your blood, let the iron take revenge on you" (Uraz, 1994). Even today, the Turkish Armed Forces continue to invoke similar oaths when adopting a defensive or combat stance.

Zaloğlu Rüstem, in his *Shahnameh*, praised the Turks for this characteristic, writing: "Turks are a people whose bodies and clothes are made of iron" (Uraz, 1994). Using this metaphor of "iron clothing," he described Turks as large, strong, and durable, possessing iron-like bodies, unwavering loyalty, immense power, and strong will. Iron itself was metaphorically called "a meteorite falling from the sky." Civilizations often defined Mars as the symbol of iron, and associated Turks, who mastered the melting of iron, with Mars, calling them "those who dominated iron" (Bilgili, 2020). In this context, when urbanization began, high mountains, especially those rich in iron, were particularly favored for settlement.

When the Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa was conceived as a healing center, its location on a major trade route and on an iron-rich mountain made it an ideal complex capable of accommodating numerous visitors and patients. The remarkable efficacy of the iron element in cleansing the mentally ill of evil spirits, magic, and the evil eye during their treatment process is attributed to the Creator, who granted David the miracle of shaping iron (Döğen, 1986).

The emphasis on iron in the 25th verse of Surah Hadid, "And We sent down iron, wherein is great military might and benefits for the people." (Yazır, 2014), further underscores its profound importance for life.

Another critical point to consider is that the common assertion—that Islamic art is highly stylized and employs a symbolic language due to a prohibition on representation—is often misleading. While there is no explicit Quranic verse directly prohibiting all forms of representation, confusion can arise from the use of the word *temāsīl*. This term is used in Surah Al-Anbiya (21:52) in the context of "idols," and in Surah Saba (34:13) in the sense of "statues." Regarding this dual usage, Hasan Yaşaroğlu clarifies that in Islam, the spheres of worship and artistic endeavor should be distinct, a principle that also applies to Hadith (Yaşaroğlu, 2016).

In this nuanced context, the architects and artists, adhering to the Creator's command to "read" and interpret the "book of the universe," skillfully engraved stylized plants, animals, and human figures. They incorporated intricate characters from fields such as geometry, biology, mathematics, physics, cosmology, astrology, astronomy, mythology, and algebra onto the stones, creating complex, layered designs (Özkul, 2025).

Doğan Kuban famously described this monumental structure as an "encyclopedic dictionary," asserting that every religion and civilization can discover a part of itself within its myriad corners and motifs. He delved into the meaning of its three-dimensional stone decorations, drawing comparisons with mythology and world architecture (Kuban, 2010).

Based on the ornaments adorning the crown gates of the Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa, it has been variously acclaimed as a "Baroque pioneer," a "Textile and Carpet" style precursor, and a "Seljuk and Gothic pioneer." These doors, while lacking a singular stylistic unity, present themselves as distinct masterpieces, seemingly competing with each other in their intricate, dimensional forms.

The geometric arrangements, diverse calligraphic styles, floral decorations, and figurative elements within these doors are all harmoniously integrated. This integration was achieved within a traditional framework, heavily influenced by the local geography, the historical period, the patrons, the architects, the artists, and the guiding insights of scholars and *ulema*. While geometric motifs largely dominate the overall appearance, creating a symmetrical effect, subtle, detailed elements introduce asymmetry, resulting in an extraordinary ornamentation program. Each ornamentation thoughtfully

incorporates a masculine and a feminine motif (symbolically a "+" and a "–"), thereby achieving a profound sense of balance. This intricate decoration program is executed through balanced distribution, stylization derived from mathematical equations, and the pervasive application of the Golden Ratio. This structure, which profoundly reflects Turkish and Islamic art and culture, can be examined through the lens of Jakobson's communication model as follows:

Sender (artist) → message (meaning) → receiver (society)
↓
Code (symbolism, symbol, image, character)
↓
Channel (Divriği Ulu Mosque and Darüşşifa, analysis) (Jakobson, 1987).

In the context of the Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa, we can analyze its communication dynamics using Jakobson's model:

- Sender: The architect and artist (Hürrem Şah, Ibrahim Oğlu Amel-i Ahmed, etc.) serves as the sender.
- Message: The message is the profound meaning and aesthetics embedded within the structure's design, motifs, and overall artistic language. This message is intended to be both expressed and interpreted in a way that resonates with the receiver.
- Receiver: Society (both of its time and subsequent generations, including contemporary observers) acts as the receiver. For the message to be functional and understood, the artist (sender) and society (receiver) must share, at least partially, a common language.
- Code: This common language manifests as a complex code comprised of elements such as symbols, signs, images, characters, and seals. These are intricately woven into the very fabric of the building.
- Channel: The work of art itself – the Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa – functions as the channel. It facilitates communication by embodying the cultural, physical, and psychological connection between the architect, artist, and society. Through this intricate coding and the physical presence of the work, the channel links the past to the present, ensuring that the message endures and continues to be communicated across centuries.

Through this lens, the Divriği complex is not merely a static monument, but an active participant in a timeless dialogue, continuously transmitting its rich cultural, intellectual, and spiritual heritage.

The Divriği Great Mosque and Darüşşifa stands as a testament to a rich understanding of motifs, forms, techniques, and materials, creating a unique masterpiece that serves as a magnificent "library of symbolic language." These symbols, intricately applied to stone, tile, and wood, were also utilized in the carpets and kilims of the period, demonstrating their role in communication.

In terms of construction, the stones for the Divriği complex were locally sourced from nearby quarries, and it's believed that the artisans crafted their own specialized tools to work them. Applying Jakobson's communication model, the artisans acted as the "sender," transmitting a message to the "recipient" (the community) through the "channel" of the artwork itself. This message was conveyed via a "code" of symbols, forms, and techniques, facilitated by a "context" of shared cultural understanding, ensuring a physical and psychological connection between creator and audience (Jakobson, 1987).

The motifs and symbols within this architecturally and decoratively unique structure continue to display flawless craftsmanship. They retain their original, sincere, and welcoming essence, while still preserving their profound meaning and mystery (Özkul, 2020d). A testament to this widespread artistry is an interview with retired non-commissioned officer Erol Bey, who served in Divriği. He recalled a carpet featuring motifs identical to those on the western gate, which was among items brought to Istanbul for protection from theft. Unfortunately, some of these carpets were later smuggled abroad, and the one in question is believed to be among them, preventing a visual record today.

Ultimately, Turkish and Islamic civilization represents a rich "cultural palace" forged through the conscious application of all methods, guided by the principle that "the first condition of knowledge is doubt" (Ağırakça, 2020). The architects of this civilization unlocked scientific keys in a way that was both thought-provoking and awe-inspiring. Modern culture, science, and technology have grown from the seeds sown by this profound intellectual tradition. As Prof. Dr. Fuat Sezgin, a leading global scientist, succinctly stated in 2015: "Western civilization is the child of Islamic civilization."

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