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The Madrasa at Kalehisar: Preliminary Results of the Archaeological Survey 2019

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YASER DELLAL – MUSTAFA KEMAL ŞAHİN

The Madrasa at Kalehisar Preliminary Results of the Archaeological Survey 2019

Keywords: Anatolian Seljuk, Archaeological survey, Architecture, Madrasa, Photogrammetry

Schlüsselwörter: Anatolische Seldschuken, Archäologischer Survey, Architektur, Madrese, Photogrammetrie

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the fact that the Anatolian Seljuk presence is in general known for the middle Black Sea region (Çorum, Amasya, Tokat, Samsun, Sinop, Kastamonu), their architectural remains and the history of the Anatolian Seljuks need to be studied in more detail. According to historical sources and previous preliminary archaeological studies¹, Kalehisar represents one of the most important Seljuk settlements in the region (*fig. 1*). Therefore, the recent research survey project aims to examine the city, its buildings, and its archaeological remains to understand the Seljuk presence here better.

Kalehisar was visited in 1838 by W. Hamilton who was the first of the European travellers describing the site. In 1859 H. Barth and A.D. Mordtmann came². Later the site attracted the attention of K. Bittel and K. Erdmann during their works in Boğazköy / Hattusha³. In 1965–1966 O. Aslanapa⁴ documented the visible remains and made some soundings to determine the properties and functions of buildings that were still apparent on the surface at that time. All investigations indicate Kalehisar was a large Anatolian Seljuk settlement in North-Central Anatolia (ca. 13th–14th cent. A.D.) including a madrasa, a caravansary, a bath, kilns, and a mosque⁵. In addition to sgraffito

Sources of illustrations: *Figs. 1, 2:* Y. Dellal. – *Fig. 3:* Drawings Y. Dellal (Sinop Pervane Madrasa after Kuran 1969, fig. 47; Korkuteli Sinaneddin Madrasa after Erdmann 1965, fig. 4; Çay Taş Madrasa after Schöttler 1995, fig. 98; Sivas Gök Madrasa after Gabriel 1934, fig. 57; Tokat Gök Madrasa after Gabriel 1934, fig. 99). – *Figs. 4–10:* Y. Dellal.

¹ Şahin 2018, 177–178.

² Mordtmann – Planhol 1960.

³ Erdmann 1955; Erdmann 1965.

⁴ Aslanapa 1968.

⁵ Aslanapa 1968, 1.

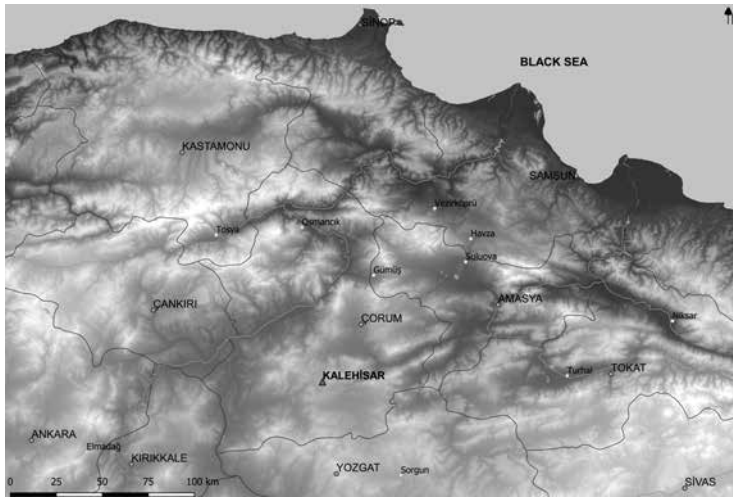


Fig. 1.
The Middle Black Sea Region

and champlévé fragments decorated with human figures were found through the excavation work. The fragments, which date back to the 13th cent. A. D., are stored in the Istanbul University Art History Collection⁶. In August 2017, M. K. Şahin conducted a first surface survey in the region in the frame of his »Anatolian Seljuk Period Structures in the Middle Black Sea: Çorum-I Region (Alaca-Mecitözü-Sungurlu and Central Districts) Project«⁷. One of the results obtained in this study was that the archaeological site of Kalehisar is so far unique in the Middle Black Sea Region, showing the remains of an important city with ruins of buildings from the Anatolian Seljuk period⁸. The site represents an example of a typical settlement type of this period⁹. A second season of surveys was conducted in August 2019 with the participation of Y. Dellal¹⁰.

Kalehisar is located in the province of Çorum, ca. 20 km to the north-west of Alaca town and ca. 5 km north of Alacahöyük next to Mahmudiye village. The site consists of a ca. 100 m high rocky peak-like mountain which is 200–250 m in diameter and has a large artificial terrace on its eastern side. The mountain is surrounded by a wide rolling plain dotted with several smaller rocky outcrops. To the east of the mountain, remains of several buildings are already visible on the surface, some of which are still partly upstanding (*fig. 2*).

The concept of the Seljuk castle cities was inherited from the Roman-Byzantine period. Due to the military situation and political conditions of the Seljuk period in Anatolia, the castles were built on steep but well visible rock formations which were difficult to access. They were situated at strategic connections or crossroads of the Anatolian settlement and transportation system. They were named e.g. Karahisar¹¹ (>black castles<) in the Turkish toponymical tradition. They

⁶ Aslanapa 1967, 136; Aslanapa 1989, 863–864.

⁷ Şahin 2018, 178.

⁸ Şahin 2018, 177–184.

⁹ Mordtmann 1960; Tuncel 2001, 417; Özcan 2010, 59.

¹⁰ Thanks to Doç. Dr. M. K. Şahin, the director of Kalehisar survey (2019), for allowing me to participate and work on the architecture.

¹¹ Özcan 2010, 59–60. This type of settlement includes Karahisar-ı Demirlü (Kalehisar village, Çorum), İnce Kara-

Fig. 2.
Kalehisar General View



also served as operational bases for military mobilization and strategic spatial elements of the Anatolian Seljuk defence system¹².

Kalehisar, which is mentioned as Karahisar-ı Demirlü in several Seljuk chronicles (*vakâyî-nâmeler*), is located on the Samsun–Amasya road, which provides connections with Kastamonu/Sinop, Gümüşhacıköy, Alıcık, Çorum, Alaca and Ankara/Delice¹³. As stated in the written sources it was used as a winter resting place for the armies and was used as a prison during the reign of Seljuk kings in late periods¹⁴. Kalehisar was also an important and economically highly developed Anatolian city beyond its military and strategic importance: 25,500 dinars were recorded as a tax revenue in the list of budgets of Anatolian cities during the Ilkhanid dependency period. This is in addition to the rich collection of coins obtained from archaeological contexts, dating back to the Seljuk period¹⁵.

THE POSSIBLE AL HÜSÂMÎYE (?) MADRASA – THE ARCHITECTURE

In 2019, the best-preserved building at Kalehisar known as Al Hüsâmîye Madrasa was recorded and documented with a photogrammetric survey. The data was further processed with SfM software¹⁶ into a digital 3D model¹⁷, which served as the basis for the 2D plans and sections

hisar (İscehisar, Afyon), Karahisar-ı Teke (Yanköy, Antalya), Karahisar-ı Develi (Yeşilhisar, Kayseri), Karahisar-ı Osmancık (Osmancık, Çorum), Hamam Karahisar (Hamam Karahisar, Eskişehir), Karahisar-ı Yavaş or Nevas (Karahisar village, Konya), Karahisar-ı Behramşah (Karamağara village, Yozgat), Karahisar-ı Köğonya (Şebin Karahisar, Giresun) and Karahisar-ı Sahip or Devle (Afyon Karahisar).

¹² Mordtmann 1960; Tuncel 2001, 416–418; Özcan 2010, 59.

¹³ Şahin 2018, 181.

¹⁴ Özcan 2008, 93.

¹⁵ Erdmann 1955, 38–41; Aslanapa 1967, 135–142; Aslanapa 1968, 1–14; Özcan 2008, 93.

¹⁶ The SfM software is Agisoft PhotoScan Professional 1.4.0.

¹⁷ <https://arachne.dainst.org/3d?id=108>.

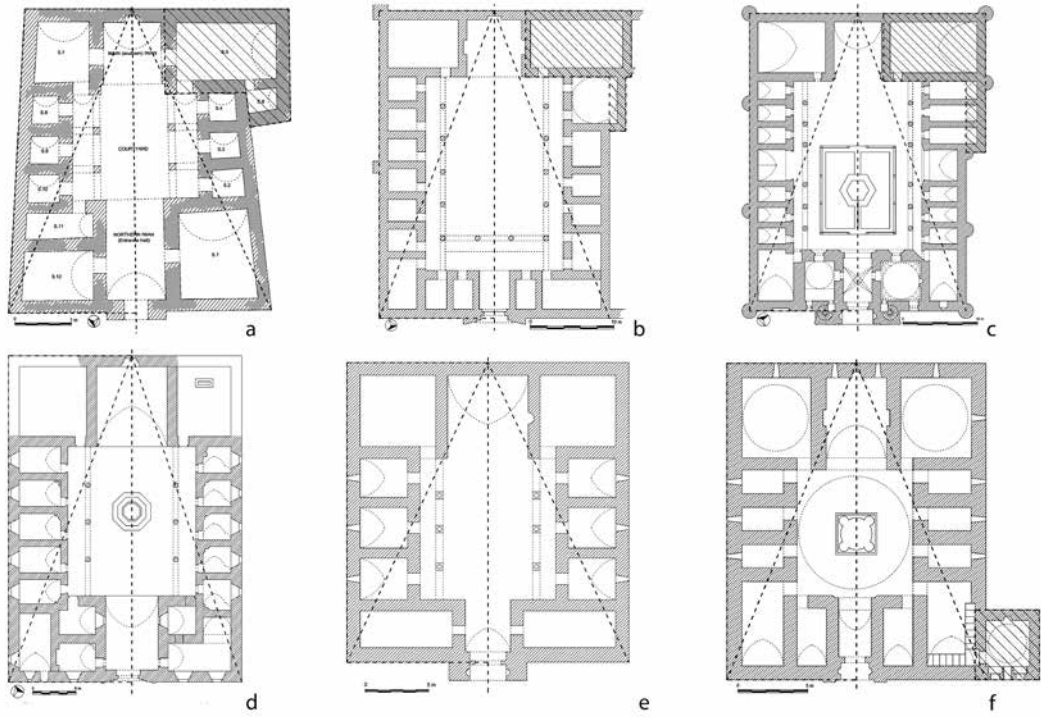


Fig. 3. Reconstructed groundplan of Al Hüsâmîye Madrasa at Kalehisar (unknown date) with symmetry axis and SW-irregularity marked, compared with the ground plan of madrasas with similar conceptions a) Al Hüsâmîye Madrasa b) Sinop Pervane Madrasa (1265) c) Korkuteli Sinaneddin Madrasa (1319) d) Çay Taş Madrasa from (1278/79) e) Sivas Gök Madrasa (1271) f) Tokat Gök Madrasa (1275)

(figs. 3. 4. 6–8). In addition to the 3D recording initial building archaeological studies and a basic state of conservation record were carried out in the field by Y. Dellal.

According to Mevlevi sources and the foundation records of the Hüsâmîye Madrasa, which was built by the Emir of Karahisar Hüsâmeldin Timur in 1266–1267, Karahisar-ı Demirlü was an important religious center during the Seljuk period in Anatolia as the shrine of Sheikh Muhammed Selmastî, one of the followers of Mevlana Celâleddin Rûmî, was located there¹⁸. In fact, the dating of the madrasa cannot be verified yet as no inscriptions were found so far. But the layout, masonry style, and ceramic fragments suggest the first half of 13th cent. A.D.¹⁹. According to O. Aslanapa, the structure can be classified as a single-story Anatolian Seljuk madrasa with an open courtyard and two *iwans*²⁰.

The building measures 27.5 m in N–S, and 24.79 m in E–W direction. The entire structure covers an area of 608.8 m². The walls and vaults are preserved up to 6.4 m. The madrasa is rectangular, slightly trapezoid in shape and N–S oriented (figs. 3. 4). The symmetric ground plan arrangement with a central courtyard shows an irregularity in the south-western corner: an

¹⁸ Eflâkî 1987, 162; Özcan 2008, 93–94; Çorumlu Dergisi 2009; Köseoğlu 1944, 1347–1352.

¹⁹ Aslanapa 1968, 5; Sözen 1970, 114.

²⁰ Aslanapa 1968, 1; Kuran 1969, 63–64; Sözen 1970, 114; Şahin 2018, 181.

extension that perhaps corresponds with or is caused by an earlier, predecessor building. Regardless of other concepts, this symmetry in the ground plan can be observed as well at Sinop Pervane Madrasa from 1265²¹, and later in Korkuteli Sinaneddin Madrasa from 1319. Otherwise, the concept of a western extension in the ground plan can be seen also at Sivas Gök Madrasa from 1271, Tokat Gök Madrasa from 1275, and Çay Taş Madrasa from 1278/1279²² (fig. 3).

The rubble stone masonry of the madrasa is made with the local hard sandstone set in lime mortar²³. The same type of masonry can be found also in Tokat and Niksar Yağışan madrasas from the middle of 12th century²⁴ and a ruined mosque at Çorum- Cemilbey village from the first quarter of 13th century²⁵. The building is not in a very sound state of preservation. Obviously the ruin was used as a quarry to retrieve building stones in later periods. The eastern facade is almost completely collapsed. The northern and western facades are in a precarious state of dilapidation. Major parts of the southern facade are invisible and situated under the current surface level. The roof, which was plastered as we recognize from remains, contained thin pottery chimneys. These chimneys could be used for ventilation as their number and dimension are not sufficient as a source of lighting. On the other hand, some rooms and cells have semi-circular openings that can be interpreted as ›windows‹ (rooflights)²⁶ as they seem to be organized and

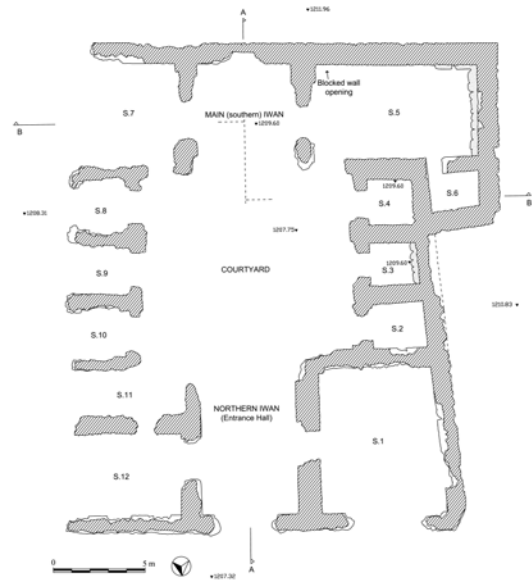


Fig. 4. Plan of the Preserved Remains Al Hüsâmîye Madrasa

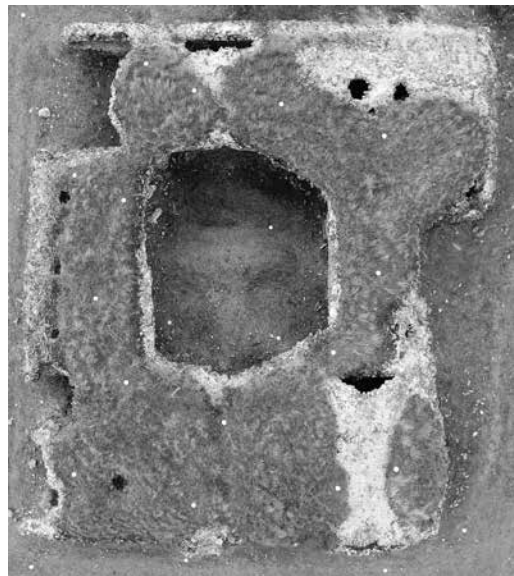


Fig. 5. Vertical Drone Image of Al Hüsâmîye Madrasa ▷

²¹ Kuran 1969, 86; Şahin 2018, 181.

²² Gabriel 1934, 94. 95. 156; Erdmann 1965, 55. 58; Sözen 1970, 40–48. 213; Numan 1984, 249–261; Schöttler 1995, 60. 62–63.

²³ A mineralogical analysis of the mortar is still pending.

²⁴ Kuran 1969, 65.

²⁵ Şahin 2008, 646–653.

²⁶ Some of the openings might be the result of collapsed roof/vault stones, which would need to be studied further.

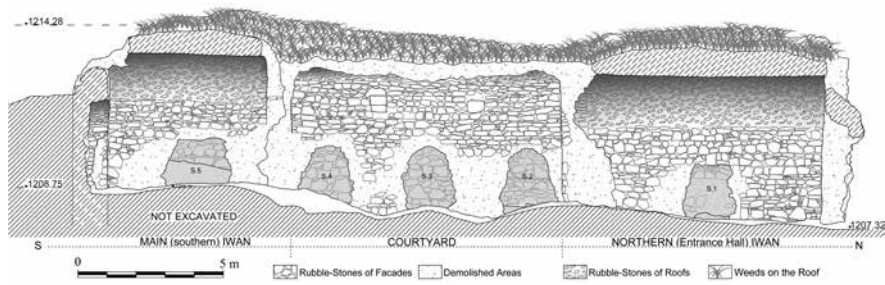


Fig. 6. North-South Section (A-A) Facing Westwards of Al Hüsâmiye Madrasa

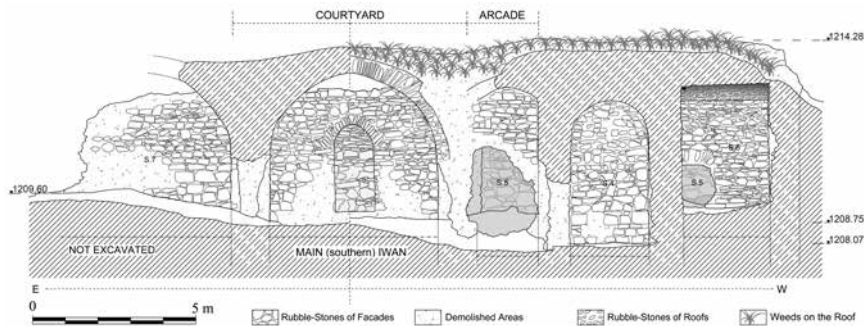


Fig. 7. East-West Section (B-B) Facing Southwards of Al Hüsâmiye Madrasa

aligned (figs. 4, 5). Interestingly, not all of the spaces have such openings or chimneys; e.g. cells S. 3 and S. 4. In contrast, others e.g. S. 5, S. 8 and S. 9 have both.

The roofs as well as the pillars of the arcades east and west of the courtyard are collapsed. All rooms have lost parts of their walls. It is unclear if the walls were plastered. Door recesses and frames show damage. Most roofs, especially the ones of the eastern part of the building, show damage or are completely collapsed into the rooms. One of the most critical points in structural terms is the south-western corner of the main *iwān*, which is about to collapse due to the loss of structurally necessary stones (figs. 4, 6, 7).

The entrance gate of the madrasa was located in the northern facade and led into a high barrel-vaulted *iwān*. This *iwān* has a north-south oriented barrel-vault that opens to the central courtyard. To the west of the northern *iwān* is room S. 1 with a N–S oriented barrel-vault. The room is connected to the northern *iwān* by a door constructed with a stone-made recess and a brick-laid arch. In fact, all doors seem to be identical. East of the northern *iwān* are two rooms with E–W oriented barrel-vaults. The northernmost room S. 12 is connected to the *iwān* while the other, southern one S. 11 is accessible from the courtyard's arcade. On the western and eastern side the courtyard is flanked by arcades with three arches and two pillars. On both sides a series of three cells (S. 2 to S. 4 and S. 8 to S. 10) are accessible via the arcades (figs. 3, 4, 6, 8). These cells could be interpreted as resident teachers' and students' accommodation²⁷. All of them are covered with

²⁷ Birşık 2003, 333–338.



Fig. 8. North-South Section Facing Eastwards of Al Hüsâmîye Madrasa



Fig. 9. The Courtyard and Main Iwan Facing the Mihrab in the Southern Exterior Wall

N–S oriented barrel-vaults (*fig. 3*). For a better understanding of the function of all the spaces in the madrasa, further studies will be required.

The main *iwan* is located south of the courtyard (*figs. 4, 6–9*). Its main feature is a simple, rectangular shaped *mihrab* with a semi-circular arch in the southern wall. The main *iwan*'s floor sits one step above the courtyard²⁸. East of the main *iwan* is a room S. 7 with a N–S oriented barrel-vault. On the western side is a larger room S. 5 with an E–W oriented barrel-vault. The room extends beyond the northern parts of the western facade. Here as well a small cell S. 6, adjacent north of the larger room, can be accessed. These parts create an irregularity in the otherwise symmetrical ground plan of the madrasa. In addition, it can be observed that the ground plan is slightly trapezoid, the wall alignments creating a slight narrowing towards the south (*figs. 3, 9*). This unusual feature may be the result of the stacking-out process of the building. The dimensions of the building were obviously laid out in relation to the central symmetric N–S axis. Measures from the one side were mirrored with the same measure on the opposite side. It may perhaps only reflect a measuring mistake that was noticed too late to be corrected (*table 1*).

space	max. length	max. width	interior area
main <i>iwan</i>	6.40 m	5.14 m	33.86 m ²
northern <i>iwan</i>	8.93 m	5.25 m	45.86 m ²
courtyard & arcades	11.22 m	9.24 m	102.62 m ²
S. 1 room	7.99 m	6.82 m	50.30 m ²
S. 2 cell-like space	2.92 m	2.52 m	6.93 m ²
S. 3 cell-like space	2.66 m	2.32 m	5.84 m ²
S. 4 cell-like space	2.39 m	2.46 m	5.77 m ²
S. 5 room	8.93 m	5.15 m	44.65 m ²
S. 6 cell-like space	2.73 m	2.05 m	5.16 m ²
S. 7 room	5.41 m	4.89 m	25.31 m ²
S. 8 cell-like space	2.44 m	2.49 m	5.80 m ²
S. 9 cell-like space	2.62 m	2.46 m	6.24 m ²
S. 10 cell-like space	2.83 m	2.48 m	6.78 m ²
S. 11 room	6.02 m	2.36 m	13.33 m ²
S. 12 room	6.36 m	4.37 m	27.19 m ²

Table 1 Measurements of al Hüsâmîye Madrasa

²⁸ Aslanapa 1968, 2; Sözen 1970, 116.



Fig. 10. a Foundations or an Earlier Structure(?)

Especially, the prolonged room S.5 with the additional, separate cell S.6 provokes additional thoughts. What kind of function could it have had? Did it have any kind of indication of its importance? Does this arrangement belong to an earlier structure or does it at least reflect an earlier structure? At least the later building of the madrasa seems to respect the remains of an earlier structure here. The walls seem to be thicker here and parts of an earlier wall or foundation are visible below the western and southern wall of the room (figs. 4, 10). Similar traces can be observed as well in cell S.3 in the western arcade. It is unclear if it is the actual wall foundation or represents the remains of an older foundation. Worth mentioning here is also the possible blocked wall opening in the south-eastern corner of room S.5, which might be as well interpreted as an earlier wall repair.



Fig. 10. b Blocked Wall Opening(?) in Room S5

Especially, the prolonged room S.5 with the additional, separate cell S.6 provokes additional thoughts. What kind of function could it have had? Did it have any kind of indication of its importance? Does this arrangement belong to an earlier structure or does it at least reflect an earlier structure? At least the later building of the madrasa seems to respect the remains of an earlier structure here. The walls seem to be thicker here and parts of an earlier wall or foundation are visible below the western and southern wall of the room (figs. 4, 10). Similar traces can be observed as well in cell S.3 in the western arcade. It is unclear if it is the actual wall foundation or represents the remains of an older foundation. Worth mentioning here is also the possible blocked wall opening in the south-eastern corner of room S.5, which might be as well interpreted as an earlier wall repair.

CONCLUSIONS

Kalehisar is an Anatolian Seljuk city of the black castle city style, which was mainly settled around 13th to 14th century. In the city several buildings with different functions can be identified, of which a few are still partially standing, while most others are in ruins or not visible on the ground. Al Hüsâmîye Madrasa, presented here, is by far the best preserved architectural structure at the site. The layout of the madrasa shows a symmetrical ground plan arrangement along the longitudinal north-south axis, with two opposite placed *iwans* and cell-like spaces on both sides of the central courtyard.

However, the building is in a very fragile and unstable state of conservation, with many of its parts demolished, collapsed or in danger of collapse. The madrasa is actually in need of urgent consolidation and conservation measures; otherwise it might disappear like the other buildings in a few years. Previous research at Kalehisar has not produced valuable data regarding the madrasa's building history and urban context.

The architectural documentation of the madrasa raises some further research questions regarding e.g. the reason for the irregularity in the rectangular ground plan. What role and function had the cell-like space S.6 attached to space S.5? How were wall surfaces treated? Were they covered with tiles or plaster? How to interpret the blocked-wall opening in space S.5? Could it have been a back-door or a window? Was the madrasa built on the remains of an earlier structure? To answer all these questions and more requires further detailed archaeological building studies in the future. In addition, targeted excavations in and around the madrasa could offer valuable information about the history of the structure, the functions of the various spaces, and its urban context.

Abstract: The archaeological site of Kalehisar represents the remains of one of the most important Anatolian Seljuk settlements in the middle Black Sea region. The settlement, which is known also as Karahisar-ı Demirlü, was according to historical sources mainly settled around the 13th to 14th century A.D. Kalehisar represents the black castle city style in the Anatolian Seljuk period, featuring facilities like a castle, a madrasa, a caravansary, a bath, kilns, and a mosque.

The archaeological survey conducted in 2019 offered the chance to record and document the best-preserved building at Kalehisar known as Al Hüsâmîye Madrasa with a photogrammetric survey. The preliminary results of this building survey including a 3D model, plans, and sections are presented here for the first time. They allow first insights into the layout conception of the madrasa and the Anatolian Seljuk building technology. In addition to the building documentation, an initial state-of-conservation assessment was carried out that showed the structure is in urgent need of consolidation measures.

KALEHISAR'DAKI MADRASA ARKEOLOJİK YÜZEY ARAŞTIRMASI ÖN SONUÇLARI 2019

Özet: Kalehisar ören yeri, Orta Karadeniz bölgesindeki en önemli Anadolu Selçuklu yerleşimlerinden birinin kalıntılarını temsil etmektedir. Tarihi kaynaklara göre Karahisar-ı Demirlü olarak da bilinen bu yerleşim alanına, ağırlıklı olarak MS 13–14. Yy civarında yerleşilmiştir. Kalehisar, Anadolu Selçuklu döneminde kale, medrese, kervansaray, hamam, Çini fırınları ve cami gibi tesislerin yer aldığı Karahisar kent tarzını temsil etmektedir.

2019 yılında yapılan arkeolojik yüzey araştırması, Al Hüsâmîye Medresesi olarak bilinen Kalehisar'daki en iyi korunmuş binayı bir fotogrametrik anketle kaydetme ve belgeleme şansı sunmuştur. 3 boyutlu model, planlar ve kesitler içeren bu yapı araştırmasının ön bulguları burada ilk kez sunulmaktadır. Bu ön bulgular Medrese ve Anadolu Selçuklu yapı teknolojisinin yerleşim anlayışı hakkında bir çerçeve sunmaktadır. Yapı dokümantasyonuna ek olarak, yapının acil konsolidasyon önlemlerine ihtiyaç duyduğunu gösteren bir başlangıç koruma değerlendirmesi gerçekleştirilmiştir.

DIE MADRESE IN KALEHISAR VORLÄUFIGE ERGEBNISSE DES ARCHÄOLOGISCHEN SURVEY 2019

Zusammenfassung: Die archäologische Stätte von Kalehisar beherbergt die Ruinen einer der wichtigsten anatolischen Seldschuken-Siedlungen in der mittleren Schwarzmeerregion. Die

Siedlung, die auch unter dem Namen Karahisar-ı Demirlü bekannt ist, war historischen Quellen nach hauptsächlich vom 13. bis 14. Jahrhundert n. Chr. besiedelt. Kalehisar ist im Stil einer schwarzen Burgstadt der anatolischen Seldschukenzeit erbaut. Unter den erfassten Gebäudekomplexen befinden sich eine Buranlage, eine Koranschule, eine Karawanserei, ein Bad, mehrere Brennöfen und eine Moschee.

Der im Jahr 2019 durchgeführte archäologische Survey bot die Gelegenheit, das am besten erhaltene Gebäude in Kalehisar, die Al Hüsâmîye Madrese, mit einer photogrammetrischen Vermessung zu dokumentieren und bauforscherisch zu untersuchen. Die vorläufigen Ergebnisse dieser Bauaufnahme, die neben Plänen und Schnitten auch ein 3D-Modell umfasst, werden hier zum ersten Mal vorgestellt. Sie erlauben erste Einblicke in die Grundrisskonzeption der Madrese und die anatolisch-seldschukische Bautechnik. Neben der Baudokumentation wurde auch eine denkmalpflegerische Bestandsaufnahme durchgeführt, welche die Dringlichkeit konservatorischer Maßnahmen unterstreicht.

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