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Stones that Transceed Time: Stonework and Cultural Texture in Afyonkarahisar Mosques

Araştırma Makalesi

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Summary

In this study, the historical development of Ottoman-era mosque minarets in Afyonkarahisar is examined in terms of typology, the use of materials, and decorative features. As a significant element of Ottoman architecture, minarets serve not merely as structures for the call to prayer (adhan), but also as architectural components that reflect the aesthetic sensibilities and technical capabilities of their respective periods. The research explores the evolution of minarets across the early, classical, and late periods of the Ottoman Empire, analyzing how these shifts are manifested in the examples found in Afyonkarahisar. While early Ottoman minarets are characterized by a simpler, function-oriented approach, the classical period is marked by the emergence of slender, elegant, and proportionally balanced structures. In the late period, there is a noticeable increase in decorative elements, a greater diversity in the materials employed, and the integration of Western influences into the architecture. Investigations into the minarets of Afyonkarahisar reveal a common use of both stone and brick, a prevalence of cylindrical shafts, and the application of traditional decorative motifs such as *muqarnas* beneath the *şerefe* (balcony). Furthermore, the influence of regional characteristics is evident in certain minarets, where local materials and craftsmanship techniques come to the fore. Ultimately, the Ottoman mosque minarets in Afyonkarahisar serve as a local reflection of broader architectural developments across the empire. The evolution of these minarets in terms of typology, materials, and ornamentation provides valuable insight into the transformation of Ottoman architecture over time.

Keywords: Afyonkarahisar, cultural heritage, minaret,.mosque, rural architectural heritage

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Giriş

Located in the heart of Anatolia at a crossroads of major routes, Afyonkarahisar is a strategic hub that has hosted numerous civilizations throughout history. This rich heritage—spanning from the Hittites and Phrygians to the Romans and Byzantines—began to take on an Islamic identity following the arrival of the Turks in Anatolia. The city's architecture, with foundations laid during the Seljuk era and reaching its zenith under the Ottomans, has effectively transformed Afyonkarahisar into an "open-air museum." The most prominent vertical symbols of this architectural legacy are, undoubtedly, the mosques and their minarets, which rise toward the sky.

While minarets an integral component of Islamic architecture were initially conceived as purely functional structures for the call to prayer, they evolved over time into architectural elements that showcase the highest levels of art and aesthetics. In the history of Turkish architecture, a minaret serves as a kind of "identity card," with every section from its base to its conical cap embodying the engineering knowledge, material technology, and decorative sensibilities of its era. In a region like Afyonkarahisar, which boasts a rich variety of local materials such as stone, marble, and brick minarets have both preserved the classical Ottoman style and acquired unique forms shaped by the hands of local master craftsmen.

This study focuses on five key structures that define the historical silhouette of Afyonkarahisar: the Gedik Ahmet Paşa, Mısri, Mevlevi, Yeni (Abdi Ağa), and Ot Pazarı mosques. In the examination of these structures, the focus is placed not only on the external forms of the minarets but also on the structural characteristics of the materials employed (brick, *küfeki* stone, and marble) and the decorative schemes such as fluted masonry, *muqarnas*, and moldings that transform these materials into works of art. The primary objective of this study is to conduct a typological analysis of these monumental structures based on their materials and ornamentation, thereby re-evaluating the significance of Afyonkarahisar within the history of Turkish architecture, specifically through the lens of its minarets.

1. AMAÇ

The Ottoman-era mosque minarets found within the historic urban fabric of Afyonkarahisar serve as tangible evidence of the aesthetic and technical evolution of Turkish-Islamic architecture, spanning from the Early period through the Classical and Late periods. This thesis aims to examine these structures within a chronological framework, providing a comprehensive analysis of the shifts in material usage, construction techniques, and decorative approaches in minaret architecture. Within the city's architectural heritage, structures dating particularly to the second half of the 15th century exhibit a transitional character, blending the brickwork and rich geometric forms inherited from the Seljuk tradition with the spatial organization typical of the Ottoman style. The flexibility offered by brick the primary material used during this phase facilitated the creation of fluted, segmented, and prismatic shafts, as well as intricate geometric patterns, effectively transforming the minaret into a sculptural work of art.

However, as Ottoman architecture progressed toward its classical phase and subsequent stages of development, a shift in material preference occurred: brick was superseded by cut stone, which imparted a more massive and monumental appearance. This transition represents not merely a technical choice, but also a fundamental change in aesthetic sensibility. The surface dynamism and material diversity characteristic of early examples gave way to a more sober, dignified style one defined by an emphasis on proportion, where ornamentation is concentrated at specific focal points, such as *muqarnas* adorned balconies (*şerefe*) and openwork parapets. This study traces the transformation specific to Afyonkarahisar, examining the decisive role of material in the decorative program and the shift in artistic approach from "dynamic, textured surfaces" toward a "simple, monumental" aesthetic supported by scientific evidence. In doing so, it explores how local traditions were integrated with the central Ottoman style, presenting the chronological manifestations of this process within minaret architecture a synthesis intended to contribute to the field of art history.

2. LİTERATÜR TARAMASI

In Ottoman mosque architecture, minarets are not merely functional elements; they are fundamental architectural components that carry religious and symbolic significance. The emergence of minarets originated from the need for an elevated vantage point from which to call the faithful to prayer (adhan) during the early Islamic period; over time, this function acquired aesthetic and symbolic dimensions. During the Ottoman era, minarets evolved within a specific typological framework, eventually becoming standardized. This typology is generally characterized by a square base, a cylindrical shaft, and a conical cap.

Research on Ottoman minarets reveals that these structures are examined not only from an architectural perspective but also from an engineering standpoint. Given their slender and towering forms, the behavior of minarets under seismic forces has become a significant subject of study. Such research emphasizes that modeling historical minarets requires accounting for not only their geometric properties but also their material composition and structural connection details a testament to the fact that Ottoman minarets are highly sophisticated structures, both aesthetically and technically.

Studies focused specifically on Afyonkarahisar examine the general architectural characteristics of mosques rather than concentrating exclusively on minaret typology. Research on mosques in Afyonkarahisar notes that the region, having served as a vital transit point throughout history, incorporates a variety of architectural influences. This has, in turn, fostered a diversity in the design of minarets associated with these mosques.

An examination of Ottoman-era mosques in Afyonkarahisar reveals that their minarets are typically attached to the main body of the mosque and are predominantly constructed from cut stone. For instance, it is noted that the minaret of the Aksaraylı Mosque a 19th-century Ottoman structure is situated on the eastern façade and constructed of stone. Such examples demonstrate that while the minarets in Afyonkarahisar uphold the classical Ottoman architectural tradition, they are also shaped by local materials and site-specific characteristics.

Regional studies on Ottoman mosques further reveal that minarets are examined in conjunction with the overall mosque plan. Research focused on Sivas, for example, points out that Ottoman mosques were long neglected, despite the fact that these structures offer significant data regarding their plans, materials, and ornamentation. Such research facilitates a comparative analysis of mosques and their minarets in cities like Afyonkarahisar.

In conclusion, a review of the literature indicates that there is limited direct and comprehensive research specifically addressing the minarets of Ottoman mosques in Afyonkarahisar. Existing studies tend to provide information indirectly through the lens of mosque architecture, with minarets generally treated merely as components of the larger structure. Conversely, broader studies on the typology of Ottoman minarets offer a theoretical framework for understanding the examples found in Afyonkarahisar. Therefore, integrating regional research with the general body of literature on Ottoman architecture enables the derivation of more comprehensive findings. (S. Bilgin)

3. MATERYAL VE YÖNTEM

This research is designed based on qualitative research methods and is situated at the intersection of architectural history, urban culture, cultural heritage studies, and digital mapping. The study employs a combination of documentary research, document analysis, spatial analysis, and historical comparison. Furthermore, graphical timelines and a body of literature concerning architectural memory and planning have been developed.

4. KAVRAMSAL ÇERÇEVE

Ottoman minarets are shaped according to a specific typological order. This typology reveals that a minaret is a structural system composed of distinct sections. In general, a minaret consists of five main parts: the base (*kaide*), the transition element (*pabuç*), the shaft (*gövde*), the gallery (*şerefe*), and the conical cap (*külah*).

The base is the lower section where the minaret rests on the ground and which bears the structural loads. The transition element serves as a link between the base and the shaft. The shaft constitutes the longest and most prominent part of the minaret, while

the gallery is the balcony from which the call to prayer (*adhan*) is recited. The conical cap, located at the very top, serves as the crowning element that completes the structure.

This structural arrangement of minarets establishes a system of aesthetic proportions while also ensuring the static equilibrium of the structure. Given their slender and tall nature, minarets require careful engineering design. In this context, research indicates that the behavior of minarets under seismic forces is a critical consideration, and that structural analyses must be conducted with this in mind (Ertek, 2009).

Because Ottoman architecture spread across a vast geographical area, it exhibits diversity from region to region, influenced by local materials and construction techniques. This variation is as evident in the design of minarets as it is in the architecture of mosques.

As a significant transit point in Anatolia, Afyonkarahisar has served as a crossroads for various cultural and architectural influences. This is reflected in the architectural characteristics of the Ottoman-era mosques built in the city. Studies on the mosques in Afyonkarahisar highlight, in particular, the prevalence of timber-supported structures and the use of local construction techniques (Yaşayacak, 2018). In this context, an examination of the minarets in Afyonkarahisar reveals that while the general Ottoman minaret typology is preserved, local characteristics evident in the materials used (predominantly cut stone) and the construction techniques have also played a significant role. It is observed that the minarets are mostly built adjacent to the main body of the mosque and feature a restrained, simple approach to ornamentation.

This study presents the historical religious architecture of Afyonkarahisar spanning from the 14th century to the early 18th century along with the patrons of these structures and the intricate stonework details found on their minarets, organized through a visual hierarchy. Figure 1 examines the city's places of worship and their architectural elements across three primary axes. The historical progression begins with the Afyon Mevlevi Mosque, commissioned by Ulu Arif Çelebi in the 14th century, and continues through the Gedik Ahmet Paşa Mosque (designed by Architect Ayaz Ağa in 1472), the Mısri Mosque (1483), the Ot Pazarı Mosque (built by Hacı Nasuh Ağa in 1601), and the Yeni Cami (1711). In terms of materials, the study categorizes the use of cut-stone bases, brick shafts, colorful tile cladding, and lead-covered conical roofs. Regarding minaret typology, the analysis groups features such as fluted shafts, molded and rope-

patterned bands, *muqarnas* (stalactite-like ornamentation) beneath the balconies (*şerefe*), prismatic infill elements, and carved stone parapets(Figure 1).

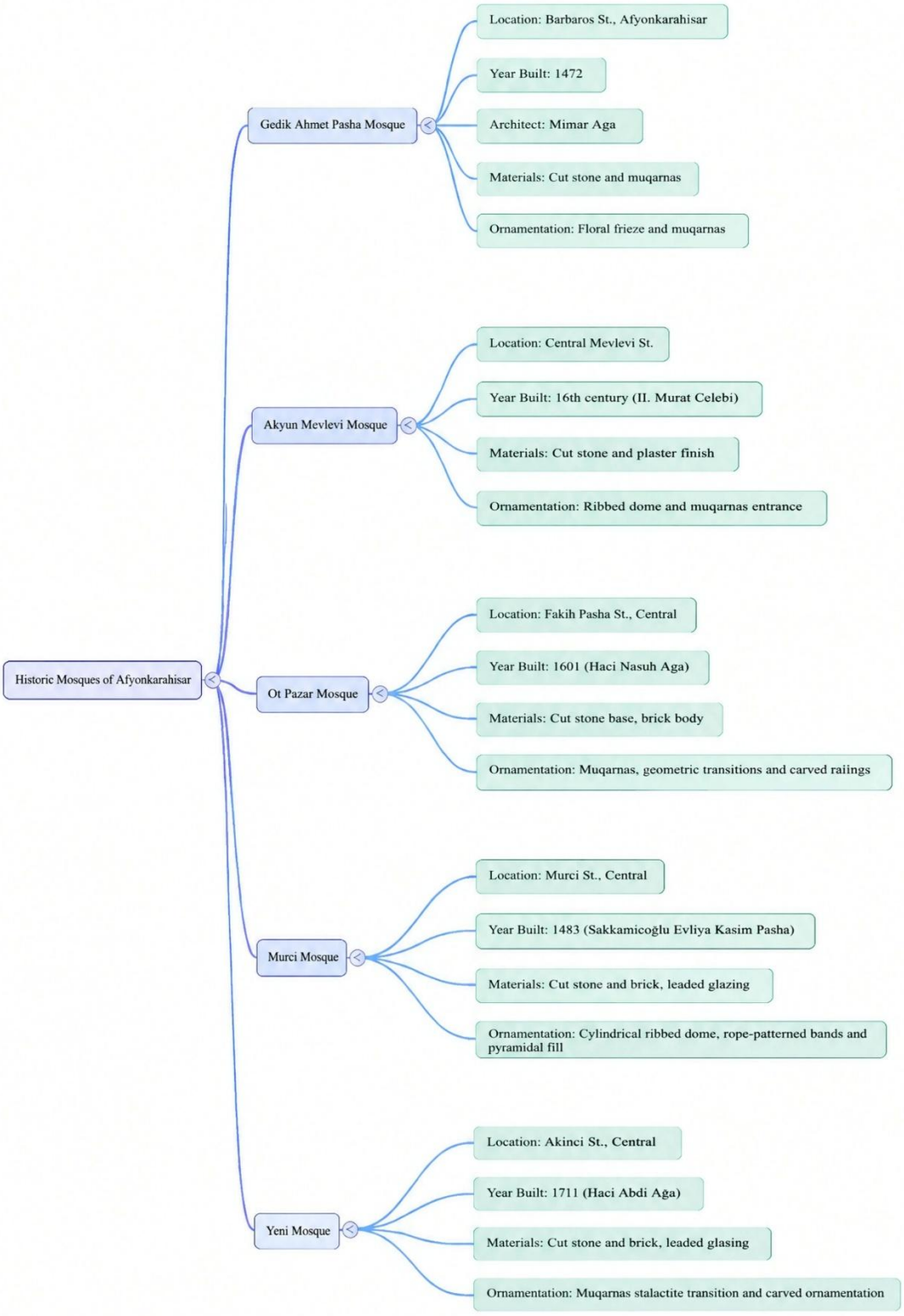


Figure 1. A mind map addressing the stonework in the mosques of Afyonkarahisar within the context of cultural heritage.

5. HISTORY OF AFYONKARAHİSAR

Afyonkarahisar is one of the oldest settlements in Anatolia, with a history dating back to around 3000 B.C. The city derives its name from the steep fortress rising atop its hill and from the poppy plant *afyon* which has been cultivated in the region since ancient times. Known as "Hapanuwa" in Hittite records, "Akroenos" during the Phrygian era, and "Akroinon" in the Byzantine period, the city began to come under Turkish control following the Battle of Manzikert in 1071.

The city acquired its definitive architectural and cultural identity during the era of the Anatolian Seljuk State and the subsequent Principality of the Sahipataoğulları. During this period, the city became not only a military hub but also a center for Sufi traditions, such as the Mevlevi order (G. Süleyman 1971).

Coming under Ottoman rule in the late 14th century, Afyonkarahisar served as a pivotal point for the empire's western campaigns and trade routes. The *külliye* (social complex) commissioned by Grand Vizier Gedik Ahmet Pasha—notably during the reign of Mehmed the Conqueror—transformed the city's physical landscape and stands as the earliest and most magnificent example of classical Ottoman architecture in the region. Structures such as the Mısri and Yeni mosques, built during the 16th and 17th centuries, adorned the city's skyline with minarets, contributing to the rich architectural layering that is the subject of this thesis.

As a gateway from Anatolia toward the west, Afyonkarahisar has served as a strategic hub throughout history. Traces of settlement dating back to 3000 BCE carry the legacy of the Hittite, Phrygian, Roman, and Byzantine civilizations into the present day. The city began to acquire its Turco-Islamic identity in the period following the Battle of Manzikert, and it developed a lasting architectural fabric during the eras of the Seljuks and the Anatolian Beyliks. Its location at the intersection of major trade and military routes ensured that the city remained a site of vibrant construction activity throughout every historical period (G. Süleyman, 1971). With the transition to Ottoman rule, the city became one of the most distinctive settings for the application of the classical Ottoman architectural style in the provinces.

The architecture of Afyonkarahisar represents a successful synthesis of local material resources and the prevailing artistic sensibilities of the era. A fundamental characteristic of the city's religious structures is the aesthetic richness derived from a diverse range of materials. The region's abundant marble deposits are showcased through high-level craftsmanship in the portals, *mihrabs* (prayer niches), and bases of the minarets found in its mosques (A. Oktay, 1989).In the design of the minarets which define the city's vertical silhouette art is intrinsically linked to construction technique. Brickwork, a continuation of the Seljuk tradition, serves not merely as a structural component in the shafts of the minarets, but also as an ornamental element. In monumental structures such as the Gedik Ahmet Paşa Mosque, for instance, fluted brick arrangements create a sense of plastic depth through the interplay of light and shadow (Ö. Gönül, 1992). Although this tradition eventually gave way to a simpler style characterized primarily by the use of cut stone during later Ottoman periods, the city's overarching artistic identity has always remained rooted in the honest application of materials.

Minarets, which serve as the symbolic language of Islamic architecture, are in the specific context of Afyonkarahisar more than just functional architectural components; they are aesthetic monuments that reflect the historical layers of the city (Doğan Kuban, 2007). In this light, each mosque serves as a historical document, conveying the technical proficiency and artistic tastes of the era in which it was built.

In the Turco-Islamic urban planning tradition, mosques serve as the primary focal points; positioned at the heart of the settlement, they dictate the arrangement of other urban elements such as marketplaces, bathhouses, madrasas, and residences around them. In the specific case of Afyonkarahisar, this pattern is clearly observable in the organic urban fabric that extends from the foothills of the citadel toward the plains. The city's architectural character is defined by the interplay between the vertical lines of monumental religious structures and the horizontal balance of its civic architecture (Kuban, Doğan, 2007).

Religious structures in Afyonkarahisar particularly those built as part of a *külliye* (a complex of buildings centered around a mosque) also shaped the city's socio-economic life. For instance, the Gedik Ahmet Paşa (*İmaret*) Complex, established in the 15th century, defined a new center for the city and catalyzed the development of surrounding commercial activities. These structures are not merely physical masses; they serve as vital landmarks that embody the city's historical continuity (Gönçer, Süleyman, 1971).

Within the city's skyline, the most prominent contribution of religious architecture comes in the form of minarets. Set against the backdrop of Afyonkarahisar's rugged citadel and uneven topography, these minarets introduce a vertical rhythm, establishing a distinct visual hierarchy. In terms of materials, these structures shaped by the harmonious combination of stone and brick represent the pinnacle of local craftsmanship and tradition. The *muqarnas* (ornamental corbelling) beneath the balconies of the minarets, the fluted decorations on their shafts, and the stonework of their bases constitute the aesthetic memory of the city (Aslanapa, Oktay, 1989). Consequently, examining a religious structure in Afyonkarahisar is, in effect, a way of reading the city's historical, social, and technical development as a whole (Öney, Gönül, 1992).

This text describes the architectural and structural evolution of mosque minarets in Afyonkarahisar from the 14th to the 18th century. The accompanying visual compares structures from the early and classical Ottoman periods with those from the later Ottoman period.

The minarets are examined in terms of their shaft form, construction materials, the transition elements beneath the balcony (*şerefe*), *muqarnas* (ornamental corbeling), and decorative features. While the Afyon Mevlevi Mosque, Gedik Ahmet Paşa Mosque, and Mısri Mosque reflect characteristics of the early and classical periods, the Ot Pazarı Mosque and Yeni Mosque exhibit features of later Ottoman architecture (Figure 2).

Overall, the visual demonstrates that, over time, the minarets underwent the following changes:

- A shift from the use of cut stone to brick and various combinations of other materials;
- The development of fluted and ornamented shafts, alongside simpler, cylindrical ones;

- The incorporation of *muqarnas*, prismatic infill, and diverse geometric solutions for the transitions beneath the balcony;
- An evolution in minaret design driven by the interplay between construction materials, ornamentation, and the architectural sensibilities of each respective period.

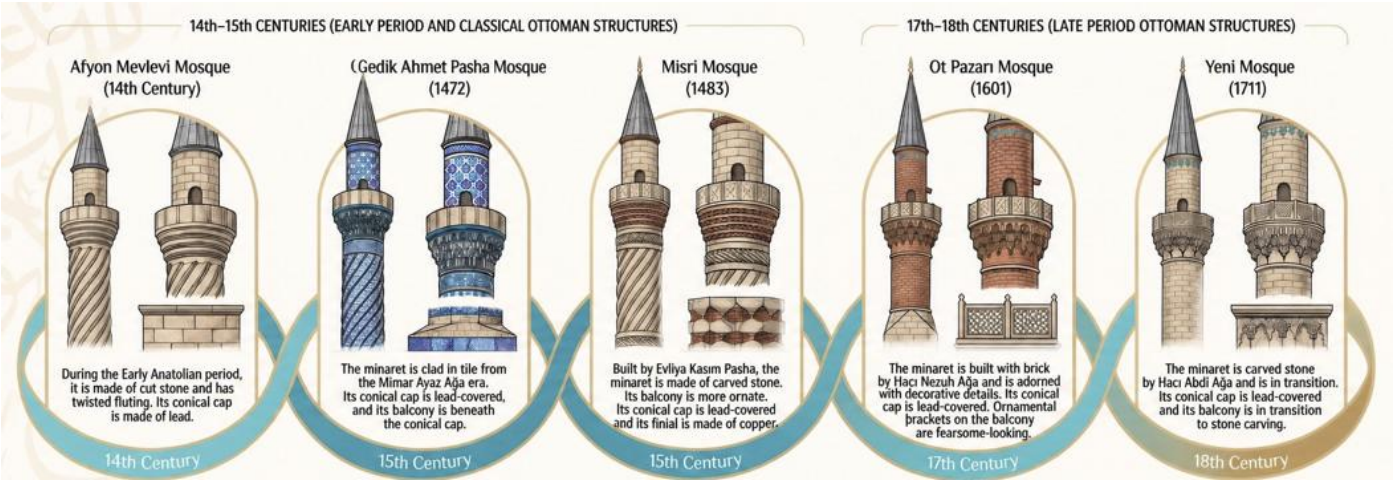


Figure 2. The architectural transformation of mosque minarets in Afyonkarahisar from the 14th to the 18th century.

1. ANALYSIS OF MINARET ARCHITECTURE

A minaret consists of six main sections that rise in a specific hierarchy, from the base to the conical cap. Although each of these sections may vary depending on the materials and decorative sensibilities of the era in which it was built, their fundamental functions remain constant (Figure 3).

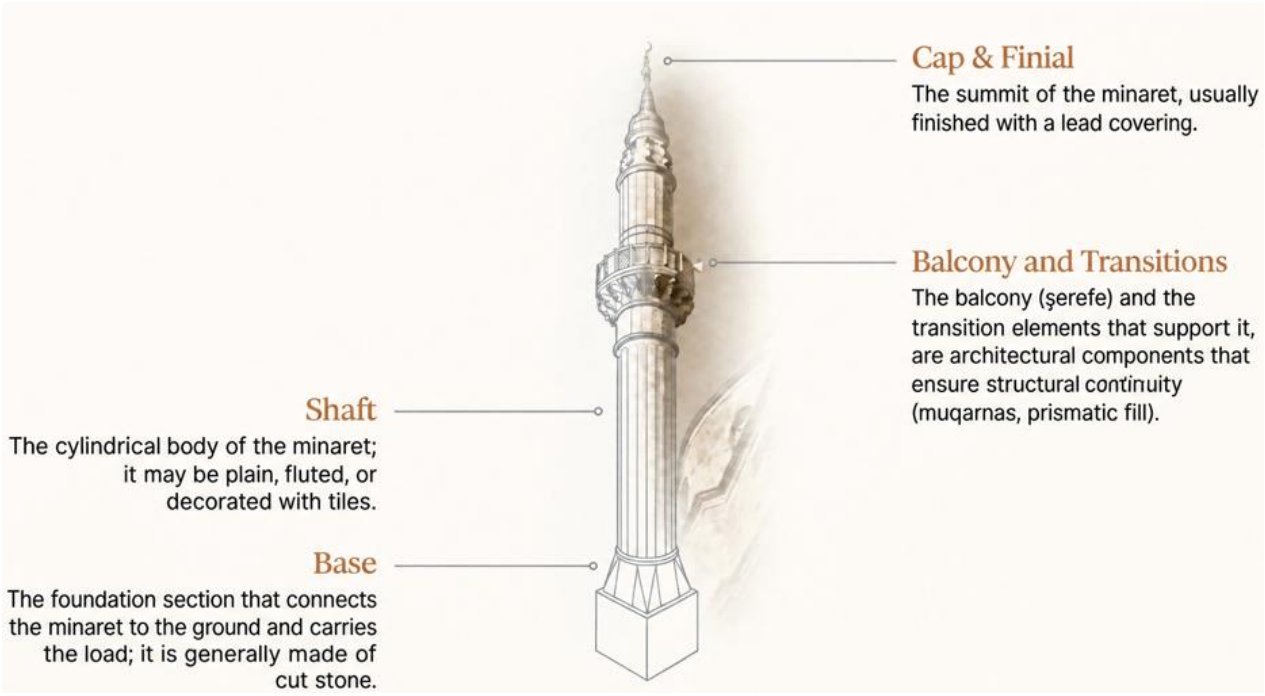


Figure 3. A schematic drawing illustrating the primary architectural components of a minaret.

Base (Pedestal)

This is the lowermost section of a minaret, which comes into contact with the ground and supports the weight of the entire structure. It is typically situated either adjacent to the main wall of the mosque or upon an independent foundation. As observed in examples found in Afyonkarahisar, the base is generally constructed using cut stone, a more durable material. The form of the base may be square, polygonal, or circular (Aslanapa, Oktay, 1989).

Transition Segment (Base-to-Shaft Transition)

This is the section that facilitates the formal transition between the base (pedestal) and the vertical shaft. It typically features a "chamfered" (beveled) structure when transitioning from a square-shaped base to a cylindrical or polygonal shaft. This component serves as a critical intermediate element that establishes the aesthetic balance of the minaret (Kuban, Doğan, 2007).

Shaft

This is the longest and most striking part of a minaret. As seen in the Mısri and Gedik Ahmet Paşa mosques in Afyonkarahisar, the shaft can be constructed using brickwork—featuring fluted designs or diamond-patterned arrangements or with smooth-cut stone. Inside the shaft, there is a spiral staircase that ascends toward the top (Öney, Gönül, 1992).

Sherefe (Balcony)

This is the balcony encircling the shaft of a minaret, from which the muezzin calls the faithful to prayer. The underside, where the balcony joins the shaft, is typically supported by tiered decorative elements known as *muqarnas*. The railings of the *sherefe* showcase some of the most exquisite examples of marble or stone craftsmanship (Hasol, Doğan, 2005).

Petek (Shaft Section)

This is the section located above the gallery (şerefe) and extending up to the conical cap (külah); it is narrower than the main body of the minaret. This part allows the minaret to visually taper as it rises toward the sky and provides a base upon which the conical cap rests (Bozkurt, Nebi, 2005).

The Conical Cap (*Külah*) and the Finial (*Alem*)

The *külah* is a conical or pyramidal roof that covers the very top of a minaret. It is typically constructed from stone or wood clad in lead. At the absolute peak of this cap sits the *alem* a metal finial often shaped like a crescent or a star. The *alem* serves as the terminal point of the minaret and carries symbolic significance (Kuban, Doğan, 2007).

1.1.Construction Materials Used

The minarets of Afyonkarahisar are significant examples of the "mixed material" (*opus mixtum*) tradition, which combines the strength of stone, the flexibility of brick, and the elegance of marble into a single structure.

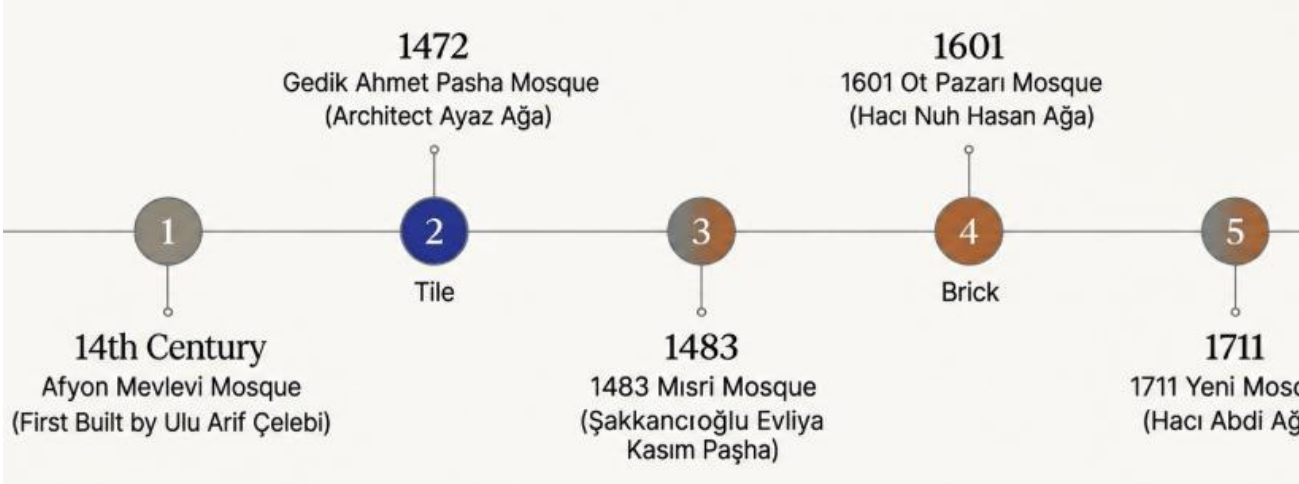


Figure 4: Four-Century Transformation of the Afyonkarahisar Skyline

This figure illustrates the historical and architectural transformation of the Afyonkarahisar urban skyline over the course of four centuries. It provides a comparative view of building styles, minarets, and shifts in the urban fabric across different periods (Figure 4).

Stone Material (Cut Stone and *Küfeki*)

High-strength cut stone was generally preferred for the base and plinth sections, which bear the heaviest load of the minaret. In monumental structures across Anatolia, stone serves not merely as a load-bearing element but also as a protective armor, shielding the structure against climatic conditions. Despite the presence of marble deposits in Afyonkarahisar, the use of local andesite and hard, limestone-derived stones in the lower sections of minarets is widespread (M. Sözen 1975).

Brick Material and Laying Techniques

Brick is the primary material preferred for minaret shafts, owing to both its lightweight nature and the vertical flexibility it provides. The brickwork observed in the Gedik Ahmet Paşa and Mısri mosques in Afyonkarahisar demonstrates that the material was employed not only for structural purposes but also for decorative ones. Arranging bricks at various angles creating diamond, zigzag, or fluted patterns results in a rich texture across the surface of the minaret. The use of brick serves as a reflection of an architectural heritage or "architectural genetics" that was carried from Central Asia to Anatolia (E. Selda, 2003).

Marble Craftsmanship

Marble is a prestigious material used in minarets most notably for the railings of the *şerefe* (balcony), *muqarnas* (ornamental corbelling) transitions, and occasionally as cladding for the base. As Afyonkarahisar has been a center for marble since antiquity, the quality of the marble used in these minaret details rivals that found in the imperial palaces of Istanbul. By reflecting light along the vertical axis of the structure, marble imparts a sense of visual lightness (A. Günkut 1990).

Horasan Mortar (Binding Agent)

In vertical structures such as minarets which are exposed to wind and tremors the quality of the mortar used to bind stone and brick is of vital importance. *Horasan* mortar, employed in traditional architecture, consists of a mixture of crushed tile, sand, and lime. Over time, this mortar undergoes carbonation, integrating with the structural elements and granting the minaret a degree of elastic resilience. Unlike modern cement, *Horasan* mortar allows the structure to "breathe," thereby extending the lifespan of the materials (C. Yılmaz 2004).

6.2 An Inventory and Analysis of Minarets of Ottoman-Era Mosques in Afyonkarahisar

Within the scope of the study, five historical mosques and their minarets located in the city center of Afyonkarahisar were examined.

6.2.1 Minaret of the Gedik Ahmet Pasha (Imaret) Mosque

The minaret of the Gedik Ahmet Pasha Mosque is a structure that reflects the simple and balanced characteristics of Ottoman-era stonework. The primary construction material is cut stone; the stone blocks are arranged in regular courses, bonded with a lime-based mortar. The gallery (şerefe) is also constructed of stone, while the conical cap at the top is covered with lead a traditional technique. The use of stone not only ensures durability but also lends the structure a robust appearance.

In terms of ornamentation, the minaret is quite understated. The shaft is devoid of elaborate decoration; its aesthetic appeal is derived instead from the orderly arrangement of the stones and the slender proportions of the structure. The most notable decorative element is found beneath the gallery, where *muqarnas* stepped, corbelled stone ornamentation are employed. These *muqarnas* create an

interplay of light and shadow, imbuing the minaret with a sense of dynamism. Subtle moldings appear on the base and the transitional sections. Overall, the ornamentation is applied with a restrained approach that complements the architectural form, embodying the simplicity and elegance characteristic of Ottoman architecture.

6.2.2 Minaret of the Mısri Mosque

The minaret of the Mısri Mosque in Afyonkarahisar is an elegant structure that embodies the traditional characteristics of Ottoman-era mosque architecture. Constructed primarily of cut stone—with rubble stone and mortar also utilized in certain sections—the material ensures both the structural integrity and longevity of the edifice. The shaft is designed with a slender, soaring form, while the gallery (şerefe) and the conical cap (külah) are shaped in accordance with the traditional Ottoman minaret aesthetic.

In terms of ornamentation, the minaret presents a remarkably understated appearance. The surface of the shaft is devoid of elaborate decoration; instead, its aesthetic impact is derived from its proportions and the quality of the stonework. The rows of *muqarnas* (stalactite-like corbelling) beneath the gallery serve as the most striking decorative element; they facilitate a structural transition while creating a dynamic visual effect through the interplay of light and shadow. Subtle moldings found on the base and the transitional sections further complement this decorative scheme. Overall, by eschewing ostentatious embellishments, the minaret of the Mısri Mosque reflects the simple, refined character of Ottoman architecture through its fine stonework, balanced proportions, and *muqarnas* detailing.

6.2.3 Minaret of the Mevlevi (Tomb) Mosque

The minaret of the Mevlevi (Tomb) Mosque in Afyonkarahisar possesses a simple and functional character, in harmony with the overall architecture of the structure. Constructed of stone, the minaret features a single gallery (*şerefe*) and is situated at the northwest corner of the mosque. The cut stone used in its construction ensures both durability and an appearance consistent with the historical fabric of the building. Its current form is the result of various repairs, and it is known to have been rebuilt in 1962.

In terms of ornamentation, the minaret exhibits a highly restrained approach. The shaft is devoid of elaborate decoration; its aesthetic impact is achieved primarily through refined proportions, quality stonework, and a sense of verticality. The *muqarnas* (stalactite-like) corbeling beneath the gallery serves as the most striking decorative element. Furthermore, the profiles and moldings found on the base and the transitional sections add a sense of dynamism to the structure. Overall, the minaret of the Mevlevi Tomb Mosque can be considered a simple yet elegant example of the Ottoman-era minaret tradition, characterized by solid stonework and balanced architectural proportions rather than ostentatious ornamentation.

6.2.4. Minaret of the Yeni Mosque

An examination of the minaret of the Yeni Camii (New Mosque) reveals that it embodies the characteristic features of Ottoman minaret architecture in terms of both materials and ornamentation. The base of the minaret is constructed from dark-colored cut stone, while the shaft is built using brick. The orderly arrangement of bricks along the cylindrical shaft lends an aesthetic quality to the structure, and the transition between the stone base and the brick shaft reinforces both its structural stability and architectural integrity.

In terms of ornamentation, the most striking feature of the minaret is the area beneath the *şerefe* (balcony). This section showcases elaborate rows of *muqarnas* (stalactite-like corbeling) and exquisite examples of stone craftsmanship. Below the *muqarnas* and encircling the balcony are bands of geometric decoration; these embellishments create an interplay of light and shadow, enhancing the visual richness of the minaret. The shaft itself is largely devoid of ornamentation, with its decorative effect derived instead from the rhythmic pattern of the brickwork. Overall, the minaret of the Yeni Camii stands as an architectural element that is both functional and aesthetically compelling, distinguished by its combined use of stone and brick, as well as the intricate ornamentation concentrated around its balcony.

6.2.5 Minaret of the Ot Pazarı Mosque

The minaret of the Ot Pazarı Mosque is a simple yet elegant example of Ottoman-era mosque architecture in Afyonkarahisar. Its base is constructed from cut stone, while the upper sections feature a combination of stone and brick. The cylindrical shaft, with its slender and tall appearance, lends a strong verticality to the structure. The materials employed not only enhance the structural durability but also help preserve the minaret's historical character.

In terms of ornamentation, the minaret reflects a restrained approach. The shaft is left largely unadorned, with decoration concentrated primarily around the *şerefe* (the balcony). The *muqarnas* (stalactite-like corbelling) located beneath the balcony serve as the most striking decorative elements. Furthermore, the moldings and profile details surrounding the balcony add a sense of dynamism to the structure, while the rhythmic pattern of the brickwork creates an additional decorative effect. Overall, the minaret of the Ot Pazarı Mosque stands out not through ostentatious decoration, but through the harmonious use of materials, well-balanced proportions, and *muqarnas* detailing perfectly embodying the simple and balanced aesthetic sensibility of Ottoman architecture.

2. FINDINGS

In Afyonkarahisar, the minarets of mosques dating back to the Ottoman era serve as significant indicators of the architectural sensibilities of their respective periods; the minarets of the Gedik Ahmet Paşa, Mevlevi, Mısri, Yeni, and Ot Pazarı mosques are notable examples in this regard. As these structures date from different centuries, they exhibit diversity in both their construction techniques and stylistic characteristics.

The Gedik Ahmet Paşa Mosque, which dates to the 15th century, is a key example reflecting the characteristic features of early Ottoman architecture. Minarets from this period generally prioritize robustness, simplicity, and functionality, with a restrained use of ornamental elements. Constructed primarily of cut stone, these minarets typically feature a cylindrical shaft, and decorative details are kept understated, serving to accentuate the structural components (Kuban, 2007).

In contrast, structures such as the Mevlevi and Mısri mosques—dating to the 17th and 18th centuries—show a continuation of the classical Ottoman style, yet they are distinguished by more slender proportions and more pronounced detailing beneath the *şerefe* (the balcony from which the call to prayer is issued). During this period, *muqarnas* (stalactite-like corbelling) transition elements and select decorative features introduced a sense of aesthetic dynamism to minaret architecture. However, in Anatolian cities like Afyonkarahisar, this ornamental approach appears more restrained compared to examples found in the capital (Goodwin, 1992).

As the 19th century approached, the influence of Westernization began to permeate Ottoman architecture, leading to the emergence of a distinct architectural language in structures such as the Yeni and Ot Pazarı mosques. Minarets from this period are distinguished by their slender, elongated shafts, the occasional use of varied materials, and a more restrained approach to ornamentation. In particular, the reduction in decorative elements with a greater emphasis placed on the form itself is considered a hallmark of the late Ottoman period (Çelik, 2010).

Ultimately, the minarets of the mosques examined here reflect an evolution from the simple, robust character of early Ottoman architecture toward the style of the later period, which is defined by more slender proportions and the incorporation of diverse influences. This transition serves as a reflection of shifts not only in architectural aesthetics but also in construction technology and the use of materials.

In Afyonkarahisar, the minarets of mosques dating from the Ottoman period exhibit variations both in terms of the era in which they were built and their local context regarding the materials employed and their decorative styles. A comparative analysis of the minarets of the Gedik Ahmet Paşa, Mevlevi, Mısri, Yeni, and Ot Pazarı mosques reveals distinct typological groupings.

In terms of materials, the use of cut stone is predominant in early Ottoman structures. In the minaret of the Gedik Ahmet Paşa Mosque, for instance, the fine cut-stone masonry serves as a key element that reinforces the monumentality of the structure; stone was favored during this period for its durability and aesthetic coherence. In later periods, however, brick began to be used alongside stone with

some examples even featuring brickwork techniques on the minaret shaft a trend attributed to both economic factors and regional building traditions (Kuban, 2007).

The minarets of the Mevlevi and Mısri mosques employ a hybrid technique, combining stone and brick. In these structures, the base is typically constructed of stone, while the shaft consists of either brick or an alternating pattern of stone and brick. Such practices are frequently encountered in Ottoman architecture across Anatolia, where the diversity of materials also introduces a sense of visual dynamism (Aslanapa, 2005).

As for the minarets of the Yeni and Ot Pazarı mosques, which date to the late Ottoman period, the use of materials reflects a simpler, more function-oriented approach. While stone is the predominant material used in these structures, it is notable that the craftsmanship is less meticulous and decorative elements are kept to a minimum. This can be explained by the economic conditions of the period and a trend toward simplification in architectural philosophy (Çelik, 2010).

In terms of ornamentation, a comparison reveals that decoration in early-period minarets is quite limited, with the emphasis placed primarily on structural elements. The fluted shaft form and sparse tile decorations found on the minaret of the Gedik Ahmet Paşa Mosque reflect the restrained approach to ornamentation characteristic of this era. In contrast, the minarets of the Mevlevi Mosque and the Mısri Mosque feature more pronounced decorative elements, particularly in the *muqarnas* (stalactite-like corbelling) beneath the *şerefe* (balcony).

In late-period minarets, the approach to ornamentation appears significantly simplified, with decoration relegated to the background. In the minarets of the Yeni Mosque and the Ot Pazarı Mosque, decorative elements are highly restricted; instead, the aesthetic effect is achieved primarily through form and proportion. This aligns with the broader trend toward simplification observed in 19th-century Ottoman architecture (Goodwin, 1992).

Ultimately, the minarets examined can be categorized into three primary typological groups based on their materials and ornamentation: early-period minarets, characterized by a predominance of cut stone and simple decoration; classical-period minarets, featuring a combination of stone and brick with limited ornamentation; and late-period minarets, which are simpler, more functional, and

possess minimal decoration. This typological distinction highlights both chronological evolution and variations in local practice (Tablo 1).

Tablo 1: Classification of Material Types Used in the Mosques Examined

Mosque (Date)	Base & Shaft Material	Shaft Type	Transition Below the Balcony
Mevlevi (14th century)	Cut Stone	Cylindrical	Classical Muqarnas
Gedik A. Pasha (1472)	Cut Stone & Brick	Cylindrical & Brick	Muqarnas
Misri (1483)	Cut Stone & Brick	Drum & Cylindrical (Threaded)	Prismatic Transition
Ot Pazarı (1601)	Cut Stone (Base) & Brick (Shaft)	Straight/Geometric	Petek Sarkıtlı Muqarnas
Yeni Mosque (1711)	Cut Stone & Brick	Straight	Stalactite Muqarnas Transition

3. CONCLUSION

An examination of Ottoman-era mosque minarets in Afyonkarahisar reveals typological differences between those from the early and late periods in terms of materials, ornamentation, and construction techniques. The influence of Seljuk architecture is clearly evident in minarets built during the early Ottoman period, characterized primarily by the use of brick and a preference for understated decoration. Minarets from this era feature thicker shafts and a shorter, more robust structure designed for durability. Ornamentation is limited, consisting mainly of geometric brick patterns.

By the late Ottoman period, significant technical and aesthetic shifts occurred in minaret architecture. The widespread adoption of cut stone allowed for the creation of taller, slenderer, and more elegant structures. Advancements in construction techniques enabled the building of higher minarets, while features such as *muqarnas* (stalactite-like vaulting) beneath the balconies (*şerefe*), intricate stonework, and Baroque-inspired decorative elements began to appear. Furthermore, while functionality was the primary focus in early-period minarets, aesthetic considerations became increasingly prominent in those of the later period.

It is our significant responsibility to gain a proper understanding of the surviving wooden minarets and *ezanlık* (muezzin platforms) and, in turn, to consciously

preserve and sustain them as this is essential for the continuity of our architectural heritage. In this study, we examined the minarets of Ottoman-era mosques in Afyonkarahisar, analyzing their characteristics such as materials and ornamentation from the early to the late Ottoman period, and compared their evolution over time to identify typological differences.

As Ottoman architecture evolved, minarets began to feature more slender proportions, taller shafts, and more intricate ornamentation. This development was driven not only by an increased focus on aesthetics but also by advancements in construction techniques and stone craftsmanship. The ornamentation and elegant forms observed in late-period minarets reflect the transition of Ottoman architecture from its classical phase toward periods influenced by Western styles.

Consequently, the Ottoman-era minarets in Afyonkarahisar are significant structures, as they both demonstrate the continuity of Anatolian Turkish architecture and illustrate the transformative processes within Ottoman architectural history. The preservation and detailed study of these structures are of great importance for ensuring that the region's cultural heritage is passed on to future generations.

In conclusion, the Ottoman minarets in Afyonkarahisar clearly reflect the architectural evolution that took place over time. While the early examples are defined by a simple, sturdy approach rooted in the Seljuk tradition, the later examples showcase more ornate designs and refined craftsmanship, reflecting the classical Ottoman style as well as Western architectural influences. This transformation illustrates the development not only of architectural philosophy but also of the materials, construction technologies, and aesthetic sensibilities employed throughout the period.

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