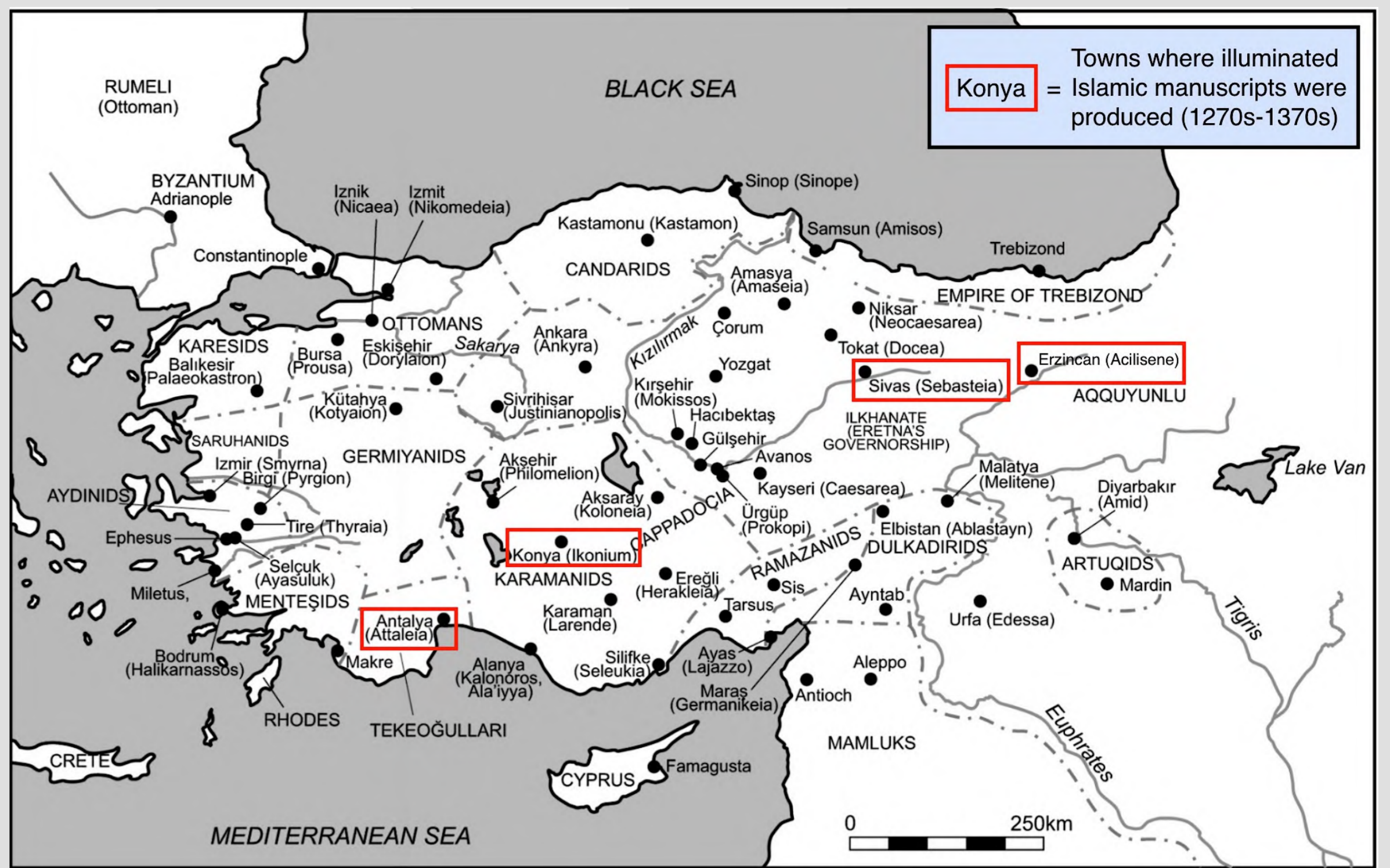


Patrons and Artists at the Crossroads

The Islamic Arts of the Book in the Lands of Rūm, 1270s – 1370s

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Anatolia in the 1330s (Peacock et al. 2015. Map 4, with edits)



What is this project about?

This thesis is about the production and patronage of Islamic illuminated manuscripts produced in central and eastern Anatolia (known in Arabic as 'Bilād al-Rūm') between the 1270s and 1370s. Although most of the Arabic and Persian manuscripts that I will be analysing are religious texts, some cover historical or legal topics. In this period, political authority was fractured and contested by the Mongol Ilkhanate, Turkish principalities and various Christian states. Despite this instability, cultural life in the cities of Anatolia flourished. The manuscripts that I discuss testify to this fact, and give fascinating insights into the nature and extent of artistic patronage and production in this under-studied context.



Why study this topic?

Research concerning the cultural and artistic life of medieval Anatolia has made welcome advances in recent years. Scholars have increasingly challenged the ethno-national frameworks and terms that previously dominated academic literature on the subject, through a renewed focus on the circumstances in which the academic field developed in the early twentieth century. As a result, new appreciations of the fragmented political scene, and the ethnic and religious diversity of medieval Anatolia have emerged. Published works to date, however, focus mainly on architecture and have not yet addressed the Islamic arts of the book in this context. This thesis aims to fill this gap. The manuscripts assessed within the thesis are an important resource for better understanding the art history of late medieval Anatolia and have yet to be examined in detail, or put into their wider cultural context. Although relatively neglected in surveys of Islamic or Anatolian art, these manuscripts are profoundly rich in both visual detail, and in historical inscriptions.



Codicological methods

Codicology - the study of the material aspects of books - puts physical manuscript evidence at the centre of analysis. The structure of the present study is shaped not by the political narrative but by the information obtained from close examination of manuscripts. In order to fully acknowledge the complexity of the book as an object, I have considered paper, binding, calligraphy and illumination together, rather than as separate media. Such an approach also challenges secondary scholarship that removes art works from their contexts and artificially dissects their constituent parts.



Primary sources

- 25 Persian and Arabic manuscripts
- Historical chronicles
- Sufi hagiographies
- Endowment deeds
- Travelogues
- Fiscal accounts

Selected bibliography

- Patricia Blessing. 2014. *Rebuilding Anatolia after the Mongol Conquest: Islamic Architecture in the Lands of Rūm, 1240-1330*. Farnham: Ashgate
- A.C.S. Peacock et al (eds). 2015. *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate