There were also a few high-ranking imperial medreses in Istanbul and other towns like Edirne or Medina where the professors were awarded more than 60 asgls daily.

Upon completion of his studies at the lowest level, a student would receive a certificate confirming his qualification and granting him the right to attend a higher level medrese. Students at high school level were called "sofa"; when they became university students they were named "damnumeel'. University graduates could become judges of Islamic law (hadi'), muf'tis (religious leader) and professors (müdderis).²

2. "Darülhurras", "däršülhadis" and medical medreses were special with training professionals in different fields. One had to graduate from primary school (sokhan nukhbat) or have an equivalent education in order to be able to attend a darülkurşa, where reading and reciting the Qur'an with style was taught. Darülhurras trained personnel (mam, müezzin) for mosques².

Darülhurras was a theological college, focusing mainly on the study of the words and deeds of the Prophet Mohammad (hadith) and related subjects.² The prerequisite to attend a darülhurras was to have a university degree.

Until mid-sixteenth century, there was no medical college in the Ottoman Empire; physicians were trained in hospitals. During the construction of the Sileymaniye Complex, the first Ottoman medical college was established. Books prepared by native and foreign scholars were part of the syllabus of Ottoman medical education. The practical part of the training comprised clinical work on the patients in hospitals.³

Usually each medrese was chaired by a professor (müdderis) but there were medreses where more than one professor lectured ². One or two students were appointed to assist a professor in reviewing students work. The assistants were called "müdah" and their wages were paid from the wakf budget.

Medrese graduates intending to go into teaching enrolled by registering their name in the Imperial Book (Razvançılı Hümâyûn Dâfı') and wait for a vacancy. Those who proved to be talented during their term as novices (müslüz), would receive a diploma (müdderislik rüsü²). Professors started their career from the lowest level and were promoted in time. To hold a post at a high ranking medrese in Istanbul usually paved the way for top administrative or religious jobs³. Scholars could be promoted to become a judge (hadi') and later given a rise to the post of kâcher; some were appointed şefiylâli"³.

Originally mosques and the premises of the teachers were used for teaching. Separate buildings with classrooms and student cells developed later. By building medreses, it was possible to stop the disturbance caused by students reading or practicing loudly in the mosques³ and to provide accommodation for pupils coming from other cities. Medreses were run with the help of pious foundations (vakıfs), offering free lodging and education for students. Wahls also provided scholarships to the students in the form of pocket money. Some medreses were attached to imperial complexes and the students could take free meals from the nearby public kitchen. According to information taken from the trust deeds (vakıflar) of imperial complexes, each student had a cell. In more modest medreses two students stayed in the same room. In some cases, the professor, his assistant, the doorkeeper (bevval) and the clean up man (terreba)² also had rooms in the medrese. Founders usually dedicated valuable books to medreses. Librarians took care of the books and kept the record of the loans³. The manuscripts were kept in bookcases within the classrooms.

THE HISTORY OF OTTOMAN MEDRESES

There is a lot of research and publication about the history of medrese education in the Ottoman Empire, analysing it from various aspects; how the educational system was sustained, how the medreses were distributed over the Empire, how the scholars were educated, how good were Ottoman scholars in scientific matters and how the system for grading medreses operated³.

In the early years of the Ottoman State, the medrese system inherited from the Seljukids continued³. According to historians, the first Ottoman medrese was established in 1331, in Iznik.² Pakinre disagrees with this view an asserts that the first Ottoman medrese was founded in Iznik, but since it was at the far end of the Ottoman Principality, Orhania and other medreses in Iznik developed more quickly³. It is claimed that the Orhanya Medrese in Iznik, to which leading scholars of the period were appointed.
ed, held its prominent position for a while but was surpassed by the medresses of Orhunzazi (1355), Murat Hikavendigaz (1365/66), Yildirim Bayezid (1388) and Celebi Mehmet (1418/19) which were founded in Bursa after the conquest of that city. As Edirne became the capital of the Ottoman State, the Darülb华adis of Murat II (1435) and the Saatli Medrese (1447/48) near the Üç Şerefeli Mosque became the leading scholarly institutes of their time²¹. After the conquest of Istanbul, the educational center of the empire moved into the new capital. At first some Byzantine churches and monasteries served as medresses²². In a very short period of time many architectural complexes were built by Mehmed the Conqueror and his viziers, founding new schools to raise the educated people to run the government offices²³. The eight medresses of Fatih Complex, named as Sahn-i Senam and their prep schools (seyyahane) mark a significant step in the higher education of the Ottoman Empire²⁴.

The Ottoman medrese system was remodelled in the fifteenth century, during the time of Mehmed the Conqueror (Fatih). Ottoman medresses were arranged in an order of rank according to their level of teaching: “Hüfşiyet-i Fırvat” (Twenty’s), Mişah (Thirty’s), Tolek (Forty’s), Huriq and Dâhil (Fifty’s), and Sahn-i Senam²⁵. The medresses of Fatih Complex were established as the highest ranking institutions dealing with Islamic sciences, Islamic law and Arabic literature and they maintained their leading position until mid-sixteenth century²⁶. With the foundation of Sileymaniye Complex, a medical school was founded and some new medresses teaching mathematics and hâtibı were added to the top of the system which formerly culminated with the Sahn-i Senam. The 12 steps of the new system were as follows²⁷:

- İtilif-i hürîq
- Haraket-i hürîq
- İtilif-i dâhil
- Haraket-i dâhil
- Musallatı Sahn
- Sahn-i Senam
- İtilif-i almâşık
- Haraket-i almâşık
- Musallatı Sâileymaniye
- Hamvâ-i Sâileymaniye
- Sâileymaniye (incorporating four medresses) and Sâileymaniye Darülbâdis.

At the end of the sixteenth century, problems arising from political interventions in the appointment of professors affected the quality of up to keep the system work in an efficient way were violated. Titles were granted by favoritism and appointments of unqualified people to important positions were harmful²⁸. Furthermore, the pressure exerted by conservative circles to reduce the hours allocated to positive sciences resulted in making medrese education more limited and outdated²⁹.

In the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, some attempts were made in order to pur medresses in order. In 1750, Mahmut I sent an imperial order to the Şeyhülislâm in order to dismiss professors who had been appointed by way of favoritism²⁹. Similar corrective measures were also taken in the period of Selim III, however they fell short of being successful³⁰. Being aware of the fact that traditional education was not sufficient to catch up with the modern developments, Mahmut II took the initiative to set up an educational system similar to that of Europe³¹. New medical, engineering and military schools with programs taken from Europe were founded³². No serious measures were taken into consideration to improve medresses; even the era of the First Constitution (Tanzimat) did not bring a new curriculum to Ottoman medresses. As medresses fell short of being modern administrators equipped with the necessary information to meet modern administrative and judicial problems, a new school for training judges and governors was established in 1853 under the title of Muallimkan-i Nâvrâhî³³.

It was after the Second Constitutional Government that the revision of Ottoman medresses was considered seriously³⁴. With the “İlah-i Medarid Nizamnamesi” issued in 1914, the medresses in Istanbul were joined together under the title of “Dar‘ül Hikâyât-i Aleyye” and their syllabus was modified. The new system had three stages, each comprising of four year sections. The revised syllabus included positive sciences and foreign languages as well³⁵. However, since the teaching was not based on experimental methods, it was difficult to succeed in developing a real scientific attitude of mind in the medrese students³⁶. After the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, attempts were made to solve the problems in the old educational system. A new law, “Tevhid-i Tedrisat” was adopted on 16 March 1924. According to the principle of the Unification of Education³⁷, enforced by the law, the new republic established modern schools and universities and medresses were abolished.

THE ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES OF OTTOMAN MEDRESES

In Early Ottoman architecture medrese designs followed the Seljuk tradition, but later a different line of development was adopted. The most striking difference between the Seljuk and Ottoman medresses is in the form of classrooms and the preference of open courtyard typology by the Ottomans. In Seljuk architecture, eyvans serving as classrooms were the major elements of the medresse designs. In Ottoman architecture eyvans
were replaced by domed classrooms. Ottomans abandoned the enclosed medrese type of the Seljukid period. The change took place gradually. During the transition which lasted until the end of the fifteenth century, open courtyards medreses reflecting the new concepts and ideas in Ottoman medrese design were distributed widely. This has not hindered some interesting compositions elaborating the 4-evyan scheme and the enclosed medrese typology inherited from the Seljukid period.

Ottoman architects concentrated on a simple medrese model which consisted of a classroom and cells surrounding a courtyard. Medreses were one of the basic elements of architectural complexes (külleyk). Many medreses were constructed within complexes but there were also free standing medreses. Imperial complexes were centres of higher education and usually a group of top level medreses included in these establishments. The Complex of Fath in Istanbul with its eight medreses formed the highest ranking Ottoman university of the fifteenth century. A similar idea of forming an educational center comprising high level medreses is reflected in the design of the Süleymaniye Complex. This complex has five medreses, including a darülıhâdî. When it was built in mid sixteenth century, the Darülıhâdis of the Süleymaniye Complex became the highest ranking medrese in the Ottoman Empire. Although it lost its superior position as the highest ranking university, the Fath Complex remained as the only Ottoman complex incorporating eight medreses. The intensity of medreses around the Feth Complex made the district of Feth Complex in order to be in close relation with this centre of scholarship. This scholarly attraction continued through centuries and at the end, the Feth district became the region with the highest number of medreses in the Ottoman Empire.

The oldest surviving Ottoman medrese is in Izmir; the medrese of Sîleymân Paşa dates from 1331. The basic elements of this medrese are the classroom, the cells and the arcades which surround a small courtyard on its three sides. The building has an almost symmetrical plan, with the classroom on the symmetry axis. The Medrese of Sîleymân Paşa belongs to a type which was used frequently in Ottoman architecture. Medrese compositions in which the cells surrounding a courtyard on its three sides are referred to as medreses having U-plan scheme. Many medreses were built in the Ottoman period, using this typology.

An interesting feature of this early medrese is the connection from the classroom to the adjacent cell on the south. The passage which is not included in later medrese designs is considered to be a corridor linking the classroom to the cell of the professor. In the Medrese of Sîleymân Paşa, the classroom, the cells and the arcades (revels) were covered by domes. Each cell was furnished with two tiers of windows and a fireplace, providing the students a more comfortable interior space to live in. Some elements of the medrese, like its pool or zalâyvan, its toilets and bathroom were lost in time.

The Hûdâvenidîgar Mosque (1365/6) in Bursa has a special place in early Ottoman architecture. Here a mosque is combined with a medrese; the mosque is on the ground floor, the medrese cells were placed on the first floor. The cells are lined in two rows along the mosque’s north-east and south-west walls. The mosque must have served as the school; the medrese has no classroom. This exquisite composition in which the mosque and the medrese were united under a single roof remained as the only example of its type. Probably some practical problems arising from the absence of a courtyard and arcades did not encourage the architects to continue on this line.

The medreses within the Yıldırım, Yozgat and Murat II complexes in Bursa contributed to the development of the U-plan scheme. In these medreses, the classrooms were designed as domed eyvan. The tendency to use domes to cover the spaces in a medrese is typical of Ottoman Architecture. The exteriors of medreses early Ottoman medreses were generally simple; the alternating wall enriched by brick patterns was common. The courtyard façades of classrooms could be lavishly decorated. Especially the medrese of Murat II in Bursa (1425-1426) is well known for its rich decoration. The eyvan dominates the courtyard and has a beautiful façade embellished with beautiful glazed tiles. Its interior is also richly decorated with turquise tiles on the walls. The fine masqûlân decoration on the transition elements and the Turkish triangle band add to the monumentality of the eyvan.

Although they were totally abandoned later, some enclosed medreses were built during the early Ottoman period. Among them, the Medrese of Haci Halil Paşa (1415) in Gümüş modern attention. In the design of this medrese, the architect has interpreted the four-evyan scheme of Seljukid medreses in a new spirit. Across the entrance, there is the usual iwan-classroom. The eyvan on the two sides were replaced by square rooms. The symmetry of the design, closing of the eyvan except one and the covering of all spaces with domes are features characteristic of Ottoman Architecture.

The Medrese of Çelebi Mehmed in Merzifon (1414-1418) is one of the monumental buildings of its time. Here the four-iwan typology was used in an innovative way. Opposite the entrance there is an eyvan covered by a dome. The transformation of the two side eyvans is an idea which had been used in the enclosed medrese of Haci Halil Paşa in Gümüş. This medrese is exceptional having more than one classroom; usually Ottoman medreses have only one classroom; medreses with more classrooms were not built after the fifteenth century.

At Edirne grew as a capital, many medreses were built in this city. From the Darülıhâdis built during the reign of Murat II, there remains only the classroom which was later turned into a mosque. Due to the destructive effects of wars and time, some medreses could not reach our day. There are two medreses attached to the Üç Şerefeli Mosque of Murat II. Of
these, Saarlı Medrese was founded by Murad II and the Medrese of Zeybek by his son, Mehmed the Conqueror. In both buildings, an eyvan of equal size stands next to the classroom. This composition comprising a winter classroom and an eyvan was typical for primary schools but it was also incorporated in the design of some other Ottoman medreses of the fifteenth century. During the sixteenth century, the eyvans in medreses were connected to the arcades and their size was reduced. The eyvans in medreses were never as monumental as those attached to the classrooms of early Ottoman medreses.

In Ottoman Architecture different plan typologies were used in the design of medreses. The arrangement of cells around a courtyard enriched the medrese typology. The first Ottoman medrese with an octagonal courtyard usually followed certain patterns. U plan was the most favored one. L-plan scheme in which two lines of cells were woined to form an L, and compositions around rectangular or octagonal courtyards enriched the medrese typology. The first Ottoman medrese with an octagonal courtyard was the Medrese of Kapalıçarşı in Amasya. Its plan scheme was later used by Architect Sinan in the Medreses of Rüstem Pasha in Istanbul. Medreses sharing the same courtyard with a mosque were popular in the classical period, architect Sinan Designed several beautiful examples of this composition. The medreses within the Sokollu Mehmet Pasha Complex in Istanbul (Kadırga) and Laleburgaz are two examples of this type adapted to different topographic and urban sites.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, financial restrictions affected the size of complexes; a small group of buildings clustered around a medrese came in favour. In the seventeenth century there were several instances when a tomb, a sebil and a medrese were united within a kağide. The composition consisting of a medrese, the tomb of the founder and a sebil produced interesting results. Two examples of this compact grouping are the complexes of Kuyucu Murat Pasha and Ekmekeçioğlu Ahmet Pasha, which date from the first half of the seventeenth century. They were designed by Architect Selimkarım Mehmed Ağa.

In the medrese architecture of the eighteenth century, two-story compositions incorporating libraries and primary schools was a new development. The medreses of Fesayullah Efendi, Damat Ibrahim Pasha and Ahmetçiye incorporated libraries in their designs. In Istanbul, there was a deep interest in books and many libraries were built in the eighteenth century. It is significant to study how the architects used the library and the classroom of the medrese as equal sized rooms within the design of some complexes.

Baroque style contributed much to the richness of eighteenth century architecture with elaborated carvings on the exterior of sebils and primary schools attached to complexes. Medreses built in the eighteenth century usually had plain features; baroque decorative elements were used sparingly, only to enrich the main entrance, jambs and lintels of classroom doors and capitals of columns surrounding courtyards. In the eighteenth century, there was a change in the choice of structural elements in the design of medreses. The columns became very slender and cells and arcades tended to be covered by panelled vaults rather than domes.

As in the Medrese o Kabahadılı, some classrooms were covered with panelled vaults as well.

In the designs of schools built after the period of Mahmut II, ideas taken from Europe were used instead of the old medrese typology. The buildings of "Medresesi'ılı Kuzat" and "Medresesiz ile Machaassiss" built under the title of medrese were designed on a line far from the traditional medrese type. Hence, we can conclude that the Ottoman medrese architecture came to an end at the end of the eighteenth century.