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# Role of Patronage in Anatolian Seljuk Architecture

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#### ABSTRACT

Seljuks left a remarkable legacy in Anatolia and contributed to its development in various aspects. Architecture became a means that allowed them to realize their economic and political goals especially with monumental buildings. In this case, building typology and patronage were decisive. During the reign of Anatolian Seljuks, the most common typologies were caravanserais, madrasas, and mosques and their patronages referred to an important issue. By the thirteenth century, architecture had different patrons than sultans in Seljuks, members of the royal class and the military bureaucratic elite also began to patronize buildings from various typologies. This paper tries to analyze how different kinds of patronage in Anatolian Seljuk Architecture shaped the architectural style of the period and the constructions of the buildings with different typologies in the cases of the Sultan, the grand vizier Sahip Ata as a high-degree bureaucrat and the Sultan's wife, Mahperi Huand Hatun, as his family member.

Keywords: Anatolia, Anatolian Seljuk Architecture, Patronage

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Seljuks achieved to leave an enormous and valuable legacy in Anatolia in every possible way. After the war of Malazgirt in 1071, they had conquered most of the region. As a result, Anatolia began to develop rapidly. When Seljuks conquered Anatolia, in the Byzantine cities, there were Christian craftsmen who worked in weaving, mining and construction and they continued their jobs without problems. However, Turkish people who settled in those cities began to gain power as well (Turan, 1993). In this process, Seljuks did not overwhelm the local people in any way and instead, ended the religion conflicts, providing a peaceful environment. Consequently, political and economic conditions also changed positively and it became possible to see their influence in many aspects (Güçlüay, 2002) as they spread to Anatolia by around the end of the eleventh century (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Map of the Anatolian Seljuk Sultanate around the end of the eleventh century. Extracted from Historical Atlas by William Shepherd (1923-26)

Source: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/shepherd/europe\_mediterranean\_1097.jpg

Thanks to their trade strategy, Seljuks showed a significant progress regarding the development of roads and cities in Anatolia. With this strategy, they also conquered important parts that were located on the transit roads, made economical treaties in order to draw merchants' interests to Anatolia after providing suitable political conditions and supported economical activities by building the necessary structures (Güçlüay, 2002). In this case, architecture became a fundamental tool for Anatolian Seljuks to realize their economic and political aims, especially in terms of monumental buildings. Building typologies and their patronages were also important. Considering the lifestyle of

Anatolian Seljuks, caravanserais, madrasas and mosques were among the most important and common building typologies; and, patronage had different influences on how they were built. Between the second half of the thirteenth century and the second half of the fourteenth century, centralized administration began to lose power in Anatolia and local land-based aristocracy came into the scene Studies about this change generally refer to the building patronage and its history (Wolper, 1995). It is claimed that the activity of building was a product, or it showed political and economic change. Therefore, patronage is usually considered depending on the political and religious ideology of the patron. Such studies lead to form relationships between the political power and the endowment of the buildings. By the thirteenth century, building donations originated from the different classes in the Seljuk administration (Crane, 1993). The Seljuk Sultan and his family members constituted the royal class. After them, rich statesmen came as the military-bureaucratic elite. The royal class usually ordered the construction of caravanserais and hospitals, which were used by a high number of people, while they did not built many religious and educational buildings (Caner and Kuran, 2006). They also donated money for building fortifications for the military. Still, the Sultan ordered his military-bureaucratic elite to construct fortifications and repair them when it was necessary (Crane, 1993). Furthermore, he wanted them to donate mosques and madrasas for religious and educational purposes (Caner and Kuran, 2006).

In the beginning of the 14th century, architecture in Anatolia began to be patronized by amirs instead of the Sultans. They preferred to support madrasas, tombs, and dervish lodges instead of mosques, fortifications, and caravanserais (Crane, 1992). This suggests that endowment of buildings became a demonstration of political power itself (Wolper, 1995). For instance, caravanserais were mostly ordered to be built by the sultans for economic and political reasons. Also, other examples of monumental architecture such as madrasas were also ordered to be built by other parties, such as the grand vizier as a high-degree bureaucrat or the wife of the sultan as his family member in the following times, mostly for political purpose in a similar way. This paper tries to analyze how different kinds of patronage in Anatolian Seljuk Architecture influenced the architectural style of the period and the constructions of the buildings with different typologies in cases of the Sultan, the grand vizier Sahip Ata as a high-degree bureaucrat and the Sultan's wife, Mahperi Huand Hatun, as his family member.

#### 2. PATRONAGE OF THE SULTANS

Among different building typologies in Anatolian Seljuk Architecture, caravanserais had a significant importance, especially in terms of developing the economy and the trade. The general patrons of Anatolian Seljuk Architecture were the sultans for a period of fifty years between the reign of Kılıç Arslan II (1156-1192) and the invasion of Mongols. Kılıç Arslan is known to be the first Sultan to attempt to build caravanserais, which would become the first priority of the later Sultans (Ögel, 2008). Seljuk sultans also had hans (an old type of hotels) built on the suitable sites in order to develop the trade in Anatolia and provide safety for merchants. However, caravanserais became very common as a separate building typology. Seljuk vezier Nizamü'l-Mülk wrote in his Siyasetname that it was a duty for Sultans to have caravanserais built as a part of public improvements in the country (Köprülü, 1942). As a result, many caravanserais were built throughout the Anatolia in time, located on the active trade routes (Figure 2).

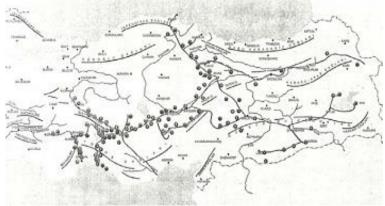


Figure 2. Trade Routes and where Caravanserais were built as Dots

Figure 2 shows these routes and dots represent the locations of the caravanserais. Ordering them to be built, the Sultans were acting accordingly to a certain economic policy. As they were also aware of the importance of those trade routes, the caravanserais symbolized their power (Ögel, 2008). Caravanserais were function-based buildings and they were used to house travelers and merchants. They had bedrooms, soup kitchens, cellar, storage, stable, masjid, bath, water tank with a fountain, hospital, pharmacy, shoemaker, and blacksmith, depending on particular

needs. Also, they included observation spaces and towers in order to provide safety and defense when it was needed (Tuncer, 2007). Alara Han, which was built in 1231 in Antalya during I. Aladdin Keykubat, is an example of most elaborate caravanserais in Anatolia (Figures 3 and 4).

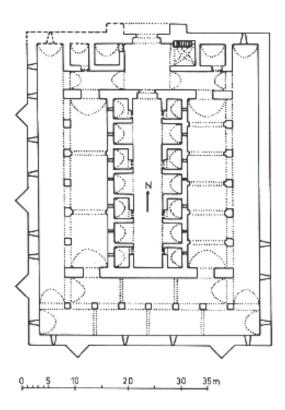


Figure 3. The Plan of the Alara Han Source: http://www.turkishhan.org/images/alaraplan2.jpg



Source: https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/contents/images/20180928102045409\_1%20logolu.jpg

Despite their authority and concern about education, the Sultans did not build many schools. Until today, only two schools have survived and they are parts of şifahane (hospital) and medical schools: the one is the complex in Kayseri, which was built between 1204-1205 by Kayhusrav I and his sister and the second one is Sivas hospital and medical school built by Kaykavus I in Sivas in 1217 (Figure 5).



Figure 5. The Crown Gate of Divriği Hospital (Dar-Al Shifa) Source: Ord. Prof. Dr. A. Süheyl Ünver Nakishanesi Yorumuyla Divriği Ulucami ve Şifahanesi Taş Bezemeleri, VIII. Türk Tıp Tarihi Kongresi 16-18 Haziran 2004 Sivas-Divriği, ed. Nil Sari, G. Mesara, N. Colpan, İstanbul 2004.

# 3. PATRONAGE OF THE GRAND VIZIER SAHİP ATA FAHREDDİN ALİ AS A HIGH-LEVEL **BUREAUCRAT**

Following the Sultans, viziers become an important source of patronage in Anatolian Seljuk Architecture. After Mongols defeated Seljuks in Kösedağ War in 1243, building caravanserais and military buildings as symbols of the administrative power began to lose its attraction. Also, Seljuks became dependent to the İlkhanids. The Seljuk Sultan began to lose his political power and as a result, high-level bureaucrats like the viziers became more active in administration maintaining the state until 1308. Sahip Ata Fahreddin Ali was one of these grand viziers who had good relations with the Ilkhanids. However, due to the political conditions in Anatolia; they were not able to donate military buildings anymore. Therefore, unlike the Sultans who mostly built caravanserais and sultan khans, they began to donate to mostly educational buildings, which were madrasas (Caner and Kuran, 2006).

The grand vizier Sahip Ata became successful in his activities and unified the society (Ögel, 1987). It is possible to claim that he achieved his aim with the construction of the madrasa buildings. The main aim of madrasas was to unify and organize the community in a similar way to the building activities in the Great Seljuk Period, which was introduced by the grand vizier Nizam-ül Mülk (Kuran, 1969). In this case, Sahip Ata's activities can be considered similar to what Nizam-ül Mülk did. He aimed to keep the society unified and stable by making improvements. He preferred to donate madrasas in Konya, Kayseri, and Sivas in order to maintain the legacy of the Anatolian Seljuks (Caner and Kuran, 2006). He did not only have the longest political career in his period, but he also became the donator whose buildings have survived until today. As a result of his donations, he was called "Ebu'l-Hayrat" (Father of the Donations) in his period (Yavas, 2010). Among the buildings which he donated to, there are İshaklı Han and Complex in 1249, the restoration of Akşehir Taş Madrasa in 1250 and the construction of his Hanikah in 1260-61, Konya Sahip Ata (Larende) Mosque and Complex in 1258-1279, Konya İnce Minareli Madrasa (Darülhadis) in 1258-1279, Ilgın Baths in 1267-1268, Kayseri Sahibiye Madrasa in 1267-1268 and Sivas Gök Madrasa in 1271 (Ferit and Mesut, 1934).

## 3.1. Akşehir Taş Madrasa

Akşehir Taş Madrasa is the earliest building complex which was donated by Sahip Ata. It was built by Emirdad Hasan bin Ali in 1216 and later restored by Sahip Ata in 1250. It consists of a tomb, a masjid, dar'ül kurra that added to the building, hanikah, imaret, and fountain. It also has an open courtyard plan including four iwans. The



entrance is located on the facade facing southwest. Additional spaces were integrated to both sides of the entrance facade and it improved the plan organization and together with the building mass. The mescit is on the north and the *dar'ül kurra* is on the south. Masjid's having a late comers' portico in its front and a minaret seems similar to one of his later donated buildings, which is İnce Minareli Madrasa. Arcaded porticos surround the rectangular courtyard on both sides of the axis that lies from the entrance to the main iwan (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Entrance Facade of Akşehir Taş Madrasa Source: Kuran, 1969

Furthermore, the tomb is close to the entrance iwan as it usually was. It can be accessed from the entrance facade through the iwan. The openings of the entrance facade, the late comers' portico, the iwan in front of the tomb, the portal, and the entrance of *dar'ül kurra* were able to provide different ways of access to the spaces placed in the behind. These entries enriched the composition of the facade that included the minaret, late comers' portico of the masjid, iwan, portal, and the entrance of *dar'ül kurra*, from north to south (Figure 7) (Caner and Kuran, 2006).



Figure 7. The Courtyard of Akşehir Taş Medrese Source: http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-lGpnghJBdug/UV- nPO7OSwI/AAAAAAAAAAAS8/Ms4F4XODntA/s1600/Ta%C5%9F+Medrese++AK%C5%9EEH%C4%B0R.jpg

Akşehir Taş Madrasa also stands out with the fact that it became the first structure to include double *şerefe* regarding its typology (Sözen, 1970). It was used only once again in İnce Minareli Madrasa in Anatolian Seljuk Architecture. The main building material of Akşehir Taş Madrasa was rubble stone. In addition, red and white marbles on the iwan in front of the tomb, white marble on the portal, and main iwan were used. Such usage of marble is considered to date back to the restoration in Sahip Ata period. A similar way of using marble can be seen in one of his later buildings, such as Gök Madrasa (Caner and Kuran, 2006). Therefore, using marble as the building material can be considered a typical feature of Sahip Ata's donorship (Brend, 1975).

#### 3.2. İnce Minareli Madrasa

İnce Minareli Madrasa (Figures 8 and 9) is another donation of Sahip Ata, built from 1258 to 1279 by the architect Kölük bin Abdullah, who was employed by him (Kuran, 1969). The building is composed of a masjid and madrasa, that is enclosed and includes one iwan. The entrance is located on the east facade. Like Akşehir Taş Madrasa, the

plan organization and the building mass was enriched by adding a masjid as a separate mass (Figure 10). Furthermore, the masjid has a later comers' portico in its front with a minaret on the corner. The courtyard in the center is surmounted with a dome at the top. It is also surrounded by rooms near both sides of the main iwan. These rooms face the cross-vaulted entrance and students' cells which are placed in a symmetrical position on the north and south. Entrances to the madrasa through the portal and to the masjid through the late comers' portico enriches the facade composition both functionally and visually (Caner and Kuran, 2006).



Figure 8. The Entrance Facade of Konya İnce Minareli Madrasa Source: Kuran, 1969



Figure 9. The Entrance of Konya İnce Minareli Madrasa, a Closer View Source: http://www.egitimkutuphanesi.com/wp-content/resimler/495ba1f279ad193a77e32df47530e627.jpg

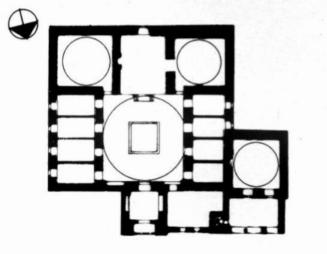


Figure 10. Plan of the Konya İnce Minareli Madrasa Source: https://i0.wp.com/www.sanatinyolculugu.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/1-8.png?w=546&ssl=1



# 3.3. Konya Sahip Ata Mosque



Figure 11. The Entrance Facade of Konya Sahip Ata Mosque Source: Karamağaralı, 1982

Konya Sahip Ata Mosque (Figure 11) is also among Sahip Ata's donations. Its construction began in 1258 by the architect Kölük bin Abdullah, whom Sahip Ata employed. It can be considered the earliest example of such a complex of buildings that included a mosque, tomb, shops, fountain, and baths. Unfortunately, the only parts of it which have survived are the portal and one of the minarets that were added to the mass. According to Haluk Karamağaralı, the integrated double minaret in the portal in the facade composition was innovative for its period (Karamağaralı, 1982). This feature can be regarded as Sahip Ata's own contribution to the building, as it can also be found in one of his later donations, Gök Madrasa. Another contribution of Sahip Ata to the complex could be the *sebils* (fountains) on both sides of the portal. By placing them in this way, the portal could also serve water for public usage besides being used for entrance. It is also possible to claim that with this kind of additional functions, the portal as a fundamental element of Anatolian Seljuk Architecture became multifunctional as well, along with its visual features. This kind of attempts can be thought as a result of Sahip Ata's trials in architecture (Caner and Kuran, 2006).

# 3.4. Sivas Gök Madrasa

Sivas Gök Madrasa, in whose construction Sahip Ata employed Kaluyan el-Konevi as the architect in 1271, (Kuran, 1969), is among the most famous examples of Anatolian Seljuk Architecture (Caner and Kuran, 2006). It consists of a masjid, a *dar'ül kurra* and a fountain that was placed to the entrance facade. It has an open courtyard plan including four iwans. The entrance is located on the west (Figure 12.) In the organization of the plan, spaces are placed in a symmetrical way around the axis from the entrance to the main iwan (Figure 13) Masjid and *dar'ül kurra* are also on both sides of the entrance iwan. Placement of the arcaded porticos on both sides is similar to Akşehir Taş Madrasa; however, these ones are more improved. The entrance facade consists of a portal with the integrated double minaret in the center two windows on both sides. Furthermore, there are two supporting towers on both corners and a çeşme (fountain) in the north of the portal. The portal with the integrated double minaret was also used in Sahip Ata Mosque, therefore it is possible to claim that Sahip Ata introduced the double minaret form

to Anatolia (Caner and Kuran, 2006). He probably encountered it during one of his visits to the land of the İlkhanids (Brend, 1975).



Figure 12. The Entrance Facade of Sivas Gök Madrasa Source: Kuran, 1969

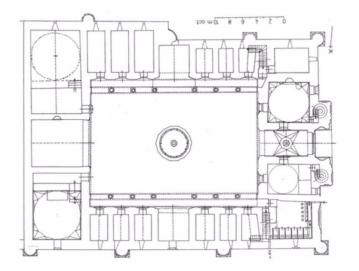


Figure 13. The Plan of Sivas Gök Madrasa

Source: https://anadolutarih.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/8E546E27-E93B-4D2E-84D0-A9171B9624A3\_900x600.jpg

The entrance facade is also enriched by using other elements both visually and functionally. Two windows on both sides of the portal visually connect the masjid and dar'ül kurra to the outside. Furthermore, the fountain stands out as a separate element unlike the one in Sahip Ata Mosque, which is a part of the portal. In terms of material usage, there are similarities with Akşehir Taş Madrasa. For instance, the portal, the windows, the fountain, and the arcades are made of marble. However, instead of the use of rubble stone in Akşehir Taş Madrasa, in Sivas Gök Madrasa cut stone was used.

Although they do not all belong to the same building typology, these four buildings which were donated by Sahip Ata have some common features. In all of them, it is possible to see similar multifunctional building programs, varieties in plan, enrichment of facades in terms of function, experiments with building elements, and intentional usage of materials (Caner and Kuran, 2006).

# 4. Patronage of the Sultan's Wife Mahperi Huand Hatun as Sultan's Family Member

Mahperi Huand Hatun stands out among the most important patrons in Anatolian Seljuk Architecture as she was female. She had married Sultan I. Alaaddin Keykubat. Mahperi Huand Hatun Complex in Kayseri (Figures 14 and 15) can be regarded as the most famous project that was donated by her. It was completed in 1238 and included a mosque, a madrasa, the tomb of Mahperi Huand Hatun, and a bathhouse (Blessing, 2014).



Figure 14. A View of the Mahperi Huand Hatun Complex Source: Blessing, 2014

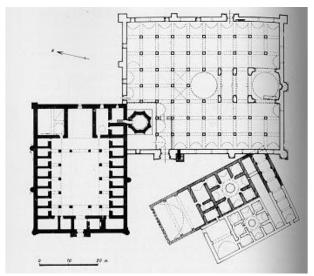


Figure 15. Plan of Mahperi Huand Hatun Complex

Source: Karamağaralı, 1976

The mosque is reached by two portals located on the east and west directions (Figures 16 and 17) The portals also meet with thick stone walls that include small windows in the upper portion of the walls. Half-octagon shaped buttresses on the west facade and rectangular shaped ones on the east facade emphasize the surface texture of the walls and conveys the impression of fortification. The mosque also has a rectangular plan (Karamağaralı, 1976). It consists of bays and aisles that are connected by vaults supported by square shaped masonry pillars. The courtyard has the width of two bays and depth of three bays. It is closed by a wall on the east side towards the prayer hall. On the north side, the wall touches the southern wall of the madrasa. And the mausoleum is located near the center of the courtyard (Blessing, 2014).



Figure 16. The Eastern Portal of the Mosque Source: Blessing, 2014



Figure 17. The Western Portal of the Mosque

Source: Blessing, 2014

The mausoleum is in the shape of an octagonal tower with a conical roof, like the other mausolea in 13th century Anatolia (Karamağaralı, 1976). It is made of the same type of basalt stone as the mosque and madrasa in the complex. However, in its square base, rows of muqarnas cells carved are made of white marble (Figure 18). There are three stone cenotaphs in the mausoleum that indicated the burials located in the crypt below (Önkal, 1996). Furthermore, a mihrab in the interior wall of the mausoleum shows the direction of the qibla. This one and inscriptions on two of the cenotaphs are the only decorations inside. The upper level of the mausoleum is accessed through a small door in the room in the southeastern corner of the madrasa. It is not accessible from the courtyard. Also, the exterior surfaces of the mausoleum walls include complicated stone carving (Blessing, 2014) (Figure 19)



Figure 18. A View of the Mausoleum Source: Blessing, 2014





Figure 19. Detail of the Inscriptions and Decorations on the Mausoleum Source: Blessing, 2014

The madrasa in the complex resembles other 13<sup>th</sup>-century Anatolian Seljuk Architecture madrasas, with the presence of an open courtyard and two iwans located through the longitudinal axis (Sözen, 1970). The entrance iwan is small; however, the other one that faces the eastern part of the building is tall and it opens in a wide arch. The madrasa has a rectangular plan. Furthermore, its longitudinal axis is turned by ninety degrees to the mosque. In this way, the exterior walls of these two buildings touch each other along the mausoleum courtyard. The portal of the madrasa is located on the west of the complex (Figure 20). And in the interior, arcades located on pillars are placed along the long sides of the courtyard (Figure 21). The four arches on each side are located in front of the doors of the eight small cells on each side and were used by the students. Also, there are two other rooms that were used for other purposes (Blessing, 2014). In the northeastern corner, there is a larger square room and in the southeastern corner, a rectangular room is opened to doors of two separate small chambers. One of these chambers include stairs that reach to the mausoleum (Önkal, 1970).



rigule 20. The Folial of the Wadiasa

Source: Blessing, 2014



Figure 21. The Courtyard of the Madrasa

Source: Blessing, 2014

Apart from the mosque, mausoleum, and madrasa, there is also an independent building in the complex. There are also ruins of a double bathhouse in front of the western entrance of the mosque. It had separate parts for men and women at that time (Blessing, 2014). Although these different types of buildings came together in a complex, it is possible to say that they did not have unique features and material usage in comparison to the other buildings from their period. However, the construction of such a complex is important to understand the position of women in the royal family at that time.

### 4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is possible to claim that different types of patronage in Anatolian Seljuk Architecture shaped the architectural style of the period and the constructions of the buildings with different typologies. When the Sultans were the patrons, they mostly focused on building caravanserais to support trade. They also built hospitals for public use. When high-degree bureaucrats became the patrons, such as Sahip Ata, they mostly preferred to build madrasas and mosques, getting away from the military buildings due to the political conditions. Madrasas and mosques donated by Sahip Ata contributed to Anatolian Seljuk Architecture. They had similar multifunctional programs, varieties in plan, enrichment of facades in terms of function, experiments with building elements, and intentional usage of materials. The Sultan's wife, as his family member, also became a patron in Anatolian Seljuk Architecture, Mahperi Huand Hatun. It was interesting for her time to build a complex that consisted of a mosque, a mausaleum, a madrasa, and a bathhouse. These buildings do not have peculiar features and material usage; however, their constructions under the patronage of a female from the royal family is important to understand the position of women in the royal family in that period. Considering all these three different kinds of patronages, it is possible to claim that they all shaped the development of Anatolian Seljuk Architecture, mostly in terms of construction features and material usage.

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