

SEARCHING TRACES OF A DONOR: SAHİP ATA IN SELJUK ARCHITECTURE

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ABSTRACT

The grand vizier, Sahip Ata, is a significant figure not only in Seljuk History as a successful statesman but also in Seljuk architecture as a distinguished donor. He initiated the construction of a considerable number of monumental buildings, regarded as unique examples of Seljuk Architecture. This study aims to analyze the role of Sahip Ata on shaping the architectural features of his buildings. Sahip Ata buildings are evaluated within themselves as well as within the general context of Anatolian Seljuk architecture concerning their building programs, plan layouts, façade compositions, building elements and construction materials. They are discussed with the findings on Sahip Ata coming from the written sources such as foundation charters, historical accounts and other documents. Finally his contribution as an eminent figure to Anatolian Seljuk Architecture is highlighted.

Keywords: Sahip Ata Fahreddin Ali, Donor, Anatolian Seljuk Architecture

INTRODUCTION

In 13th century Seljuk Anatolia, architectural donations were from various ranks of the Seljuk ruling institution (Crane, 1993, 1). On the highest rank were the Seljuk Sultan and the family members of the Sultan, who formed the royal class. They were followed by the significant and wealthy statesmen, who were the military bureaucratic elite of the State. As an extension of the State's policies, the royal class mostly initiated the construction of caravanserais and hospitals, which embodied functions to serve for greater masses of people, rather than religious and educational edifices.(1) They were also engaged in donations of fortifications for military purposes. However, the Sultan mostly assigned his military bureaucratic elite depending on their rank and wealth for fortification construction and

repair (Crane, 1993, 7-10). In addition, he encouraged them to donate mosques and madrasas, which serve for religious and educational purposes.

The interest in building activities of caravanserais and military architecture as a representation of the State power diminished after Seljuks were defeated by the Mongols in Köseadağ War in 1243. The Seljuk State could continue survival dependant to the İlkhaniids. The Seljuk Sultan lost his absolute political authority. In active political grounds, the powerful ruling sultan was replaced with the upper ranked bureaucrats like the viziers, who could succeed to hold the State until the 1308. Grand viziers like Celaleddin Karatay and Sahip Ata Fahreddin Ali, who conducted temperate relations with the İlkhaniids, achieved to protect the society's stability though not the State's. Due to the political milieu in Anatolia, the ruling bureaucrats could no longer donate works of military architecture. Where sultans as donors shifted to upper rank statesmen in building activity, donations of caravanserais, sultan khans, shifted to educational edifices, madrasas in building types in most cases.

It is interesting and attentive that, in such political dependency, building activity did not stop to develop. Monumental works of architecture were incessantly constructed. During the second half of the 13th century, specifically educational edifices, in other words, madrasa was the building type, which represented examples of Anatolian Seljuk monumental architecture.

Scholars have counter arguments concerning the shift in building types and programs in terms of architectural donations and the development in terms of architectural expression in madrasa construction. Bayburtluoğlu attributes these changes and improvements to the rivalries between the grand viziers and other upper rank bureaucrats as a sign of their power declaration (1977, 68-70). Ögel emphasizes the successful policies of the grand vizier Sahip Ata Fahreddin Ali to establish a consistent unification and gathering of the society (1st ed. in 1966, 2nd ed. 1987, 2-3). Ögel's statements are more to the point, considering the aim of madrasa buildings, their educational purposes. They were constructed with an intention of unification and organization of the community, generally under certain sects, similar to the building activities during the Great Seljuk period, initiated by the grand vizier Nizam-ül Mülk (Kuran, 1969, 5-9). Sahip Ata's policies may be akin to Nizam-ül Mülk in this respect. He tried to maintain and even improve the society's unification and stability. He donated madrasa constructions in important city centers like Konya, Kayseri and Sivas to keep the permanence of the Anatolian Seljuk State. Hence, Sahip Ata Fahreddin Ali was a significant figure not only as a successful statesman but also as a distinguished donor, who actively contributed to the formation and development of the architectural milieu.

Sahip Ata became part of the Seljuk ruling institution as *emir dad*, minister of justice after Celaleddin Karatay passed away in 1258. In the following two years, Seljuk Sultan İzzeddin Keykavus II appointed him as *sahip*, the grand vizier in 1260. Sahip Ata tried to maintain the persistence of the State together with Muiniddin Pervane and they established peaceful relations with the İlkhanids. According to historical accounts of İbn Bibi, his collaboration with Pervane lasted until 1271, when Pervane got him prisoned for his ambitions to be the only governor (274-277). Soon after he had to meet the İlkhanid ruler, Abaka Han in Tebriz. Abaka charged him again as the grand vizier in 1272 and sent him back to Konya (İbn Bibi, 277-278). He continued to govern the Seljuk lands until he was forced to retire by the other İlkhanid rulers, when they came to Anatolia in 1285. Then, he settled in Akşehir until his death in 1286.

The career of Sahip Ata within the Seljuk ruling institution is attentive with respect to two major points. First, he achieved to govern as grand vizier for rather long period in comparison to other statesmen and held together the State and the society within the ongoing political discrepancies in the period. Second, he contributed to the development of the architectural environment of the Seljuk Anatolia. The reason for that was probably twofold. One might be related to his political wisdom to improve the public facilities and the living environment of the society. The other might be related to his affinity in architecture. Sahip Ata was fond of building activities to a great extent. As Seljuk historian İbn Bibi states, during his visit of political necessities to the İlkhanid State, Abaka appointed him to engage in management of his *akar* and *emlak*, architectural property (278). Moreover, he was the one, who donated the greatest number of monumental works of architecture among the Seljuk viziers. The list of his buildings are: İshaklı Han and Complex in 1249, restoration of Akşehir Taş Madrasa in 1250 and construction of his Hanikah in 1260-61, Konya Sahip Ata (*Larende*) Mosque and Complex in 1258-79, Konya İnce Minareli Madrasa (*Darülhadis*) in 1258-79, Ilgın Baths in 1267-68, Kayseri Sahibiye Madrasa in 1267-68 and Sivas Gök Madrasa in 1271 (Ferit & Mesut, 1934). In addition, in the foundation charters of Sahip Ata, he gave detailed descriptions of building programs, required functions to be included and the related employee staff (Bayram & Karabacak, 1981). It is interesting that he mentioned about the *mimar*, architect and notified the amount of the salary given to him (Bayram-Karabacak, 1981, 37). This shows Sahip Ata's personal interest not only to architecture but also to architects. He preferred to employ the master architects of the period like Kölük bin Abdullah and Kaluyan el-Konevi to carry on his architectural donations.

Accordingly, it is expected to see the reflections of his interest in architecture in the works he donated. Below is given the brief descriptions of his major works. They tend to display common characteristics in certain ways, concerning their

building program, plan layout, façade composition, building elements and construction materials. These can be discussed as a contribution of Sahip Ata as a distinguished donor.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF SAHIP ATA BUILDINGS

Akşehir Taş Madrasa

It is built by Emirdad Hasan bin Ali in 1216 and restored by Sahip Ata in 1250.(2) It is the earliest building of the complex donated by Sahip Ata, including tomb inside, masjīd and *dar'ül kurra* attached to the building as separate masses and *hanikah*, *imaret* and fountain just across, which points to a wealthy building program.

The madrasa has an open courtyard plan scheme with four iwans. The entrance is on the southwest façade. The plan layout and building mass of the madrasa is enriched with additional spaces attached on the both sides of its entrance façade. On the north, there is a masjīd with a late comers' portico in its front and a minaret attached on its corner. On the south, there is a *dar'ül kurra* with a separate entrance. The construction of a masjīd with late comers' portico in its front and an attached minaret may be associated with Sahip Ata that similar approach is repeated in one his later donations, İnce Minareli Madrasa. In plan, the rectangular courtyard is surrounded by arcaded porticos on both sides of the axis proceeding from the entrance, to the main iwan. The tomb, being generally next to the main iwan, is located close to the entrance iwan on the north side. The tomb was accessible from the entrance façade by the iwan in its front (Figure 1).

The openings on the entrance façade such as the late comers' portico, iwan in front of the tomb, portal and entrance of *dar'ül kurra* probably provided separate accesses to the spaces behind. These entries to different functions included in the building yields to an increase in the articulation of the façade composition. The entrance façade is composed of the minaret, late comers' portico of the masjīd, iwan, portal, and entrance of *dar'ül kurra*, following from north to south (Figure 1).

Concerning the building elements, the use of double *şerefe* on the minaret is the first example and thus has a unique character in its time (Sözen, 1970, 28). The minaret with double *şerefe* is only repeated in İnce Minareli Madrasa in Anatolian Seljuk buildings.

In Taş Madrasa, rubble stone is the major construction material. However, red and white marbles on the iwan in front of the tomb, white marble on the portal and the main iwan are used. Marble facings of the building probably belong to the restoration phase initiated by Sahip Ata. Similar marble usage is repeated in one

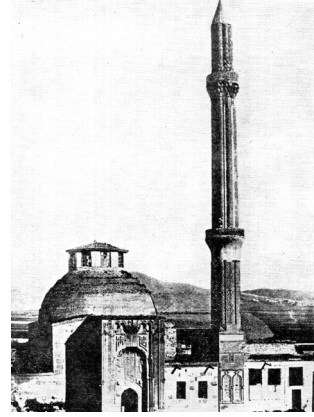


Figure 1. Entrance Facade, Akşehir Taş Madrasa. (Sarre's photograph in *Reise in Kleinasien*, 1896, taken from Kuran,1969)

Figure 2. Entrance Facade, Konya İnce Minareli Madrasa. (The photograph was taken at the end of XIX.th c., from Kuran,1969)

of his later buildings, Gök Madrasa. Thus, preference of the building material and refinement on the building elements may be related to the interventions of Sahip Ata as the donor (Brend, 1975, 164).

İnce Minareli Madrasa

The madrasa, also known as *Dar-ül Hadis* was built by Sahip Ata, who employed the architect Kölük bin Abdullah in its construction between 1258 and 1279 according to the inscription on the portal (Kuran, 1969, 55). The building includes a madrasa and an attached masjüd.

It is an enclosed madrasa with single iwan. The entrance is on the east façade. The plan layout and the building mass are articulated with a masjüd attached as a separate mass on the north like Taş Madrasa. Similarly, the masjüd has a late comers' portico in its front and an attached minaret on the corner. In plan, the central courtyard is surmounted with a dome at the top. The courtyard is surrounded with rooms flanking on both sides of the main iwan, facing the cross-vaulted entrance space and the student cells arranged symmetrically on the north and south sides (Figure 2).

Entrances provided by the portal to the madrasa and by the late comers' portico to the masjüd are effective for the façade articulation in terms of not only functional aspects but also visual characteristics. The entrance façade is composed of the madrasa façade with the projected portal with its vestibule space as a separate mass in the middle and the late comers' portico of the masjüd with the attached minaret on its southeast corner.

Certain building elements like the attached minaret, display resemblances with Taş Madrasa. The use of double *şerefe* on the brick minaret is similar. These are the only examples in Anatolian Seljuk madrasa architecture with both their masjids constructed as separate masses with the late comers' porticos in their front and their attached minarets forms with double *şerefe* (Figure 2).

Konya Sahip Ata Mosque

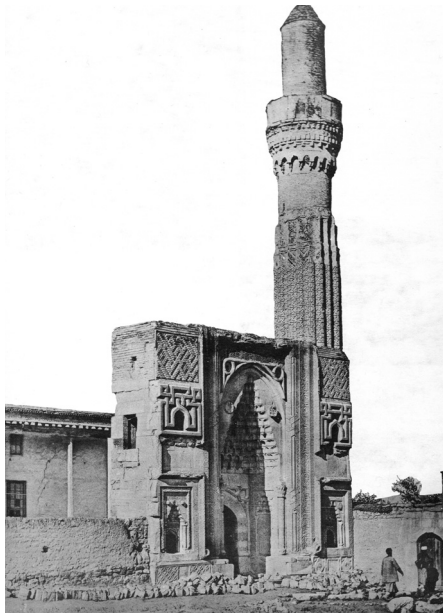


Figure 3. Entrance Facade, Konya Sahip Ata Mosque. (Sarre's photograph in *Reise in Kleinasien*, 1896 taken from Karamağaralı, 1982)

It is donated by Sahip Ata, who had Kölük bin Abdullah as the architect of the building in 1258 according to its inscription panel (Karamağaralı, 1982, 49). It is the earliest edifice of the complex of buildings, comprising mosque, tomb, shops, fountain and baths. The only surviving part of the mosque is its portal and one of the minarets integrated to its mass.

It has hypostyle plan scheme (Karamağaralı, 1982, 49, 68) with the entrance on the north façade. The integrated double minaret form in the portal design within the façade composition is a new trial in Anatolian Seljuk Architecture up to its time (Karamağaralı, 1982, 51). The use of integrated double minaret form in the portal design may be considered as a contribution of Sahip Ata and it is repeated in his later donation, Gök Madrasa.

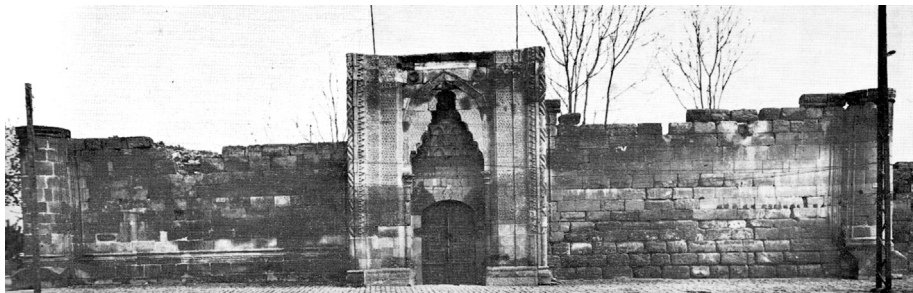


Figure 4. Entrance Façade, Kayseri Sahibiye Madrasa (Kuran, 1969: Figure 229)

The other contribution of Sahip Ata may be searched on the inserted *sebils*, fountains (Karamağaralı, 1982, 66-67) on both sides of the portal. By this way, the portal functions not only as an entrance space, but also as a fountain, serving water to public use. Hence, it can be assumed that the portal, being the major element of the Seljuk façade architecture is transformed into a multifunctional element with its visual and functional characteristics. This may be related to the preferences of its donor Sahip Ata for experimenting new trials in shaping the architecture of the period (Figure 3).

Kayseri Sahibiye Madrasa

It is donated by Sahip Ata in 1267 according to its inscription panel. The building program consisted of a madrasa, as well as a masjid and a fountain, which are constructed just across (Sözen, 1970, 29-31).

It has open courtyard plan scheme with four iwans. The entrance is on the south façade. In this example, Sahip Ata's intentions may be to perfect the open courtyard, four iwan madrasa plan. The plan layout is articulated with skilled symmetrical arrangement. An arcaded portico runs along the three sides of the courtyard. The plan may be regarded as the initial example due to the form and placement of the vaulted rooms that the vaults of these spaces run parallel with the walls of the madrasa (Sözen, 1970, 33; Tuncer, 1988, 38). However, while this may probably be related with the architect of the building rather than the donor, the use of four iwan may be attributed to Sahip Ata, since the four iwan scheme repeats in his open courtyard madrasa plans.

The entrance façade is composed of a monumental portal in the middle and two supporting towers on the corners. The façade is articulated with a molding lined along the upper part and connected to the portal as well. It is probable to say that it has a symmetrical, simple façade composition with portal as the predominant component. Hence, an enriched façade articulation façade in terms of both function and composition is not inherent. Instead, the traditional Anatolian Seljuk approach can be traced in the façade architecture. Such preference may be related with Sahip Ata's choice as a statesman that he might have used traditional design intentionally in Kayseri to emphasize the Seljuk identity towards the İlkhaniids (Tuncer, 1988, 40). Even though there are not additional functions inserted to the façade, the inclusion of a masjid and fountain, in other words an intention to form a complex of buildings is similar to other Sahip Ata buildings, which display enhanced building programs (Figure 4).

Sivas Gök Madrasa

It is built by Sahip Ata, who had Kaluyan el-Konevi as the architect in 1271 according to its inscription panel (Kuran; 1969, 94; Sözen, 1970, 41; Sönmez, 1989, 1995, 283). It is one of the prominent examples of Seljuk architecture and

dates to the same year with two other madrasas in Sivas, when intense building activities took place.(3) It includes a *maşjid* and a *dar'ül kurra* inside and a fountain inserted to the entrance façade.

It has open courtyard plan scheme with four iwans.(4) The entrance is on the west. In plan, the spaces are arranged symmetrically around the axis leading from the entrance to the main iwan. *Maşjid* and *dar'ül kurra* are located on both sides of the entrance iwan. The arcaded porticos on both sides are similar to Taş Madrasa. However, the proportions concerning the arcades and the spaces behind them are rather improved and successful in Gök Madrasa.

The entrance façade is composed of a portal with the integrated double minaret form in the center, flanked by two windows on both sides, two supporting towers on both corners and a *çeşme*, fountain to the north of the portal. The portal with the integrated double minaret form was used in Sahip Ata Mosque before. It is likely that Sahip Ata played a significant role in importing the double minaret form to Anatolia. It is probable that, he got acquainted with the double minaret form during one of his visits to the İlkanid State (Brend, 1975, 170-171). Even though Erzurum Çifte Minareli Madrasa has a similar façade composition and portal design to Gök Madrasa, the earliest use of the form is traced on Sahip Ata Mosque. The entrance façade is richly articulated with other façade elements contributing to the portal in terms of visual and functional aspects. Two windows flanking on both sides of the portal connect the *maşjid* and *dar'ül kurra* to the outside. The fountain, which is a part of the portal in Sahip Ata Mosque, becomes an individual element on the façade in Gök Madrasa.

Considering the use of building material, similarities with Taş Madrasa is attentive. The portal, windows, the fountain and the arcades are of marble. However,

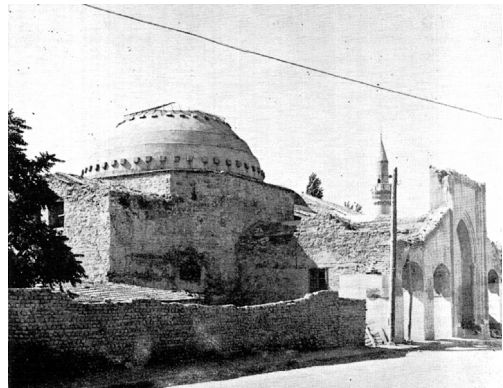
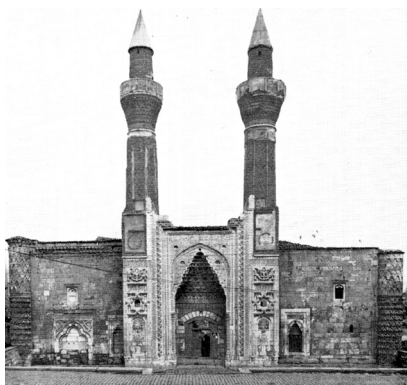


Figure 5. Entrance Façade, Sivas Gök Madrasa (Kuran, 1969: Figure 237)

Figure 6. Entrance Façade, Sahip Ata Hanikah (Kuran, 1969: Figure 137)

use of rubble stone in Taş Madrasa is replaced with cut stone in Gök Madrasa (Figure 5).

Sahip Ata Hanikahı

Hanikah, which is a part of Sahip Ata Complex embodying mosque, tomb, shops, fountain and double baths in Konya, dates to 1279 according to its inscription panel (Önge, 1984, 281). It is adjacent to the tomb built in 1276 (Önge, 1984, 281). The connection to the tomb was probably deliberately achieved, considering the location of the mosque, tomb and *hanikah* with respect to each other on the site.

In plan, it has a domed central space, surrounded by four iwans and shops on the entrance façade. The central space is accessed by a corridor, along which vaulted rectangular spaces are located.

The entrance façade is composed of a portal in the middle, flanked by iwan-like spaces, which serve as shops on both sides. Due to the inserted row of shops, the entrance façade not only provides access to the building but also serves for commercial activities (Figure 6).

Evaluation of Sahip Ata Buildings

Different types of Sahip Ata buildings, including madrasa, mosque and *hanikah*, which are discussed above, display similar characteristics. The similarities can be summarized with respect to certain features like building program, plan layout, façade composition, building elements and construction materials.

Multi-functionality in Building Program

Depending on the architectural evidences, inscription panels and foundation charters, Sahip Ata buildings appear to have enriched building programs. Firstly, in some buildings such as Taş Madrasa, including a *hanikah*, *imaret* and a fountain just across, Sahip Ata Mosque including a tomb, *hanikah* and shops next to, Sahibiye Madrasa including a masjid and a fountain nearby, it is possible to trace intentions for gathering multi functions in the form of building groups, which in a way can be regarded as building complexes. Secondly, multi functions appear to gather on a single building as well. These are either in the form of separate masses attached to the building mass like the masjids of Taş and İnce Minareli Madrasa or in the insertion of functions on the entrance façades, like the fountain of Sahip Ata Mosque and Gök Madrasa. Accordingly, it is probable to say that Sahip Ata's buildings comprise more than one function. They are rather multi-functional buildings serving for religious, educational, social and cultural purposes (Figure 7).

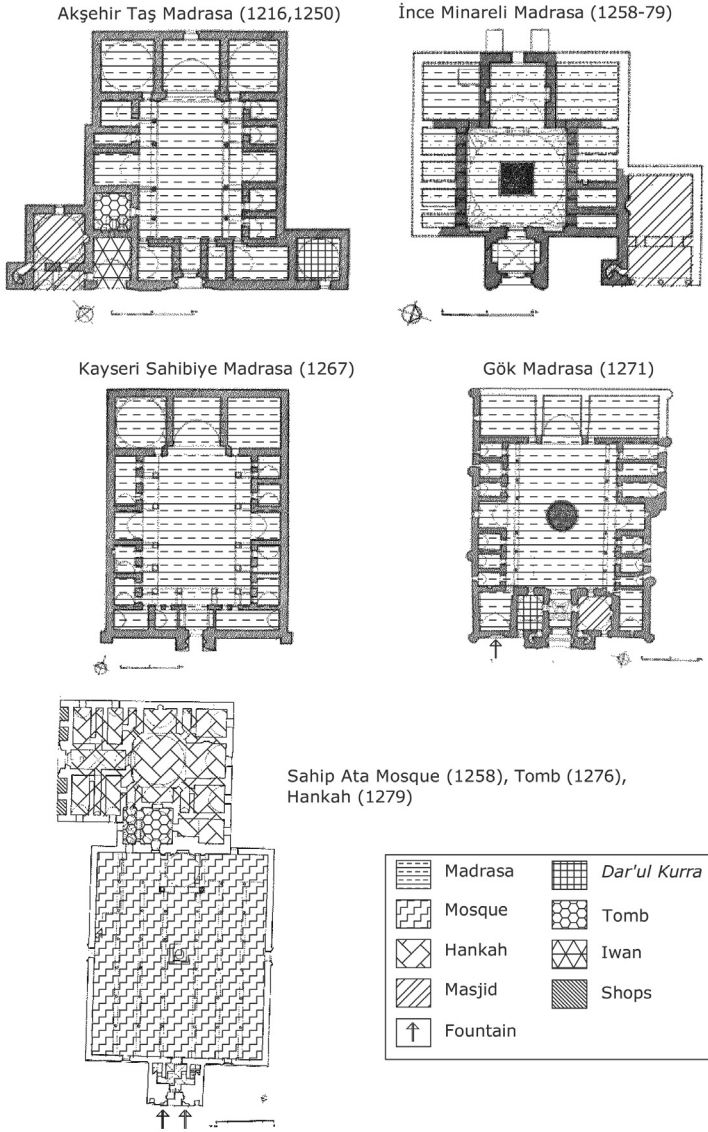


Figure 7. Plans of Sahip Ata Buildings indicating their functions (Kuran and Karamağaralı)

Variations in Plan Layout

Sahip Ata buildings display certain characteristics in terms of their plan layouts, which may be discussed as a contribution of their donor. Firstly, in his open court-

yard madrasa plans, four iwan schemes are used. This may be associated with Sahip Ata, concerning his visits to Ilkhanid State, where the four iwan scheme is used. Secondly, it is possible to trace a symmetrical plan organization around the axis proceeding from the entrance towards the main iwan. Especially in Sahibiye Madrasa, the intention to perfect the open courtyard, four iwan, symmetrically arranged madrasa scheme is attentive. Thirdly, the construction of a masjid with the late comers' portico in the front as a separate mass from the main mass of the building in Taş and İnce Minareli Madrasa are unique, in terms of experimentations both in plan layout and building mass as well as in façade architecture (Figure 7).

Function and Articulation in Façade Architecture

Sahip Ata buildings are enriched in their façade architecture within the general context of Anatolian Seljuk approach to façade design. Façades are attentive due to two major respects. First is the additional functions attributed to the entrance façade. Second is the increased articulation in façade composition.

The intention for multi functionality mentioned above can be detected on the entrance façades of Sahip Ata buildings. For instance, the masjid with late comers' portico, the tomb with iwan and *dar'ül kurra* with gateway in Taş and the masjid with late comers' portico in İnce Minareli Madrasa provide separate entrances to these spaces other than the portal. Direct accessibility from outside is changed into a visual connection in the masjid and *dar'ül kurra* of Gök Madrasa, where emphasis to the exterior is still inherent. Additional functions other than the masjid can also be seen on the façades of some buildings. For instance, the *sebils*, fountains inserted to the portal in Sahip Ata Mosque and the *çeşme*, fountain inserted to the façade of Gök Madrasa provide direct connection with the public serving for social purposes. Moreover, the use of shops on the entrance façade of *Hanikah* point to the commercial activities and public use integrated in the façade design. Accordingly, Sahip Ata buildings are not enclosed spaces embodying only certain functions, opposed to the general case in Anatolian Seljuk architecture. It is possible to consider these façades more open due to the new inserted functions and to the openings providing accessibility to these functions. Hence, it may be said that, in addition to the interior, the exterior of these enclosed buildings, in other words, their entrance façades turn into spaces serving to the public, providing religious, social and commercial activities and that may be associated with the intentional efforts of Sahip Ata (Figure 7).

The use of additional functions on the entrance façades brings forth the introduction of new elements in façade composition. The façade composition becomes more articulated in visual respects. The façade design becomes enriched with elements other than the portal. These elements are not limited with newly introduced ones like the fountain that the use of vertical elements like minaret and support-

ing towers are also inherent in the façade designs. However, there is an increase both in the number of façade elements and in their articulation and ornamentation. Accordingly, the façades of Sahip Ata buildings may be regarded as rather enriched and more articulated compared to the traditional Anatolian Seljuk façade understanding (Figure 1-3, 5-6).

Experimentation in Building Elements

In Sahip Ata buildings, the enrichment in the façade composition goes parallel with the new trials, experimentations in certain building elements. The portal design with integrated double minaret form is initially used in Sahip Ata buildings in Anatolia. Where the double minaret form integrated to the portal is firstly constructed in Sahip Ata Mosque, it is possible to detect the approval of this development in Gök Madrasa example, which may be related to Sahip Ata as the donor (Brend, 1975, 181) (Figure 3, 5).

Preference in Building Material

Regarding the use of building material in Sahip Ata buildings, the importance given to use of more imposing and better quality construction material can be pointed out. For instance the use of colored marble in Taş Madrasa iwan and marble in both Taş and Gök Madrasa may be associated with the prestigious and monumental expression aimed at these edifices (Figure 1, 5).

CONCLUSION

While it is precarious to make pronouncements on the personal skills and interests of a thirteenth century donor figure, it seems probable that, Sahip Ata played an important role in shaping the architecture in his period, concerning the distinctive features displayed in the architectural works he donated.

Sahip Ata, who was a successful bureaucrat in his period, was also a distinguished donor, considering the number of monumental works he donated in comparison to other Anatolian Seljuk viziers. As the historical accounts, which are the foundation charters and written accounts of the historian of the period, İbn Bibi, point to, Sahip Ata displays an affinity in architecture and architects. He even commissioned the master architects of the time, Kölük bin Abdullah and Kaluyan el-Konevi for some of his donations, as can be followed from the inscription panels of these edifices.

The architectural works he donated have similarities in many respects. The enrichment and multi-functionality in building programs, the experimentations for new trials and searches for perfection in plan layouts, the articulation in the façade design both in visual and functional aspects, the import of new forms of building elements and preference of imposing and good quality construction

material may be regarded as the common features in Sahip Ata buildings. Especially the intention to initiate multi-functional buildings serving for religious, educational, social and commercial purposes and the intention to make the entrance façade function as a part of the public space is interesting among Sahip Ata's donations.

This may point to not only his interest in architecture and architects but also his ability to make use of architecture to serve for the society's needs and to maintain the social stability and integrity in Seljuk Anatolia. Accordingly, where it is possible to trace Sahip Ata's interest in architecture and his prominence as a distinguished donor in the works he donated, it is also possible to detect from his architectural donations, his significance as a successful statesman, who tried to hold the society and the State together. Finally, Sahip Ata stands as an eminent figure not only in Anatolian Seljuk history but also in Anatolian Seljuk architecture.

NOTES

(1) Kuban states that, after the conquest of Sinop and Alaiyye, the Anatolian Seljuks had the control of the caravan routes running from Syria to Europe. During these most powerful times of the State, Alaeddin Keykubat came up with the idea of caravanserais construction and initiated the construction of a number of Sultan Hans on these routes for political purposes (1965, 83). To show their power, the royal class made use of monumental works of architecture of mostly caravanserais and hospitals opposed to less durable examples of palace structures (Ögel, 1994, 17-19).

(2) Scholars have counter arguments for the donor of the building. Kuran, with reference to Sarre, gives Emirdad Hasan as the first donor and Sahip Ata as the donor of restoration of the building and the donor of the additional edifices built around the madrasa (1969, 80-82). Sözen claims that, madrasa is a part of a complex of buildings and thus it should be donated by Sahip Ata from the beginning in 1250 (1970, 23-24). Kuran's arguments are more to the point considering variations of construction materials on the whole building and some inexperienced applications of the four iwan, open courtyard madrasa plan. In addition, depending on the inscription panel Demiralp gives the construction date of the *hanikah* as 1260-61. (1996, 64) Thus, it is assumed that, Sahip Ata restored Taş Madrasa and donated additional buildings nearby.

(3) The other two buildings are Çifte Minareli Madrasa donated by İlkanid vizier Şemseddin Cüveyni across the Keykavus Hospital and Buruciye Madrasa donated by Muzaffer Barucurdi. The monumental and enriched expression of these buildings, which were constructed in a period of intense construction activities, is a point of discussion among scholars. Where Bayburtluoğlu attributes it to the rivalries between the donors (1977, 68-70), Ögel emphasizes the successful policies of Sahip Ata as the grand vizier and his willing attitude for building activities (1966 & 1987, 2-3). Brend also argues about rivalries within these circumstances. However, she calls attention to the ambitions of Sahip Ata as a donor for more impressive architecture in each building he donated (1975, 179-180).

Whether the madrasa has one or two storeys is a point of discussion, because of its resemblance to Erzurum Çifte Minareli Madrasa. Kuran depending on the lack of stairs claims it to have one storey. (1969, 94). Sözen referring to Evliya Çelebi's travel accounts argues it to have two storeys. (1970, 41-48; 1982, 95)

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