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Imperial References:
The Gök Medrese in Sivas as an Example of the Use of Marble in Thirteenth-century Anatolia

Introduction

In the Seljuq Sultanate of Rum's relatively short period of existence, it was only after the second half of the twelfth century that representative architecture, founded by or in the name of sultans and members of the royal family, showed a distinctive development. From that point on, however, it developed rapidly and in a variety of directions. In the first half of the thirteenth century especially, a vocabulary of forms was developed that was consistently deployed in representative architecture. With the closing of the era of the independent rule of the Seljuk sultans over Anatolia in the middle of the thirteenth century, royal architectural commissions too came to an end; some of the forms though remained in use and were even further developed, though now applied to buildings founded by members of the state apparatus who had accumulated landed property and, with it, power.[1]

In recent years, the connection between politics and art in Rum Seljuq Anatolia has increasingly been a focus of research.[2] Scholars have analysed several elements of Seljuq Anatolian art and architecture and the possible use and function of these within the context of official representation.[3] Marble, though it is one of the elements that repeatedly occurred in the official building programmes of the most important royal patrons, the sultans ʿIzz al-Din Kaykawus (r. 1211–1220) and ʿAla al-Din Kayqubad (r. 1220–1237), has not been thoroughly examined in terms of its public function and effect in Seljuq Anatolian architecture.[4] To approach the use of marble decoration within public architecture at the peak of royal representative architecture, as well as after the end of the era of independent rule, this article focuses on the monuments commissioned by the two sultans mentioned above and by Fakhr al-Din ʿAli ibn al-Husayn or Sahib ʿAta, one of the most important patrons of the later period. Did the two sultans consider marble a special material for their architectural purposes, and how were their concepts transferred and transformed after the loss of the sultans' independent power in the second half of the thirteenth century?

This article considers the architectural and ornamental elements of both reused and newly-carved marble.[5] The long tradition of reusing ancient building material played a role for the Seljuq sultans, but at the same time new marble decoration was deployed for façade revetments. In the second half of the thirteenth century, members of the state apparatus who had taken over the patronage of big building projects continued to use marble decoration, both newly-formed and spolia, in their foundations. The article will start by looking at a late commission of Fakhr al-Din ʿAli in Sivas, which will be juxtaposed with the local architectural development in order to show that the extensive use of marble that this building made was not the product of a local tradition. It will then be set against the background of royal and non-royal commissions in the Seljuq capital of Konya, where marble was used in the buildings. This approach will be complemented by a short examination of similar developments beyond the borders of Anatolia, in Aleppo and Damascus, areas rich in ancient Graeco-Roman and (early) Christian history and sites. A look at art historical approaches towards the use of marble in these areas is useful, since much more has been written on the use marble, particularly spolia, there than for Anatolia, and since the various developments have not been examined with the goal of establishing their common political and artistic tendencies. Finally, this article will underline that in Anatolia the creation of new decorative forms out of marble and their use alongside marble spolia continued the antique tradition of the area as part of the claim of the Seljuq rulers to be sultans of Rum, and that this concept was taken

over and further developed by members of the state apparatus who replaced the royal patrons in the second half of the thirteenth century.

Building with marble in late thirteenth-century Anatolia

The Gök Medrese was erected in Sivas in the year 670 AH/1271 AD, as were two further madrasas, one built by Shams al-Din Muhammad Juwayni, the *ṣāḥib-i dīwān* of the Ilkhanid court, and the other founded by Muzaffar ibn Hibat Allah al-Barujirdi, an otherwise unknown patron, whose name shows some possible connection to or origin from Barujird in western Iran.[6] The Gök Medrese was founded by Fakhr al-Din 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, who was then *al-ṣāḥib al-āʿẓam*, grand vizier[7] of the Seljuq sultan Ghiyath al-Din Kaykhusraw III (r. 1265-1284). His foundation in Sivas was the last of his series of foundations.[8] These three madrasas initiated a sudden building boom in Sivas in 670 AH/1270–71 AD, after a long period with no significant architectural projects in the city.[9] As the titles of the three patrons show, they were not members of the royal family and, as the building inscriptions reveal, none of the buildings was a royal commission.

The only foundation commissioned by a sultan in Sivas had been built over half a century before and was the city's last important foundation before the Mongol Conquest. It was a hospital founded by the sultan 'Izz al-Din Kaykawus in 614 AH/1217–18 AD, today called the Ṣifaiye Medrese, and it included a tomb, in which Kaykawus himself was buried when he died in 617 AH/1220 AD. The hospital was built completely of limestone and introduced ornament forms which were later used as points of reference for the three madrasas. However, this building shows no use of marble at all, an important fact to keep in mind when studying the use of marble at the madrasas built in 670 AH/1270–71 AD.

The Gök Medrese (fig. 1), though built at the same time and place as the other two madrasas, has features that clearly distinguish it from its 'competitors' and go beyond this area and period, establishing, as shall be shown, connections with Seljuq architecture of the pre-Mongol period. The construction has an
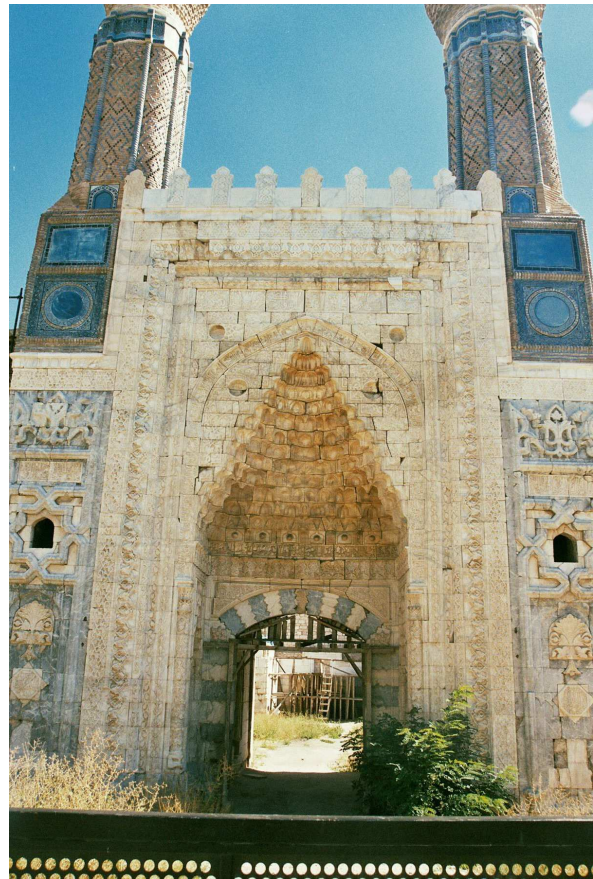

Fig. 1: The portal of Gök Medrese after restoration, Sivas, 2013

undecorated, fortress-like surrounding wall with corner buttresses with little decoration. Its gate, however, is a highly decorated, projecting porch with twin minarets. The porch, with the exception of the minarets and their supports, is made of brick completely covered with grey and white marble. The fountain embedded in the wall on the left side of the portal, and the door leading to the integrated *masjid* (small mosque) on the right side, are covered with the same material. The five bands surrounding the porch are decorated with floral and geometric patterns in low relief, showing clearly structured forms and almost no overlapping or background motives. Marble was not used for single ornamented – and therefore eye-catching – forms on the Gök Medrese façade: the material itself seems to have played at a least as big as a role as forms and motifs did there, and had an equal function as ornament.

The entrance of the madrasa led to an inner courtyard with one central and two symmetrically placed side *iwan*s. The central *iwan*, as well as the second storey, are no longer in existence today. Along the lengthy sides of the inner courtyard arcades led to cells for the madrasa students. The supporting columns consist mainly of reused marble shafts;[10] these have been partially extended with limestone in order to achieve a homogeneous height. The same applies to the capitals: some consist of spolia with different heights and forms, while others were newly carved. Marble must have been used extensively in the spandrels as well, and may also have been used in the doorways leading to the students' cells, which are no longer preserved in their original form.[11] Such an extensive use of marble, whether spolia or newly-cut, is comparable with only very few Seljuq buildings.[12] The following comparison with the other two madrasas built in the same period in Sivas will show that the Gök Medrese, with its marble spolia in the inner court and particularly with its newly-carved marble revetment on the façade, is an exceptional case.

The so-called Çifte Minareli Medrese (fig. 2) was built by the Persian statesman Shams al-Din Muhammad Juwayni and today exists as a ruin. Excavations[13] have revealed a similar ground floor with a stone façade and two brick minarets leading to a courtyard with four *iwans* and student cells. The preserved façade of the madrasa allows for a comparison with Gök Medrese's. The façade of the Çifte Minareli Medrese shows very limited use of marble: this use is clearest at the entrance porch, which is in the same style as the Gök Medrese porch. Above the arch, made of bichrome marble slabs, there is a *muqarnas*-dome framed by a band. Constructing an arc by alternating white and bluish stone slabs seems to have been popular in Anatolia from the early thirteenth century[14] and was used in all three madrasas discussed here. Beside this, only the band around the *muqarnas*-dome and parts of the column shafts seem to be made of marble. The portal of the madrasa is decorated with lavish filigree designs, but marble does not seem to have been particularly important, as little use is made of it there.[15]

Fig. 2: The portal of the Çifte Minareli Medrese after restoration, Sivas, 2013

The Buruciye Medresesi (fig. 3) follows the other two madrasas: it has the same ground plan and the portal is foregrounded on an otherwise rather plain façade. However, marble plays an even lesser role in the decoration. The lavishly decorated portal with its tight net of low reliefs arranged in bands, combined with sculptural elements spread across the flat surface, reveals the importance placed on the aesthetic of the decoration here. The form of the ornament must have been far more important than the material: marble is not used at all in the façade,[16] and in the inner court of the madrasa we find only single column shafts made of it.

To sum up, the sparse use of marble in the two madrasas built around 670 AH/1271 AD and the lack of marble in the only royal foundation of the city make it clear that the extensive use of the material in the foundation of the grand vizier Fakhr al-Din 'Ali in Sivas was not the extension of a local tradition. Rather, it seems that the statesman introduced the use of
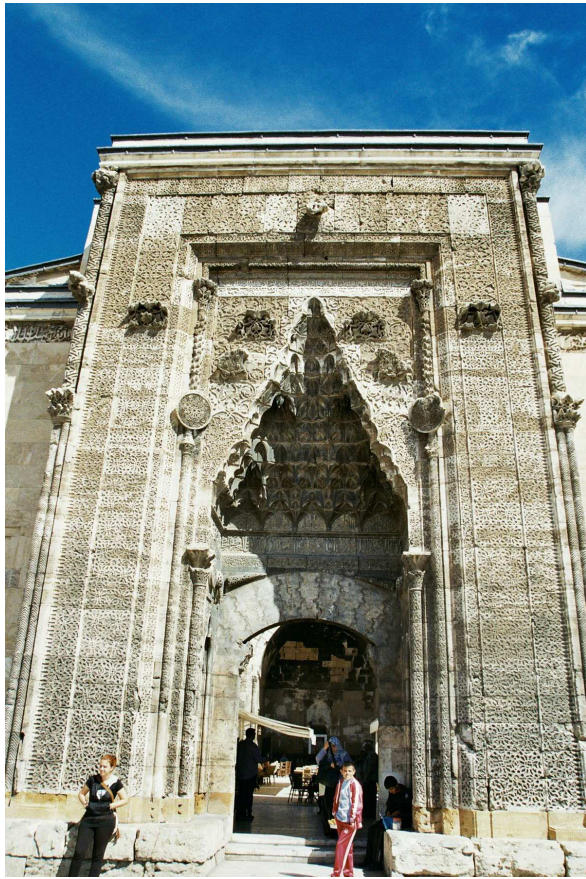
Fig. 3: The portal of the Buruciye Medresesi

marble to Sivas, having experienced elsewhere how it could be used. The marble portal of the Gök Medrese is in fact the end of a story which – as we shall see – started around half a century earlier in Konya.

Marble in the capital of Rum

When the Prussian Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke (1800–1891) stopped in Konya during a long journey on horseback in October 1838 through the Ottoman Empire, the first thing he saw, beside the minarets, were the city walls,[17] which he described in his letters. The 'curiosities' he found inserted into the city walls – "heidnische Altäre, christliche Grabsteine, griechische und persische Inschriften, Heiligenbilder und genuesische Kreuze, den römischen Adler und den arabischen Löwen"[18] – were representative of a tradition of building spolia into Seljuq fortifications throughout Anatolia.[19] This tradition reached its peak in the walls of the Seljuq capital,[20] in which a mass of Greco-Roman and late antique marble statuary – freestanding

or in high relief – was embedded. Furthermore, the marble spolia were presented together with newly carved marble with Seljuq forms – these included figural reliefs such as angels, lions and a double-headed eagle.[21] Regarding the meaning and purpose of these spolia, Scott Redford mentions a passage of Ibn Bibi's account in which the Seljuq chronicler points out the association of marble with talismanic qualities.[22] According to Ibn Bibi, 'Ala al-Din Kayqubad ordered that his inscription for the walls of Alanya should be made out of marble, for only this material was suitable for the purpose. Suzan Yalman discusses the possibility that the figurative spolia had apotropaic functions[23] as signs of power and royalty,[24] or that a 'tribute' was being paid to the philosophical tradition of Plato in Islamic culture (Konya was associated with the philosopher Plato – Aflatun in Arabic – whose tomb was believed to be located there). A fourteenth-century visitor saw what he believed was a figure of Plato in one sculptures in the Konya walls.[25] Suzan Yalman comes to the conclusion that the use of spolia had both "pragmatic and ideological purposes".[26] Furthermore, she sees the addition of "purpose-carved" works as an evidence for the Rum Seljuq "syncretism" and draws a connection with 'Ala al-Din Kayqubad's experience of exile in different courts and his aim of addressing an international audience both within the borders of his sultanate as well as beyond them.[27]

The Alaeddin Camii (fig. 4), the royal mosque of Konya built in the middle of the twelfth century and renewed during the reign of 'Ala al-Din Kayqubad, displays extensive reuse of Classical and Byzantine marble. Roman and Middle Byzantine columns are to be found in the hypostyle hall, and Early Byzantine mullions can be seen in the blind arcade on the north façade. Marble, however, was also used for the construction of new architectural elements during the expansion of the mosque complex in the early thirteenth century. The tomb tower built by 'Izz al-Din Kaykawus (never finished) is the only such tower built of marble in Anatolia. As Scott Redford mentions, this expansion of the mosque seems to have been part of 'Izz al-Din's campaign for the glorification of the Rum Seljuq dynasty, and was taken over by his brother 'Ala al-Din Kayqubad, who added to the mosque its charac-

Fig. 4: The portal of the north façade of the Alaeddin Camii, Konya

Fig. 5: The portal of the Karatay Medresesi, Konya

teristic portal at the north façade of the complex. This portal shows the first use of bicolour marble – a decorative style from Syria – in exterior Anatolian decoration. Right below the new pattern, created by interlacing light and dark marble bands, 'Ala al-Din Kayqubad placed the foundation inscription.[28]

Foundations that emerged a short time after the defeat of the Seljuqs by the Mongols in 1246 and were commissioned by members of the state apparatus took over decorative marble forms as well as the use of marble spolia, developing them in different directions. The Büyük Karatay Medresesi (fig.5), the madrasa opposite the Alaeddin Hill, where the Alaeddin Camii lies, was built by Jalal al-Din Qaraṭay, the emir of the sultan ʿIzz al-Din Kaykawus II, in the year 649 AH/1251–52 AD. Friedrich Sarre has called it "das künstlerisch bedeutendste Bauwerk [the artistically most significant monument]" of Rum Seljuq Konya.[29]

Its portal strongly resembles that of the Alaeddin Camii, but it is made completely of marble. The bichrome, interlacing pattern above the entrance occupies a larger area compared to its forerunner and is combined with a *muqarnas* vault and large *thuluth* inscriptions[30]. A further interesting feature is the fact that, on the right and left sides of the entrance, bands with a geometric chain-like ornament form rectangular frames filled with symmetrical geometric ornament. It recalls altar screens, pulpit balustrades or marble wall revetments (fig. 6), as they were used in Byzantine churches from the Early Byzantine period; such architectural features may have been the inspiration here.[31]

In 656 AH/1258 AD in the Rum-Seljuq capital, Fakhr al-Din 'Ali built his only mosque in his long career as a patron. This is the Sahip Ata Camii (fig.7). Though the mosque was built rather far from the royal citadel and the Büyük Karatay Medresesi – it is close to one of the city gates[32] – its architect[33] took over and further developed stylistic elements used in the Alaeddin
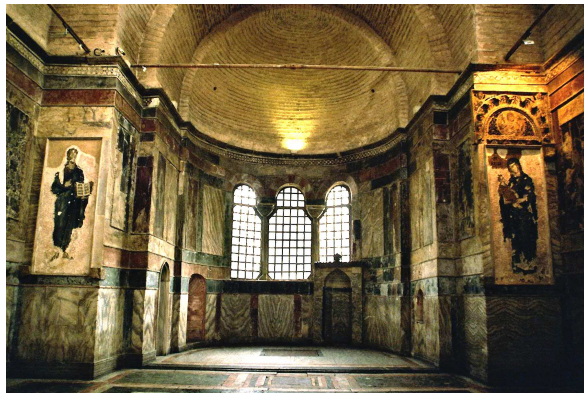
Fig. 6: The main apse of the Chora Church, Istanbul

Camii and the Büyük Karatay Medresesi. A kind of architectural 'dialogue' was established between important constructions in the city, as would later be the case with the three madrasas in Sivas. The portal of the mosque has been described as combining elements from the Iranian, Syrian and North-Mesopotamian traditions.[34] The twin minarets at the façade were already in use in Iran; this was their first appearance in Anatolia.[35] The interplay of grey and white, as seen in the Alaeddin Camii and the Büyük Karatay Medresesi, was used for the entrance gate of the mosque, where the marble stripes now form an curved band. At the minaret supports, which flank the portal, white marble bands are set against a blue-tiled background. The bands form geometric patterns which, though slightly different on either side, recall the marble star at the left side of the north façade of the Alaeddin Camii. However, while the forms there are rather flat, here they are executed in a way that creates a deep profile.

Next to the white-greyish arch of the portal and the interlacing forms, a further, more striking – though much less-discussed – feature[36] makes a clear reference to the royal habit of using marble spolia: the two marble sarcophagi, which act as the base of the minaret supports. The sarcophagus on the right side of the portal[37] displays at the front two symmetrical fields with intertwining circles separated by a plain field in the middle. The only visible short side shows a much more interesting composition consisting of three columns carrying two gables, which are again arched through archivolts. In the openings of the arcades two medallions clasped by wreaths of leaves

Fig. 7: The portal of the Sahip Ata Camii, Konya

can be seen, with the recognisable remains of a cross and a Christogram.[38] The sarcophagus has thus been identified as Byzantine-Christian. The architectural composition of an arcade with gable and archivolt seems to have been widespread in Anatolia in the early Byzantine period, though the doubling of the form in this area is rather rare, as is the motif on the main front. As an early dating of the circle pattern has been questioned, it has been suggested, interestingly, that it could be an Early Byzantine marble sarcophagus with the main front altered sometime around the eleventh century. That would make it a fascinating case of marble spolia reused twice.

The sarcophagus on the left side of the portal (fig. 8) has been classified as late antique and is easily identifiable as pre-Christian, not only due to the medusa heads that are still recognisable on the main front, but also due to its ornament structure. This side shows three panels: the middle consists of a framed plate, and the two panels on the right and the left consist of

two rumbuses, each filled with a medusa head. The corners of the side panels are filled with dolphins and birds. The visible short side is rather simple, showing only two panels with plain rhombuses, with the corners filled with leaf-ornaments. Though the relatively simple decoration of the sarcophagus gives no hint of date or origin, a very similar sarcophagus which was discovered in a house garden in Konya in 1949 does. This sarcophagus has an almost identical arrangement, only with five panels instead of three, all of which are plain. In the main panel, an inscription has survived that mentions the owner of the sarcophagus. According to Arif Mansel, this form is a rare type; it imitates wooden sarcophagi, and there are only a few examples existing. The Konya sarcophagus was, due to its form and inscription type, dated to the early third century and the origin established as Roman Pamphylia or Lycaonia.[39]

As Ethel Sara Wolper has shown,[40] the sarcophagi were used as fountains where people could receive or donate water – or possibly even milk – for private use. This means that people would get close to and even stand immediately in front of the sarcophagi fountains while filling their pots with water or milk. People would repeatedly see the ornaments, such as the cross and the medusa head.[41] We can imagine that the apparent 'non-Islamic' origin of the sarcophagi would have been taken into account when choosing them for such a prominent position. As Ethel Sara Wolper notes, embedding the fountains in the façade brought "a larger and more varied audience"[42] to the madrasa. The portal with its fountains would thus become "an advertisement of piety".[43] For this important charitable function, Fakhr al-Din 'Ali and his architect had chosen obvious marble spolia with characteristic features and added newly-carved, large-scale marble elements in the upper part of the façade, thus linking Anatolia's past and present.

The discussion has shown so far that marble was an important feature in Rum Seljuq architecture, and its use was developed in the capital of the empire when the city was in its apogee. Classical marble sculpture was set next to newly-carved marble reliefs in the city walls, while Graeco-Roman and Byzantine marble

Fig. 8: Sahip Ata Camii, the sarcophagus at the left side of the portal, Konya

columns enriched the interior, and geometric forms made out of newly-cut marble the exterior, of the royal mosque of Konya. At a time when no sultan or royal family member was capable of – or interested in – further developing the architectural standards set by ʿIzz al-Din and ʿAla al-Din – due to the defeat by the Mongols and the intrigues between potential successors to the throne – powerful patrons, members of the state apparatus, took over important features of the vocabulary of forms from the earlier royal foundations – among them, the use of marble. The *amir* Jalal al-Din Qaratay directly addressed the royal mosque opposite the Büyük Karatay Medresesi by extensively applying newly-formed marble and using patterns that immediately corresponded with the existing mosque architecture. Only a few years later, on his Konya mosque façade Fakhr al-Din 'Ali further developed the idea of using 'new' and 'old' marble by offering a new 'interpretation' of the bichrome stripes and the interlacing patterns, combining them with prominently posi-

tioned marble spolia – as the sultan had done on the city walls a few decades before. Less than fifteen years later, the same patron founded his last big project in Sivas, where the same ideas used for his mosque in Konya were applied on a much bigger scale. The madrasa portal, in contrast with the interior, which made use of marble spolia, was entirely covered with newly-carved marble, a development that was the product of no local tradition.

In order to understand this development, it is important to further analyse the function of spolia in general, and marble spolia in particular, in representative architecture of this period and region. Looking beyond the borders of the Sultanate of Rum is helpful here. On the one hand, marble spolia in Mesopotamia were also used in contemporaneous architecture. On the other, from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, both Anatolia and Mesopotamia saw rulers with the power and the ambition to leave their mark for posterity through architectural patronage. For the purpose of this article specific examples from Zangid Aleppo and Damascus will be used.

Islamic architecture in medieval Syria (eleventh to twelfth centuries) and its Christian legacy

In the case of medieval Syria, particularly Aleppo and Damascus, the reuse of architectural elements from the late antique or Christian era has been examined thoroughly over recent decades; scholars[44] have taken a wide range of approaches, from ones explaining the use of spolia as a survival of a centuries-old aesthetic and technical know-how, to ones classifying the phenomenon as a 'renaissance' of Classical forms within the architecture of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[45] Further, the embedding of spolia into medieval buildings has been interpreted in some cases as directly addressing contemporary issues. In the case of the Qastal al-Shu'aybiyya in Aleppo, built by the Zangid sultan Nur al-Din Mahmud bin Zanki in 545 AH/1150–51 AD, Julian Raby has theorised that the building's archaising form could have been a deliberate effort on the part of the sultan to refer to the era of the first Caliphs – the late antique period – and thus

try to weaken the Shi'i positions that were gaining ground.[46]

Finbarr B. Flood has thoroughly examined the reuse of Coptic and Byzantine marble slabs in Islamic contexts,[47] and has concluded[48] that the practice was a more complex phenomenon than has been acknowledged, and that we should not expect that the meaning of it to remain static across different periods and regions. One of the cases that Flood discusses involves a double reuse of Byzantine marble slabs, possibly originally used as altar slabs; this provides an interesting example for focusing explicitly on the use of marble spolia and the probable meaning of this in the medieval Syrian context.[49] The spolia were marble slabs embedded in the interior of the madrasa al-Siba'iyya in Damascus in 1515. The slabs, however, had been reused at an earlier time too: some of them were inscribed with the name of a Seljuq ruler, Abu Sa'id Tutush, who ruled in Damascus from 471 AH/1078 AD to 488 AH/1095 AD, and must have been first reused in an unknown monument associated with him.

While this interesting case attests to marble spolia use in Damascus as early as the late eleventh-century, it gives no indication about how such spolia were appraised. For this, an important hint given by the mention of a similar marble slab from the madrasa al-Halawiyya in Aleppo, dated 544 AH/1149–50 AD, by a thirteenth-century Muslim author who identified it as a Christian altar with a Greek inscription and praised it with the following words: "royal transparent marble, a stone of exquisite beauty: when a candle is placed on it, one sees its light shining through."[50] Flood argues that whether the slabs truly served as altars in the first place is of lesser importance as long as they were considered to have served as such, as the source shows.

From Ibn Tutush's period no building has remained and nothing is known about his building activity. However, it is clear that the Great Seljuqs aimed, with the help of the ruler Abu Sa'id Tutush, to restore the Sunni supremacy after they had captured Damascus from the Fatimids. He himself would use Damascus

as a base for later proclaiming himself sultan.[51] As Flood points out, there are differences in terms of "propaganda" in these early periods compared to the slightly later period of the Crusades. In the later period, the conversion of Christian churches and their furnishings to Muslim worship acted as a sign of "religious and political hegemony", as attested in contemporaneous reports.[52]

The examples above clearly show that the various historical contexts need to be thoroughly considered when trying to identify the meaning, purpose, and appraisal of spolia use. The reasons why the Zangid Nur al-Din Mahmud – while trying to safeguard himself against the Shi'i sectarian tendencies in this city – might have embedded an antique entablature in his second madrasa built in Aleppo[53] may well have differed from those of the Seljuq ruler of Damascus, Abu Sa'id Tutush, who, some decades earlier, had not only the task of re-establishing the Sunni superiority, but also an eye on extending his power beyond the governorate of the city.[54] For him, the use of Christian marble spolia could have carried a message of unification, rather than of confrontation. And both cases differ from the later connotations surrounding marble and marble reuse in the Crusades. What is important is that marble was admired as a material, its 'non-Muslim' origin notwithstanding.

Conclusion

As the different cases from Syria have shown, the reasons for using marble spolia went far beyond simple convenience. Aesthetic practices occurred that, though similar at first glance, actually differed in each case and should be compared with literary sources so that they can be set in the right historical and art historical context and the intellectual, religious or political debates that were related to them can be established.

Regarding the role of marble in strategies of imperial representation and glorification, as Suzan Yalman, Yasser Tabbaa and Julian Raby have shown, the patronage of the thirteenth-century Rum-Seljuq sultan 'Ala al-Din and the twelfth-century Zangid sultan Nur al-Din have some elements in common. 'Ala al-Din had to safeguard his throne against exterior and interior enemies when he started his building programme, while Nur al-Din was fighting against the Crusaders and Shi'i influence. In the case of the first ruler, spolia could have been used in order to emphasise the continuity of past and present in the region, and in the case of the second to address contemporary debates and legitimise his own rule over the territory.

However, in the case of the Rum-Seljuq patronage, marble seems to have played a distinctive role, a fact underlined by the parallel use of both marble spolia and newly-carved marble. As shown in the examples of royal and non-royal commissions in thirteenth-century Anatolia, alongside ancient marble columns and capitals used in the interiors, ancient marble statuary and reliefs were combined with newly-carved marble forms – reliefs or panels – and included in the exteriors of the buildings. The article also considered in this case its association with the Greco-Roman and Byzantine tradition of Anatolia and related it to the claim of 'Ala al-Din to be the King of "Rum", an area developed upon these traditions. The new forms created out of marble and set next to marble spolia could be understood as a way of using a medium known from and linked with the past to create a new visual vocabulary, in order to emphasise the continuation through re-interpretation of traditions set up by prior cultures. This practice went a step beyond the pure 'incorporation' of antique elements into new architecture. This close connection of the Anatolian Seljuqs to Greco-Roman and Byzantine art, manifested through marble sculptures and architectural forms, is important in order to understand the architectural development in the second half of the thirteenth century, which I have concentrated on here.

In terms of the patronage of the members of the administrative and military elite, two things can be said. First, use of both materials and forms relied on developments that took place in the royal architecture of the first half of the same century, so that we can observe a deliberate adoption and adaptation of the vocabulary of forms. Thus we could see the practice of carving new marble as a development of the origin-

al practice of incorporating spolia. Secondly, the concepts were not only transferred from royal to noble patrons, but – more importantly – were developed in multiple directions. In the case of the Büyük Karatay Medresesi, spolia plays no role at all. But in the large-scale adoption of the newly introduced marble pattern of the Alaeddin Camii on the façade one can 'read' a self-confident attitude towards representation and a rather 'conservative' one towards aesthetic innovation, staying close to the royal decorative style.

The case of the Sahip Ata Camii exemplifies a double strategy in the use of marble. Marble spolia are ostentatiously shown to visitors, as in royal buildings earlier, while, in terms of newly-carved marble, the first steps towards a transformation of the royal vocabulary of forms – the result of changes in the way the artisans created the forms and combined them with new features – can be seen. On the façade of the Gök Medrese, built by the same patron around fifteen years and some four foundations later, representation through marble and innovation in its use seem to have been of great importance and led to a new level of visual language. While the interior has a rather traditional placement of marble columns and shafts, on the madrasa's façade a totally new concept was presented. The portal was completely covered with marble, with finely executed forms in balanced proportions. Fakhr al-Din 'Ali dealt during his whole 'career' as a patron of public foundations with the tradition of marble use in Anatolian Seljuq architecture. The façade of the Gök Medrese could be seen as a re-interpretation of this tradition, one undertaken when he had already become al-ṣāḥib al-āʿẓam and royal patronage had no longer been available for over two decades. The accumulation of land and power by Fakhr al-Din 'Ali and his descendants has been mentioned by several scholars. 'Dynastic' interests could have been one of the reasons why Fakhr al-Din 'Ali 'dared' this reinterpretation.

Endnotes

1. In contrast to the royal patrons, who were members of the Seljuq royal house, this group of patrons was involved in the military-bureaucratic and/or economic elite but were not members of the royal family, see Howard Crane, *Notes on Saldjūq Architectural Patronage in Thirteenth Century Anatolia*, in: Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient, Vol. 36 No. 1, 1993,

pp. 1–57. After the second half of the thirteenth century, they began to accumulate former state land as private property, see Ethel Sara Wolper, *Understanding the public face of piety: Philanthropy and Architecture in Late Seljuk Anatolia*, in: Mesogeios, Vol. 25–26, 2005, pp. 311–336; p. 313.
2. See among others: Ethel Sara Wolper, *Cities and saints: Sufism and the transformation of urban space in medieval Anatolia*, Pennsylvania State, 2003, Suzan A. Yalman, *Building the Sultanate of Rum: Memory, Urbanism and Mysticism in the Architectural Patronage of ʿAla al-Din Kayqubad (r. 1220–1237)*, PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2010, *The Seljuks. Politics, Society and Culture*, eds. Christian Lange and Songül Mecit, Edinburgh, 2011, Patricia Blessing, *Reframing the Lands of Rūm: Architecture and style in eastern Anatolia, 1240–1320*, PhD dissertation, Princeton University, 2012, Suzan Yalman, *ʿAla al-Din Kaykubad illuminated: A Rum Seljuq sultan as cosmic ruler,* in: Muqarnas, Vol. 29, 2012, *The Seljuks of Anatolia. Court and Society in Medieval Middle East*, eds. A. C. S. Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız, London, 2013.
3. In particular, see Scott Redford, *Thirteenth-Century Rum Seljuq Palaces and Palace Imagery*, in: Ars Orientalis, Vol. 23, 1993, pp. 219–236, Scott Redford, *The Seljuq of Rums and the Antique,* in: Muqarnas, Vol. 10, 1993, pp. 148–156, Oya Pancaroğlu, *The Mosque–Hospital Complex in Divriği: A History of Relations and Transitions*, in: Anadolu ve Çevresinde Ortaçağ, Vol. 3, 2009, pp. 169–198.
4. To my knowledge there are only two articles explicitly on spolia: G. Öney, *Anadolu Selçuk Mimarisine Antik Devir Malzemesi*, Anadolu, Vol. 12, 1968, pp. 17–38, which does not consider the use and function of marble, and Scott Redford 1993, *The Seljuq of Rums and the Antique*, who focuses on marble spolia in the walls of Seljuq cities.
5. It is important at this point to define marble spolia and newly-formed marble, as the terms are used in this article. As Michael Greenhalgh has shown in his recent publication, Michael Greenhalgh, *Marble Past, Monumental Present: Building with Antiquities in the Mediaeval Mediterranean,* Leiden, 2009, it is very difficult to establish today how intensively marble quarries were used in different periods and, as far as the Seljuqs are concerned, there are no documents on this subject, Greenhalgh 2009, p. 100; pp. 472ff. In the case of this article, marble is treated as spolia, when it is recognisable as such, which means when form and/or iconography, inscriptions etc. make a prior use obvious. When marble is cut and formed in a way such that no traces are left which would give a clue about whether the material came from a contemporary quarry, a stockpile (more on this in Greenhalgh 2009, pp. 120ff.) or an ancient cite, it is treated as newly-formed and thus contemporaneous marble decoration (see also Greenhalgh 2009, pp. 10ff.).
6. For the titles of the patrons, listed in alphabetical order, see Howard Crane 1993, *Notes on Saldjūq Architectural Patronage in Thirteenth Century Anatolia*. There is nothing further known about Muẓaffar ibn Hibat Allah al-Barūjirdī, see Micheal Meinecke, *Fayencendekorationen seldschukischer Sakralbauten in Kleinasien*, Vol. 2, Tübingen, 1976, p. 448, Crane 1993, *Notes on Saldjūq Architectural Patronage*, p. 46 and the foundation's inscriptions in Max van Berchem and Halil Edhem, *Matériaux pour un Corpus inscriptionum Arabicarum, Pt. 3: Asie mineure, T. 1: Siwas, Diwrigi, Tekkeh*, Le Caire, 1917, pp. 26ff.
7. See J. Michael Rogers, Waqf and Patronage in Seljuq Anatolia: The Epigraphic Evidence, in: *Anatolian Studies*, Vol. 26, 1976, pp. 69–103; note 6.
8. After the Gök Medrese only the expansion of his mosque in Konya from 656 AH/1258 AD took place, with a *khānqāh*, dated 678 AH/1279-80 AD (no longer extant), and an *ʿimārat*, dated 682 H/1283-84, with beautiful tiles in the interior but nothing new to add in the style of the stone architecture, see Crane 1993, *Notes on Saldjūq Architectural Patronage*, pp. 36–37.
9. It is controversial whether the three buildings started being built simultaneously or whether they were simply finished within the same year see J. Michael Rogers, Seljuq architectural decoration in Sivas, in: The Art of Iran and Anatolia from the Eleventh to the Thirteenth Century A.D., London, 1973, pp. 13–27; p. 13. Furthermore, it has been claimed that in the case of Gök Medrese, it was not a wholly new construction, but rather a renovation of an old structure, see J. Michael Rogers, The Date of the Çifte Minareli Medrese at Erzurum, in: Kunst des Orients, Vol. 8, Nr. 1/2, 1972, pp. 77–119, and Blessing 2012, Reframing the Lands of Rūm: Architecture and Style in Eastern Anatolia, 1240–1320

10. Jerphanion mentions that all columns are antique, see Guillaume de Jerphanion, *Mélanges d'archeologie anatolienne*, Beirut, 1928, pp. 76–91; p. 84.

11. In the case of the doors of the students' cells, one should make careful comparison with older photographic material, since these have been considerably altered in different periods. In their appearance today they are extensively renewed and it is doubtful whether they correspond to the original concept.

12. As will be shown later, the *Alaeddin Camii* shows a very extensive use of marble, since not only marble spolia have been embedded, but a whole tomb tower is made out of marble – a quite exceptional case.

13. Excavations took place from 1967 onwards, see Meinecke 1976, *Fayencendekorationen seldschukischer Sakralbauten in Kleinasien*, p. 451.

14. See e.g. the north façade of the *Alaeddin Camii* and the entrance of the *Büyük Karatay Medresesi* in Konya (though both portals without a curved arch).

15. During my visit of the site in 2013, I could identify parts of the façade as marble with the naked eye, others however not, due to the recent restoration, which makes it difficult to judge whether stone parts have been over-polished or even replaced. For this reason, only the marble parts are considered here which could be compared with older photographic material made prior to the restoration. About the difficulties of defining marble, see Greenhalgh 2009, *Marble Past, Monumental Present,* pp. 26f.

16. The bluish and white slabs building the entrance porch could be of marble – as in the other two madrasas – however I could find no references on this, nor judge it myself, since the façade has become darker over time.

17. On the question whether the nineteenth-century drawings (e.g. of Léon de Laborde from 1838 or Charles Texier from the 1840s) show parts of the city or the citadel walls, see Joachim Gierlichs, *Wie sahen die seldschukischen Burg- und Stadtmauern von Konya aus? Überlegungen zu den antiken und byzantinischen Spolien und ihrem Verhältnis zu den seldschukischen Reliefs*, in: Anadolu ve Çevresinde Ortagaç, Vol. 3, 2009, pp. 157–167, where Gierlichs raises the argument that the antique spolia, e.g. the Hercules statue, were part not of the city walls, built by ʿAlā al-Dīn Kaykubād in 618 AH/1221–22 AD, but of the citadel walls, built by his grandfather in 569 AH/1173–74 AD and renewed or expanded in 600 AH/1203 AD.

18. "Pagan altars, Christian tombstones, Greek and Persian inscriptions, pictures of saints and Genoese crosses, the Roman eagle and the Arab lion" (transl. by the author), Helmut Arndt (ed.), *Helmuth von Moltke, Unter dem Halbmond. Erlebnisse in der alten Türkei 1835–1839*, Berlin, 1981, p. 287.

19. Scott Redford 1993, *The Seljuq of Rum and the Antique*.

20. Since the restricted space of this article does not allow a discussion of the question raised by J. Gierlichs, I will, for the moment, follow the mainstream point of view (as presented e.g. in Redford 1993, The Seljuq of Rum and the Antique) that the spolia described and drawn in the nineteenth-century travel literature were part of the city walls.

21. Redford 1993, *The Seljuq of Rum and the Antique*, pp. 148–153.

22. Ibidem, p. 150.

23. Yalman 2010, *Building the Sultanate of Rum*, p. 119.

24. Ibidem, p. 122.

25. Ibidem, pp. 124-127.

26. Ibidem, p. 134.

27. Ibidem, pp. 134-140.

28. Scott Redford, *The Alaeddin Mosque in Konya Reconsidered*, in: Artibus Asiae, Vol. 51, No. 1/2, 1991, pp. 54–74; pp. 57–58, pp. 69–70.

29. Friedrich Sarre, *Reise in Kleinasien. Forschungen zur seldschukischen Kunst und Geographie des Landes,* Berlin, 1896, p. 48.

30. See also Scott Redford 1991, *The Alaeddin Mosque in Konya Reconsidered*, p. 69.

31. Compare e.g. the objects Ident. Nr. 3239 and Ident. Nr. 3020 in the Museum for Byzantine Art in Berlin, www.smb-digital.de.

32. Dorothy Lamb, *Notes on Seljouk Buildings at Konia*, in: The Annual of the British School of Athens, Vol. 21, 1914/1915–1915/1916, pp. 31–61; p. 46.

33. For an interesting approach to the cooperation of Fakhr ad-Dīn ʿAlī and the architect of the Sahip Ata Camii, see Barbara Brend, *The Patronage of Faḫr ad-Dīn ʿAlī al-Ḥusain and the Work of Kalūk ibn ʿAbd Allāh in the Development of the Decoration of Portals in Thirteenth Century Anatolia*, in:, Vol. 10, No. 1/2, 1975, pp. 160–186.

34. Lamb 1914/1915–1915/1916, *Notes on Seljouk Buildings at Konia*, pp. 47ff.

35. I leave aside the discussion about the date of the *Çifte Minareli Medrese* in Erzurum (and thus about which of the two buildings introduced the twin minarets for the first time in Anatolia), since there is no consensus in the literature on its building date; see J. Michael Rogers 1972, T*he Date of the Çifte Minareli Medrese at Erzurum,* and Brend 1975, The Patronage of Faḫr ad-Dīn ʿAlī al-Ḥusain.

36. Friedrich Sarre speaks only of "classicising fillings at the base", see Friedrich Sarre, *Denkmäler persischer Baukunst*, Berlin 1910, p. 132; Dorothy Lamb, though discussing the mosque thoroughly, does not pay attention to the sarcophagi, see Lamb 1914/1915–1915/1916, pp. 46–50. Among modern authors, J. Michael Rogers and Barbara Brend mention only in passing the two sarcophagi at the base of the minaret supports, see J. Michael Rogers, *The Çifte Minare Medrese at Erzurum and the Gök Medrese at Sivas: A Contribution to the History of Style in the Seljuq Architecture of 13th-century Turkey*, in: Anatolian Studies, Vol. 15, 1965, pp. 63–85, p. 73 and Brend 1975, *The Patronage of Faḫr ad-Dīn ʿAlī al-Ḥusain,* p. 166. On the contrary, the sarcophagi seem to have drawn the interest of many scholars from the fields of Byzantine art and early Christian archaeology, see next footnote as well as Guntram Koch, *Frühchristliche Sarkophage,* München 2000, p. 564.

37. Otto Feld, *Mittelbyzantinische Sarkophage*, in: Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte, 65. Band, 1970, pp. 158–184, particularly pp.176–178; Carl D. Sheppard, *Byzantine Carved Marble Slabs,* in: The Art Bulletin, Vol. 51, No. 1, 1969, pp. 65–71, particularly p. 67.

38. The cross is visible to the naked eye; for the Christogram see Feld 1970, *Mittelbyzantinische Sarkophage*, p. 176 and the illustration of the short side, plate 11b.

39. Arif Müfid Mansel, *Konya'da bulunan yeni bir Lâhid,* in: Belleten, Vol. 18, 1954, pp. 511–518.

40. Wolper 2005, *Understanding the public face of piety*, p. 328.

41. The antique sarcophagus measures 2.24m in length, 0.9m in height by 1.13m in width, see Mansel 1954, *Konya'da bulunan yeni bir Lâhid,* pp. 512–513.

42. Wolper 2005, *Understanding the public face of piety*, p. 331.

43. Ibidem, p. 329.

44. J. Michael Rogers, *A Renaissance of Classical Antiquity in North Syria*, in: Annales archáeologiques arabes syriennes, Vol. 21, 1971, pp. 347-356; Terry Allen, *A Classical Revival in Islamic Architecture,* Wiesbaden, 1986; Yasser Tabbaa, *Survivals and Archaisms in the Architecture of Northern Syria, ca. 1080–ca. 1150,* in: Muqarnas, Vol. 10, 1993, pp. 29–41.

45. Julian Raby, *Nur Al-Din, the Qastal al-Shu'aybiyya, and the "Classical Revival"*, in: Muqarnas, Vol. 21, 2004, pp. 289–310; p. 290.

46. Raby 2004, *Nur Al-Din, the Qastal al-Shu'aybiyya, and the "Classical Revival"*, pp. 289–310; pp. 294–299.

47. Finbarr B. Flood, *The Medieval Trophy as an Art Historical Scope: Coptic and Byzantine "Altars" in Islamic Contexts*, in: Muqarnas, Vol. 18, 2001, pp. 41–72; and Finbarr B. Flood, *A Group of Reused Byzantine Tables as Evidence for Seljuq Architectural Patronage in Damascus*, in: Iran, Vol. 39, 2001, pp. 145–154.

48. Flood 2001, *The Medieval Trophy as an Art Historical Scope*, p. 54.

49. Flood 2001, *A Group of Reused Byzantine Tables*, p. 148.

50. A passage from Ibn al-ʿAdim's (d. 1262) description of the *madrasa al-Halawiyya*, see Flood 2001, *The Medieval Trophy as an Art Historical Scope*, p. 52.

51. Flood 2001, *A Group of Reused Byzantine Tables*, pp. 150–151.

52. Flood 2001, *The Medieval Trophy as an Art Historical Scope*, p. 56.

53. Raby 2004, *Nur Al-Din, the Qastal al-Shu'aybiyya, and the "Classical Revival"*, p. 297.

54. Flood 2001, *A Group of Reused Byzantine Tables*, p. 145; *Tutush (I) b. Alp Arslan* in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition.

Figures

Fig. 1: The portal of Gök Medrese after restoration, Sivas, 2013 (Photo: Sophia Vassilopoulou)

Fig. 2: The portal of the Çifte Minareli Medrese after restoration, Sivas, 2013 (Photo: Sophia Vassilopoulou)

Fig. 3: The portal of the Buruciye Medresesi (Photo: Sophia Vassilopoulou)

Fig. 4: The portal of the north façade of the Alaeddin Camii, Konya (Photo: Stefan Weber)

Fig. 5: The portal of the Karatay Medresesi, Konya (Photo: Stefan Weber)

Fig. 6: The main apse of the Chora Church, Istanbul (Photo: Sophia Vassilopoulou)

Fig. 7: The portal of the Sahip Ata Camii, Konya (Photo: Stefan Weber)

Fig. 8: Sahip Ata Camii, the sarcophagus at the left side of the portal, Konya (Photo: Michael Greenhalgh)

Abstract

Marble was a frequently deployed material in the representative architecture of the two most important royal patrons in Rum-Seljuq Anatolia, the sultans ʿIzz ad-Dīn Kaykāwūs (r. 1211–1220) and ʿAlā ad-Dīn Kayqubād (r. 1220–1237) and its use reached a peak in the royal capital, Konya. The practice was further developed by patrons from the bureaucratic and military elite who replaced the sultans in providing patronage for public foundations in the second half of the thirteenth century. Based on the work on one of the most important patrons of this later period, Fakhr al-Dīn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn or Sahib Ata, this paper attempts to investigate the function of marble decoration in the architecture of the second half of the thirteenth century by analysing the concept of marble use in royal commissions in the first half of the same century. In addition, in order to understand how the functions and effects of forms and materials could shift depending on political and social circumstances, the paper also takes a brief look at similar developments beyond the borders of Anatolia – at Zangid Aleppo and Damascus. This short examination will allow for further discussion of the possible 'entanglements' of traditions, the 'non-Muslim' past of Anatolia and the political ambitions of the several patrons during the different phases of the thirteenth century in Anatolia.

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