

“CONTINUITY” BY “REUSE” IN ANATOLIAN SELJUK ARCHITECTURE

ANADOLU SELÇUKLU MİMARİSİNDE “DEVŞİRME” İLE “SÜREKLİLİK”

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Abstract

This paper examines the reused stones or spolia encountered on a group of religious buildings, from the Seljuk period, in Akşehir**. In the early thirteenth century, the conquest of Konya by the Seljuks was followed by Akşehir. Standing religious, educational and commemorative buildings in the town, from the first quarter of the century, witness the inclusive building activities aimed at re-establishing and embellishing the town after its collapse during the wars of conquest. On these new constructions the remains of building stones and carved fragments surviving from the earlier cultures were reused and this way they were preserved to our time although in a new context.

Keywords: Akşehir, Seljuk, Byzantine, masjids, reuse.

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Özet

Bu yazıda, Selçuklular döneminde Akşehir’de inşa edilen bir grup dini yapıda kullanılan devşirme taşlar incelenmektedir. Onüçüncü yüzyıl başında, Konya’nın Selçuklular tarafından fethini Akşehir’in fethi takip etmiştir. Kentte halen ayakta duran dini, eğitim ve anı yapıları, savaşlar sırasındaki yıkımlardan sonra kenti yenilemek ve zenginleştirmek için gerçekleştirilen yapısal etkinliklere tanıklık ederler. Bu etkinlikler sırasında, kentteki eski kültürlere ait, ancak savaşlar sırasında yıkılan yapılardan kalan yapı taşları ve bezemeli taşlar ikinci kez kullanılmış ve bu sayede zamanımıza kadar yapıların üzerinde, ancak özgün işlevlerinden farklı konumlarda korunmuşlardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Akşehir, Selçuklu, Bizans, mescidler, devşirme.

Introduction

According to Ceylan (2005:74), reuse has a dual meaning: first it denotes changing the function of a building for a new use, and second it indicates the second use of building materials and elements, coming from earlier buildings, for new uses (Ceylan 2005: 74). Both issues were practiced in classical Greek and Roman times but they became widespread in Byzantium. Emperor Constantine, brought antique statuary "to adorn his new capital on the Bosphorus" (Mango 1963: 55). The aim was, on the one hand to exhibit the power of Constantine over the great Roman emperors whom he had overthrown and on the other to expose the authority of the new religion, Christianity as well as the church over paganism (Ceylan 2005:74-75). According to Saradi, in Byzantium after the fourth century, reuse was practiced both as a way to transmit specific political and ideological messages, and as a means to serve practical issues, such as economic and functional purposes (Saradi 1997: 395). Readymade building materials facilitated in cutting down the quarrying, crafting and transportation costs and helped in finishing the constructions in less time.

Considering the meanings in the reuse of earlier architectural and sculptural elements in Byzantine art and architecture, Redford, thinks that the Byzantines found Christian associations in some figural reliefs and sculptures and they considered some others like columns or statues as objects granted with magical powers. These and other spiritual associations led them to incorporate figural and inscriptional spolia into their city walls in sizeable numbers which consisted of funerary art, like antique reliefs, stelae, and sarcophagus panels (Redford 1993:148). One good example for their practice for inserting antique statuary in the construction of citadel walls is represented on the walls of the inner citadel in Ankara (Bakırer 2001: fig. 5).

The Anatolian Seljuks, like their forerunners in Anatolia, were also interested in the reuse of architectural remains from Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine cultures, while embellishing their newly conquered towns with buildings necessary to fulfil their social and religious needs. They practiced reuse both as changing the functions of existing buildings which had lost their original functions, for new uses, and also in reusing the building materials gathered from buildings that had fallen into ruins. At first glance, their interest in spolia, appears to be more inclined with practical and economic intentions. The economic preference, like in the Roman and Byzantine times, was possibly in order to reduce the costs for quarrying, transportation, cutting and trimming, as well as to eliminate the time required for the production of

new cut stone blocks or support elements. The practical approach focused on the ordinary stone or marble blocks and on architectural elements with specific functions like columns, columns capitals, column bases. In addition, there are also elaborately carved statuary with aesthetic qualities, complete gravestones in the form of stele, large or small fragments of liturgical furniture originally designed for particular functions and specific spots but after the damage of the buildings they must have been laying close to the construction sites. Therefore as Ceylan mentions it for the Byzantine period, in the Seljuk building programs also the earlier building stock, existing entirely or in parts, was "reprocessed in new constructions" (Ceylan 2005:75)¹.

The above mentioned practices are well displayed on the walls of many newly constructed or repaired citadel walls as well as on mosques, masjids, khans and caravanserais and even mausoleums without a differentiation of the function of the buildings on which they are used and also from which buildings they came from.

In most cases, with ordinary stone building blocks, the new use was closely associated with the original one. Thus, they were once more utilised as building stones in the construction of most monumental Seljuk edifices where finishing the construction in a short time was possibly the initial goal². Quite often, the dismembered columns, column capitals, those no longer in their original locations, were once more used in regard to their original load bearing functions. Several monumental buildings in Konya, Kayseri, Isparta and Amasya are only a few examples to this practice (Öney 1970: 21, Doğan-Şaman 1997:347-354). The fragment of an arch, again used for the construction of an arch but placed upside down as on the Kuruçeşme Han between Konya-Beyşehir. Many more examples can be added to these uses. Another customary practice was to reuse the reverse sides of plain or carved marble blocks to engrave the building inscription to be inserted on the portal. For this practice Redford, finds a relation with an incident mentioned by the Seljuk period historian İbn Bibi, who related the victory of Alaaddin Keykubad, during the siege of Alanya with the use of marble bullets, and associated the

¹ Ceylan, B., "Spolia: Geç Antik Dönemde Yapılar ve Yapı Elemanlarının İkinci Kullanımları", *Eskiçağ'ın Mekânları Zamanları İnsanları* (der.L.Özgenel), Ankara, 2005: 75; Both in Rome but more so in Byzantium, the large number of new construction and sanitation projects that increased the need for building elements and the lack of qualified masons and artisans forced the administrators to turn into ready material, no longer used in their original places.

² Possibly for this reason, on the exterior elevations of most buildings the heights of the building stones are aligned but their widths vary between 20-110 cm., thus specific masonry styles are not seen.

use of marble, for the inscription panels with the name of this Sultan (Redford 1993: 149-150)³.

On the other hand, there are also cases where similar elements were assigned new uses, which were not in direct association with their original employment. As seen on the city walls of Antalya, where round slices, cut from marble column drums were used for carving documentary inscriptions on their circular fronts, which were then inserted horizontally inside the wall thickness, displaying their inscribed surfaces (Redford, Laser 2008; Yılmaz 2002)⁴.

Sculptured stones, like gravestones or funerary stele, architectural or liturgical fragments, which are recorded on the walls of several buildings in Konya, Akşehir, Eskişehir, Isparta, Ankara, Sivas, Kayseri and others, may have been picked up because of a preference for their artistic merits and usually reorganized in a new context.

The selection of fragments for reuse, could also be a personal choice of the donor who as the patron of architectural projects guided the builders by his likings, aiming at merely exhibiting, as a collector of art works, something with artistic merit, as seen on the portal of the Sahip Ata Mosque in Konya⁵.

In addition, besides economic reasons, using the materials of those buildings which had fallen into ruins, must have helped in the cleaning of debris while they were reorganizing their new cities. Whatever the issue, Anatolia reuse has increased the lifetime of both ordinary and decorated stones coming from the buildings

of earlier periods. They have continued to exist on the Seljuk buildings, in a new and refreshed context, instead of being lost. This reuse has contributed in the survival of the Roman and Byzantine heritage to our times. However, it is not possible to make a guess for whether the Seljuks had a specific preference like an aesthetic enjoyment while using the plain or elaborately carved architectural elements, as there seems to be no restrictions?

Buildings with Reused Stones in Akşehir

Akşehir is a small town in central Anatolia, around 50 km. northwest of Konya.

The beginnings of the settlement in Akşehir is dated to the Phrygians when it was on the main way and this priority continued during the Roman period, as Akşehir (Philamelium) was again on the road network connecting Afyon-Kütahya and the smaller settlements surrounding them (Konyalı 1945:11-15; Parman 2002: 79; Özcan 2006:18). A milestone, carrying the inscription “the first milestone from Philamelium (Akşehir) to Julia (Çay)” was recovered during the salvage excavations conducted by the Akşehir Museum in 1997. This milestone is considered as the proof of the town being the starting point of the highway (Demirci, Türkan, Salman 1998:341). After the establishment of the Byzantine Empire with its capital in İstanbul, the highway network was re-organized. The north west-south east route, coming from İznik, reached Akşehir via Konya (Parman 2002: 87). Özcan defines this as the “postal route connecting the capital to Syria” and highlights Akşehir as an important way station that flourished on this route (Özcan 2006: 18). During the above mentioned 1997 excavations, the Byzantine cemetery was discovered where eight graves provided information on the reuse of Roman gravestones from the second or third centuries and carved fragments of liturgical furniture from Byzantine churches, pointing to the existence of religious edifices in the town.

Modern scholarship describes the Roman and Byzantine periods of Akşehir as a citadel-city model (Çiftçi 2001: 219-224). The following Seljuk period is classified within the first category of Seljuk towns, which were already existing settlements when the Seljuks arrived, and which they re-established and embellished by extensive urbanization activities (Tanyeli 1987: 33-45). The surviving building stock of the Seljuk period shows that large and small sized religious edifices, commemorative and educational buildings were among the new constructions that were planned to fulfil the daily needs of an Islamic society. The construction of religious buildings started with the Great Mosque, where the date of the minaret is 1213, and continued

³ According to Redford, during the conquest of Alanya, for a long period the Seljuk's were not able to go through the walls and conquer the city. Finally Alaaddin Keykubad ordered the use of marble bullets, because he claimed no other stone could fly as far. This command caused the delay of the siege as no marble was available in Alanya and the marble had to be brought from the quarries on the island of Marmara (Procenneseos). With the use of the marble bullets it was possible to demolish the city walls and conquer Alanya. Marble was then associated with some spiritual power to the Sultan.

⁴ This is especially striking if one thinks that normally columns stand upright and it is not customary to cut circular sections out of them and write inscriptions on these circular surfaces. Redford and Leiser have published the inscriptions inserted on the Antalya city walls which are a historic document as they record the conquest of Antalya by İzzeddin Keykavus. See Redford and Leiser 2008.

⁵ The Seljuk grand vizier, Sahip Ata Fahrettin Ali for his Sahip Ata Mosque in Konya, had two Roman sarcophagi placed at the sides of the portal frame and two elaborately carved windows in the Seljuk style above these sarcophagi. This assemblage became the bases of the minarets.

with small masjids in every neighbourhood, until 1230. They were constructed as endowments and supplied with inscriptions that give the dates of construction and the names of the donors (Bakırer, 1984:77-84; Bakırer, 2007:51-64)⁶. During the first quarter of the thirteenth century, the wealthy inhabitants of the town must have come together and decided to donate small masjids to each newly developing neighbourhood, using the available ready material, the remains of earlier buildings in their constructions..

The Great Mosque, and four masjids, Ferruhşah, Güdük Minare Altın Kalem and Ayasofya, dated between 1220-1226, the Taş Medrese from 1250, and the tomb of Seyyid Mahmoud Hayrani from 1268, display various kinds of spolia. Whereas, nothing stands from the Roman and Byzantine architectural heritage of the town. That these earlier cultures and their buildings existed are verified with the reused material on the Seljuk period buildings, remains of gravestones and carved fragments now exhibited in the Akşehir Taş Madrasa Museum and perhaps in other local museums, in neighbourhood towns. The reuse of both ordinary building stones and carved fragments coming from Roman and Byzantine times shows an imaginative and original style on the minaret of the Great Mosque and the west facade of Ferruhşah, but on the other masjids the approach is customary as seen on many other Seljuk period buildings. Therefore in the following section the constructions with reused material are discussed, in detail, only in the Great Mosque and masjid, while the others are mentioned briefly.

The Minaret of the Great Mosque (1213)

The Great Mosque must have been the earliest building erected in town, however, because of later interventions it has lost its architectural authenticity except the tiled mihrab (Öney 1965:171-184). The minaret, that stands at a close distance to the main building, has a cubic base, measuring 4.80x4.80m., and a cylindrical shaft tapering slightly towards the balcony. The inscription panel, is inserted on the west side of the base (Bakırer 1971:337-367; Bakırer 1980:375-395). It is a rectangular slab of reused marble placed with its long side parallel to the

horizontal line, looks reminiscent to a *templon slab* in the Afyon Museum⁷. The large rectangular frame is decorated with a floral scroll, carved in high relief, a composition not familiar to the Seljuk repertoire. Perhaps there was another pattern, on the rectangular section inside this frame, which was scraped off to make place for the inscription⁸. Inside this frame, the inscription is arranged in four lines, and gives the date of construction as 610H/ AD1213, the name of the donor as İmam Sait Hacı Necmettin Necipzade, and mentions



Figure 1 - Great Mosque, base of the minaret, west side, inscription panel surrounded by three reused stones (2003) / *Ulu Cami, minare kaidesi, batı yüz, kitabe levhası çevresinde üç devşirme taş (2003)*

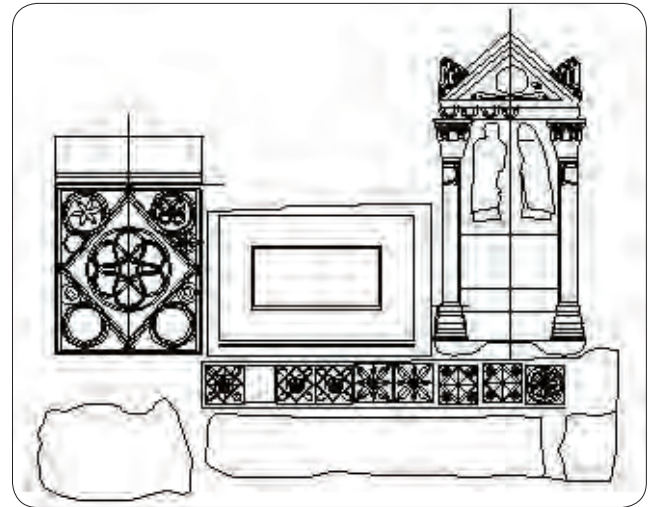


Figure 2 - Great Mosque, base of the minaret, drawing of the west side: inscription panel at the centre surrounded by reused stones, (Bakırer, 2004) / *Ulu Cami, minare kaidesi, batı yüzün çizimi: ortada kitabe levhası çevresinde üç devşirme taş (Bakırer, 2004)*

⁶ The masjids in Akşehir are examples of a special group of small religious buildings from the Seljuk period. In number they come after Konya where the largest number of masjids have survived to our times. These buldings resemble each other in their plan types, in their sizes as well as the materials employed for their construction and architectural ornament. Both in Konya and Akşehir, the plan types show variations that make it possible to distinguish sub-groups. Again both in Konya and in Akşehir, the preference for the materials of construction is for brick and stone. In Akşehir, almost 75 % of the ordinary building stones are reused building stones, in addition sculptured and carved pieces are also used.

⁷ The types of the reused stones are discussed more in detail below, in the section on reused stones. On this particular slab, the angular form and the palmette scroll are reminiscent to a templon slab now inserted on the Taşpınar fountain in Afyon, see: Afyonkarahisar Kütüğü, 2001, fig.399.

⁸ According to Konyalı, there was a cross at the centre which was scraped off in order to make place for the inscription. He believes that the donor, whose name is given, is responsible for the minaret only and that the original mosque was of an earlier date.

the name of Alaaddin Keykubat I. as the ruling Sultan (Konyalı 1946:350-351; Öney 1965:171-179; Yetkin 1968: 171-179).

The inscription panel is flanked by two other large reused stones. The one on the right is a *gravestone*. It is in the form of a funerary stele with a pediment, complete except the pointed apex of the triangle, which is now broken⁹. But the two stylized *acroterion*, at each corner of the triangle, are in place. On the surface of the triangular pediment the centre is marked with a disc or a *medusa head*. The badly mutilated surface makes it hard to identify this figure with assurance. The figure is accompanied by two dolphins, one on each side, extending towards the corners of the triangle. The base of the pediment sits on a moulding decorated with an egg and dart frieze, carved in high relief. The shaft is flanked by two pilasters whose surfaces are decorated with entwining wine-scrolls, in relief. They have carved capitals, which resemble highly stylised composite examples. On the face of the shaft, two large human figures and perhaps a third one in between them fill the upper section. These standing figures were probably carved in high relief, yet, like on the surface of the pediment the surface of the stone is worn out or intentionally scraped, making it hard to identify the figures, which might be a woman, a man and a child, possibly representing a family stele¹⁰.

The second reused stone slab, which is inserted on the left of the inscription panel, is possibly a *templon slab* or *closure slab* coming from a Byzantine church¹¹. This is an unbroken square panel with a slightly mutilated headboard. The headboard has the trapezoidal cross-section and its front face is divided into square units and each unit is decorated with a lobed flower carved in low relief (Alpaslan 1997:235-247)¹².

Below the headboard, the square section of the slab has a decoration which is seen many of such slabs, there is first a square frame which is delineated with a narrow, double rope moulding. A lozenge pattern, outlined by a triple rope moulding is inscribed inside the square frame

and knotted to the frame from its corners. The triangular apertures, formed at the corners, between the sides of the lozenge and the inner corners of the square frame, are filled with circles that are outlined by triple rope mouldings and knotted to the sides of the lozenge pattern. The centres of these four circles are filled alternately with a pinwheel, a flower with four petals, a flower with six pointed leaves and another flower with four leaves.

The decorative composition on the surface of the closure slab is not completed here, as the lozenge circumscribes a large circle and the circle in turn circumscribes a six lobed knot. This knot is the centre of the whole composition and is bounded by six entwining lobes which are today partly mutilated, whereas in earlier photographs which illustrate the format of the slab before its damage, the knot can be clearly distinguished (Öney 1970: fig. 15b).

The arrangement of the reused fragments around the inscription panel, is completed with a fragment from a *templon architrave*, inserted horizontally below the inscription panel and extending from the left corner of the inscription to the right corner of the *funerary stele*. The exposed surface is decorated with a composition repeated on many of such architraves and it is divided into small square panels and each panel is filled with a different floral composition, carved in low relief, such as, rosettes inscribed in circles, flowers with large and small pointed petals, lozenge patterns with small circles attached on the sides.

Thus the square minaret base of the Great Mosque in Akşehir, is constructed with bricks and on one of its sides, there is a multicultural and traditional arrangement as: the documentary inscription panel at the centre, that informs of the date and donor of the Seljuk period construction, it is surrounded by reused elements from the Roman and Byzantine periods. Is there a meaning or a message in this arrangement?

Ferruḡşah Masjid

Ferruḡşah masjid (Figs. 3-11), is located in the Anıt district, that establishes the northern limits of the town and houses also the Tomb of Seyyid Mahmud Hayrani, from a slightly later date. According to the inscription on the entrance wall, the masjid was donated by Kuluoğlu Ferruḡşah from Konya, in the year 621H/AD1224 (Konyalı 1946: 311).

Ferruḡşah is a small, single unit, domed building, a square block, measuring ca.6.50x 6.50 m. in plan and around 7.50 m in height. The north and east walls have no openings and both are constructed with un-coursed

⁹ Because of the resemblance of these fragments to some examples, noticed on the gravestones, exhibited in the Roman Baths in Ankara, the terminology used by late David French (2003) was adopted.

¹⁰ Öney (1970: fig. 15a) published an earlier photograph of this funerary stele. Here the surfaces of the pilasters and the shaft are in a slightly better condition. Both the entwining wine scroll and the three figures can be easily recognized.

¹¹ Also called, chancel barrier, chancel screen, parapet slab. These liturgical components are associated with the iconostasis which is also called a templon.

¹² Alpaslan (1997: 235 - 247) gives an informative discussion on the slabs with trapezoidal section.



Figure 3 - Ferruḥşah Masjid, general view of south wall (2003) / *Ferruḥşah Mescidi, güney duvarın genel görünümü (2003)*



Figure 4 - Ferruḥşah Masjid, detail of south wall, window openings / *Ferruḥşah Mescidi, güney duvardan ayrıntı, pencere açıklığı*

rubble stones and larger blocks of rough cut stones, which are only partly exposed on the upper and lower parts of the wall, where the plaster of a later date has fallen off. In contrast to these two walls, the south and west walls are articulated with window and door openings and are not plastered. While the south wall has two, symmetrically arranged, rectangular windows, the west wall has one window and one door, again symmetrically arranged.

The south wall of Ferruḥşah faces the street (fig.3 and 4). The lower section of the wall, from the foundations to the height of five meters, is constructed with large sized, square and rectangular blocks of marble *spolia*, alternating with ordinary building stones of related shapes and sizes. Some of the reused marble blocks carry incisions and holes on their surfaces which point to their second use after initial first use perhaps in an antique period building. The upper section of the wall is completed with small sized rough cut stones, ordinary building blocks and fragments, which are lined up in courses together with brick units scattered between them.

The rectangular window openings are topped with arched lunettes, that are set in square frames, delineated in brick, all in the Seljuk style. They are a simplified version of the ones on the west wall, but at present in a damaged state, carrying signs of a crude and hastily done intervention. On the lower part of the window close to the southeast corner, there are two fragmentary *balustrade supports*, used as jambs¹³. Both have soffit patterns on their surfaces, carved in high relief. The decoration of the two soffits do not match (fig.4) On the window, close to the southwest corner, the jambs are plain, they have only moulded bands on the sides.

The rectangular zone between the lower end of the window sill and the first row of the stone blocks, above ground, is crudely restored with cement and above this a stone block is placed lengthwise. It is broken in half but reminds of a *templon architrave*. Like the one on the minaret of the Great Mosque, the surface is divided into one rectangular and two square units with carved patterns. On the rectangular corner unit, there appears to be the representation of a peacock, but today only a small section of its tail is left because of the brake. The composition of the carved patterns with their resemblance to the decorative schemes used on some *templon architraves*, makes it possible to assign it to them (Parman 2001:98, A1)¹⁴.

The west wall is the entrance façade of the small masjid (figs. 5-11). Considering the variety in the materials and the differences in their techniques of construction, this wall can be studied or rather read in three horizontal sections. The first section, above the foundations, to a height of around 2.00 meters, is constructed with large blocks of marble in a variety of sizes, some rectangular,

¹³ Balustrade supports are part of the iconostasis or *templon*, they are placed between the *templon* slabs and they carry the architrave.

¹⁴ Parman has published the example in the Afyon Mus. inv. no.1394, Pl.31/a,b with the representation of a stylised peacock. Variations of the same theme can be seen on fig.32



Figure 5 - Ferruḡşah Mescid general view of west wall, entrance façade (2003) / *Ferruḡşah Mescidi batı duvarın genel görünümü, giriş cephesi* (2003)

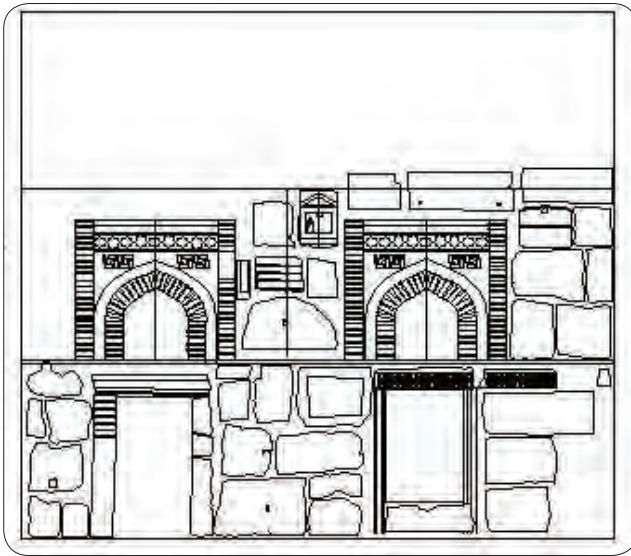


Figure 6 - Ferruḡşah Mescidi, drawing of west wall, inscription panel surrounded by four reused stones, on the left restitution drawing of the closure slab (Ö.Bakırer, 2004) / *Ferruḡşah Mescidi batı duvarının çizimi, kitabe levhası etrafında dört devşirme taş, solda korkuluk levhasının restitüsyon çizimi* (Ö.Bakırer, 2004)

some square and some irregular due to breakage. Their colours vary from off white to medium grey and the texture from a smooth surface to one rather rough and worn out in time. On the surfaces of some of these plain,

building blocks, there are circular holes, reminding one of dowel holes.

The central section of the west wall, is more interesting than its lower and top sections, as it blends a characteristic Seljuk period design, material and construction scheme with a number of reused stones from the Roman and Byzantine periods (fig. 5, 6, 9). Above the door and the window openings, there are, two arched lunettes set in square frames, which repeat the frames on the south wall, but these are better preserved. Therefore it is possible to see that both the composition and the properties of the materials used, like the sizes of the bricks, the imprints of the eight cornered star shaped, turquoise blue tiles from which only a small piece remains, all contribute to put a thirteenth century Seljuk stamp on this facade (Yetkin 1968: 36-49; Bakırer 1980: 313-315)¹⁵.

The inscription is carved on a rectangular marble block which might be the back of a reused block. The text of the inscription is arranged in four lines, but not framed with a border. The inscription mentions that, it was donated by Kuluoğlu Ferruḡşah from Konya, in the year 621H/AD1224 and during the reign of Alaaddin Keykubad (1220-1236), son of Giyasedin Keyhüsrev 1 (1192-96, 1205-11) (Konyalı 1946: 311; Yetkin 1968: 36-39; Bakırer 1980: 313-314).

The inscription panel is inserted between the window lunettes, and around it there are five reused fragments that give the impression of a deliberate and planned arrangement. (fig.5,6). These reused stones need to be studied one at a time. The first is a large marble slab below the inscription panel with uneven edges because of breakage and a hole at its centre, which cannot be associated with a dowel hole and looks more like a later intervention. To the left of the inscription panel, half of a marble post, ca 50 cm. long fragment, possibly part of a *templon support* or *balustrade support*, is placed upright. It is framed with a plain moulding on three sides and the narrow rectangular area inside the frame has a simple guilloche pattern, formed of a continuous band of two interwoven spirals. Running upright from bottom to top, only six interwoven loops can be counted, whereas on other similar examples of complete supports, there are around fifteen loops, which makes it clear that what

¹⁵ Such windows with lunettes, set in square frames are common in Seljuk architecture. They appear not only on the facades of the small mesjids in Akşehir and Konya, but also on Türbe façades, as seen in Sivas, Tokat and others. The present condition of the frames is badly mutilated, with missing tiles and renewed brick units, but more unfortunate are their centres, which are carelessly filled with small stones. For a full description and comparative study with other examples of these lunettes see: Bakırer, 1980.



Figure 7 - Ferruḥşah Masjid, west wall window opening /
Ferruḥşah Masjid batı duvarı, pencere açıklığı

we have here is only 1/3 of a complete support (Parman 2001:115)¹⁶.

To the right of the inscription panel, there is another broken, reused fragment in marble (fig. 9). It comprises only one fourth of the original, but gives enough information to identify it as a *templon* or *closure slab*. In most examples of these *paraphet slabs*, the general layout and the compositions carved on their surfaces are symmetrical arrangements, composed of geometric elements. Therefore, although in this case we have only one corner of the original slab, it is possible to make a restitution drawing of the complete panel seen on fig.6. The square parapet slab must measure around 85X85 cm. All the elements of the composition are outlined with a triple rope moulding. This moulding first outlines a square frame, and inside this frame, another square sitting on edge is inscribed within the first one, and its corners are knotted to the first frame with large loops. The triangular zones formed at the corners, between the first and the second squares, are filled with small circles, delineated with three narrow bands and bonded with

¹⁶ Such complete supports measure ca. 103cm. or more. For an example which is almost alike see Parman, 2001:115, H6.env. no.K.339/E.212, Fig.10, Pl.51/55. Parman dates such supports to the middle Byzantine period.



Figure 8 - Ferruḥşah Masjid, west wall, door opening /
Ferruḥşah Masjid batı duvarı, kapı açıklığı



Figure 9 - Ferruḥşah Masjid, west wall, detail of centre /
Ferruḥşah Masjid batı duvarı, orta kısımdan ayrıntı

loops, on the diagonal axis both to the inner corner of the frame and the outer corner of the large square. The centre of the circle in this remaining fragmentary slab, is filled with a double knot formed of two interwoven bands. While making a hypothetical restitution all the circles can be filled by a knotted pattern. But is not known for sure, whether this knot repeats in all the circles, at the corners, because in most of the examples of closure slabs

that were examined, the pattern inside the circles show variations, such as rosettes, pinwheels or stylised flower with round or pointed leaves, as seen on the minaret of the Great Mosque.

A large circle is inscribed inside the second square, followed by an eight cornered star which is composed of two juxtaposed squares, one sitting on its side and the other on its corner. Finally at the centre of the circle, three pointed leaves can be identified, which when completed could be a flower or a rosette with eight petals (fig. 9)¹⁷.

Immediately above the closure slab there is a rectangular block in limestone, measuring around 46 cm. wide and 70 cm. high (fig. 10). This is a small, *gravestone* in the form of a rectangular *funerary stele*, finished with a triangular pediment, partly incised and partly carved in low relief¹⁸. The triangle is outlined with a band of wine scrolls with attached leaves and these take the places of the *anthesterion* on top and *acroteria* at the corners that are usually seen on Roman stele. Below the triangular pediment, there is a rectangular panel with a figural composition carved in low relief. As the surface of the stone is heavily worn out, either by time or on purpose, the composition is hardly identified as four figures, each with different heights. To the right there are two figures who could be the parents, then comes another one, possibly a child standing on a high pedestal, and at the far left, the fourth figure could be a servant. Above the second figure on the right, there is a big hole which must be due to the bad state of the stone as it is not related to the composition. With the same reason the single letters incised on the frame of the stele cannot be deciphered.

A fragment from a second *gravestone* or *stèle* is inserted on the southwest corner of the façade (fig.11). One can assume that this is the central section of a tall rectangular stele, a fragmentary marble slab, measuring ca. 60 cm. wide and 45 cm. There is no pediment but a small disc or possibly a head, placed above the central figure on the first register. The narrow plain moulding that defines a frame follows the outline of this figure and makes a semicircular projection on top. A rope moulding, runs horizontally and divides the surface of the stele into two equal registers. The representations on both registers are figural and they are arranged in two superimposed and repeating scenes with slight variations.



Figure 10 - Ferruḫşah Masjid, west wall, detail of funerary stele, 1 / Ferruḫşah Mescidi batı duvarı, 1. mezar steli, ayrıntı



Figure 11 - Ferruḫşah Masjid, west wall, detail of funerary stele, 2 / Ferruḫşah Mescidi batı duvarı, 2. mezar steli, ayrıntı

¹⁷ This type of a knot and more elaborate versions of it are typical patterns not only on in Byzantine carved ornament but also on sgraffito pottery.

¹⁸ In an earlier photograph of the west façade, this stele cannot be seen as the surface of the slab is covered by a layer of cement. It is not known when this cement was removed, yet it must be one reason for the worn - state of the surface. For the early photograph see: Yetkin, 1965: 8, fig.12.

On the upper register there are five figures depicted in front view. Konyalı (1946: 310) identifies them as; “five soldiers standing close to each other. They are represented with short skirts, or tunics, with their heads open and holding weapons in their hands. At the corner of the composition there is another figure on horseback, facing the soldiers” (Konyalı 1946: 310). Öney (1970:

fig. 17b), depending on an earlier identification defines this composition as “a slab with the relief of twelve gods from the Byzantine period” (Öney 1970: fig. 17b). The same scene is repeated on the lower register, where the figures are slightly larger but still lined up as on the upper register.

The third horizontal section, the topmost part of the west façade, is constructed with small sized stones, both new and re-used, including fragments of column drums. These alternate with single brick units, which are scattered here and there. This very irregular construction is alien to the lower section and gives the impression that the wall has perhaps undergone a later restoration.

Like the minaret of the Great mosque, the west facade of the Ferruḥşah masjīd has an arrangement presenting the three different cultures. The inscription panel, this time on a plain ground but perhaps the rear face of a carved *spolia*, is surrounded by Roman stele and Byzantine liturgical elements. Could we consider a meaning in this arrangement also?

The Masjīd of Gūdük Minare

According to its inscription placed over the entrance door, the Masjīd of Gūdük Minare, was donated by Muktesip Hacı Hasan and constructed during the reign of Alaaddin Keykubat I, in 624H/1226-27 (Yetkin 1965:68-69; Memecke 1980: 31-35; Bakırer 1971:340; Bakırer 1980, I, 342; Bakırer 1984: 55, fig.1-2). This is another small masjīd, where up to around 2.00 m.reused stone blocks have been used (figs.12-13) These blocks have varying dimensions, their surfaces have a smooth finish or they have holes and grooves. These blocks might also originate from antique period buildings like in almost all the masjīds in Akşehir. Above the first section, an orderly common bond brick lay rises up to another 2.00 m. height. On the front elevation, on the section constructed with brick, the surface is articulated with blind niches that have pointed arches, which are outlined with single brick units. Above these niches, the walls are constructed with small sized cut stones, rubble stones, marble *spolia* and single brick units, the work of a later restoration.

Immediately below the rectangular recession, which looks quite large for the present panel, there is the remains of a decorative band delineated in bricks and tiles, most probably belonging to an arched lunette set in a square frame, reminiscent to those on the west façade of Ferruḥşah, but in a much more worn out state. Two fragments of reused marble panels are inserted at a close distance from the inscription panel. The one above is a



Figure 12 - Masjīd of Gūdük Minare, spolia, reuse of stone blocks with various dimensions / *Gūdük Minare Mescidi, devşirme malzeme, farklı boyutlarda taş blokların yeniden kullanımı*



Figure 13 - Masjīd of Gūdük Minare, entrance façade, inscription and spolia / *Gūdük Minare Mescidi, giriş cephesi, kitabe ve devşirme taş*

fragment from a *templon architrave*, whose surface is decorated with carved ornament consisting of a band of five knotted medallions (antrolac pattern). This is reminiscent to the one on the west façade of Ferruḥşah, used as a lintel over the window opening. Below there is another fragment, this possibly coming from another *templon architrave*. Because of the worn condition of its surface and a newly placed metal sill in front of it, this intricate geometric composition cannot be clearly identified.

The Masjīd of Altın Kalem

Another contemporary example, Altın Kalem has its north wall designated as the entrance façade (fig. 14). The entrance door has a simple format, but it is topped with a lunette set in a square frame. The inscription panel, an upright rectangular slab, is placed at the centre of this wall to the right of the entrance. It gives the date of construction as 620H/1223AD, and mentions that the masjīd was donated during the reign of Alaaddin Keykubat by Hacı İsfendiyyarzade Eminüddin Yusuf. A long fragment from a *templon architrave*, with only one of its sides left open, is inserted a little below this



Figure 14 - Masjid of Altın Kalem, entrance façade, inscription and spolia / *Altın Kalem Mescidi, giriş cephesi, kitabe ve devşirme taş*

inscription panel. The pattern, carved in low relief, is composed of knotted medallions alternating with knotted squares set on edge, and a braid pattern at the end. An inscription, perhaps a dedicatory one, runs on its frame (Parman 2001:Pls.2-4/ 32).

The Variety of the Reused Stones, Spolia

Spolia encountered on the buildings in Akşehir can be grouped as ordinary building stones, gravestones, and those with carved ornament that were originally used as liturgical furniture. It is not possible to determine the provenance of these reused stones building but they may come from earlier antique or Byzantine period buildings in the town.

Building Stones

Large marble or limestone blocks in varying forms and dimensions are the main type of *spolia* used in abundance, as building stones, on the Akşehir masjids, but especially on Ferruhşah, and Güdük Minare (figs. 3, 5, 12). Depending on certain carved or incised grooves and holes on their surfaces it is possible to assign them to the Hellenistic or Roman period. The reuse of building stones, both plain and carved, in the construction of Seljuk buildings without specific reference to their original use and original buildings, can be followed throughout the thirteenth century to which the Zazadin Han (Konya-Aksaray road) is a good example. In addition, as already mentioned, besides the ordinary building stones, sections from arches, carrying elements like stone or marble columns together with their capitals or single capitals that were placed on wood columns in some mosques with timber upper structures, like the Great Mosque in Sivrihisar and the Aslanhane Mosque in Ankara are abundantly used. The few well known examples for stone and marble columns and capitals are, the walls

of Kuruçeşme Han (Konya-Beyşehir road), on the exterior, interior walls and entrances of Mubarizüddin Ertokuş Medrese, in Atabey, near Isparta (Doğan / Şaman1997); in the Alaaddin Mosque in Ankara, in the harim section of the Alaaddin Mosque in Konya; harim section of the Aslanhane Mosque in Ankara.

Gravestones , Funerary Stele

The gravestones in the form of pediment stele with a triangular pediment and two acroteria at the side which are recorded on the minaret of the Great Mosque and on the west façade of Ferruhşah and they resemblances to some gravestones exhibited in the Roman Baths in Ankara (French 2003: 141-182)¹⁹. A family stele with two figures is recorded in the 1997 excavation in Akşehir (Demirci, Türkan, Salman 1998: fig.13) and others now in the Taş Madrasa Museum are examples to indicate the existence of a Roman cemetery with gravestones that are dated to the 2nd-3rd centuries AD (Demirci, Türkan, Salman 1998: 349-350)²⁰. Stele exhibited at the Archaeological Museum in Konya, are local examples collected from several districts inside the city and from some nearby settlements. They are studied in detail by A.Alp who has pointed out certain general characteristics, among these one close relationship between Konya and Akşehir is in the choice of materials. In most cases, gravestones from Konya region are carved from the local material, a calcareous type of stone which is likewise recorded on the Akşehir examples Alp 1984. (Pls.XXXVII-XLIII)²¹. Furthermore, certain parallels can be pointed out with the Roman period examples exhibited in other museum, but the Akşehir examples do not seem to have much in common with those from İstanbul (Fıratlı 1965: 265-323).

Therefore it appears that examples of gravestones, in the form of pediment stele, encountered on the thirteenth century Seljuk buildings in Akşehir have a closer relationship with those from the Roman

¹⁹ French 2003: 141 no.70, 160 no.52, 169 no.59, 170 no. 60

²⁰ In the Akşehir Taş Medrese Museum, there are resembling Roman gravestones on display. However, as the Museum at the Taş Medrese was closed for restoration, at the time of our last visit, it was not possible to compile more information on these stele, including their inventory numbers. Others in İzmit, İstanbul, Konya, Akhisar museums show similarities too.

²¹ Beside the relationship in material, certain other characteristics, such as the upright position of the stele, triangular pediment placed over the shaft, acroteria at the corners, anthesierion on top of the triangle, and usually standing figures represented on the face of the shaft show resemblances. Their number, type clothing and other peculiarities may differ. For other examples from the same region and also from Kütahya and Afyon see: Michael, 1995, has published several related examples in vols. I& II and Calder, 1955: 25-38.

period, recovered in the Phrygian settlements to the north and northeast of Akşehir²². What I did here is only a very brief attempt to describe, study and point out resemblances and relations. Further research is necessary to evaluate these gravestones, especially those with the multi figural compositions as mentioned, on the west façade of Ferruhşah, which seems to be a unique composition charged with some symbolic meanings²³.

Liturgical Furniture

Fragments of liturgical components with carved ornament are utilized on all the buildings studied in this paper (figs. 1, 2, 4-7), but with emphasis on Ferruhşah. They show a variety as; *templon architraves*, *templon supports* and *templon slabs*, which seem to resemble Byzantine period examples, which were recovered in the vicinity of Akşehir, specifically in the Phrygian settlements and attributed to the tenth and eleventh centuries by Parman²⁴.

The Iconostasis is "a screen or partition, separating the sanctuary, the sacred Bema of many Eastern churches, from the nave" (Ötügen 1997: 2, 838). "During the reign of Justinian, (565-578) the changes in the liturgy, brought a change in the arrangement of the chancel, which was from then on separated from the rest of the church by a continuous screen from north to south, that eventually developed into the iconostasis. The earliest ones that survive consist of screens composed of closure slabs (*templon slabs*) below, fitted between tall supports (*balustrade supports*) which uphold a cornice above (*templon architrave*). It was only in comparatively late times that the open space came to be filled with icons" (Versones 1959: 792) Between the 7th and 13th centuries it was also called the *Templon* (Ötügen 1997:

2, 838). The *templon* two on or iconostasis slabs were placed between the *templon supports*, which in turn carried the *templon architrave*. It is pointed out that the original function of these liturgical components is varied, yet the more common function was connected with religious ceremonies (Dalton 1961:166; Rodley 1994:27; Parman 2002:95).

The *templon architraves* are long elements, perhaps easily broken, therefore when reused only fragmentary samples are used as lintels, jambs or inserted on walls beside ordinary building blocks. Those encountered on the monuments in Akşehir can be grouped according to the compositions carved on their surfaces.

Templon architraves decorated with a band of knotted medallions are recorded on the west façade of Ferruhşah over the lintel of the window and on the north façade of Güdük Minare to the left of the inscription panel. Parman, who has published *templon architraves* decorated with similar knotted medallions, now in the collections of Afyon, Eskişehir and other nearby museums, thinks that, the band of knotted medallions "is a well known and much repeated composition", "a typical decorative scheme encountered on architraves dated to the middle Byzantine period"²⁵. Furthermore similarities can also be pointed out with architraves utilized on a few Seljuk period buildings in the vicinity of Isparta²⁶. Another much used composition is a variation of the knotted medallions, created by adding knotted squares and a braid pattern as seen on the base of the minaret of the Great mosque, extending below the inscription panel and the funerary stele. To this type, reminiscent examples can be pointed out from Afyon²⁷.

²² Karagöz 1984:10, this study is a brief but informative approach to examples of gravestones in this region, as it gives regional variations and preferences. Akşehir examples seem to have parallels with Roman period stele recovered in Phrygia.

²³ Beside the comparative examples already mentioned, multi figural compositions can be encountered on gravestones recovered in and around Ephesos, which are commemorative family stele with three, four or more figures with individual characteristics, but none of them are in direct relation with the Ferruhşah example, see: Atalay, 1988: Pl.107-130. On the Ferruhşah example the figures belong to a group with identical attributes, it seems to be a unique composition see: Konyalı, 1946:310; Öney, 1970: fig.15a, its attribution to the twelve Gods, finds one earlier example, perhaps close in the number of the figures only, see: Akurgal, 1961:149, fig.101; Atasoy-Parman, 1983:128-129, B.354, a late Roman examples from Lycia.

²⁴ Parman 2001. This study is a comprehensive work on this region which has been an informative guide to study and learn the liturgical furniture.

²⁵ Parman 2001, according to examples given by Parman, complete *templon architraves* measure ca. 4.50m. The ones that are closest in decoration to Akşehir examples are listed below. These are in marble, some are exactly alike and some show slight changes in the single patterns that fill the centres of the medallions: Parman : (A2) Afyon Mus. inv.no.1396; (A3) Afyon Mus. inv.no.1398, Pl.3/3; (A4) Afyon Mus. inv.no.1404, Pl.,2,4/2b,e,f shows that the composition is completed with a second pattern with arches; inv. no.1405, (A5) Afyon Mus. Pl.6,7, 8/4, on the front face medallions and the back face of the same has a second composition with knotted medallions, girandole and rosette patterns at the centre Pl.8/4e; without inv.no., (A24) Afyon Museum, Pl.25, 26/22 a,b,c,d; a series of knotted medallions with rosette, maltese cross insets at their centres; see also *templon balustrade support* with similar composition, without inv.no. (A65), Pl.136/188a & b. For reminiscent architraves with knotted patterns from Byzantine churches, see. A.Alp,-Görkem, 2012: 32-36. Grabar, 1976 :41-49, 71-79, Pl.XI-XIV, dated to the 11th century.

²⁶ For example at the Atabey, Ertokuş Medrese and Yalvaç, Devlethane Mosque, see: Demiriz, 1972: 87-100, fig.13-14; Doğan, 1997: 347-372, fig.7-8 ; Doğan, 2001: 243-250, Pl.15.

²⁷ These compositions decorate usually the side faces of the architraves

The second group of liturgical furniture, the *templon* or *balustrade supports*, are encountered on *Ferruhsah*, where there are three fragments inserted on the west and south walls²⁸. The one on the west wall, which has the guilloche pattern formed by a continuous band of two interwoven spirals, seems to be a widespread composition on supports dated to the middle Byzantine period (AD 600-1200), which are published from the collections of the Afyon, and Uşak Museums, and are almost identical in form and decoration²⁹. While another fragment, again close in form and decoration, was recovered in the excavations of the Church of Saint Nicholas at Demre³⁰.

On the south wall of *Ferruhsah*, the two fragmentary balustrade supports used as jambs have the soffit pattern carved on their surfaces. The soffit pattern could have been as popular or perhaps even more popular than the guilloche as there are several examples coming from a variety of origins such as Afyon, Eskişehir and Seyitgazi and even Istanbul³¹.

Finally, the last group of liturgical furniture are the so called *templon slabs*, *claustra slabs* or *chancel screens*, which were placed between the balustrade supports to complete the composition of the iconostasis. The one on the minaret of the Great Mosque is complete, while the one on the west façade of *Ferruhsah* masjid is only one fourth of a slab. Both of them are decorated with geometric compositions formed of interlocked squares, concentric lozenge patterns, circles and loops as well as tiny leaves and palmet leaves filling in the openings. There are a large number of almost identical, very close or reminiscent fragments reused on buildings in other Seljuk towns which make one think that this specific group of liturgical furniture, were appreciated more than the rest or did they carry some symbolic meaning for the Seljuks. To mention but a few, they are found on buildings in Isparta and Antalya³². While,

others, originally located on Byzantine buildings in the vicinity of Akşehir, but now in the collections of Afyon, Eskişehir -coming from Seyitgazi, Emirdağ - museums were published by Parman.³³

Conclusion

In this paper, religious buildings in Akşehir, constructed after the arrival of the Seljuks, are discussed with emphasis for reused stones or spolia. The minaret of The Great Mosque and the façade of the *Ferruhsah* Masjids carry resemblances to each other. Furthermore, they also present unique approaches while the other two have simple and repetitive applications.

Both with the examples of Roman gravestone and the fragments from Byzantine liturgical furniture, it is possible to add a number of other examples from buildings in other Seljuk towns and with other functions. These practices definitely point to the interest of the Seljuks in spolia and especially those with carved decoration which they reused with special care combining them with their own special stones, and not only with the ordinary building stones but also together with inscription panels. What we notice on the four masjids in Akşehir is the arrangement of the reused material, even those in a fragmentary conditions, together with the inscription panel. The inscription which documents the identity of the Seljuk building is surrounded by earlier material, from two different cultures, and probably charged with some symbolic or religious meanings. This relationship of the past with the present, is best accentuated on the base of the minaret and the facade of *Ferruhsah*, which were all together carried to the future, to our times. The buildings that were demolished during the conquest of the Seljuks were not completely lost but survived at least in sections and continued their existence by being reused, although in a different context.

Here one wonders whether the architect, builder, donor or artist of the buildings have used these special blocks as ordinary building stones, without paying much attention to their specific characteristics, their religious or symbolic meanings; or with these specially designed compositions have they meant to transmit a message to the observers? Were they concerned with

as mentioned in note, see: Alpaslan 1997: 246, inv.no.286.fig.9.

²⁸ A number of other examples are scattered on the walls the Seyyid Mahmud Hayrani türbesi standing at a close distance to *Ferruhsah*. These have carved compositions like the braid, and the interlocked circles. Several others with similarities in form alone are recorded in Selçukler near Uşak.

²⁹ As mentioned in note, for an identical example and the one from Demre see: Parman, 2001:126 (H6), Hieropolis Mus. inv.no.K.339/E.212, Fig.10, Pl.51/55, p.115.

³⁰ Alpaslan 1997: 246, inv.no.286.fig.9.

³¹ Parman 2001:126 (A30) Afyon Museum, without inv.no. Pl.50/52; p.126 (E9),Eskişehir Museum, inv.no. A70.67, Pl.50/53; p.127, (S2) Seyitgazi Museum, inv.no.A.133/68, Pl.52/57. Matthews 1971: 54, fig.26, Pl.3, from the Hagios Polyruhtos Church in Istanbul, Eyice, 2001, from the Hagia Glykera Church'in Tuala, p.201,fig.6.

³² Demiriz 1972: fig.13,14, the interior of the Atabey Medrese,

near Isparta is perhaps the richest example with spolia as it houses a number of these slabs besides other spolia. See also, Doğan 1997: fig.7,8; Yılmaz, 2002: fig. 341, inserted on the city walls as a set.

³³ Alpaslan 1997: inv.no.292,293, fig.1,2; Parman 2001: 123, (A27) Afyon Mus.inv.no.1401,Pl.47/47; p.124, (A29) Afyon Mus.inv.no.2009, Pl.48/49; p.124,(E 8), Eskişehir Mus. inv. no.A.148.68. PL.48/50.

the preservation of these stones by reusing them or have they tried to assign them a more special place and a more special function ?

These and similar issues cannot find accurate answers, as there is not enough information for the medieval Anatolian elite or townsman, his way of life, his habits or preferences. However, one is inclined to think that as these people were interested with all the happenings around them, be it nature, flora, fauna or buildings and building stones, so it is possible that they may have been interested with the stones that were laying around them merely with an artistic eye and placed them on their buildings to own and keep them in their possession.

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