

CIÉPO INTERIM SYMPOSIUM
THE CENTRAL ASIATIC ROOTS
OF OTTOMAN CULTURE

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İstanbul 2014

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İstanbul Esnaf ve Sanatkarlar Odaları Birliđi (İSTESOB)

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1. Baskı
İstanbul 2014
ISBN: 978-975-7914-38-9

İstanbul Esnaf ve Sanatkarlar Odaları Birliđi (İSTESOB)
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Litros Yolu 2. Matbaacılar San. Sit.-B Blok Bodrum Kat No: 2BB4 Topkapı, İstanbul
Tel: +90 212 612 06 62 pbx Fax: +90 212 612 06 63
www.printist.com.tr

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This book is a cultural service of the Istanbul Chambers of Artists and Artisans.

**Architecture for the Dead: Thoughts About the Origin
of the Tomb Tower in Islamic Architecture The *Türbe*:
Old Theories, New Synthesis**

*Machiel Kiel**

From India straight across through Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and the Balkans and all the way to Budapest stretches a broad belt of land in which the historical architecture is not only dominated by imposing mosques but also very much by monumental mausolea, *türbe* in the Turkish and *gumbad* in the Iranian context. There is, so to say, an artistic link between South-Eastern Europe and India. In India, Islamic architecture, including monumental tombs, was introduced by the Turkish (Turkic) Sultans of Delhi from the early 13th century onward. In the Balkans, the *türbe* was introduced in the 14th century by the Ottoman Turks because, since the downfall of the Roman Empire and its early Byzantine successor, around 600 A.D., the local architectural repertoire did not know this building type at all. Neither did it know mosques, hamams, and caravansarays etc. They were introduced by the Ottomans, partly following the building traditions of the great art of the Seldjuks of Rum (Asia Minor) [*Ulu Kümbet, Ahlat, Lake Van, 1274*] but soon developed their own stylistic principles.

In the Balkans, the oldest example of a *türbe* is that of the early Ottoman conqueror, Prince Süleyman Pasha in Bolayır near Gallipoli on the Dardanelles, dating from shortly after 1356, when Süleyman fell from his horse and died. The second oldest preserved example must be the *türbe* of Laļa Şahin Pasha, the first Ottoman Governor-General of the Balkans, still standing on a hill overlooking the Bulgarian town of Kazanlık, and dated from shortly after 1386. The Bolayır *türbe* is a square block, covered by a dome, while the one in Kazanlık is a so-called canopy *türbe*, a dome resting on four pointed arches, supported by four masonry pillars. [*Kazanlık makam-türbe of Lala Şahin Pasha, ca. 1387/88*] Another example of a 14th century *türbe* was the one that once stood on the historic battle field of Kososo Polje, where in 1389 the Ottomans consolidated their hold on the Balkans. Its site marks the place where Sultan Murad I fell and where his intestines were buried. His mummified body was carried to his capital,

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Bursa and buried there. The building we see today is the product of a thorough rebuilding in the 1850s. The original türbe on the Kosovo Polje, just north of the town of Priština, was seen in the 1440s by the famous "Serbian Janissary" Michael of Ostrović and, in 1530, by Benedict Kuripešić. The Serbian Janissary noted that the victor of the battle, Sultan Yıldırım Bayezid, "remained on the Field of the Black Birds and erected on the battlefield, on the place where his father was killed, a monument: on four pillars a vault was built, covered with lead. And this is still standing today." As a boy Michael had lived in the close vicinity of the place and is therefore a reliable source. The northernmost example of a canopy türbe still stands in the castle of the Slavonia town of Ilok on the Danube (Rep. Croatia). Even further to the north, in Hungary, are two octagonal domed türbes still preserved and in good shape, the türbe of the Sufi saint Idris Baba in Pécs (Eyice, 2000), and the likewise 16th century türbe of Gül Baba in Budapest (Fekete, 1954), the latter still much venerated by Muslim pilgrims.

It is said that the mausoleum, or tomb tower, is one of the most remarkable creations of Islamic architecture but this is only true in a restricted sense. The origin of the *türbe* is without doubt to be found outside Islam, as we shall discuss below. The largest and most magnificent domed mausolea were created in 17th century India. One may think here of the Gol Gumbaz in Bijapur in South India or, better still, of the Taj Mahal in Agra. But the Central Asian republics, as well as Iran and 13th-14th century Anatolia also possess a long line of magnificent examples. [*PLAN and view Bijapur*]

Much has been said and written about the origin of the *türbe* and the question of whether it is to be found inside or outside the realm of Islamic culture. Most opinions have been influenced by the geographical standpoint from which the researcher observed the topic, and by the languages he, or she, knew. General overviews, taking all possibilities in account, are rare. Perhaps the best is that of Robert Hillenbrand (1994).

So, being here together in a part of the world which has some of its oldest examples of the tomb tower, my old friend and colleague İlhan Hoca suggested that it might be useful to give the general interested public a brief overview of the various approaches, add some new details, and try to reach a new synthesis.

The word "türbe/turbah" comes from the Arabic "turab" for earth. In the Persian context the word is pronounced as "turbat." In Iran the word gumbat is also often used, the same word also being used in the Turkish context, written and spoken as "kümbet", to mean dome, vault or cupola. Many *türbes* have a square plan, while others are often octagonal, dodecagonal or circular. The square ones are either closed or open, the latter having a dome resting on four arches and four pillars, the so-called canopy *türbe*.

In a few cases the canopy türbe has a hexagonal form. The Hatuncıklar Türbesi (15th century) and the Altı Ayak Türbesi (1690), both in the Macedonian capital of Skopje (Üsküp), may be cited as good examples. The Hatuncıklar türbe was sacrificed for road widening, and of the Altı Ayak ("Six Legs") only two arches remain standing after the terrible 1663 Skopje earthquake.

We find *türbes* in the loneliness of the steppes, far away from any human settlement. We often find them on cemeteries, where they are the most conspicuous element. Often they stand in the courtyard of a mosque and usually contain the tomb of the founder of that building. It was also usual to incorporate a *türbe* into a medrese, a college for higher learning. The oldest well-dated combination of türbe and school is in Baghdad, where the enormous mausoleum of the founder of one of the four schools of Islamic law, Abu Hanifa, was built in 1066 on order of Şeref ul-Mulk Khwaresmi, the Vizier of the Great-Seldjuk Sultan Alp Arslan, and connected with a likewise very large medrese (Leisten, 1992, 42). Both buildings no longer exist in their original form. They were destroyed by the Safavids and rebuilt by the Ottoman Sultan Süleyman shortly after he had conquered Baghdad and driven out the Shi'it Safavids, only to be destroyed again by the Safavids and rebuilt by Murad IV after the Ottoman re-conquest of Baghdad (1638). The complex has survived to this day in its 17th century form.

Often *türbes* form the nucleus of a *zaviye*, *tekke* or *hankah*, monastery-like convents for dervishes that have been built around the tomb of an important dervish saint. [*Konya, Mevlana, and independent Sivas, Gündük minaret*] The rulers and the powerful had also türbes built for themselves, connected with a *zaviye* where dervishes could pray daily for the salvation of the soul of the deceased. The türbe developed into its most monumental form when it was combined with a mosque and a *hankah* as one large building block. Here, the *hankah* of Hodja Ahmed Yesevi (d. 1166), built in the 1390s on order of Timur, is the one that first comes to mind. Islamic culture went much further here than, for example, the Christian church, where separate sepulchral chapels were added to churches but never became dominant. The *türbe* that surpasses in size and beauty every other in the world is the famous Tadj Mahal, in Agra in North India, built between 1630 and 1642 by one of the greatest rulers of the Moghul Empire, Shah Djahan, for his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal (or, as sacrilegious tongues maintain, for the greater glory of himself).

As already indicated, opinions about the origin of the türbe greatly vary. The key question is that of what should be done with the deceased? Bury them, like Jews, Christians and Muslims do? Burn them, like the Hindus do? Give them as food to the vultures, as the Zoroastrians did and the Parsis still do? Or mummify them through smoke-curing and then take

them out of their containers for special occasions so they can "participate" in great feasts or celebrations of the community in which they once lived, as do some Papua tribes in New Guinea?

According to the Hadith of the prophet of Islam, the best grave should be level with the earth and, in this way, unrecognizable (*taswiyat al-Kubûr*). There is a whole line of statements against making graves recognizable. The Kur'an itself says nothing on this topic. Only Surah 102: verse 1, mentions that people visited graves and were therefore diverted from striving to Higher things. Most of the Hadiths contain recommendations against the cult of graves, and many of them come down directly from the first followers of the Prophet. Some of the founders of the great schools of Islamic Law, such as ibn Hanbal, were violently opposed to building mausolea. Later scholars, people with great authority like ibn Taymiyya in the 13th century, forcefully rejected the mausoleum and wrote several treatises about the subject. In the Ottoman 16th century the puritanical scholar Mehmed Birgevi (d. 1573) did the same, but it did not help at all.

To summarise: The *türbe* did not come from genuine Islamic traditions. Pre-Islamic Iran could not have been the origin because earth and fire are holy for the old-Iranian religion and therefore could not be polluted by dead bodies. They were therefore put on special sites where they were devoured by the vultures. These special places later (presumably after the end of the Sasanids) developed into the *dakhma*, the so-called "Towers of Silence." After a year, the clean bones of the deceased were collected and stored in bone houses, *ossuarium*, which today might remind us of the luggage lockers in railway stations. It should be added that, even today, in many arid parts of Greece the bones are dug up after a year or so and stored in small wooden boxes placed in the narthex of local church and kept there. In Central Asia many old *ossuaria*, known as "naus", are preserved or made known? by excavation. (examples by Chmelnitski, 1989). The Iranian concept that the earth is holy, and can therefore not be polluted by dead bodies, finds an interesting counterpart in the religious convictions of some black-African peoples. So, for example, the aversion of "piercing of the soil" held by the warlike nomadic cattle-breeding Massai people of Western Kenya or North-West Tanzania, where the dead are simply left behind in the steppe, to be devoured by wild animals.

Old and influential is the theory that the Islamic tomb tower derives from the Early Christian martyria and churches with a circular ground plan. Here an important role is played by the fact that until the first half of the 20th century 'art history' meant the Greco-Roman tradition. It was natural to see everything that came later as a continuation of the great culture of Antiquity, ignoring any other aspect. The Austrian scholar Josef Strzygowski was the first to break the explanatory dominance of Greece and Rome.

In his work "Iran und Altay" (1917), which is still of great value, as is much (but not all) of his other work, Strzygowski pointed out that everything centred on the horseman and the tent. An important role was also played by Central Asiatic abstraction, which constituted a real break with the Helleno-Roman concept of art. Strzygowski was the first to build a bridge between the Central Asia tent-culture and the Iranian tomb tower, and the textile-like mantle of decoration on many Seldjuk buildings. In spite of this promising beginning, the old explanations continued to thrive. Catharina Otto-Dorn once remarked that many of the thoughts of Strzygowski now rest on much strong empirical foundations. "He felt it intuitively; now we know it for sure."

There is, however, much to be said in support of the theory of the ancient Greco-Roman tradition. Most people living around the Mediterranean Sea in the pre-Islamic period, have produced an imposing funerary culture. We only need to take a walk along the Via Appia in Rome to see one imposing mausoleum after another. And the "mausoleum" itself springs from the Greek cultural tradition, deriving from the enormous, and abundantly decorated tomb of King Mausolos in Halikarnassos in Karia (now Bodrum in S. W. Turkey. This colossal structure was one of the Ten Wonders of the World. In Southern and S.W. Turkey a number of Roman mausolea remain preserved, square buildings with a dome resting on four pillars. Disregarding some decorative elements, they could be an almost exact proto-type of the early Ottoman canopy türbe. [*Gaziantep and Didymoteichon Compared*] The canopy türbe enjoyed great popularity in Ottoman domains. Partly because it was considered less offensive by the learned Muslim establishment, partly because it was far cheaper to build than the closed mausolea. The picture below shows how far this open type of türbe reached: it is a rare surviving example in the northern Balkans, located in the Croatian town of Ilok on the Middle Danube. [*Ilok, Türbe*]

Directly preceding the rise of Islam we have, as most representative funeral monument of the old Christian world, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, a vast domed space with the tomb of Jesus at the very centre, surrounded by an ambulatory. This building existed as early as 390 A.D. but has come down to us in a much changed form. It was to become the proto-type of scores of round churches, stretching from Armenia in the east to Portugal, Holland and Denmark in the west. A perfectly preserved example of a fully developed rotunda serving as a Christian mausoleum is the church of St. Constanza in Rome. It was built as the sepulchre for a daughter of Emperor Constantine the Great, Constantina, who died in 354. The building must have been completed a few years later. [*Photo and ground plan St. Constanza, Rome*]

A further development of these round churches can be seen in two buildings famous in art history. One is the San Vitale in Ravenna, built in 545 by Emperor Justinian and inspired by it the Cathedral of Aachen (Aix le Chapelle), consecrated in 805 by Emperor Charlemagne. [*Plan of Ravenna*] The other important but much less known edifice is also the round church of S. Michael in Fulda, central Germany, initially built in 822 and partly reconstructed in 945. This building was directly inspired by the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. [*Ground plan and photo of Fulda*]. Another example is the curious "Carolingian Chapel," part of the Carolingian and Ottonian castle of Valkhof in the Dutch city of Nijmegen. It is visibly inspired by the great church of Aachen but is simpler and much smaller. [*Ground plan and section of Chapel in Nijmegen, NL*]. Another very good example is the church of Ottmarsheim in the Elsass (Fr.) built in 1048, following Aachen closely. It is easy to see that the famous Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, built in 695 by the Umayyad Caliph Abdulmalik, belongs to the same family. The octagonal form of the Dome is also found in the aforementioned buildings. Its function here, however, is rather different. It was neither a mausoleum to houses the relics of a saint and nor a palatial church (as Ravenna or Aachen), but a monument to the victory and greatness of Islam. [*Plan and section of Dome of the Rock*]

From the plan of the Dome of the Rock runs a direct line to the oldest known monumental tomb in Islam, the so-called Qubbat as-Sulaibiya in the ruined city of Samarra on the Tigris north of Baghdad. It was discovered, studied and described by a man of genius, Ernst Herzfeld, in 1911. It was built in 862 A.D. for the Abbasside Caliph al-Muntasir by his Greek mother, who had asked and received special permission to do so. Until recently only the lower part of this building was still standing. Some years before the Iraq War the missing part of the building, with the central dome, were reconstructed, following Herzfeld's suggestions. It is the oldest preserved example of a mausoleum built for a Muslim, no less than the Caliph himself, the head of the entire Muslim world. Later two other Caliphs were buried next to al-Muntasir. [*Plan and section of Qubbat as-Sulaibiya*]

It appears that from the Early Christian tradition of building martyria, via the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, and its counterpart the famous Islamic Dome of the Rock from 695, and via the Qubbat as-Sulaibiya from 862, runs a line of development to the sepulchral architecture that is usually connected with the cult of Shi'ite martyrs and saints. The monuments that form the link do not exist anymore, but enough accounts have been preserved that were written by people shortly after the events. These old accounts were collected in the great work of Thomas Leisten (1998), which has, alas, remained a closed book for many because of the language in which it was written: German.

Following Leisten, we may give some examples. The town of Kerbala developed around the grave of the martyr Husayn, son of the fourth Caliph, Ali. In the Umayyad period the place where Husayn was buried was kept secret. The first reliable account about it dates from just four years after Husayn's death (680 A.D.). From the year 765, or shortly before it, we have a few instructions for pilgrims written by one of the Imams of the Shi'a, Djafer as-Sadik, who mentions a *qubba* over the grave of Husayn. The historian Tabari mentions that in 193 (A.D. 808/09) Umm Musa, mother of Caliph al-Mahdi donated 30 dirham monthly for the maintenance of the "qabr al-Husayn bi'l-hayr." (Tabari, *Tarih* III, p. 752). The grave of Caliph Ali, patron of the Shi'a, is situated in Nedjef, also in Iraq. This grave was discovered around the year 800 by Caliph Harun ar-Rashid, who had a *qubba* with four entrances erected above it, and a dome painted in red. This was handed down by ad-Dailamî. In 928 the Zaidid Prince Muhammed ben Zaid from Tabaristan erected a new *qubba* over the grave of Ali for for the sum of 20,000 dirhems. In 980, this building was replaced by a more monumental construction by the Buyid ruler Adud ud-Daula (ruled 949-983). From all this, nothing survives until our time. What we today see in Nedjef, for example, is from the time of the Safavids and later.

From the time of Adud ud-Daula, however, an important part of an octagonal mausoleum, with a likewise octagonal ambulatory, remains preserved in Natanz in Central Iran, incorporated into a much later enlargement. It is thanks to Sheila Blair (Blair 1983) that this important building became known to the world of scholarship. The Natanz building is not dated by art historical assumptions but firmly by a commemorative inscription, giving the name of the builder (a relative of Adud ud-Daula) and the date, 389 (999 A.D.). It would be clear that in the process of coming into being of the *türbe* the Shi'it cult of saints indeed played a great role. Because the Shi'a had remained until about 900 a persecuted underground movement, it could not? indulge in monumental tomb building before that year. This only became possible after 900, when the Buyid Grand Viziers of the Abbasid Empire concentrated all political power in their hands in a way resembling the Ashikaga and Yamamoto Shoguns of Japan. The Buyids maintained the Abbasid Caliph as a kind of figurehead and started to build mausolea over the graves of important Shi'it saints in many places in the territories under their control: Iran, Irak, Afghanistan and Khorassan. None of these monuments remain, with the exception of Natanz. [*Plan of Natanz*]

There is, however, another component, seldomly mentioned. The famous Muslim geographer and scholar al-Makdisi (Muqaddasi), who completed the first version of his great *Ahsenü't-Takâsîm* in 985 (A.D.). The author died around the year 1000. Writing about the Buyid rulers of the North Iranian metropolis Rayy (Rey) he noted:

“Beholds the Daylamite (i.e. the Buyyids) at Rayy, who build over their tombs lofty domes which they construct with all their zeal and erect to their utmost ability, lest they decay. Those who are under kings build smaller domes.”

The Buyid rulers over Rayy in the time of Makdisi were Fahr ud Daula Ali, 977-983, and Meqd ud-Daula Rustam, 983-997. Buyid rule over this area ended after that date and was replaced by the Sunni Turkish Ghaznavids. Before 977 it was also under Buyid control, under the powerful Adud ud-Daula (948-983) and those before him. Makdisi, a Palestinian Arab, evidently disliked the lofty domes (*qibah ‘aliyya*). His remark makes very clear that imposing dome mausolea were built also over the graves of rulers and their nobles and must have constituted another important component in the emergence of the *türbe* as an architectural type. About their form we do not know anything because none survived. There are imposing tomb towers still standing in Rayy, but they are from the successors, the Sunni Seldjuk Turks.

The small and humbly built canopy mausolea of Fatimid Egypt, such as the Sab’a Banat near Cairo and the fifty mausolea of Assuan, also fit very well in the Shi’ite tradition. From the “Seven Buildings” near Cairo, four have been preserved, dating from around the year 400 (A.D. 1010). Most of those in Assuan also date from the 11th century and as a new feature are oriented towards Mecca and have a *mihrab* niche (Monneret de Villard 1930; Hillenbrand, 1994, 311/13). They are more a curiosity than a building type that led to further developments. Funeral architecture in Egypt developed further under the Mamluk rulers (1250-1517), who came from Central Asia and brought with them ideas from their ancient homeland. They gave a strong impetus to the development of architecture, creating the steeply stilted and bulbous domes that still dominate the skyline of old Cairo.

A theory which was developed almost a century ago maintains that the *türbe* was introduced around the year 1000 by the new masters of the Near East, the Turks. This theory was not first formulated by R.S. Read in the *Revue des Arts Islamiques*, 1930, as Guitty Azarpay wrote (Azarpay 1981), but in 1917 by Joseph Strzygowski in his *Iran und Altai* and, almost simultaneous, by his student and collaborator Ernst Diez in the latter’s monumental work *Churasanische Baudenkmäler*, Berlin 1918. Diez noted that anyone familiar with the architecture of the Sasanians of pre-Islamic Iran (or the Greco-Roman tradition), when confronted with a great Seldjuk-period tomb-tower standing alone in the steppes, immediately recognizes that this was something new and different from all that came before. He also stressed the point that the great tomb-towers were almost only found in the northern half of Iran, where since the late 10th century the Turkic element dominated, whereas the south remained ethnically and cultural Iranian.

In the line of argument advanced by Diez, Otto-Dorn and the others, the nomadic Turkic peoples inhabiting the Eurasian steppes had, as recent converts to Islam, carried over many of the old pagan convictions. Exceptional emphasis was placed on the ancestor cult, which also lives on in Turkey today. When still pagans, they would first expose the bodies of important people during complex funerary rituals held in a lavishly adorned tent around which the mourners would walk in procession. Afterwards the body was laid to rest in a tomb over which a mound was erected, a *kurgan*. *Kurgans* are very old (long before the beginning of our era) and are (or were) to be found all over the Central Asian steppes. It should be added that the *kurgan* is not restricted to Asia. In the Balkans before the Greco-Roman period, ancient peoples like the Macedonians or the Thracians constructed well-built underground tomb chambers, which were covered by a round or semi-conical mound. Hundreds of them can still be seen in Bulgaria, European Turkey and Northern Greece. The tombs of the Phrygian kings in Central Anatolia also belong to this tradition, although in this case the underground chamber was made of wood. The royal tombs of Gordion are so big that they can be seen from some twelve miles away.

Arriving in today's Uzbekistan and Northern Iran these Turks had their funeral tents built in brick according to the local building traditions. Textile patterns in the decoration of the surface of the buildings, repeating those of the old tents, are still visible on many early tomb towers in Iran and Anatolia. Even the lambrequin frieze of the nomadic yurt has sometimes been "translated" into stone. The *türbe* is thus an architectural conflation of a double ritual, a combination of the yurt and the *kurgan*. It might be added that the richly decorated ceremonial trellis tents of the rulers, the "Otağ-i Humayun" for the Ottomans of the 15th and 16th centuries, forms another component in the appearance of the Seldjuk tomb towers. The yurt, as both a place to live in and the cover of graves, is a relatively low structure. The "Otağ-i Humayun" is twice as high, the 11th and 12th century tomb towers are even higher. Ernst Diez answered the question as to where the idea came from to make the structure so high. According to him, it was the influence of the Buddhist stupa, with its high circular body. Half-ruined stupas are still found standing in the ruins of the old Uygur capital of Kocho in the Turfan oasis and other old sites in Sinkiang (formerly called: Eastern Turkestan). We only have to look at the soaring circular türbe "Güdük Minare" from 1347 in the city of Sivas in Central Anatolia to see the link. The building has a square basis with a partly subterranean vaulted tomb chamber on top of which soars a high cylindrical drum. The ruler who ordered the construction of this grand mausoleum, the founder of the Eretna dynasty, Eretnaoğlu Alaeddin Bey, was of Uighur (Uygur) origin. He had come with the Il-Khans to Anatolia in the early 14th century, serving as a high commander (Noyan) in the Mongol army. (Göde, 1994; Sevim and

Yücel 1989). The Uighurs were Buddhists until the 14th century, and had created a high civilization and a rich literature, Turkish, but written in the special Uighur script, that was later adopted by the Mongols. The Uighurs converted to Islam as late as the 14th century. Further east of Turfan, in the Chinese province of Kansu a groups called Sarı Uyğur (the Yellow Uighurs), still adhere to Buddhism. The history of the Uighur Buddhist Kingdom of Kocho was written by Annemarie von Gabain (1961). Their rich culture was excavated and studied by Aurel Stein, Le Coq and Grünwedel before World War I.

All Together with the Mongols, Buddhists, or people with a Buddhist background, had come to Anatolia. They were partly Mongol, partly Turkic. In the 13th century the Uighur script was used for official documents, a few of which have been preserved and published. The *vakfiye* of the Caca Bey Medrese in Kırşehir from 1271 should above all be mentioned (Ahmet Temir, 1989), but there must have been more. As a toponym, the name “Bahşayış” is still found among the Turkish colonist village of the Central Greek province of Thessaly (Ottoman between 1387 and 1881), as well as some villages in Anatolia, where we also find Bahşılar and Bahşılı. The word means “Lama” or “The Lamas” (Buddhist priest or scholar/teacher). Maria Subtelny used it in the second meaning in the title of a study written on the greatest 15th century scholar and poet in Chaghatay Turkish, “Ali Shir Nava’i: Bakshi and Beg (“scholar and ruler”). The words disappeared from modern Turkish and Persian. In Persian texts from the Timurid period it was well known. The words still remind us today of the former presence of Buddhists or people with a Buddhist background in Iran and Anatolia. In the Ottoman census and taxation registers (*tahrir*) of the 15th century Anatolia and the southern Balkans one occasionally comes across the persons named Bahşayış. It is interesting to see that the father of Alaeddin Eretna, the builder of the stupa-like türbe in Sivas, bore the name “Taycu Bahşi! In the 1950s a small statue of Buddha was found in Central Anatolia and was brought to the Museum of Afyon Karahisar. Recently young Turkish art historians found a Buddhist grotto-temple in Old Ahlat on Lake Van in Eastern Anatolia. In Turkey the topic of “Buddhism in 14th century Anatolia” is disliked and usually simply denied.

From the Turco-Mongol corner of the world originates the mummification of the bodies before they are placed in the burial chamber (Sümer, 1965). In a number of places in Turkey today we can still see mummies from the 12th or 13th century, for example at Kemah on the Euphratus, or Amasya in Pontus, both regularly open to visitors. Faruk Sümer produced a whole list of preserved mummies in Anatolia and identifies written sources about the practice of mummification among the Oghuz tribes of Central Asia in the 10th century.

The tomb towers built in the 11th and 12 centuries for the Turkic rulers of Iran and Anatolia (the Seldjuks) reflect the double ritual of the pre-Islamic period. It should be added that perhaps the oldest description of the double ritual is that of the funeral of Attila, King of the Huns, in 453, given by Jordanes in his *Getica*.

The theory as formulated by Strzygowski and Diez was strongly propagated by Katharina Otto-Dorn in her book *Kunst des Islams* (1964), which was translated into many languages and has appeared in many editions. The theory was accepted by influential British art historians like David Talbot Rice. Both Diez had been teaching in Istanbul and Otto-Dorn taught Islamic architecture for decades at Ankara University and trained many Turks - later themselves occupying chairs of Islamic Art at various Turkish universities - so the theory of the Turkish origin of the *türbe* became strongly entrenched among the generation of Turkish art historians now in charge.

The "Turkish theory" was by no means universally accepted. The influential American couple Bloom-Blair ignored it complete. "Their" Islamic art is wholly Irano-centric. The German Thomas Leisten, with his strong Arabic background, focused exclusively on the martyria theory (Leisten 1998).

Adherents of the "Turkish theory" had one great difficulty. They had to explain away the fact that two very prominent and very early Islamic mausolea: the mausoleum of Ismail the Samanid (in power: 892-907 A.D.) in Bukhara, most often dated in the first half of the 10th century, and the spectacular Gumbad-i Kabuz near Gurgan in northeastern Iran, safely dated by inscription in 1006-07. The Samanid mausoleum is usually seen as a dynastic monument, as the tomb of Ismail's father Ahmed ibn Asad. It has been pointed out that, although the Samanid territory had a substantial Turkish population, Turks did not play a great role at the Samanid court. The Samanids were of Iranian stock and recently converted to Islam. The Gumbad- i Kabuz was also not built for a Turkic ruler but for the Iranian prince, Kabus b. Vushmagir. What is perhaps more important: it has no burial crypt, the element essential to the "Turkish theory", and never had one.

The Samanid mausoleum of Bukhara is very beautiful, lavishly decorated on the four outside walls but also in the interior. The building is, alas, very much over-published. It is a domed cube of 10.80m. square, with four entrances, one in the middle of each wall, and has curious corner turrets at the four "shoulders" of the cube. Optically, they help in the transition between dome and square. [*Bukhara, Samanid Mausoleum. 1) general view, 2) upper gallery, 3) squinch and dome*] According to some writers the plan of the *türbe* is related to the ancient Zoroastrian fire temple, the Chahar Taq, which is usually formed by a dome resting on four pillars. Other

scholars, like the influential Galina Pugačenkova, came up with the very convincing theory that the Samanid mausoleum and related buildings are in fact directly derived not from the *chahar taq* but from the Zoroastrian “bewailing pavilion,” the *ked* in which the body was laid to rest before finally given over to the vultures. A fresco painting in the ruins of the 5th-7th century city of Pendžikent, east of Samarkand, depicts such a pavillon, and an elaborately decorated silver plate in the Berlin Museum does the same. Pugačenkova’s reconstruction of the pavilion is very convincing indeed. [*Drawing of bewailing pavilion*] The square, block-like Samanid mausoleum, including the conspicuous open gallery running around it on its upper parts, and the four pinnacle towers at the corners, stands in a direct line, via a number of examples of the 10th and 11th century, to the huge *türbe* of the Great Seldjuk Sultan Sandjar/Sencer (1186-1157) in the Merv oasis in Turkmenistan. This point was made very clear by Bulatov (1976) and further propagated by Gabrielle Stock (1991), and also used by Robert Hillenbrand in his work (1994, 531). In Sandjar’s mighty *türbe* we have a good example of a mausoleum evidently not deriving from the Turkish nomad tents but from Zoroastrian, pre-Islamic traditions. Bulatov restored (on paper) the missing upper part of the mausoleum with four small turrets like those on the Samanid mausoleum. But when, between 2001 and 2004, the great monument was restored with help of the Turkish Republic, the turrets were not reconstructed, although the building very much needs them to make the transition between the solid block-like body and the circular tambour with its visual smoothness. (Atmaca, 2004) Whether this was done to adjust reality to theory by making the building more “Turkic” or simply through ignorance, is not known. It is interesting to note that the name of the architect responsible for the original construction has survived in the written sources of the Seldjuk period: Muhammed ben Atsız from Sarakhs, thus a Muslim with a very good old-Turkish name. Sarakhs is also in the Republic of Turkmenistan, only 170 km from Merv. It is not very likely that Atsız would have conscientiously fused Turkic and Iranian traditions in a time when people determined their place in society not in ethnic but in religious terms.

As to the question of what sparked the idea of building a domed mausoleum over the grave of an important person Russian specialists like Rempel and Akhratov (1971) saw a clear link between the Samanid mausoleum and the Qubbat as-Sulaybia in Samarra, which is only four or five decades older than the famous building in Bukhara. In their opinion the Samanid mausoleum is a successor of the Samarra structure and the idea to build a dome over a grave came from Iraq. Ismail the Samanid had a mausoleum build for him as a visible manifestation of his power. In Samarra it was the power of the Caliph, in Bukhara that of himself. The socio-political significance of

the tomb Tower has been stressed by others and need not to be repeated here. (Daneshvari 1986).

If the initial idea to build a domed mausoleum indeed came from Iraq we can link up with the architectural form of the martyrrium. The new Turkic rulers of the land eagerly adopted the idea to make their power visible in buildings, with mosques and huge caravansarays but also with their tombs, thereby linking up with their own pre-Islamic burial practices. This was in particular done by the leaders of the new power in the area, the Seldjuks, who evidently brought in the round or polygonal ground plan of their *türbes*.

It might be added that some of the oldest and most beautiful *türbes* in Kyrgystan and Kazakhstan also follow the square, "Zoroastrian" plan. So do the three dynastic *türbes* of the Karakhanid rulers in their old capital of Uzgend / Özgön in the Fergana valley in southern Kyrgyzstan, dated 1012/13 (see further down), 1156 and 1185. They constitute one rectangular building block of three units, each one covered by a single dome and having its own lavishly decorated entrance. Their orientation is not towards Mecca (S.W.) but to the four points of the compass, the *points cardinaux*, the entrances facing due south. At closer inspection can be seen that we have three different *türbes* of different size and date. In a few places "peep holes" have been made in the masonry, inside and out, to show that the middle mausoleum (the largest) is the oldest of the three and that the southern and northern mausoleum have been stuck against it.

On the outside the middle mausoleum measures 12.90 meter in square. Its dome is the product of a recent restoration. Edgar Knobloch (1972) published seven good photographs of the Uzgend mausolea, showing the collapsed central dome, with the decorated squinches rather well preserved. The latter very much resemble those in the Samanid mausoleum of Bukhara. The walls of the building are extremely thick (2.35m.), leaving an inner space of only 8.20m. square. The mausoleum had once bordure with a beautifully calligraphed inscription stretching over the entire façade. A fragment with five large-size letters is all that is left over. The mausoleum originally had a decorative half-column at each of the four corners but these elements are partly masked, partly disappeared when the smaller mausoleum were added. We cannot know if there have been small corner turrets as on the Samanid mausoleum in Bukhara. See from afar the dome does not show but is largely hidden behind a high cornice, the product of the recent restoration.

Against the opinion of many others the redoubtable expert Sergej Chmelnitskiy, for many years responsible for the historical monuments of Soviet Central Asia, maintained that the "middle mausoleum" of Uzgend is no mausoleum at all but a monumental mesdjid. In the rear wall, opposite

the entrance, is a shallow rectangular niche which he declares to to a *mihrab*. It is not oriented toward Mecca (south-west), as is a prerequisite, but to the north-west, which should be enough to reject this opinion. To support his assumption Chmelnitskiy noted that in Turkmenistan there are many mosques and mesdjids which are not orientated to the south-west but to the west, or even north-west and gives as example the plan of the two inter-connected mesdjids known as Chihil Duhtaran. One is oriented due west, the other almost to the north-west. Here the observer should make his own conclusions.

The northern mausoleum—called “mausoleum” in the building inscription—measures 10 x10 m. with a domed inner space of 7 x7 m. indicating that the walls are considerably thinner than at the central building. The southern *türbe* is the smallest of the three, with an inner space of only 5x5 m. All three mausolea are inter-connected, the former side windows of the central mausoleum turned into doors. The facades of all three mausolea are exquisitely decorated by a profusion of plaster decoration of vegetal and geometric motives and, of course, inscriptions (Arabic) in beautiful calligraphy. The deep niche of the portal of the northern mausoleum shows a wealth of ornaments cut in the so-called “Samarra C” style plasterwork, cut in the *Schrägschnitt* technique, or “beveled style.” This was one of the specific Turkic contributions to the art of Samarra, spread widely and was also used on the wooden doors made in 1030-35 for the mausoleum of Mahmud b. Subuktegin in Ghazna. The technique also survives in woodwork in Cairo, where it was imported by craftsmen brought in by the Abbasid governor of Egypt Ahmed ibn Tulun (868-884) who was of good Turkish origin. The Samarra C- style has old predecessors in the form of metal work of the old Turkish warriors, found during excavations in Pazyryk in Gornii Altai, dating from centuries before the advent of Islam (Rudenko, 1951) and was studied by Ettinghausen (1957, and 1961).

The northern mausoleum has a long inscription in Arabic, in the monumental Kufic script, cut in plaster, and giving the full names and titles of the builder. They have been read and published by Yakubovskiy in 1947. In 1972 Davidović made some important corrections of Yakubovskiy’s reading, and added information on the identity and genealogy of the builders (who lack in Bosworth’s authoritative “Islamic dynasties”).

“The just, the very great khakan Jalal ad-dunya wa ‘l-din Alp Kutlug Tonga Bilge Türk Toghrul Kara Khakan al-Huseyn ibn al-Hasan ibn Ali, God’s elect, helper of an-Nasir, Commander of the Faithful, the King.”

The names and titles can hardly be more Turkish! There is a second inscription at the mausoleum, written in Persian in the decorative *naskh* script of the Arabic alphabet, giving the date of construction:

“The construction of this mausoleum began on Wednesday 4 Rabi’l-awwal of the year 547 of the Hidjra of Mustafa Muhammed the Prophet - God’s greeting be upon him and His family and all his companions. The ultimate kingdom is God’s. 4 Rabi ül-Ahir 547 (9 July 1152).

The southern mausoleum is also dated by inscription but this one is only fragmentarily preserved. At the right side of the pylon of the portal the following date can still be read: “...in the middle of the month Rabi ül-Awwal of the year 581” (June 1185 A.D.) as well as the title “...al-Khakan”, a religious formula of blessing, and the date of “14 Dhu’l-Hicce 583” (26 February 1187).

The central mausoleum is not dated. The text containing name and date fell off long ago. Cohn-Wiener, who traveled in Central Asia in 1924/25 dated the mausoleum at 1012/13 and noted that the ruler buried in the mausoleum was Nasr ben Ali, who ruler between 996-1013. Nusov, in his monograph of 1963, and others following him, accepted name and date on authority of Cohn-Wiener. Cohn-Wiener, however, had not been in Uzgend himself but relied on the best works on the subject, the research of B. N. Zasytkin, published in 1926 and 1927. Zasytkin used the historical context for his dating. Cohn-Wiener published his important work in 1930.

After World War II (1945) Bačinsko and Bernštam did archaeological excavations around and below the central mausoleum and concluded, on the basis of the finds that the building must have been made at the end of the 10th or the beginning of the 11th century (Bernštam 1952. The date of 1012/13 (H. 403) is now generally accepted. The three *türbes* of Uzgend constitute a valuable link in the chain of development of Central Asian Islamic funeral architecture. Other important links, showing a further development, are still to be seen in Kazakhstan. We mean the mausolea of the princess Ayşe Bibi and her nanny Babadja Hatun near the historic town of Taraz/Zhambyl. Like those of Uzgend they have remained little known among the greater public.

The splendid *türbe* of Ayşe Bibi standing on high grounds overlooking the village of the same name 16 km west of the city of Taraz (formerly: Džambul) in southern Kazakhstan, is also built according the “Zoroastrian Plan,” but at the same time combines the element of Turkish tent tradition in its upper part. Like the Uzgend mausolea the two *türbes* near Taraz are orientated on the four *points cardinaux*. The splendid mausoleum of Ayşe Bibi indeed seems to be a fusion of the two traditions, the nomad culture of the Turkic ruling class, and the Zoroastrian culture of the Islamised sedentary local population, with its Zoroastrian cultural traditions behind them. Like the Samanid mausoleum it is a cube with four protruding decorative columns, one at each corner, each one topped with a tiny dome reminding of the Bukhara building. Three of the four walls have a large window

placed in a deep niche; the entrance is in the front wall, also placed in a deep niche. The rear wall has only a niche, no window. When looking at the plan one is reminded of the four pillared Sasanian fire temple. The inside of the dome, is melon-shaped. In contrast to the Samanid mausoleum the interior walls of Ayşe Bibi are bare. Very Turkic looks the conical roof of the building, resting on a sixteen-sided tambour. When seen from a distance we might imagine a fusion of the two elements, Turkic and Iranian. Alas, we cannot be sure because only the front wall and one of the lateral walls of the building are original, with the entire profusion of decorative elements in cut and molded bricks with 64 different patterns, is authentic. The rest is a careful reconstruction. The dome and the entire upper structure and parts of the lateral walls had collapsed long ago. For the outward form of the dome, in particular the conical cap, no indications were preserved at the building before its restoration and resurrection in 2004/05. [3 views of Ayşe Bibi and Babadja Hatun]

As to decoration and plan the *türbe* of Ayşe Bibi has to be dated in the last quarter of the 11th or early decades of the 12th century. It is evidently younger than the central mausoleum of Uzgend. Youri Yaralov, who studied and measured the ruin in 1942, and introduced it to the international scientific world in 1959, thought that it was from the 11th century.

According to very popular local – romantic – legends Ayşe Bibi was the daughter of the famed scholar Hakim Ata (or of the ruler of Samarkand according to another version) and married a Karakhanid prince but died by snake bite immediately afterwards. The prince swore to build for her - at the spot where she had died - the most beautiful mausoleum of the whole world and never again touch any women. The first he did, the second we don't know.

Less romantic but more serious is the statement of the Turkish art historian Gözde Ramazanoğlu (2002). Basing herself on the genealogical tables of the Karakhanids made by the redoubtable Omelyan Pritsak (1968) in the first *İslâm Ansiklopedisi* identifies Ayşe Bibi as a daughter of the Great Seldjuk Sultan Alp Arslan (ruled 1063-1072), who was married to the Karakhanid Sultan Nasr b. Ibrahim (ruled 1068-1080). In 1070, it has to be added, Alp Arslan was preparing to invade Fatimid controlled Syria and needed to cover his rear against unpleasant surprises. The united Karakhanid Sultanate was still a power of importance. Be this as it may its ruler certainly had the means to erect such an exquisite and expensive building as the *türbe* of Ayşe Bibi. As a date of construction the years between 1070 and '80 seems the most probable.

A further development is shown by the second *türbe* of the Ayşe Bibi compound, that of her nanny Babadja Hatun, who is said to have survived her many years, let us say to 1110-1120. The building is certainly

very old. Bernštam (1956), who wrote the best and most detailed description of it, even suggested the 10th century, which, in our view is at least a century too early. Moreover Bernstam did not know the genealogy of Ayşe Bibi. The *türbe* of Babadja Hatun, standing in the same rose garden as that of Ayşe Bibi, is much smaller (7x7 m.) and is only modestly decorated. The ground plan and orientation is practically the same as that of Ayşe Bibi but the dome shows an apparently new element: a fluted dome composed of folds of a fan that rest on a star-shaped tambour. The *türbe* of Babadži Hatun is much better preserved. Old photographs published by Senigova (1972) show that only less than half of the conical dome had collapsed and that the so important star-shaped tambour on which it stands was almost entirely preserved. In 13th and 14th century Anatolia his kind of roofing for türbes was to see a number of followers and was not as unique as Hillenbrand thought (1994, p.306). The still standing *türbes* of Nureddin Sentimur in Tokat (from 713/1314) and the likewise 14th century Aydınoğlu *türbe* in Ayasoluğ/Selçuk near the ancient Ephesus might be cited as examples. The star-shaped fluted dome was also occasionally used in Armenian architecture. The central dome of the great church of the Monastery of Marmashen, or the monastery church of Ambert (13th c.) both in the Armenian Republic, and even more spectacular the great church of the Gandzasar Monastery in Nagorno-Karabakh from 1216, still illustrate this. (Mnatsakaniyan 1971). It is often maintained that the conical dome of many Anatolian Seldjuk türbes followed Armenian prototypes and there is much to support this view. Yet here we either have it the other way round, or in both cases we see the work of highly creative architects.

The *türbe* of Ayşe Bibi, it should be added, has always remained a place of pilgrimage. During the recent restoration and reconstruction a beautiful rose garden was laid out around the two *türbes*, who are now a favourite for fresh married couples to search the blessing of (the legendary) Ayşe Bibi. The türbe at the same time is a bridge between Orthodox Christianity and Islam, just married Russian couples also worship at her mausoleum and, to receive the *baraka*, even embrace the old trees around the mausoleum, which indeed is the most beautiful and touching historical monument of Kazakhstan.

The tomb towers erected from the eleventh to the thirteenth century by the Seldjuk Turkish rulers of Iran and Anatolia show a further development. A special vaulted tomb chamber was made, half subterranean and reached by a stairway. On top of the tomb chamber a polygonal or round, tower-like room was built, reached by a stairway leading upward. This room was well lit, had a *mihrab* niche, and served a *mesdjid*. This caused the builders to leave the old orientation of the building on the four *points cardinaux* for an orientation towards Mecca. In Eastern- and Central Anatolia this was due south and had as consequence that the entrance to the

mesdjid had to be on the north. It is often said that the custom of having a half-underground tomb chamber was abolished by the Ottomans. There are, however enough examples preserved to show that this is at least a half truth. The *türbe* of Oruç Bey in Didymoteichon (Dimetoka), from shortly after 1426 is a case in point. The 17th century description by the traveller Evliya Çelebi of the *türbe* of the famous frontier warrior Gazi Evrenos in the town of Yenice-i Vardar (today in Greek Macedonia) is also very clear. The original *türbe* had a tomb chamber half dug in and to be reached by several steps down, and a monumental upper part, housing a *mihrab*. (Evliya Çelebi 1928 and 2000). Finally, the destructions caused by the terrible 1963 earthquake in Skopje, Macedonia, showed that the late 17th mausoleum of Altı Ayak (see above) also had an underground tomb chamber. This became visible only after the earthquake. The difference between the Seldjuk and Early Ottoman *türbes* on the one hand, and the later ones on the other, is that the tomb chamber was now underground and not accessible. How many more examples of this kind of *türbes* can still be found is hard to say. It needs extensive excavation, which is not very likely to be done soon.

For almost a decade it seemed that the “Turkish Theory” had a kind of forerunner in some 13th century accounts written in Latin by the Franciscan monks, the Italian Giovanni di Plano Carpini and the Flemish Willem van Ruysbrouck. Some years ago Oktay Belli (2002), discussing the Turkic funeral traditions, suggested that the link between the tent and the tomb tower was already made by the two 13th century monks. Quoting Plano Carpini (writing in 1244/47) Belli noted: “*The noble person who dies is buried in a room similar to a yurt tent so that he can have a house in the hereafter*”. His contemporary Ruysbrouck (travelled 1253/55), when writing about the Cumans (Kıpçak) noted: “*The Comans rise a large mound over the deseased and set up a statue to him facing eastward and holding a cup in his hand in front of the navel. In addition, for the rich they build pyramids, namely little pointed houses; and in some places I saw large towers of baked tiles, and in others houses of stone, although stone is not found there.*”

At this crucial point Belli uses the following translation of the same passage:

“I saw in some places graves over which brick towers had been built and in some other places graves having the shape of yurts made of stone, although there is no stone around the area.” [the bold characters are added by the present author].

In 1968 Jean-Paul Roux gave a rather different translation of the same text. In stead of “yurts made of stone” he writes: “*des maisons de pierre qu’ou’il n’y ait pas de pierre aux environs.*”

Friedrich Risch, in his German translation of 1934 gives the most complete rendering: “*Reichen bauen sie sogar Pyramiden, d.i. kleine spitzige Häuschen, hie und da sah ich auch grosse Türme aus Backstein, manchmal Steinbauten, obwohl sich dort gar kein Steine finden.*”

Finally, in the Latin original of Ruysbrouck, given by Beazley in 1903 (p. 156, lines 25-30) we find nothing about **yurts**. The key word is used nowhere. In the Latin original of Plano Carpini, also published by Beazley 1903 (p. 75-106), the situation is the same. Oktay Belli is a very serious scholar and in Turkey much relied upon. The solution seems that he became the victim of a bad Turkish translation, or that his Turkish text was translated badly by an unknown translator. Our two 13th century monks did indeed saw *türbes* in Seldjuk-like style but did NOT make the link with yurts.

Another point that needs correction is the picture of grand yurts transported through the steppes loaded on waggons. Tamara Talbot-Rice published it, stating that it was a drawing made by Ruysbrouck himself. This is not correct. It is directly visible that the drawing is in fact an engraving having all characteristic of the art of the seventeenth, early eighteenth century. Drawings of the time of the High Gothic period were very different from those of the Baroque. We would do well to attribute it to an artist accompanying Adam Olearius during his famous Russian and Persian travels (1633-1639) and used as model in the Bergeron edition of “Rubruquis” (The Hague 1735). [*Drawing of turbes by “Ruysbroeck”*]

In the context of the Turkish origin theory it should be noted that the leading Russian art historians of the 20th century Pugačenkova, Rempel, Bulatov, Bernštam, Zasytkin and others arrived at similar conclusions as Strzygowski, Diez and Otto-Dorn. Zasytkin (1928) calls the ornamentation and decoration of the Karakhanid mausolea, **and** the Samanid one in Buchara, a Turkish element. Pugačenkova and Rempel (1982) call the decoration of the Samanid mausoleum “the art of the Turkish steppes.” Rempel compares the intersecting ribs of the inner dome of the mausoleum of Sultan Sandjak with the roof of a yurt. These authors also made the remark that under the Karakhanids Turkish literature flourished and was patronized by the dynasty as opposed to the Ghaznavids, patronizing Persian. In such a context it is easier to understand why the architectural works of the Karakhanids was so open to Turkic elements in the decoration of their architectural monuments.

The link between the nomadic tent and the tomb is still made visible on many 20th century cemeteries in Kyrgystan and Southern Kazakhstan around the capital Bishkek (ex-Frunze), at the edges of the Fergana valley, or on the road from Bishkek to Taraz and Shymkent (Kazakhstan). Over the actual grave a skeleton of iron rods is place which is an exact copy of the wooden skeleton of the yurt crowned by a filial (*alem* in Turkish) with a

metal crescent, the symbol of Islam, on top. The way the body is buried was explained to us as follows: a narrow corridor was dug into the earth, ending in a sort of 'vaulted' room where the body was placed. Afterwards the corridor was filled up with earth again and the iron "türbe" placed on top of it. Very similar practices are described by Faruk Sümer for the beginning of the 10th century (Sümer 1965, p. 248). Among the Ottomans the türbe with a crypt below survived as long as the 17th century (remember Skopje/Üsküp, Türbe of Altı Ayak).

It would have been very useful to have more information on the mausoleum of the first Karakhanid ruler who, together with his people became Muslim, Satık Bughra Khan (d. 344/A.D. 959) in Artuç near Kashgar, ancient Karakhanid capital but since long part of the Chinese province of Sinkiang. It is said to date from the 11th century but changed several times and in bad condition. A date in the 960s would be more realistic. As such it would be a valuable link between the Samanid mausoleum, "dateable before 943" (Hillenbrand, 1992, 289) and the middle mausoleum of Uzgend, 1012/13.

In conclusion we might say that the origin of the *türbe* was **not** exclusively the early Christian tradition of building martyria, **not** the monopoly of Zoroastrian traditions, nor of Iran, or of the Shi'a cult of martyrs, or **only** the Turco-Mongolian yurt. Much more it is a synthesis of various ideas, a synthesis in which the various components and remote origins can still be "read" on the surviving buildings. On great *türbes*, like those of Radkan in N.E. Iran, or Ahlat in Anatolia, the memory of the arched ambulatory of the old martyria fused with the reminiscences of the nomad tent, and many more examples can be cited. However, the great geographic spread of the *türbe*, spanning the bow from Bosnia, Croatia and Hungary in the middle of Europe, all the way to India, **cannot** be explained **without** the intervention of the Turks and the Turkic ruling classes in this vast swath of land where **they** formed an important part of the population, or where **they** constituted the ruling class. This **cannot be** accidental ! In countries that have **not** been ruled by Turks or did not had an important Turkish population a monumental funerary architecture like the tomb tower did **not** come into being.

I would like to close this hurried overview with a 16th century Ottoman miniature, showing the magnificence of a trellis tent (yurt) and make visible the influence such magnificent structures made on people and were therefore used by the ruling class of the time to show imperial splendor. At the same time it makes clear how such structures could be "translated" in brick and stone and form an important component of the emerging new building type: the tomb tower or *türbe*. [*Miniature from 1569, Sultan Süleyman in a trellis tent.*]

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