TEXT AND IMAGE IN MEDIEVAL PERSIAN ART

SHEILA S. BLAIR

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CHAPTER FOUR

Monumentality under the Mongols: The Tomb of Uljaytu at Sultaniyya

The slip-painted bowl from Samarqand and the inlaid bronze sprinkler from Herat discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 exemplify the finest of the portable arts of ceramics and metalwares made in eastern Iran before the Mongol invasions of the early thirteenth century administered the coup de grâce to the declining economy of that region. The Mongols were but the most dramatic of many such migrations from the eastern steppe that had been occurring for centuries, and one effect was the shift of both people and patronage westwards. This trend accelerated in the thirteenth century such that

Figure 4.1 “Siege of Baghdad,” from Rashid al-Din’s Compendium of Chronicles. Right: 37.4×29.3 cm; left 37.2×29 cm. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek.

This detached double-page image illustrates Hulegu’s conquest of Baghdad in 1258, with Mongol troops amassed outside the walls and the Abbasid caliph fleeing in a boat. This victory put an end to any fiction of a unified caliphate and ushered in centuries of Mongol rule.
northwestern Iran and Iraq became a major center of artistic activity, particularly under the patronage of the Ilkhanids, the dynasty established by Genghis Khan's grandson Hulegu (c. 1217–65). In 1255, the great Khan Mongke at Karakorum in Mongolia had charged his brother Hulegu with conquering the Muslim states of southwest Asia. Hulegu moved slowly but inexorably westwards. In 1256, he defeated the Assassins in Alamut, and two years later he took Baghdad, capturing the Abbasid caliph and putting an end to any fiction of a unified rule over all the Islamic lands (Figure 4.1). Hulegu, sanctioned with the title of ilkhan (Subordinate Khan), then set up his own line in the area. Continuing the Mongol custom of transhumance (the practice of moving livestock from one grazing ground to another in a seasonal cycle, typically from lowlands in winter to highlands in summer), the Ilkhanids wintered in Baghdad and summered in the pastures of northwestern Iran. Baghdad, therefore, was not totally “destroyed” as contemporary chroniclers say, and the city soon regained its pre-eminence as a major center of intellectual activity and artistic production.

The Ilkhanids’ first summer capital was the city of Tabriz, but Hulegu’s grandson Arghun (r. 1284–91) selected a new site 350 km/220 miles further to the southeast en route to Qazvin in a pastured plain known as Qongqor Ölong (the Prairie of the Alezans). His son Uljaytu (r. 1304–17) enlarged the site, such that the city created by royal edict and dubbed Sultaniyya (the imperial) was said to have rivaled the old capital of Tabriz. Construction at Sultaniyya began in 1305, and the enclave soon included a citadel with bastions, mosques, madrasas, hospices for Sufis, markets, baths, hospitals, palaces, and residences. Virtually all of the once-renowned city has been destroyed, except for the small tomb Chelebi Ughlu built c. 1310 with its adjacent hospice added in the 1330s and the largest building—the undisputed gem of extant Ilkhanid architecture and a masterpiece of world architecture—the mausoleum that Uljaytu erected for himself (Figure 4.2).

Like the name of the newly founded capital, everything about Uljaytu’s mausoleum there is grand. The main part of the building is a huge octagon, measuring 38 m/125 ft in diameter. It is oriented cardinally, probably in deference to Mongol custom in which buildings faced the south (presumably to accord homage to the prestigious north), rather than adhering strictly to Muslim religious custom in which religious buildings face the qibla, here the southwest (Figure 4.3). The north wall of the structure projects laterally to meet the side walls, with stairs to the upper stories filling the triangular spaces in the corners. Another turret stair giving access to the galleries occupies the southwest corner (Figure 4.4).

On the exterior, the tomb’s walls are articulated with blind reveals that are left undecorated at the bottom, suggesting that subsidiary structures abutted the building on several sides. In the upper story,
a ring of galleries, from which one gets stunning views of the surrounding plain, provides a visual transition from the matte brick walls below to the ethereal blue-tiled dome floating majestically above. Ringed by eight slender cylindrical towers, the ovoid double-shelled dome soars 50 m/164 ft above the ground (Figure 4.5). It encompasses a vast central space, measuring some 25 m/82 ft in diameter and divided into two stories by eight arched openings with balconies (Figure 4.6).

Appended to the south of the building is a rectangular hall (15×20 m/50×65½ ft), once lavishly decorated with superbly carved stucco (Figure 4.7). The roof has been reconstructed, following the remains of walls and vaults visible in early photographs, with transverse

Figure 4.2 View of Sultaniyya with Uljaytu’s tomb taken by Antoine Sevrugin; albumen print from glass-plate negative.

The Ilkhanids established a new summer capital in the plains northwest of Qazvin; it was dubbed Sultaniyya (the imperial). Uljaytu’s tomb there is the major building to remain at the site and one of the masterpieces of world architecture.
**Figure 4.3** *East elevation of Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultaniyya.*

This elevation of the east façade of Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultaniyya shows the massive octagonal building and rectangular hall appended to the south. The lower walls were undecorated, with glazed tile confined to the upper part, including a date of 713/1313–14 in the spandrels of the portal.

**Figure 4.4** *Ground plan of Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultaniyya.*

The tomb was cardinally oriented, with the rectangular hall appended to the south, stairs to the upper story in the northern corners, and a turret stair to the galleries in the southwest corner.
Figure 4.5 *Southeast–northwest section of Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultaniyya.*
The section shows two of the eight minarets that ring the ovoid double-shelled dome.

Figure 4.6 *Interior view of the main octagonal hall in Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultaniyya taken by Hans Seher-Thoss.*
The interior of Uljaytu's tomb, badly deteriorated but shown here before recent reconstruction, displays the eight arched openings with two stories of vaults.
THE TOMB OF ULJAYTU AT SULTANIYYA

vaults flanking a central dome. A stairway in the floor between the octagonal room and the rectangular hall to the south provides access to a recently excavated crypt, whose several rooms also show distinctive and innovative forms of vaulting (Figure 4.8).

Construction and redecoration

Texts and inscriptions on the building show that Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultaniyya was both built and then revamped during the Ilkhanid period. Construction and decoration of the original building took place between 705/1305–6 and 713/1313–14. An inscription in cut tile over the east portal with the date 710/1310–11 probably marks completion of the exterior decoration in brick and glazed tile some five years into the project. Another inscription in unglazed terracotta set against a ground of light and dark blue tile mosaic in the soffit of the east bay on the interior ends with another date, written out in words: seven hundred and thirteen (1313–14). It marks completion of the interior decoration three years later. This date for the inauguration of the tomb is confirmed in textual accounts, which mention the celebrations there attended by the major Sufis of the day, including Sheikh Safi of Ardabil and Sheikh ‘Ala’ al-Dawla of Simnan. The original campaign of construction and decoration on the structure therefore took some eight years (705–13/1305–13).

Figure 4.7 Stucco decoration of the rectangular room appended to Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultaniyya.

The south room in Uljaytu’s tomb was once lavishly decorated in superbly cut stucco, with two levels of inscription on an ornate floral ground.
In the original decorative scheme, the interior decoration swept upward from the floor to the base of the dome, with the four corner bays distinguished from the four cardinal ones. The corner bays were decorated with a revetment of light buff fired brick laid in common bond, with patterns executed in light blue glazed bricks with square ends. In contrast, the bays on the cardinal axes had more elaborate decoration in all-over geometric patterns of specially cut brick, thin light blue glazed strips, dark blue glazed strips, and unglazed terracotta cut to special shapes. The upper stories in the corner bays were decorated with *muqarnas* vaulting, whereas those on the cardinal bays were left smooth.14

The gallery vaults on the exterior (Figure 4.9), superbly preserved perhaps because the stairway leading to them was destroyed for centuries, also belong to the original program of decoration. The subtle design of interpenetrating volumes is complemented by the sophistication of vaulted spaces. Each of the two dozen vaults (eight groups of three) displays different decoration, including a wide variety of carved and stamped plaster motifs painted in red, yellow, green, and white. Many of the strapwork panels strongly resemble contemporary manuscript illumination, and the close similarities suggest that designers provided patterns that could be used on different scales in architecture and book painting.15

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*Figure 4.8* Crypt below the rectangular room appended to Ulujaytu’s tomb at Sultaniyya.

The recently excavated crypt shows distinctive and innovative forms of vaulting and probably served as a tomb room for the sultan and other members of the dynasty.
At some point after the building was completed in 1313–14 but before Uljaytu’s death on December 13, 1316, the building was renovated by adding the rectangular hall and multi-room crypt below it to the south and redecorating the interior of the main hall. According to Marco Brambilla, the architect in charge of the building’s restoration in the 1970s, the joints between the main octagon and the rectangular hall to the south are not always perfect and sometimes visible, thus indicating that the hall was an addition. Furthermore, the tile dado in the rectangular hall is set in plaster laid directly on the brickwork, showing that there was only one campaign of decoration there (Figure 4.10). The dado comprises hexagonal light blue tiles framed with a border in complete tile mosaic with interlocking floral scrolls in light blue and white set against a dark blue ground. This is one of the first surviving examples of complete tile mosaic to include white as a major color.

At the same time that the rectangular room was added, the interior of the main domed room was redecorated by covering the original brick, terracotta, and tile with a layer of tile and painted plaster following a new scheme that emphasized horizontality and the equality of all eight interior iwans. In the new scheme, the lower walls were
covered with a 4-m/13-ft dado of light blue hexagonal tiles, with five-sided corner colonnettes completely covered in three colors of tile mosaic (white, light blue, and dark blue), the same colors used for the new dado in the tomb hall. Crowning the dado was a 12-cm/5 in border of underglaze-painted rectangular tiles, described by Donald Wilber, who saw them in situ, as having a ground of dark blue, a pattern in light blue, and details in white. Above the dado, the upper walls were covered with a thick coating of white plaster displaying traces of polychrome ornament and inscriptions painted in light blue, red, black, green, reddish brown, and yellow gold and partly executed in low relief on two levels (Figure 4.11). Even the interior of the dome seems to have been replastered, as one fragment of an inscribed underglazed tile, probably the remains of a Qur’anic text, is visible beneath the plaster coating. The archway between the main octagonal room and the rectangular hall to the south was singled out with more elaborate gilding.

Work on the addition and redecoration must have begun during Uljaytu’s lifetime, because one of the molded plaster inscriptions

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Figure 4.10 Tile dado preserved in the rectangular hall appended to Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultanıyya.

During the redecoration, the new tomb room on the south was decorated with a dado of light blue hexagonal tiles in a border of interlocking palmettes in light blue and white, set against a dark blue ground. This is some of the earliest complete tile mosaic to contain white and marks the beginning of a change from geometric to floral patterns.
from the second program of decoration, detached from the wall of the north bay and now preserved in the rectangular hall, carries an honorific appropriate for the sultan (Glory of Islam and the Muslims), his given name (Muhammad), and a benediction for a living person. Work on the renovation must have continued into the reign of his son and successor Abu Sa'id (r. 1317–35), as a badly deteriorated band below the balconies on the interior of the west iwan implores God to extend the reign of the sultan of the world, who is identified this time with Abu Sa'id's honorific 'Ala' al-Dunya wa'l-Din. A date of 720/1320–1, written in numerals and tucked into the bottom right corner of the southeast bay on the interior, probably marks the end of this second phase of redecoration, which therefore continued four years after the death of the patron Uljaytu into the reign of his son Abu Sa'id. The painted plaster inscription encircling the iwans corroborates this date of completion for the second stage: it contains the names and titles of Taj al-Din 'Ali Shah, who became co-vizier in 1315 and chief vizier following the execution of his rival Rashid al-Din on July 17, 1318.

In the second scheme, inscriptions play not just an integral but a dominant role. They are written in a range of scripts, from a huge 3-m/10-ft band in thuluth ringing the interior of the dome to smaller ones in kufic, sometimes inserted in the stems of the
larger inscriptions. The texts contain a variety of well-known Qur’anic excerpts and canonical hadith, including the entire Surat al-Fath (Chapter of Triumph, 48) encircling the dado (4.11) as well as Traditions about prayer in a mosque, the building as a center of pilgrimage and circumambulation like the Ka’ba, the rewards of paradise for believers, and the uniqueness of God.

Reasons for redecoration

Scholars have long speculated about the reasons why Uljaytu had his tomb at Sultaniyya revamped so soon after it was inaugurated. Contemporary sources are virtually silent about the change, and as with the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, the major evidence lies in the building’s form and decoration.²⁶ Explanations for the changes to Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultaniyya fall under two general rubrics—religious and political—although the two may not be exclusive, but perhaps interrelated.

Many scholars have connected the tomb’s renovation to Uljaytu’s conversion to Shi’ism, but the exact chronology and the correlation of these events with the stages of the building’s construction and reconstruction has been hazy. André Godard was one of the first to lay out a scenario, suggesting that the sultan, having visited the holy shrines of Iraq in April 1310, decided to bring the bodies of the Shi’ite imams ‘Ali and Husayn to Sultaniyya in order to make the city a place of pilgrimage, but then near the end of his life, either because Uljaytu reverted to Sunnism or because of opposition from the people of Najaf and Karbala, he had to give up the idea and had the tomb redecorated to serve as his own mausoleum.²⁷ Donald Wilber concurred but noted that the rectangular hall and redecoration both belong to the second period, a stage he dated before 1313 when the tomb was dedicated.²⁸ The inscriptions show, however, that the second stage began after that time and continued past the sultan’s death in December 1316 up until 1320.

Three decades ago when I studied the building’s inscriptions, I dismissed the story of Uljaytu moving the bodies of ‘Ali and Husayn since it is not found in any source from the period. The earliest evidence that I know for it comes from a handful of nineteenth-century European travelers, who visited the site en route to the nearby summer camp established by the Qajar ruler Fath ‘Ali Shah (r. 1797–1834).²⁹ Such stories about translation of relics may have struck a chord with nineteenth-century Europeans, who readily incorporated them in their travelogues.

In retrospect, however, I feel that this story, late though it may be, may contain some kernel of truth. There is at least one earlier story about a Muslim ruler who envisioned transporting the bodies of revered figures in order to attract pilgrims to his new capital. In 1000, the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim ordered the construction of
three sanctuaries south of Cairo intended to house the bodies of the Prophet and the first two caliphs, which were to be removed surreptitiously from their graves in Medina in order to attract pilgrims to Egypt, but the effort had to be abandoned when the Medinans discovered the plot. The aim of the project was to transform the spiritual and religious geography of the Muslim world and reroute the streams of pilgrims from the Hijaz to the new Fatimid capital at Cairo.

In addition, two contemporary sources from outside the Ilkhanid realm mention an analogous story about Uljaytu planning to disinter the bodies of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar—the first two Orthodox caliphs whom Shi‘ites repudiate as having usurped the place of Muhammad’s rightful heir, his cousin ‘Ali—from the Prophet’s tomb in Mecca. One source was al-Aflaki, the biographer of the Mawlawi Sufi order who accompanied his master ‘Arif Chelebi on a mission to Sultaniywa in 1315 to persuade Uljaytu to drop his adherence to Shi‘ism. The story here is even associated with Uljaytu’s conversion to Shi‘ism, albeit from a Sunni perspective. The report is repeated by the Mamluk chronicler al-Nuwayri [d. 1333]. In a similar vein, the Ilkhanid accountant and historian Hamdallah Mustawfi mentioned Uljaytu bringing a hair of the Prophet to the hospice for descendants of the Prophet (dār al-siyāda) in the tomb complex at Sultaniywa. Thus, even contemporary chroniclers connect Uljaytu with the translation of relics, although it is difficult to say whether the stories reflect fact or aspersion, since the movement of bodies is usually recounted to cast negative light on the actor.

Nevertheless, the inscriptions on the building do not trumpet the idea of Uljaytu’s turning his tomb into a shrine for ‘Ali and Husayn. Inscriptions, particularly for shrines and other religious buildings, can be polemic and certain epigraphic programs from the Ilkhanid period definitely are. Uljaytu’s conversion to Shi‘ism in 1310 provoked riots to break out in Isfahan, according to the Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta, who passed through the area in the 1320s. The sectarian unrest in the city is clearly reflected in the long, pointedly Shi‘ite inscriptions on the stunning stucco mihrab that Uljaytu had added to the congregational mosque there in July 1310. The main inscription on the mihrab is an aptly chosen Qur’anic verse (4:49) emphasizing obedience to those in authority. It is followed by a long explication from the early Traditionist Jabir ibn Zayd al-Jawfi [d. c. 720] that the Prophet defined “those in authority” as the Twelve Imams, who are enumerated by name. In addition, two other inscriptions juxtapose Prophetic and ‘Alid hadiths, and both placement and content underscore the connection between Muhammad and his son-in-law ‘Ali. In contrast, the inscriptions on the tomb at Sultaniywa are much more generalized, with less obvious sectarian content.

Uljaytu seems to have maintained a strong allegiance to Shi‘ism for only a few years before drifting back toward Sunnism, perhaps
even embracing it before his death. But according to the official record on coins, only under his son and successor Abu Sa‘id did the state adhere again to Sunni Islam. In a recent study of the tomb’s inscriptions, the epigrapher ‘Abdallah Quchani [Ghouchani] returned to the scenario put forth by Godard and others, suggesting that the redecoration marked Uljaytu’s re-adherence to Sunnism, but citing new evidence in the inscriptions. Ghouchani argued that the benediction used after ‘Ali’s name in the inscription on the plaster redecoration of the west bay on the interior of the tomb, “may God ennoble his countenance” (karrama allâh wahju), is specifically Sunni. The evidence of contemporary travelers and commentators shows, however, that this is not true.

Benedictions did matter in the Ilkhanid period, as shown by Ibn Battuta’s travelogue. When visiting the tomb of ‘Ali in Najaf, Ibn Battuta, an orthodox Sunni of the Maliki school, noted that the tomb enclosed three cenotaphs: those of Adam and Noah, both of whom he blessed with the benediction “upon him be peace” (‘alayhi al-salâm), and that of ‘Ali, who received the benediction “may God be pleased with him” (radiya allâh ‘anhu). The difference in benedictions for three figures buried in the same tomb is striking, and as the text’s editors and translators commented, Ibn Battuta insisted on addressing ‘Ali using the Sunni formula given to the Companions of the Prophet and the first four caliphs, rather than the one preferred by Shi‘ites, who see ‘Ali as Muhammad’s rightful successor. Sunnis might use a benediction like “peace be upon him” for ancient Prophets, but they considered it abhorrent to do so for ‘Ali, as it would thereby accord him undeserved status as Muhammad’s successor.

Orthodox theologians of the period disapproved outright of Sunnis using the benediction “may God ennoble his countenance” in reference to ‘Ali. The Damascene commentator Ibn Kathir (1300–73), who followed the teachings of the conservative Ibn Taymiyya [d. 1328], reported that many copyists singled out ‘Ali with the benediction “peace be upon him” or “may God ennoble his countenance” in order to show veneration and honor, but that this should not be done and that the other Orthodox caliphs were more deserving of such a benediction. Many Sunnis continue to feel this way today. Whoever composed the benediction for ‘Ali in the inscription to redecorate the west bay, therefore, was not a Sunni.

Ghouchani argued that further evidence for Uljaytu’s adherence to Sunnism in the tomb’s redecoration was the use of the names of the three Orthodox caliphs Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthman in the southeast bay. Again, this reasoning is not convincing, for the names are combined there not only with that of ‘Ali, the fourth Orthodox caliph and Shi‘ite imam, but also with those of his two sons Hasan and Husayn. The combination of these six names reflects the eclecticism of the Ilkhanid period and perhaps Uljaytu’s drift back toward
Sunnism, but it does not show that sectarianism caused the tomb’s renovation.

When studying the inscriptions on the tomb some three decades ago, I proposed an alternative explanation for the redecoration in light of contemporary political events, an explanation that I still feel holds merit, but might be argued in a more nuanced fashion. In 1315, the son of the chieftain of Mecca, Humayza, having murdered his brother, sought refuge at the Ilkhanid court, and the following year Uljaytu dispatched a thousand cavalry to help recapture the Holy City. This was one of the major events during the years when Uljaytu decided to revamp his tomb, and hence I suggested that the new epigraphic program reflected Uljaytu’s attempt to capture the Holy Cities. The tomb, with its eight towers surrounding the dome, already carried a visual allusion to the seven minarets at Mecca, and by having one more tower on his own tomb, Uljaytu had signaled his ambitions for broader authority as leader of the Islamic lands. With the possibility of becoming sovereign of the Holy Cities, the sultan reinforced the symbolism inherent in the building by enlarging the tomb and redecorating the interior.

The redecoration of the tomb featured a new program of inscriptions, including a knotted kufic text ringing the dome with Qur’an 2:127 about Abraham and Isma’il laying the foundations for the Ka’ba, a text that would support Sultaniyya’s connection to Mecca. Like Flood’s interpretation of the Surat Maryam on the minaret of Jam (see Chapter 3), however, the use of this text at Sultaniyya must be seen more as symbolic affirmation than communication, for both script (kufic with knotted stems) and location (high up in the dome) render it virtually unreadable to those on the ground.

More weight might perhaps be given to the huge 3-m/10-ft band around the zone of transition with the last eight verses (105–12) from Surat al-Anbiya’ (Chapter 21: the Prophets). The text begins by mentioning the Qur’an as a continuation of the revelation in the Psalms (al-zabûr) that God’s righteous servants (‘ibâdiya al-sâlihûn) will inherit the earth. It then mentions Muhammad’s mission as a mercy for mankind, God’s omnipotence and oneness, and the advent of Judgment Day, when God the merciful will triumph against what disbelievers say. The text focuses on the function of the building as tomb, perhaps even one for a convert from Christianity, as Uljaytu was, but it may also allude to the varying sectarian positions held by “disbelievers” versus the “righteous.”

These verses in the large inscription around the dome emphasize many points articulated in the dado inscription with Chapter 48 about the triumph of Islam (4.111). The title refers to the occasion mentioned in the first verse when the Prophet had a vision that he and his followers would perform the pilgrimage to Mecca. They set out to do so, but were barred from reaching the town. Eventually the Prophet signed a treaty with the Quraysh at Hudaybiyya, agreeing
that he and his followers would not enter Mecca that year but would perform the pilgrimage the following year. The chapter condemns the hypocrites in Medina and the idolaters of Mecca and praises believers, reassuring them that their self-restraint and obedience to the Prophet were inspired by God. This large inscription too might be read as an allusion of Uljaytu’s aspirations in the Hijaz.

My original explanation for the tomb’s redecoration also did not give sufficient weight to the way that the renovations reconfigured the interior space. The central octagon was transformed into a large gathering hall (Persian *jama‘at-khana* or *ziyarat-khana*), separated by a grille from the back room containing the cenotaph (*gūr-khana*). Uljaytu had always considered his tomb as a place of pilgrimage like that of his brother and predecessor Ghazan in Tabriz. Uljaytu’s panegyrist Kashani mentioned several such pilgrimages to Ghazan’s tomb by his family and courtiers. On October 23, 1307, for example, Ghazan’s widow Bulghan Khatun made a pilgrimage (*ziyāra*) to her husband’s tomb in Tabriz, where she sprinkled alms and other gifts on the dervishes there. She was followed the next week by the vizier Rashid al-Din, who made a similar pilgrimage on October 29. Uljaytu himself did so the following year.

Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultaniyya was also considered the burial spot for his family. According to Kashani, after the sultan’s wife Ilturmish Khatun died on October 10, 1308, her coffin (*sandāq*) was transported to Sultaniyya, where she was buried in his mausoleum, the Sublime Tomb (*gunbad-i ‘āli*). In addition to the multi-room crypt below the rectangular hall, recent excavations at Sultaniyya have uncovered various empty crypts on the east side of the tomb. The revamped tomb would thus have accommodated many graves, and the site may thus have resembled the shrine at Ardabil, where the area behind the sheikh’s tomb became the locus for his followers’ graves [see Chapter 6]. In adding a rectangular hall and separating the tomb room from the gathering space, Uljaytu was transforming a place of pilgrimage designed for a few family members into one that could accommodate larger groups of people, who needed to be close to but screened off from the cenotaph itself.

By combining elements from these various religious and political explanations, we can better understand the chronology of Uljaytu’s tomb and its renovations. Virtually all sources, medieval and modern, agree that the building at Sultaniyya was originally conceived as the sultan’s tomb, an octagon decorated with brick and tile. Halfway through construction in the spring of 1310, the sultan, having converted to Shi‘ism, visited the shrines in Iraq, where he must have been impressed by the fervent veneration of saints he saw there and the rich fittings in their tombs. Perhaps he even envisioned moving bodies from Najaf and Karbala in order to bolster pilgrimage to his capital at Sultaniyya. After he had returned from Iraq, work continued on his tomb, and it was dedicated in 1313.
Shortly thereafter the sultan decided to enlarge the building and make it a center of pilgrimage like the shrines of Iraq by adding new interior decoration and a tomb room to house the cenotaph separately from the main gathering space. The new decoration emphasized directionality toward the tomb room and was executed in brightly colored tile and elaborately carved stucco typical of contemporary buildings. The carved stucco in the tomb room has been left plain (4.7), but that of the gathering hall was colored with polychromy and gold, an effect that is difficult to appreciate from the few remaining traces (4.11). Such a glittering interior, especially when festooned with shiny hanging lamps and candlesticks, brocaded hangings, and other fittings, would have provided a rich sensual experience for pilgrims. The new vizier who supervised the work, the parvenu jeweler Taj al-Din ‘Ali Shah, might have been all the more open to such bright, even gaudy decoration. And the extensive program of inscriptions from the Qur’an and hadith about pilgrimage would have appealed to learned visitors while at the same time underscoring Uljaytu’s aspirations to broad legitimacy and authority, with repeated allusions to Mecca, a place to which he had just dispatched cavalry.

The ultimate reasons for the decision to redo the tomb remain obscure. Perhaps Uljaytu realized that he needed such renovations in order to turn his tomb into what we today would call “a destination.” Although Hamdallah Mustawfi lauded the city as second only to Tabriz with a polyglot population, at least one Mamluk source reported that soon after the tomb’s dedication, most of the weavers and artisans returned to Tabriz whence they had come.57 Like other flat cities such as Fatehpur Sikri, founded by the Mughal emperor Akbar in 1571 and his principal residence for only fourteen years,58 Sultaniyya did not enjoy strategic or geographical advantages, and like other Ilkhanid summer residences such as Takht-i Sulayman (see below), it was used most frequently as a hunting ground. Uljaytu’s ego, one might even say megalomania, was already evident in the size of his tomb, part and parcel of the Mongol view of the world with themselves at the omphalos, and the renovations served to make that image grander by encouraging pilgrimage there.

On an architectural level, we are on surer ground, and Uljaytu’s decision to transform his own tomb at Sultaniyya can be seen as part of the development of the shrine complex and the transformation of a single-room tomb into a multi-chambered place of pilgrimage with extensive services for visitors. These additional functions were served in the adjacent and abutting structures as part of a large complex. Pending the full excavation and publication of the site, we can use aerial photographs, texts, and surviving objects to reconstruct more of the original context of this pious foundation (abwāb al-birr).
The pious foundation

The satellite view of Sultaniyya available on Google Earth shows the traces of a large squarish enclosure oriented cardinally like the tomb and measuring some 325 m/1,066 ft north to south and 300 m/985 ft east to west. The enclosure walls (Figure 4.12) are articulated with the foundations of some of the original twenty towers, three-quarter round ones in the corners and four half-round ones on each side except for a square one in the middle of the north side. Constructed of dressed stone of a distinct gray-greenish hue, these walls match contemporary textual descriptions of the city.\(^{59}\) Hamdallah Mustawfi Qazvini described the tomb as a castle (\textit{qa'la}) of cut stone (\textit{sang-i tarāshīda}).\(^{60}\) The panegyrist Abu'l-Qasim Kashani, whose descriptions are more florid, often with internal rhyme, said that its walls were of blue stone (\textit{sang-i mīnā rang}).\(^{61}\) The fifteenth-century Timurid historian Hafiz-i Abru repeated this information and added that the walls were articulated with sixteen towers.\(^{62}\) Adam Olearius (1599–1671), who visited the site in 1637 as secretary to the embassy sent by the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp to the shah of Persia, described castle walls built of square pieces of free-stone and adorned with a great number of quadrangular towers.\(^{63}\) André Godard was quite dismissive of these accounts, arguing that no trace of stone was visible at the site and that Mustawfi, for example, must have been old and his description inaccurate.\(^{64}\) The recent excavations not only prove the chroniclers to be accurate but also show that the tomb was

![Image of the tomb](image)

*Figure 4.12 West walls around Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultaniyya.*

Recent excavations at the site show that the walls around the tomb were constructed of local gray-green stone and articulated with round towers, just as described by contemporary chroniclers.
typical of its time and place, for foundations of cut stone are standard for Ilkhanid construction in Azerbaijan, used at the nearby tomb of Chelebi Ughlu and elsewhere.\textsuperscript{65}

The satellite view shows that the tomb is set in the southwest corner of the squarish enclosure. According to contemporary texts, Uljaytu’s pious foundation included places for prayer, instruction, Qur’an reading, residence, and medication, activities probably carried out in buildings grouped loosely around a court.\textsuperscript{66} Olearius mentioned a large metal gateway leading to the tomb from the maidan,\textsuperscript{67} which probably lay to the northeast of the tomb near the center of the citadel, with direct access from the square projecting tower in the center of the north wall.

Uljaytu’s complex likely continued the formal model of the complexes that his vizier Rashid al-Din and his predecessor Ghazan had built outside Tabriz.\textsuperscript{68} Both have been destroyed, but part of Ghazan’s complex is depicted in a half of a double-page illustration detached from a copy of Rashid al-Din’s \textit{Compendium of Chronicles} made at Tabriz c. 1315 (Figure 4.13).\textsuperscript{69} According to contemporary chronicles, Ghazan, after converting to Islam in 1295, had built a large tomb complex in a suburb west of Tabriz known as Sham (Syria) or Shemb.\textsuperscript{70} The complex known as the Ghazaniyya included a congregational mosque, two madrasas for followers of the Shafi’i and Hanafi schools, a \textit{khanaqah}, a hospital, a palace, a library, an observatory, a courtyard, and a hot-water bath-fountain in addition to the dodecagonal tomb decorated with signs of the zodiac. The contemporary depiction is quite accurate, showing a large and prominent doorway to a dodecagonal enclosure with distinctive courses of stone at the base of the walls, rendered here as blue and white stripes but repeated in later illustrations of the same scene as courses of blue-green stone.\textsuperscript{71}

Uljaytu’s tomb complex at Sultaniyya had one of the largest pious endowments of its time. According to a report by a sheikh who taught there, in the sultan’s lifetime the endowments exceeded one hundred \textit{tumans}, or one million dinars, almost the total of the annual taxes collected from Tabriz and the surrounding countryside in the next generation.\textsuperscript{72} The decoration was also some of the most elaborate of the time, for the complex is described by the sultan’s court panegyrist, admittedly a biased source, as having courtyards paved in white marble, roofs covered with \textit{muqarnas}, silvered domes, and painted and plastered walls.\textsuperscript{73} Although there is undeniably some hyperbole and poetic license in such descriptions, they do indicate the imperial scale of the complex, and the richness and quality of surviving fragments, especially the time-consuming technique of tile mosaic, attest to the prodigious funding behind it. Most fittings have been plundered, but a few scattered finds excavated at the site include shards of tiles overglaze painted in luster and \textit{lajvardina}, the two most expensive techniques known at the time.\textsuperscript{74}
We know about other fittings for the tomb complex too. A lattice grille of the type seen in contemporary painting (and also used at Rashid al-Din’s tomb in Tabriz) separated the rectangular tomb room from the main octagonal hall. The steel grille was held together by inlaid brass bosses, of which at least seven examples of the general type survive. Three bear Uljaytu’s name, and two others have similar geometric designs. Two more display roundels with a mounted hawk: a small boss (diameter c. 6.5 cm/2½ in) was excavated in the environs of the tomb at Sultaniyya; another twice the size (Figure 4.14) probably came from the tomb complex as well. Early European travelers to the site were quite taken with these metal fittings, noting their remarkable size and weight, beautiful finish, and expensive inlays. The fittings were so striking that, according to the British lieutenant-colonel John Johnson, who passed through the region in 1817, the Qajar ruler Fath ‘Ali Shah removed them for use in his own palace nearby. Perhaps these are
the bosses that have surfaced in American and European collections today.

European travelers to the site also describe large books propped up against the cenotaph in the tomb room, and several parts of one thirty-volume Qur'an codex with the original endowment notice bequeathing it to Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultaniyya (Figure 4.15) have survived. Extant pages exist in five collections, all outside of Iran: in Denmark, Saxony in Germany, and Turkey.84 European travelers may have lifted some of these sections from the tomb, perhaps sold off by some corrupt tomb guardian. Olearius was quite specific, reporting that in the tomb he saw several old Arabic books, more than half an ell square, with letters as long as a man’s finger and alternate black and gold lines. He took some leaves, which he deposited in the prince’s library.85 Olearius is likely referring to the two pages of this manuscript that ended up in Copenhagen, for the prince that he mentioned, Frederick III of Gottorp, was also the King of Denmark, whose library was incorporated into the Royal Library of Denmark in 1749.86

Europeans were not the first to have helped themselves to sections from this magnificent Qur’an manuscript in the tomb at Sultaniyya.

Figure 4.14  Brass boss inlaid with silver, gold, and black compound, likely from Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultaniyya. Height 13 cm. Ham, Surrey, Keir Collection

This boss likely came from the steel grille separating the rectangular tomb room from the octagonal hall in the tomb at Sultaniyya. A similar one, but half the size and with the decoration in reverse, was excavated there.
Figure 4.15 Folio with Sura 41: 9–10 from the enormous Qur’an manuscript made for Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultaniyya. 72 x 50 cm. Copenhagen, National Library.

This manuscript, made between 1306 and 1313, bears a certificate of commissioning in the name of Uljaytu and an endowment notice to his tomb at Sultaniyya. It is the largest copy of the Qur’an known to have been produced for the Ilkhanids, and both its large size and its lavish use of gold bespeak the prodigious funding behind it.
THE TOMB OF ULJAYTU AT SULTANIYYA

The Ottoman sultan Süleyman (r. 1520–66) and his entourage probably did so too on their campaign through the region in the 1530s. Three sections (juz’ 7, 20, and 21) of the manuscript belonged to the Ottoman royal collection, now part of the Topkapi Library, and in Şa’ban 951/October 1544 Süleyman’s vizier Rustam Pasha reendowed another section, juz’ 17, now in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art in Istanbul, to the tomb of Süleyman’s son Mehmed.87

The Ottomans may also have been the source for the pages currently in Leipzig and Dresden. Boris Leibrenz has suggested that they were part of the “Türkenbeute” (Turkish booty) acquired from the Ottoman camp after the ill-fated siege of Vienna in 1683.88 The section in Leipzig was presented to the Senate Library in 1692 by the book merchant and printer Johanes Friedrich Gledistch (1653–1716), as attested by a small inscription on the flyleaf; the section in Dresden belonged to the Royal Saxonian Library that has been in the city since the eighteenth century. Like most manuscripts in these collections, they were probably spoils of war accumulated from the remains of the camp abandoned by the Ottoman grand vizier Köprülü.

This splendid Qur’an manuscript for Sultaniyya was made at Baghdad, with transcription beginning by 706/1306–7, the year after work on the tomb had begun, and was nearly finished by 713/1313–14, the year the tomb was inaugurated.89 The artist Muhammad ibn Aybak ibn ‘Abdallah signed the illumination. He usually worked in tandem with Ahmad ibn al-Suhrawardi, one of Yaqut’s followers and the most famous calligrapher of the age, and so the calligraphy of this manuscript is generally assigned to Ahmad al-Suhrawardi’s hand. The same team of calligrapher and illuminator made another thirty-volume Qur’an manuscript at Baghdad between 701/1302 and 707/1307–8, which James dubbed the “anonymous Baghdad Qur’an” and considered finer, with a better balance between calligraphy and decoration.90

Uljaytu’s Qur’an manuscript for Sultaniyya, however, is more ambitious on several counts. It is remarkable as being the only Qur’an codex from the Ilkhanid period transcribed on full baghdadi-size sheets of paper, with each bifolio measuring 72×100 cm/28×40 in.91 A 1-m/40-in mold approaches the limit of what a single papermaker can lift, and the sheets are thus the largest that can be produced using dipping molds. It still must have been a Herculean task to lift the large wet sheets of paper, as over 1,000 of these enormous sheets were needed for this manuscript, which consumed nearly 700 square meters/837 square yards of paper.

The Qur’an manuscript made for Sultaniyya is also visually distinct, as it is the only Ilkhanid copy known that has three lines of gold calligraphy outlined in black alternating with two lines of black calligraphy outlined in gold. Gold is also used for many chapter headings, verse markers, and the like, such that the manuscript shows
an almost profligate use of the precious metal. The manuscript thus typifies the Mongol love of gold.\textsuperscript{92}

Two different methods were used to apply the gold in this manuscript. The calligraphy and the outlining are done with gold ink applied with a reed pen (or perhaps a brush).\textsuperscript{93} By contrast, the ornament is done with gold leaf, sheets that are hammered to extreme thinness and laid on some sort of glue, size, or glair.\textsuperscript{94} To combine materials and techniques was time-consuming, as the calligrapher needed to use two pens charged with either black or gold ink, and the outliner needed two other smaller ones, quite apart from all the illumination with gold leaf.

The opening spreads in the individual volumes of this enormous manuscript are quite diverse, and the variation suggests that the illumination was done by different hands, with Muhammad ibn Aybak supervising a workshop of several artists with individual specialties, including calligraphy, outlining, and illumination. On this page in Copenhagen with Qur’an 41:9–10 from \textsuperscript{4}juz’ \textsuperscript{24} (4.15), furthermore, the gold leaf was never applied for the verse markers, both the smaller circles in the text indicating individual verses and the larger one in the margin at the bottom right marking the end of the tenth verse.\textsuperscript{95} The omissions allow us to see how the artists worked.

The verse markers were added after the letters and their outlines, probably by a specialist illuminator or illuminators.\textsuperscript{96} For the large marginal ornament, the illuminator drew a circle in red ink using a compass and then filled in the individual rounded petals freehand. He prepared the ground for the circular ornament with a brownish yellow wash intended to intensify the color when the gold leaf was applied. He also labeled the marginal ornament with an ‘\textsuperscript{ayn} for ‘\textsuperscript{ashr} (ten), indicating that this was the tenth verse. He used a red circle to indicate zero for the in-text circles marking the ends of the individual verses. All of this red ink would have been covered by the gold leaf.

The individual volumes were bound in leather covers. The one preserved on the \textsuperscript{4}juz’ in Leipzig seems to be original.\textsuperscript{97} It displays a central scalloped medallion similar to the ogival ones on the dome of the tomb. The medallion is decorated with a scrolling arabesque with flowers. The doublure of the thick leather cover has a diamond inscribed with the short version of profession of faith (God, there is no god but Him; Muhammad is God’s Messenger) in square kufic. The diverse artists, their many steps, the lavish application of gold as both ink and leaf, the long length of time needed to complete the manuscript, and the luxury binding show how expensive this manuscript was.

No wonder then that such Qur’an manuscripts and other precious objects were kept locked inside the tomb. According to the endowment deed for Rashid al-Din’s contemporary tomb complex at Tabriz, on Fridays and fifty-eight special nights (the month of Ramadan and other holidays), the sweeper cleaned the tomb, filled
the four hanging lamps (qandil), and carried in four large candlestands in preparation for the Qur’an reciters to “seal the Qur’an.”

The setting for such a ceremony is depicted in the painting showing the “Mourning for Alexander,” detached from the Great Mongol Shahnama made at Tabriz under Uljaytu’s son Abu Sa’id (Figure 4.16) and perhaps even depicting this very tomb at Sultaniyya. The painting shows a room with a tiled dado surmounted by white walls with blue painted ornaments, the same types of decoration used in the redecoration of Sultaniyya (4.11). The cenotaph is surrounded by four large candlestands, exactly as described in the endowment deed for Rashid al-Din’s tomb in Tabriz. Many examples survive from the period; the largest (21 × 41 cm/8½ × 16 in), made of brass inlaid with silver, was endowed in 708/1308–9 by Uljaytu’s amir to the shrine of the Sufi Shakyh Bayazid at Bastam, where the sultan’s son was buried. We can only imagine that the sultan’s tomb had even grander candlesticks made of or inlaid with gold. The tomb was probably also richly furnished with mats, rugs, and hangings, like the gold-and-silk brocade draped over Alexander’s coffin.

Figure 4.16 “Funeral of Alexander” from the Great Mongol Shahnama. Page 57.6 × 39.7 cm; painting 25 × 29 cm. Washington, DC, Freer Gallery of Art.

The painting gives a good idea of how tombs were venerated in the Ilkhanid period, with mourners clustered around the richly decorated cenotaph, which is surrounded by candlesticks and hanging lamps along with rich furnishings including rugs, mats, and textiles.
The architectural setting

Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultaniyya is the culmination of a steady line of polygonal mausolea with dome chambers and side galleries erected in Iran for at least the preceding four centuries.102 The first to survive is the tenth-century tomb of the Samanids in Bukhara (Figure 4.17), although the quality of its construction and decoration shows that there must have been a long tradition of domed buildings in the region before it. Like the Bobrinsky bucket (3.17), the tomb of the Samanids is canonical, illustrated in virtually every survey of Islamic art and architecture.103 A tapering cube, measuring about 10 m/33 ft on a side and constructed of baked brick, the building contains many of the features found at Sultaniyya, albeit on a simpler scale: a large central dome (rounded, rather than the pointed one at Sultaniyya), framed at the corners (by four domelets, rather than the eight turrets at Sultaniyya), with an exterior gallery masking the

Figure 4.17 Tomb of the Samanids at Bukhara.
This tomb built for the Samanid rulers of Transoxania in the 930s is the first extant example of a mausoleum in the Iranian World, but the quality of its construction and decoration shows that there must have been a long tradition of domed tombs in the region.
zone of transition (although this one is inaccessible, whereas the
one at Sultaniyya is accessed through the stairway in the southwest
corner).

More sophisticated is the tomb of the Saljuq sultan Sanjar (r. 1118–
53) at Marv (Figure 4.18).\(^{104}\) It too is square (c. 27 m/88 ft to a side)
and constructed of baked brick, with an exterior gallery masking
the zone of transition, but the dome is pointed and the building was
incorporated into a complex, with a mosque to the east separated
from the high dome (\textit{qubba}) by a grille (\textit{shubbâk}), according to a
contemporary witness.\(^ {105}\) Excavations revealed that the tomb was
set at the west side of a baked brick pavement as part of a complex of
buildings, all now sub-surface. In addition to the mosque to the east,
a madrasa and bath lay to the south and a range of semi-subterranean
rooms to the north. We know that Sanjar’s tomb was the direct inspi-
ration for the Ilkhanids, for after Ghazan had converted to Islam, he
visited various mausolea in Khurasan before ordering his own tomb
in Tabriz to be larger than that of Sanjar at Marv, then considered
the grandest building in the world.\(^ {106}\) Ghazan’s tomb was in turn the
model for that of his brother and successor Uljaytu.

These earlier tombs were conceived as square entities, with the
cenotaphs set in the main room.\(^ {107}\) The additional room at the back
sets Uljaytu’s tomb apart from its predecessors, but so does its scale:

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\(^{104}\) Figure 4.18 Tomb of Sultan Sanjar at Marv.

This tomb built in the mid-12th century for the Saljuq ruler Sultan Sanjar,
one part of a surrounding complex with mosque and other facilities, was
the model for the Ilkhanid tombs in northwestern Iran.
the diameter of its dome is almost four times that of the one over the Samanids’ tomb in Bukhara and almost one and a half times that of Sanjar’s tomb at Marv. Ilkhanid architecture is distinguished by its monumental size and sophisticated handling of space, features one readily sees in two other buildings constructed for the Ilkhanids in the region and brought to light by excavations carried out over the past several decades.

One is the summer palace known as Takht-i Sulayman (Throne of Solomon), built by Hulegu’s son and successor Abaqa (r. 1265–82) southeast of Lake Urmia (Figure 4.19). In addition to providing excellent pasture, the area was one of great scenic beauty, located at an elevation of 2,500 m/8,000 ft beside a seemingly bottomless lake. The site also had symbolic importance, as the palace was built over the ruins of the Zoroastrian temple of Shiz, the place where the Sasanian emperors had been crowned. But it, like Sultaniyya, never replaced earlier capitals.

As at Sultaniyya, the site is basically oriented cardinally. The Ilkhanid construction took advantage of the extant fortification walls with thirty-eight bastions, but emphasized the north–south axis by breaking through the perimeter wall on the south to establish a new gateway complex. It leads to a large rectangular area (120 x 145 m/394 x 475 ft) encompassing the lake. Like the typical courtyard,
the central area is surrounded by arcades, punctuated with iwans on the four sides.

The north iwan at Takht-i Sulayman, rebuilt at more than double the original scale (17 vs 8.4 m/56 vs 27½ ft), leads to the main audience hall, constructed using the ruins of the temple as a substructure, with the new hall erected on the restored dome and vaults. A freestanding set of monumental steps bridged the difference of more than 5 m/16 ft in height. The raised hall at the back of the iwan would have provided an imposing setting for the enthroned monarch, but the staircase is a feature surprisingly rare in Islamic architecture. Such stairs were known in pre-Islamic palaces in the region [the most famous is the double stairway at Persepolis], but the most notable example from Islamic times is the monumental flight of steps that leads from an artificial water basin to the triple gateway known as the Dar al-'Amma in the ninth-century Dar al-Khilafa/Jawsaq al-Khaqani palace at the Abbasid capital of Samarra. The Ilkhanids may well have drawn inspiration from both traditions, thereby linking themselves with major rulers of both the pre-Islamic and Islamic past.

The Ilkhanid palace at Takht-i Sulayman is also remarkable for its extraordinary decoration, including carved stone moldings, capitals, and bases; plaster muqarnas; and luster tiles. Doorways (Figure 4.20), for example, were framed with moldings elaborately carved in a pinkish stone and displaying a network of interlaced panels enclosing four-petaled flowers. Interior surfaces were typically covered with tiles executed in at least six techniques ranging from monochrome glaze to polychrome and gilding. Most of the intact tiles have been removed, but shards found on site allow us to localize many better-preserved examples now in museum and private collections. Some of the most distinctive are molded frieze tiles that display inscriptions from the Shahnama and creatures drawn from the imperial Chinese repertory that were probably derived from imported textiles. One set, for example, shows such creatures below a lotus border. Some tiles have phoenixes; others display striding dragons with four claws, cresting, and a gaping mouth breathing flames backwards over the body (Figure 4.21).

The decorative motifs found at Takht-i Sulayman allow us to date another site closer to Sultaniyya: an incomplete complex cut halfway up the north face of the Kuh-i Rustam, a hill some 30 km/20 miles south-southeast of Sultaniyya near the village of Viar (Figures 4.22–4.24). The complex, which is again oriented cardinally, comprises a large iwan in the center, flanked by two smaller iwans, fronting on a large forecourt (approximately 40 m/130 ft on a side), all cut into the rock from the top down (Figure 4.23). The presence of finished rock-cut surfaces in all parts of the complex, from the central iwan to the forecourt, suggests that the masons were working to dimensioned plans and elevations in coordinated teams, for the top-down
Figure 4.20 Carved stone moldings from Takht-i Sulayman.
The palace at Takht-i Sulayman was lavishly decorated. Stone moldings around the doorways, for example, display an interlaced design framing four-petaled rosettes.

Figure 4.21 Fritware tile overglaze painted in luster depicting a four-clawed dragon amid cloud scrolls. 35.7×36.5 cm. London, Victoria and Albert Museum.
This tile, which probably once decorated the Ilkhanid palace at Takht-i Sulayman, displays a four-clawed dragon, writhing with its head turned back over its body.
The excavation of the rock would have required the advance calculation of the eventual ground plane to ensure that elements such as the iwans were correctly proportioned. Such a working method would probably have been unfamiliar to builders practiced in construction from the ground up. Although there is no evidence for the determination of this ground plan on site, it must have existed in the minds of the masons, if not also on paper. The ruin thereby confirms textual references to the use of such plans in the Ilkhanid period.\textsuperscript{115}

The many partially quarried blocks at Viar show that the builders wanted to use as much stone as possible from the site in constructing the upper sections of the complex. Most blocks are rectangular (at least $1.1 \times 2.1 \times 0.8 \text{ m}/3\frac{1}{2} \times 7 \times 2\frac{1}{2} \text{ ft}$), although some in the main iwan were quarried as drums (diameter $1.6 \text{ m}/5\frac{1}{4} \text{ ft}$) and must have been intended for large columns somewhere in the complex. Carved blocks (Figure 4.25) include column capitals and bases, inscriptions in Arabic script, cable moldings, cornices, and \textit{muqarnas} elements. The cable moldings frame hexagonal spaces, which may have been intended for some sort of inlaid decoration, perhaps hexagonal tiles of the type abundant at Takht-i Sulayman.

Carved into the rock face between the iwans are the remains of facing panels ($6 \times 1.6 \text{ m}/20 \times 5\frac{1}{4} \text{ ft}$) that display striding dragons.

\textbf{Figure 4.22} Ruins at Viar.

The complex at Viar, perhaps to be identified as a Buddhist monastery built under Arghun in the 1280s, was cut out of the cliff face at a site some 30 km south-southeast of Sultaniyya.
Figure 4.23  *Elevation of the main courtyard in the rock-cut complex at Viar.*
The complex, cardinally oriented like the tomb at Stulaniyya, comprised three iwans set out in front of a large forecourt with a pool.
Figure 4.24 *Ground plan of the ruined rock-cut complex at Viar.*

The plan shows the main iwan, flanked by dragon panels and side iwans. Partial collapse of the east iwan may have led to the abandonment of the site.
Although many of the details are obscure, the dragons seem to face outward. Like the tiles attributed to Takht-i Sulayman (4.21), their bodies are arranged to fit within the rectangular frames and are embellished with scales, cresting along the back, and outstretched claws. They, like many of the reliefs, are unfinished, and the site must have been abandoned because faults in the rock caused the rear of the east iwan to collapse.

This isometric view (Figure 4.27) shows one possible reconstruction. It makes a number of assumptions, including the level of the ground plane (estimated by proposing a plausible proportion for the vault of the central iwan), subsidiary panels on the sides (suggested by the remains of carving), the location of the principal entrance façade and its construction from ashlar masonry (suggested by the numerous ruined blocks), and the colonnades of the forecourt (suggested by the ruins of columns and bases).

The complex at Viar was probably constructed just before the development at Sultaniyya, for the rock, with its high percentage of copper inclusions giving it a bluish tinge, resembles that used for the walls at Sultaniyya. The unfinished building near Viar can thus be attributed to the second half of the thirteenth century, but an exact dating depends somewhat on its function, which is more problematic. Despite its iwan-plan, the rock-cut complex was not a Muslim religious building, since it has no provision or orientation for prayer. The
Figure 4.26 Relief-carved dragon from the west wall at Viar.
The main iwan at Viar is flanked by panels, now unfortunately covered with glass. The panels show striding dragons like the ones depicted on the tiles from Takht-i Sulayman.

Figure 4.27 Isometric reconstruction of the ruins at Viar.
This drawing shows a possible reconstruction of the ruins at Viar, including a monumental entrance and arcaded forecourt.
most likely possibility is that the complex was intended as a Buddhist monastery. The name of the nearby village may be a corruption of vihara, the Sanskrit term for a Buddhist monastery. If this is the case, it would probably date to the reign of Arghun, who is said to have had Buddhist priests brought from India and who selected the area for a summer capital. His son Ghazan, following his conversion to Islam, is said to have destroyed most Buddhist temples, and the ruins at Viar would be the rare remains of a Buddhist structure in Iran to survive. Whatever its ultimate purpose, the size and scale of the ruined structure at Viar show that it, like Takht-i Sulayman, provided a comparable scale for Uljaytu’s monumental tomb at Sultaniyya.

The tomb as inspiration for later Mongol rulers

Not surprisingly, the enormous tomb at Sultaniyya also served as an inspiration for other buildings constructed by the later Mongol rulers, who wished to see themselves as heirs to the Ilkhanids, who in turn provided a direct link back to Genghis Khan. Various features of Uljaytu’s mausoleum are echoed in at least three Central Asian tombs connected with the warlord Timur after he had occupied Sultaniyya in 1385–6. One is the so-called tomb of Turabeg Khanum in Kunya Urgench, south of the Aral Sea in present-day Turkmenistan. The name refers to the wife of Qutlugh Timur, governor of Khurasan from 1321 to 1336 for Uzbek Khan of the Golden Horde, but Lisa Golombek has argued persuasively that the renovations to the tomb must post-date the arrival of architects from Iran under Timur in 1388 and that the building may even have been the laboratory for his architects at the shrine of Ahmad Yasavi. As at Sultaniyya, the shrine of Turabeg Khanum shows the same progression of portal, gathering room, and tomb, with the crypt entered from the archway leading from the gathering room to the tomb behind. Golombe noted that bicameral mausoleums became common in Central Asia in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as in the two tombs in the suburb of Fathabad east of Bukhara for the Sufi Sheikh Sayf al-Din Bakharzi and his disciple, the Chaghatayid Buyun Quli Khan (d. 1358), and that the second chamber was often added. This was exactly what had happened at Sultaniyya, but there both parts were the work of the same patron. The main room in the tomb at Kunya Urgench, however, is dodecagonal, perhaps derived from that of Uljaytu’s predecessor Ghazan in Tabriz. Assuming that the building actually marks the burial of the princess Turabeg Khanum, Timur may have been inspired to renovate it to enhance his Mongol affiliations, for she was a Chingissid princess descended from Genghis Khan.

In contrast to Sultaniyya, the tomb at Kunya Urgench is much taller, with a high drum supporting a double dome in place of the two-shelled dome used over the earlier building. In the tomb at Kunya Urgench, the high drum conceals a two-tier zone of transition
on the interior: a dodecagon and a twenty-four-sided ring with twelve windows. The exterior dome has fallen, but it has been reconstructed as a conical dome rising from a circular drum around the spherico-conical inner dome. Such height achieved through a double dome became a hallmark of Timurid architecture.

One other feature of the tomb at Kunya Urgench deserves mention: its tilework decoration. Glazed tile covered all of the exterior and at least the superstructure of the interior. The exterior inscription framing the portal is composed of large rectangular painted tiles combining under- and overglaze techniques in a broad palette that includes low-fired pigments such as red and gold but also apple green. The range exemplifies the interest in adding color to the repertory and is typical of a group of buildings in the region dating to the 1380s and 1390s, including several tombs in the Shah-i Zinda, the Timurid necropolis outside Samarkand. Recent testing has shown that this spectacularly colored underglaze tilework was accomplished through the technique commonly known as cuerda seca (Spanish “dry cord”), in which the different colors are separated by a substance that burns off during separate firings.

Most of the decoration at the tomb at Kunya Urgench, however, is done in the more costly technique of tile mosaic (Figure 4.28). The palette has expanded from the three colors (light blue, dark blue, and yellow) of the earlier decoration to include an expanded palette and floral designs.

Figure 4.28  Tile mosaic decoration in the rear vestibule of the tomb of Turabeg Khanum in Kunya Urgench.

The tomb of the Chingissid princess, probably renovated under Timur in the 1390s, shows a sophisticated handling of space from portal to gathering hall to tomb room and elaborate decoration in tile mosaic with an expanded palette and floral designs.
and white) used in the Phase II decoration at Sultaniyya to include green, bright yellow, bright red, brown, and gold. These colors are not typical of tilework from western Iran and bespeak a local tradition in which Khwarazmian potters were adapting the colors used in underglaze cuerda seca tilework. Designs too have evolved, and the nascent floral patterns in the Phase II decoration at Sultaniyya have blossomed.

A second building that Timur had renovated after his return from Azerbaijan to Central Asia is the tomb for the Sufi sheikh Ahmad Yasavi (d. 1166) at Turkestan (Figure 4.29). The sheikh and his eponymous order, the Yasaviyya, were responsible for converting many steppe nomads to Islam, and the sheikh’s tomb became a major place of pilgrimage venerated by the Turks of Central Asia and the Volga region. In the closing decade of the fourteenth century, Timur radically transformed the small building originally on the site. The enormous tomb at Sultaniyya provided a suitable model in both scale and spatial organization, for Timur had grand plans when he ordered Ahmad Yasavi’s shrine to be renovated, expending on the project the prodigious booty he had gained after defeating the Golden Horde.

As at Sultaniyya, the transformation of Ahmad Yasavi’s tomb took

Figure 4.29 Side view of the tomb of Ahmad Yasavi at Turkestan.
Built by the warlord Timur in the 1390s, possibly on the inspiration of Sultaniyya, the tomb for the Sufi Sheikh contains the same configuration of space as that of Uljaytu, with a central domed hall leading to the domed tomb behind.
place in two stages, but here the second stage followed the original rectangular footprint (65.5 × 46.5 m / 215 × 153 ft) and the cause was structural. In the first phase, usually dated between 1391 and 1395, the basic core of the building was completed. In the second campaign, from 1397 to 1399, the superstructure and revetment were added, including the narrowing of certain interior spaces and corridors to provide additional support. The building’s structural instability, perhaps a result of the many innovative systems of vaulting used within it, is clear from the fact that exterior buttresses had to be installed in the back corner. As at Sultaniyya, various activities were carried out within the shrine complex, but in Ahmad Yasavi’s shrine in the middle of the steppe, rooms for different functions were combined within the regular rectangle, including a domed mosque beside the tomb, a library, kitchens, and spaces for residence and meditation.

Ahmad Yasavi’s shrine is organized along a central axis that shows the same progression of space as at the renovated tomb at Sultaniyya. At Turkestan, a monumental portal with a set of stunning inlaid and carved wooden doors leads to a central domed hall. A doorway in the rear of the domed hall, once provided with wooden doors no longer extant but known from their knockers, leads to the domed tomb room beyond. The door knockers on the entrance portal, signed by Izz al-Din ibn Taj al-Din and dated 799/1396–7, are cleverly inscribed with a Persian verse that puns on their function:

این در شادکامی دائم خجسته باد
بر دوستان گشاده و بر خصم [بسته باد]

May this door always be auspicious with felicity,
May it always be open to friends and closed to enemies.125

The entrance door knockers also bear the pithy saying that the world is only an hour so one should use it obediently, the same hadith inscribed on the southeast bay of the tomb at Sultaniyya.126

Both sets of door knockers from Ahmad Yasavi’s shrine are also inscribed along the edge with a variation on lines from the Gulistan of Sheikh Sa’di of Shiraz, completed in 1258:127

غرض نقشیست کز ما بام داند
که هستی را نمی بینم بقایی
مگر صاحبادی روزی برحتم
کند بر حال مسکینی دعائی

Our intent was a design to remain after us, for I see no permanence to being.
Perhaps one day a sympathetic person will mercifully make a prayer for the sake of the indigent.
The verses, which come at the end of the prologue just before the list of contents, lay out the poet’s reason for composing the book, one of the most widely read in the Persian-speaking world and source of many proverbial everyday statements, much like Shakespeare in English. On the door knockers, however, the poem has been slightly modified to fit the shrine context. The inscriptions omit the first line in which the poet says that this poetry and arrangement will remain for long years when every particle of us has turned to dust and been scattered. They also vary the wording in the last hemistich. In the standard published version, the poet asks the sympathetic person to pray for the labor of dervishes (dar kār-i darvīshān). Here, the inscriptions ask the sympathetic person to pray for the sake of the indigent (bar ḩāl-i miskīn), a variant that underscores the shrine’s function in feeding the poor.

We know that the central hall in the shrine of Ahmad Yasavi was intended for the gathering and feeding of devotees, in this case Sufis, because of the elephantine cauldron in it (Figure 4.30). The large inscription around the top of the cauldron specifies that it was intended as a vessel for drinking water for pilgrims and does so in a clever inscription that repeats the word siqāya three times in three different ways. The text opens with a Qur’anic passage (9:19) about providing drink to pilgrims to Mecca (siqāyat al-hājj). Next comes a hadith that whoever builds a place of drinking (siqāya) will receive a pool (ḥawd) in heaven. The text ends with the endowment saying that the amir Timur bestowed this drinking vessel (siqāya) to the shrine (rawdā, literally garden) of the Sufi sheikh Ahmad Yasavi on 20 Shawwāl 801/June 25, 1399. Through wordplay, the text links the Mongol conqueror’s gift to the Qur’an and hadith, just as the inscriptions had done at Sultanīyā.

The cauldron is the largest example of Iranian metalwork known, so heavy that it required the construction of a special railway to transport it to Leningrad in 1935 for the Third International Congress and Exhibition of Iranian Art and Archeology. Cast in as many as fifteen segments that were welded together, the vessel was a stunning technological achievement, which was, according to a smaller inscription in two cartouches below the endowment text, the work of the master (ustādh) ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, son of the master (ustādh) Sharaf al-Din Tabrizi. The nisba Tabrizi connects him or his father with northwestern Iran, and he and/or his father may well have been part of the group of master artisans that Timur forcibly brought back from his campaigns in the west to furnish his Central Asian homeland. On the door knockers to the tomb chamber, ‘Izz al-Din ibn Taj al-Din bears the nisba Isfahani, referring to the city in central Iran, and he too may have been brought from the west. Such transfer of artists would explain the similarities with the inscriptions on the tomb at Sultanīyā and its linear progression of space from entrance to gathering hall to tomb. The tomb was not the only
building at Sultaniyya that impressed Timur’s architects: the portal of Uljaytu’s mosque at Sultaniyya, known only from drawings by Préault and others, closely resembles the portal of the mosque of Bibi Khanum, the congregational mosque that Timur had constructed in Samarqand c. 1400.\textsuperscript{131} Other artisans who signed work at the shrine of Ahmad Yasavi include two builders (\textit{bannā}) with the \textit{nisba} Shirazi, referring to the “city of roses and nightingales” in southwestern Iran. These builders may have been responsible for introducing new forms of transverse vaulting to the region, for the shrine displays such a wide variety of innovative systems that it has been dubbed “a virtual museum of vaulting possibilities.”\textsuperscript{132} They were not the only craftsmen that Timur removed to Central Asia: Syrian metalsmiths, probably brought back after Timur had devastated Damascus in 1401, worked on the large oil lamps endowed to the shrine.\textsuperscript{133} And, as we shall see

\textbf{Figure 4.30} Bronze cauldron made by the master ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Tabrizi and endowed by Timur to the shrine of Ahmad Yasavi in 1399. Height 1.58 m.

The inscriptions on this huge cauldron show that it was intended for providing pilgrims with water and confirm that the central hall was intended as a gathering space. The endowment inscription around the top cleverly links its donor Timur to the Qur’an and hadith by playing on the various meanings of the word \textit{siqāya} as watering, watering place, and vessel for water.
in the next chapter, papermakers, painters, and other book artists were part of the flow.

A third building in Central Asia that bears the imprint of Sultaniyya is Timur's own tomb, the Gur-i Mir. After the warlord's unexpected death in 1401, he was buried in Samarqand in a madrasa set on a large square courtyard opposite a hospice for Sufis. The complex became the dynastic tomb of the Timurid line, with cenotaphs in the crypt below the main floor for Timur, his favorite grandson and heir presumptive Muhammad Shah, his spiritual guide Sheikh Baraka, and his sons Shah Rukh, Ulugh Beg, and Miranshah (whom Timur had granted sovereignty over Azerbaijan and its chief city of Sultaniyya and who was probably the person responsible for removing Uljaytu's body from his tomb). Like the tomb at Sultaniyya, Timur's tomb is octagonal, but the double dome, with swelling ribbed profile, is a marked step beyond the ovoid double-shelled dome of the prototype and represents the epitome of the double-domed tomb typical of Timurid architecture.

The major feature marking the interior of the Gur-i Mir is the extraordinary decoration, which is even more lavish than that used during the redecoration of Uljaytu's tomb. The dado of onyx slabs in the Gur-i Mir recalls the one with light blue hexagonal tiles in Uljaytu's tomb (and that depicted in the "Funeral for Alexander" (4.16)), but in a more expensive medium. The upper walls of Timur's tomb have designs executed with pressed and molded paper in low relief, probably stiffened with a thin overlay of plaster and painted in gold and light blue with inscriptions and palmettes. The same sort of molded decoration occurs at Sultaniyya in the Phase II decoration, where stucco is molded in low relief in ornamental bands that were then painted and gilded (4.11) and in much higher relief in enormous forms shaped over bases of coarse cloth probably stiffened with glue or size to make the large ogival motifs that stud the inner surface of the dome. Such decoration, which clearly derived from the illumination used in Qur'an manuscripts of the Ilkhanid period, is continued, but without the lavish use of gold, in Yazd at the Rukniyya (dated 725/1325) and the Shamsiyya (c. 1335). Both buildings were much indebted to the metropolitan style of northwestern Iran: Shams al-Din, patron of the Shamsiyya, was the son-in-law of Rashid al-Din, and plans for the Shamsiyya are said to have been drawn up in Tabriz and sent to Yazd. Both buildings in Yazd also continue the progression of space seen in the renovated tomb at Sultaniyya, with a domed hall preceding the square tomb room in the Rukniyya and a monumental iwan leading to a rectangular tomb hall in the Shamsiyya. The Gur-i Mir marks a revival of the lavish use of gold so prominent at the tomb of Uljaytu but was probably beyond the budget of the more modest provincial patrons in Yazd.

And, as is well known, Timur's tomb in Samarqand in turn provided the model for the Mughals in India, notably for the Taj Mahal,
THE TOMB OF ULJAYTU AT SULTANIYYA

the tomb that Shah Jahan built for his wife at Agra between 1631 and 1647.140 Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultaniyya thus cast a long shadow, offering a model for Mongol rulers for over three centuries not only in Iran but also in Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent by providing these rulers with an association back to Genghis Khan.

The tomb as inspiration for the Ilkhanids’ rivals

Perhaps more surprisingly, Uljaytu’s tomb also provided a model for the Ilkhanids’ contemporaries and rivals, who were not necessarily inspired by dynastic aspirations or Chingissid lineage, but rather stimulated by the tomb’s size and sophistication and thereby free to adapt its architectural innovations not just for mausolea but also for other types of buildings, including mosques.

The closest in time may be the tomb known as Rukn- i ‘Alam, built some 300 km/200 miles to the east at Multan in Sind: a monumental brick octagon (15.71 m/52 ft in diameter) crowned by a hemispheric dome surrounded by eight turrets.141 As at Sultaniyya, the tomb’s original function and date are unclear.142 The tomb now houses the grave of the Sufi sheikh Rukn al-Din Abu’l-Fath (1251–1335), grandson of Sheikh Baha’ al-Din Zakariya (1170–1267), who had brought the Suhrawardi order to the subcontinent. The tomb’s size and scale connect it with the patronage of Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq (r. 1320–5), the founder of the Tughluq dynasty who had been governor of Depalpur in Sind, and most people accept a date of 1320–5 for the tomb. Some suggest that it was intended as the ruler’s own tomb, but was then repurposed as a tomb for the Sufi sheikh. According to tradition, after his death Sheikh Rukn al-Din had been buried in his grandfather’s nearby tomb, but his body was then moved to its current location by Firuz Shah Tughluq (r. 1351–88).

In form and decoration, the tomb at Multan bears many similarities to that at Sultaniyya: set within a walled precinct, the building shares the use of brick as a building material, octagonal tiered form, scale, presence of a gallery, group of turrets clustered like a corona around the dome, and decoration densely concentrated at the base of the dome and executed in colored tilework. There were certainly contacts between the two regions that might have made the transferral of general ideas possible. For example, Ibn Battuta, who had passed through Azerbaijan in the 1320s, visited Multan in 1341 and mentioned the congregational mosque Ghiyath al-Din had built there.143 Sufis may have made the journey as well. As Robert Hillenbrand pointed out, Uljaytu’s tomb must have been “the talk of Iran,”144 but the connection between the tomb at Sultaniyya and Multan remains speculative.

Ilkhanid architecture also seems to have impacted the tombs built by their rivals, the Mamluk rulers of Egypt and Syria, and the tomb at Sultaniyya may have provided inspiration for the complex built...
from 1357 to 1364 by Sultan Hasan (150×68 m/492×223 ft), the largest and most impressive of all Mamluk funerary complexes in their capital Cairo. The building bears many features of Iranian inspiration, such as the four-iwan plan and perhaps also the portal with flanking minarets. According to contemporary sources, the monumental iwan in the mosque of Sultan Hasan (Figure 4.31) was designed to be five cubits larger than that at Ctesiphon, the large Sasanian palace near present-day Baghdad, but Sultaniyya would have been a fitting model as well.

Sultan Hasan’s tomb is constructed with the materials typical of the Mamluk period (limestone with a multi-colored marble revetment), but the decoration of the main iwan bears the imprint of Iranian work. The springing lines of the iwan are decorated with a 2-m/6½-ft band of carved stucco, containing a Qur’anic text set on a foliate ground beneath a palmette frieze crisply carved on three levels. Such fine stucco carving with inscriptions on a foliate ground and palmette friezes on several levels was a typical feature

**Figure 4.31** Main iwan at the tomb complex of Sultan Hasan in Cairo.
The tomb complex of Sultan Hasan is the most imposing of the many Mamluk buildings in Cairo. Its large iwan separated from the tomb by a grille and the carved stucco ornament may have been inspired by Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultaniyya.
of Ilkhanid architecture, seen in the tomb room at Sultaniyya (4.7) and in the contemporary mihrab that Uljaytu had added to the congregational mosque in Isfahan in 1310 to mark his conversion to Shi’ism.\textsuperscript{147} The Ilkhanid stucco work displays a liveliness that is missing from the more rigid Cairene work, whose designs may have been copied from contemporary illumination in Qur’an manuscripts and the like.

As at Sultaniyya, the tomb chamber in the complex of Sultan Hasan projects on the qibla axis beyond the main core of the structure and is separated from the main gathering space by windows with lattice grilles and inlaid bronze doors. Its location made it gratifyingly visible from the citadel above, but it also follows the same progression of space from prayer area to tomb found at Sultaniyya. In the Cairene building, the tomb room is a square (21 × 21 m/69 × 69 ft and 30 m/98 ft high) surmounted by a dome, whereas the rectangular hall at Sultaniyya was covered by a sophisticated system of cross vaults. In both tombs, similar rituals were carried out, including the continuous reciting of the Qur’an round the clock.\textsuperscript{148}

Like their Ilkhanid predecessors Mamluk patrons commissioned large copies of the Qur’an with which to carry out these readings. The earliest surviving example is a manuscript in Cairo (Dar al-Kutub, ms. 8) copied by Ya’qub ibn Khalid ibn Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Hanafi in 757/1356.\textsuperscript{149} Later bequeathed by Sultan Sha’ban to his mother’s madrasa in the district known as Khatt al-Tabbana on 3 Dhu’l-Qa‘da 769/June 13, 1368, the monumental Qur’an manuscript was probably begun for the complex of Sultan Hasan. Like the one enormous copy endowed to Sultaniyya (4.15), the one for Sultan Hasan was transcribed on full Baghdadi-size sheets of paper, folded in half so that each page measures 75 × 50 cm/30 × 20 in. Regular pages in the Mamluk manuscript, however, have eleven lines of text per page, making it a single-volume codex as opposed to the thirty-volume one prepared for the Ilkhanids, which has only five lines per page. But like the Ilkhanid Qur’an, the opening pages of the Mamluk manuscript have five lines of text written in gold and black, though here the middle three lines in black are sandwiched between two lines in gold. Such gold calligraphy is rare in Qur’an manuscripts prepared for the Mamluks, but standard in those made for the Ilkhanids. In the Qur’an manuscript for Sultan Hasan, furthermore, the text is written over red lotus flowers on a red hatched ground, another feature typical of Ilkhanid work. And like the Ilkhanid Qur’an manuscripts, the Mamluk one has elaborate illumination with much gold on the double-page frontispiece and finisepiece, in which each page has a square central panel with a star polygon sandwiched between two inscribed cartouches, all set within a chinoiserie border. This arrangement in turn became standard in the group made for Sultan Hasan, probably the finest Mamluk work in traditional manner.\textsuperscript{150}
Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultaniyya may also have provided inspiration for the Ottomans. On his 1534 campaigns through Iraq and western Iran, Sultan Süleyman was accompanied by the court artist Nasuh Matrakçı, who presumably made sketches en route and then painted a double-page spread of the city three years later in 1537–8 when he compiled his illustrated manuscript about the sultan’s journeys back home in Istanbul (Figure 4.32). This is the earliest known representation of Uljaytu’s capital. The city is surrounded by stone walls with bastions, and Uljaytu’s tomb with its eight turrets and ring of gallery vaults is unmistakable in the center left. On the facing page is another large building with a domed portal with flanking minarets, covered hall, and large dome over the qibla. It must represent the city’s congregational mosque, now destroyed but shown with similar features in the accounts of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European travelers.

Another person who accompanied the Ottoman mission to Sultaniyya was Sultan Süleyman’s court architect Sinan, and he too may have been impressed by the size, scale, and massing of Uljaytu’s tomb. As the architectural historian Doğan Kuban perspicaciously noted, the tomb must have been “imprinted as a provoking image in his [Sinan’s] mind” when he laid out the Selimiye complex at Edirne (1568–75). For his masterpiece in the new Ottoman capital, Sinan adapted the cascading domes and semi-domes that had been a hallmark of his classical idiom, adopting a new sculptural dynamism and plasticity and expanding the octagonal structure to create a single unified interior space. A spacious court with surrounding arcades and central ablution fountain leads through a five-domed porch to the interior. On the exterior, the enormous dome (31.3 m/102.5 ft in diameter) is surrounded by eight turrets, just as at Sultaniyya. On the interior, the soaring central space is supported on eight huge piers that create an octagonal space framed by multi-story arches. Flat tiers of muqarnas between the arches recall those below the dome at Sultaniyya.

The progression of space at the Selimiye also echoes that at Sultaniyya. In the mosque, the central octagonal space leads to a projecting rectangular prayer hall containing the mihrab, just as the octagonal gathering hall led to the rectangular tomb room at Sultaniyya. In the mosque, arcades flank the projecting hall on the exterior to provide a unified façade and enhance the chiaroscuro effect of the wall. The arrangement is a striking departure from Sinan’s earlier work, including his previous masterpiece in Istanbul, the Süleymaniye, in which the rear wall is flat and enlivened only by buttresses. The Selimiye marks the culmination of Sinan’s experiments in large dimensions and unified space to create a domed building whose profile is as striking as that of Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultaniyya.

Contemporary political events may have provoked the architect
Sinan and his patron, the Ottoman sultan Selim II (r. 1566–74) to adapt Iranian models. In the same year that work began on the Selimiye, an Iranian embassy sent by the Safavid ruler Shah Tahmasp arrived in the Ottoman capital at Edirne to celebrate the accession of the new sultan. The embassy brought all sorts of “rare and propitious gifts,” carried in state by thirty-four heavily laden camels. The gifts included many books, including an early manuscript of the Qur’an attributed to ‘Ali as well as the famed two-volume copy of the Shahnama that the shah had commissioned several decades earlier (see Figure 6.11). The event remained current in the minds of the Ottomans, for it was carefully depicted in Loqman’s double-page painting in the copy of the Şehname-i Selim Han made for Selim’s son Murad III in 1581 (Topkapı Palace Library A.3595, folios 53b–54a), itself inspired by Tahmasp’s gift.

In a curious twist, Matrakçi’s painting of Sultaniyya (4.32), made...
thirty years before the mosque at Edirne, shows the same five-domed portal flanked by minarets found at the Selimiye. There is no evidence that such a domed portico with flanking minarets existed at Sultanıyıa, and Matrakçı may well have adapted his depiction of the Ilkhanid building to Ottoman conventions, but the resemblance shows that the artist too must have been aware of the similarities in scale and massing between the Ilkhanid model and contemporary Ottoman buildings.

The Selimiye is decorated with a learned program of inscriptions, in which quotations from the Qur’an and hadith emphasize the unity of God, the role of the Prophet as His messenger, and the Last Judgment. These inscriptions repeat many of the texts and themes already broached at Sultanıyıa. Window lunettes on the main (north) façade of the mosque, for example, contain the Throne Verse (Qur’an 2:255), used similarly on the arch of the north portal at Sultanıyıa, as well as the soffit of the east bay in the interior. Other lunettes in the mosque façade have the final verse from Chapter 48 (Surat al-Fath), referring to Muhammad as God’s messenger. The same sura is inscribed around the dado at Sultanıyıa (4.11).

The painted inscriptions on the interior of the Selimiye have been reworked but seem to reflect the original program. The recesses under the dome are inscribed with Qur’an 62:9–10, describing the importance of Friday prayer and the remembrance of God, themes similar to those invoked in the huge inscription encircling the dome at Sultanıyıa, which opens with a phrase about remembrance of the Almighty (dhikr al-aziz) and then cites Qur’an 21:105–12 about the designation of Muhammad as Prophet and the Day of Judgment. Roundels in the mosque contain the names of the four Orthodox caliphs. Sacred names were already a major part of the epigraphic decoration at Sultanıyıa, though the references there more typically include the name of the Prophet’s son-in-law ‘Ali, particularly revered in Iran.

There are stylistic parallels in the inscriptions on the two buildings as well. For example, the roundels flanking the doorway from the forecourt to the mosque in Edirne contain invocations to God, the Most Compassionate, the All-Bounteous, the Assembler on the Day of Judgment, and the Vigilant Guardian. The words are inscribed in a circle that radiates from a central octagram. The arrangement recalls the pentagram with sacred names set in medallions in the vaults at Sultanıyıa (4.9). It is unfortunate that the painted decoration at Sultanıyıa is so badly deteriorated, for we might be able to posit other stylistic connections too.

It must be said, however, that these similarities between Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultanıyıa and other buildings erected around the Mediterranean by the Ilkhanid’s contemporaries and rivals are distant echoes of the original. The tomb provided a closer model for later buildings nearer to home.
Afterlife

Sultaniyya remained a summer camp for later Safavid and Qajar rulers from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth. Many visitors passed through the region, but one of the few to leave his mark on the tomb was an Indian poet and envoy who inscribed a stone plaque when visiting the site en route to Shah ‘Abbas’s court in Isfahan in the early seventeenth century. The plaque, now in the rectangular hall, is signed on the three lower lines with the statement that the author and scribe Muhammad Ma’sum, identified as al-Tirmidhi on his father’s side (aban), al-Sabzavari on his mother’s side (umman), al-Bhakkari by residence (mawtinan), and al-Nami by penname (takhallusan), arrived there in 1012/1603 as a messenger from India when approaching the world-conquerer Shah ‘Abbas. The upper two lines contain a quatrain:

ديره جفدى ننشته در صبح پگاه
فروید کناد ز روی عبرت می گفت

Early in the morning I saw an owl sitting
On the turrets (gangara) of the tomb (maqbara) of the Shirvanshah,
Crying out, he said, as an example to others,
“Where is all that magnificence; where is all that glory?”

The poem recalls the scene in Nizami’s Khamsa [Quintet] in which owls warn the Sasanian monarch Nushirwan to reform his errant ways lest the country fall into rack and ruin. The envoy Muhammad Ma’sum al-Nami continued on to Isfahan where he left another stone plaque in the Masjid-i ‘Ali, noting that he had come from meeting Shah ‘Abbas in Erivan in 1604 and inscribing several verses of the Khamsa that he had composed en route. From his name and epithets, we can identify this traveler as the author of a history of Sind from its conquest by the Arabs to the reign of Akbar, who died c. 1606. His interest in history may have led him to visit the tomb at Sultaniyya and other monuments in the region.

Over the centuries Uljaytu’s tomb became quite dilapidated, all the more so as many of these travelers and rulers used it as a quarry, helping themselves to its materials and fittings. Nevertheless the monumental structure was still inspirational at the turn of the twentieth century, when it was the model for another type of building: a Baha’i temple. Founded in the nineteenth century by Baha’ullah (1817–92), Baha’ism grew out of the Iranian messianic movement of Babism, developing into a world religion with internationalist and pacifist emphases. Baha’ullah was exiled to Iraq, and under his son and successor ‘Abd al-Baha’ (1844–1921) the movement expanded beyond Iran and the Iranian diaspora, notably to Turkestan.
(Transcaspia), where the consolidation of Russian rule and its consequent economic development encouraged Iranian emigration during the 1880s. By 1890, about 1,000 Baha’is had settled in the new provincial capital of Ashgabad (modern Ashgabat). Baha’is had been prevented from building temples in Iran, and one of the first acts of the burgeoning community in Ashgabad was the construction of a house of worship known as the Mashriq al-Akdhar [Dawning Place of the Mention [of God]].

Construction of the new Baha’i house of worship in Ashgabad began in 1902 under the supervision of the Bab’s cousin, Hajji Mirza Muhammad Taqi Afnan, a merchant from Yazd who had been commercial agent of the Russian government for southern Iran and served as the community’s Wakil al-Dawla.167 Officially inaugurated in 1919, the temple was demolished after extensive damage in the earthquake of 1948 and heavy rains during the 1960s and is known only through old photographs [Figure 4.33] and the description by Charles Mason Remey (1874–1974), an American architect who visited the site in 1909 as part of his mission.168

The Bab’s son and successor ‘Abd al-Baha had stipulated that a Baha’i temple building must be nine-sided, because, according to Baha’is, the number nine symbolizes unity and is the alphanumeric (abjad) for baha’, the name of the founder.169 Uljaytu’s octagonal tomb at Sultaniyya provided a convenient model, one that was well known to Baha’is, as there was a significant Baha’i congregation

![Figure 4.33 Baha’i House of Worship at Ashgabad, Turkmenistan.](image)

The octagonal tomb at Sultaniyya provided the model for the Baha’i temple known as Mashriq al-Adhkar [Dawning Place of the Mention [of God]]. This first one, constructed in Ashgabad between 1902 and 1919, was demolished in the 1960s.
in the nearby city of Qazvin. Like Uljaytu’s pious foundation at Sultaniyya, the Bahá’í temple was part of a complex with services for worshippers. Surrounding dependencies included a hospital, a drug dispensary for the poor, a travelers’ hospice, a school for orphans, a home for the infirm and disabled, and a university for advanced studies. In the Ashgabad temple as designed by the builder ‘Alí Akbar, the proportions, however, are skewed, to comprise a central rotunda with an ambulatory and two exterior loggias opening onto gardens.

Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultaniyya and the house of worship in Ashgabad, in turn, provided a model for a second Bahá’í temple, known as the Mother Temple of the West, built in Wilmette, a suburb north of Chicago (Figure 4.34). Inspired by the ongoing construction in Ashgabad, the Bahá’ís of Chicago broached the idea as early as 1903, but the cornerstone was not laid until 1912, and the temple was dedicated only in 1953. The architect was Louis J. Bourgeois, a Canadian who had studied with Louis Sullivan in the 1880s and converted to Bahá’ísm. Bourgeois might have known about Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultaniyya not because he had visited the site but through several nineteenth-century publications readily available in Chicago. Eugène Flandin and Pascal Coste, for example, had published lithographs of the tomb as part of their monumental travelogue published in the early 1850s (Figure 4.35). The tomb had also been the subject of a long article in the 1883 Revue générale de l’architecture by the French archeologist Marcel Dieulafoy, who extolled it as the largest and most remarkable building of the Islamic period in Persia. The Wilmette temple repeats many of the features found at Ashgabad such as the central rotunda and galleries, but the proportions are again distorted. The materials are also quite different: it is constructed of concrete, and both interior and exterior are faced with panels of crushed white quartz.

In the last seventy-five years, Bahá’ís have been active proselytizers around the globe such that Bahá’ísm is reported to be one of the world’s fastest-growing religions. Houses of worship have spawned in six other cities (Kampala, Uganda; Ingleside outside Sydney in Australia; Frankfurt, Germany; Panama City, Panama; Tiapapata, Samoa; and Delhi, India), with a ninth temple under construction in Santiago, Chile as the Mother Temple of South America. All are domed nonagons loosely modeled on the tomb of Sultaniyya, but with adaptions to the local environment in their forms and materials. The one in India, for example, recalls a marble lotus; the one in Panama City uses local stone; and Hariri Pontarini Architects’ design for the one planned for Chile has nine wings of translucent alabaster torqued around the dome. Uljaytu’s tomb at Sultaniyya thus lives on today, albeit in a very different form.
Uljatyu’s tomb at Sultaniyya also provided the model for the second and largest Baha’i temple, built in Wilmette outside of Chicago and dedicated in 1953.

Flandin and Coste’s lithographs of Sultaniyya, published in the early 1850s, allowed architects in the Europe and the United States to become familiar with the extraordinary tomb of Uljaytu at Sultaniyya.
Notes
1. The most recent overview of the period, particularly from a military and political standpoint, is Manz, 2010.
2. On Hulegu’s journey, see Smith, 2006.
3. The subject of this detached painting can be readily identified by comparing it to the same scene in a manuscript made a century later c. 1430 in Herat [Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, ms. Or. Suppl. Pers. 1113, folios 180b–181a; illustrated in Richard, 1997, no. 40].
4. This is the generally accepted definition of the title, but its meaning is not entirely clear nor is it certain when Hulegu received that title: see Amitai-Preiss, 1991.
6. On Tabriz in the Mongol period, see Blair, forthcoming (b) and the accompanying essays in the same volume.
8. Wilber, 1955, 51 and no. 80; for the redating of the tomb c. 1310, see Blair, 1986, 142.
9. EL²: “Sultāniyya, 2. Monuments,” by S. S. Blair; Wilber, 1955, no 47; Blair and Bloom, 1994, 6–8 and figures 4, 5, and 7; Tavakoli, 2002 gives a full bibliography. In 2005, the building was inscribed on UNESCO’s list of World Heritage Sites [http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1188]. The Sevrugin photograph has been published in several places, including Stein, 1989, figure 20.
10. The building technically does not have a double dome, in the sense that there is no substantial space between the interior and exterior surfaces. It has two shells, with narrow pockets of empty space between them, a honeycomb arrangement designed to reduce the mass and weight of the enormous dome. The two shells merge towards the top. See the profile in Hillenbrand, 1994, figure 5,98. Some of the spaces between the shells are also visible in Sevrugin’s photograph [4,2] when the exterior tile had fallen and in Wilber, 1955, figure 86.
12. Sims, 1988, 151 suggested that the decoration of Phase I on the intrados of the lower story of the bay leading to the rectangular hall on the south is incomplete, but her illustration [plate 34] shows the plaster ground for Phase II with the outline of the designs sketched out in blue paint.
13. Godard in Pope and Ackerman, 1938–9, 1103; Blair, 1987, 62.
16. This is the date (27 Ramadan 713) given by the contemporary chronicler and panegyrist Abu’l-Qasim Kashani 1348, 222. The sultan reportedly died from cirrhosis of the liver.
17. Personal communication. Brambilla pointed out further that Uljaytu’s tomb was modeled on that of his brother and predecessor Ghazan, which, though destroyed, has been reconstructed on the basis of textual descriptions and a later miniature painting as a freestanding decagon within a courtyard [see below]. But since the reconstruction...
of Ghazan’s tomb is based on what Uljaytu’s looks like, the evidence here is somewhat circular.

18. Complete tile mosaic means that the design covers the entire surface; for the development of tile mosaic see the pioneering study by Wilber, 1939 and the further analysis by Bloom, 2006, 297–9. See also Pickett, 1997, 73 [e], plate 48 and figure 7. A piece from the border of the dado in the tomb room at Sultaniyya is illustrated in Komaroff and Carboni, 2002, no. 121 and figure 143 and discussed in Bloom, 2006, 296–7, although in both it is mistakenly attributed to the Phase I decoration.

19. Sims [1988] misattributes the decoration of the colonnettes to Phase I, but they were added in Phase II; see Wilber, 1955, 140 and Pickett, 1997, 74 [h].

20. Wilber, 1955, 140. A similar underglaze tile, but a diamond shape decorated with a molded lotus in white outlined in black against a blue ground, is published in Komaroff and Carboni, 2002, no. 122 and figure 144, but following Sims, it is misattributed there to the Phase I decoration. Other variants are illustrated in Pickett, 1955, plates 44–5. The location of all of these fragments is not known.


24. Quchani, 1381, 18–19 and figures 29–32.

25. In his obituary of the sultan under the year 716, Uljaytu’s panegyrist Kashani [1348, 223] confirms that the sultan was a lover of building, especially his city of Sultaniyya, but that work there was unfinished at the sultan’s death.

26. The Dome of the Rock has engendered many explanations; the ground-breaking study in using formal and epigraphic evidence to suggest its function was Grabar, 1959.


29. Rogers, 1974, 41 reported that the story occurs in “none of the early travelers, nor in any historical source before the Jihannama of Hajji Khalifa/Katib Çelebi [1600],” citing the reference in Godard’s essay [in Pope and Ackerman, 1938–9, 1111, note 5], but Godard’s note refers to Katib Çelebi’s description of the tomb being constructed in forty days. Godard’s sources for the story about moving the bodies of ‘Ali and Husayn are Sir Percy Sykes, A History of Persia [London, 1821], II: 153 and Charles Texier, Description de l’Arménie, la Perse et la Mésopotamie [Paris, 1842–5], 76. Rogers also traced the story back to Robert Ker Porter, Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, Ancient Babylonia, etc. etc., during the years 1819, 1818, 1819 and 1820 [London, 1821], I: 278–80.


32. Melville, 1992, 200–1 and note 19, citing Nuwayri, XXX, folios 84r–87. Charles Melville noted that the report provides evidence about how Sunni sources viewed Uljaytu’s conversion to Shi’ism, but is not necessarily true.

34. Ibn al-Athir recounted a long episode in which Sunni–Shi’ite squabbling over the inscriptions at Karkh led to the destruction of the shrine of Kazimayn with the tombs of the seventh and ninth imams Musa al-Kazim and Muhammad al-Jawad in 1049–50; see Allan, 2012, 12–15.


36. Blair, forthcoming (c).

37. For Uljaytu’s drift back toward Sunnism, see ‘Abbasi, 2006–7.


40. Blair, 1987, no. 50a; Ghouchani, 1381, 17.

41. Ibn Battuta, R1993, I: 257 and note 44.

42. Ibn Kathir, 1990, III: 495–6, commenting on Surat al-Ahzab (33), verse 56. I owe this reference and its explication to Yahya Michot, whom I thank wholeheartedly.

43. There are numerous websites on which Sunnis denounce its use today.

44. Blair, 1987, no. 58b; Ghouchani, 1381, 11.


46. There I cited Bloom’s preliminary work on minarets in 1982; since then, his work on minarets has been updated in Bloom, 1990 and 2013.

47. I take my summary of the chapter from Abd al-Haleem’s translation, available online at www.oxfordislamicstudies.com

48. Sims, 1988 put forward the argument that the original architectural and decorative iconography was inappropriate for a mausoleum, but she too did not consider the change in space and function.

49. In its original state with just the octagonal hall, the sultan must have intended to have had his cenotaph in the main room, with a simple crypt dug below. There is, to my knowledge, no trace of this original crypt remaining.

50. Kashani, 1348, 75–6 mentions the event on 24 Rabi’ II 707.

51. Ibid., 75–6, giving I Jumada I.

52. Ibid., 83.

53. Ibid., 83, giving 23 Rabi’ II 708; Blair, 1987, 61 and note 73.

54. Godard (in Pope and Ackerman, 1938–9, 1111–13) brings up the story recounted by Texier and others that the building was begun originally as a tomb for the bodies of ‘Ali and Husayn and that it only became the sultan’s tomb when he was unable to procure their bodies. Godard rightly discounts this story, which is completely dispelled by the detailed contemporary account by Kashani (1348, 45–8), who specifies in this description of the founding of the city in 705 that the building was for the sultan’s sepulcher [marqad].

55. Even the staunchly Sunni Ibn Battuta (R1192, 1:257) felt compelled to enumerate them in detail; Blair, 2011, 52–3. For the sites themselves, see Allan, 2012, Chapter 1.

56. Even the Mamluks were aware of this event: see Little, 1978.

57. Qazwini, 1336, 60 and 1919, 61; Little, 1978, 171 citing al-Nuwayri.

58. For Fatehpur Sikri, see Blair and Bloom, 1994, 272–5 and GEIAA: “Fatehpur Sikri.”


60. Qazwini, 1336, 60 and 1919, 61.

61. Kashani, 1348, 46.

62. Hafiz-i Abru, 1350, 68. Much of Hafiz-i Abru’s account draws on Qazwini’s description of the tomb in his poem Zafarnama [British Museum Or. 2833, folios 711–12; see Blair, 1984, addendum].
63. Olearius, 1669, 186. Much of this is repeated in Ogilby, 1673, 22.
64. Godard in Pope and Ackerman, 1938–9, 1113.
65. See above, note 8.
66. Blair, 1986. Ganjavi’s 1979 report already mentions finding traces to the southeast of a courtyard (8×7.8 m/26×25½ ft) and several rooms, a large one (21×21 m/69×69 ft) and six smaller ones (4.5×4.75 to 6.75×6.80 m/15×15½ to 22×22 ft). Vaulted substructures were still visible when I visited in 2009.
67. Olearius, 1669, 186.
68. For a reconstruction of Rashid al-Din’s complex, based on its endowment deed, see Blair, 1984.
70. Wilber, 1955, no. 27.
71. Like the depiction of the siege of Baghdad (4.1), the subject of this painting can be identified from the copy in a manuscript made a century later in Paris (illustrated in Wilber, 1955, figure 29); Wilber thought that this painting belonged to the Ilkhanid period, but we now know that it is a Timurid copy of an Ilkhanid original.
72. Amuli reported the endowment; see Blair, 1984, 144 and note 63; Qazvini (1336, 81 and 1919, 83; see also Khaifipour, 2012, 100) gives the figure of 1,150,000 dinars for the combined tandemha and kharaj taxes of Tabriz. I. P. Petrushevsky, in Boyle, 1968, 498, gives other related figures as part of his discussion of the socio-economic conditions in the Ilkhanate.
73. Kashani, 1348, 47–8.
74. The luster and lajvardina tiles are on display in the tomb room; for other examples of Ilkhanid tiles from the site, see Komaroff and Carboni, 2002, nos 121 (a fragment of tile mosaic in light and dark blue and white) and 122 (a fragment of a square tile underglaze-painted in blue and white).
75. Allan, forthcoming. On grilles, see Allan and Gilmour, 2002, 283ff.
76. Pope and Ackerman, 1938–9, 2505 and plate 1357A; RCEA, 5376–8.
77. One is in the Aron Collection (Allan, 1986, no. 34); the other is in LACMA [M.73.5.124; mentioned in Komaroff and Carboni, 2002, 280, note 1 and discussed on the museum’s website at collections.lacma.org/node/239923]
78. Ganjavi, 1979, figure 5.
80. And (if we are to believe the local seventeenth-century tradition) for the fact that they were exotica, imported, at huge expense no doubt, from India.
81. Allan and Gilmour, 2000, 284, citing Johnson, 1818, 108-101 [sic], a typo for 180–2. Johnson also mentioned that the Qajar ruler removed some “enamelled tiles,” perhaps some of the fragments that decorate museums today.
82. Blair, 1986, 143 and note 57, with references to Adam Olearius and Jean Struys.
83. James, 1988, no. 40, calls it “Uljaytu’s Baghdad Qur’an.” Volumes in Istanbul [James, figure 93] and Leipzig have endowment notices saying that this juz’ and ones before and after it were endowed to the tomb [rawda] in the pious foundation [abwāb al-birr] that the sultan had founded in Sultaniya.
84. There are parts in Leipzig University (ms. xxxvii, K1; juz’ 1, 10, and
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29), Dresden Library [ms. 444; juz’ 4 and 28], the National Library in Copenhagen [Cod. Arab. 43; part of juz’ 24] and two libraries in Istanbul, Topkapi Palace Library [EH 243, 245, and 234; juz’ 7, 20, and 21] and the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art [339, juz’ 17].

85. Olearius, 1669, 186; repeated in Ogilby, 1673, 22; James, 1988, 254, note 14; Blair, 2008a, 92. Olearius says that the leaves contained a paraphrase of the Qur’an called the “Candle of the Heart” (serars Elkulub); it is not clear what this paraphrase of the Qur’an refers to, but the description of the individual pages with alternating lines of gold and black and the large letters matches that of the Uljaytu Qur’an exactly. For a readable survey of Olearius’s work, see Brancaforte, 2003.

86. Ogilby is more specific, reporting that some of the Arabic books in the repositories were “a quarter of a yard deep and three quarters long; the characters in them are three inches long, and every second line neatly written with gold and ink, all transcribed out of the al-Coran. Several leaves of one of these books came to the hands of Olearius, who kept them as a great rarity.”

87. My thanks to Nana Lund and Bent Lerbaek Pedersen, who have helped with information about the Copenhagen pages; the entry on Cod. Arab. 43 in the recent catalog (Perho, 2007) also suggests that they came via Olearius.

88. TIEM ms. no. 538; Tanind, 1992; her figure 8 illustrates the endowment page with its marginal inscription in the name of Rustam Pasha.

89. Juz’ 1 bears the date 706/July 1306–July 1307; juz’ 7 was copied in 707/July 1307–July 1308 and illuminated three years later in Dhu’l-Hijja 710/April–May 1311. It thus took about a year and a half to copy seven of the thirty parts, suggesting a range of six to seven years to copy all thirty parts. Copying would then have been finished by 712 or 713/1312–13, in time for the tomb’s inauguration. Illumination takes much longer. Interestingly, in the endowment deed for juz’ 7 (James 1988, translation on 93–4 and text on 236), which was copied in 707/1307–8 and illuminated in 710/1311, Uljaytu maintained his allegiance to Sunnism, for one of his titles is “invigorator of the principles of the Sunna” (muhiyy maråsim al-sunna).

90. James, 1988, no. 39; Komaroff and Carboni, 2002, nos. 63–64. It was probably begun for Ghazan and continued under the auspices of Rashid al-Din; see Blair, 2006, 174. Juz’ 4 is dated Ramadan 702/April 1303, so James assumed, likely correctly, that the manuscript would have been begun at least by the previous year.

91. On sizes of paper, see Blair, 2005, 251.


93. The calligrapher Mohamed Zakariya suggested to me that that the gold ink could have been made by pulverizing gold leaf in large quantities and placed in a receptacle, probably suspended in a liq’a, a small wad of raw silk fiber that is inserted into the inkwell. This would need to be turned over and irrigated constantly, or the gold ink could be stirred constantly. In either case, the ink could have been applied with a brush to the pen or the pen carefully dipped.

94. My thanks to Dr. Beate Wiesmüller, who confirmed this by examining the Leipzig pages under a microscope, and to Cheryl Porter, Nancy Turner, and Mohamed Zakariya who patiently answered my many questions about this manuscript.
95. Boris Liebrenz has generously shared with me his unpublished article on the manuscript. It shows that the illumination on some of the pages in Dresden was also not finished. It is unclear why the manuscript was endowed while still incomplete.

96. Such gold outlining (Arabic *zammaka*) also became a specialty at this time; see Blair, 2005, 348 and Blair and Bloom, forthcoming.

97. Visible on the YouTube video showing Dr. Beate Wiesmüller, conservator in Leipzig, turning the pages on their volume (www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QNUoppHoVA).


107. Alternatively, the site may have been a palace like Takht-i Sulayman, with a monumental iwan as a ceremonial setting for any of several Ilkhanid rulers.

108. Size is a feature of much Ilkhanid (and contemporary Mamluk) art; see O’Kane, 1996.


110. Most monarchs in the Great Mongol *Shahnama* are shown in this way in front of an iwan; see Grabar and Blair, 1980.

111. *GEIAA*: “Staircase.”


113. The tiles are thoroughly discussed in Masuya, 1997, where (pp. 400–3) she casts doubt on the hypothesis put forward by A. S. Melikian-Chirvani that the verses were adapted specifically for the site and suggests instead that they might have been simple variants, sometimes chosen just to fill the space.

114. I visited the site in the summer of 2009 with Nicholas Warner, who made a rough survey using a hand-held tape and laser distance meter. I thank him warmly for his drawings and analysis, which I have included here.


118. Blair, 2002, esp. 70.

119. See, most recently, Golombek 2011.

120. See the reconstruction by M. M. Tuhtaev in Golombek, 2011, figure 10.

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125. Golombek and Wilber, 1988, 287. The doors are illustrated in Blair and Bloom, 1994, figure 72. 'Izz al-Din’s name is followed by the nisba al-Saki, a term of unknown meaning, but perhaps a misspelling for “Isfahani” which follows his name on the second pair of knockers.
126. The door knocker with its hadith is illustrated in Lentz and Lowry, 1989, figure 68; the Sultaniyya inscription is Blair, 1987, 49c.
127. On the Gulistana, see also EIr: “Golestān-e Sa’di,” by Franklin Lewis.
128. Sa’di, 2008, 10. Komaroff, 1992, 28–9 discusses the signature, the verse, and its variation, found also on the four oil lamps from the shrine, and makes the plausible suggestion that the texts were added to the oil lamps.
130. The basin was returned to its home in 1989, and UNESCO designated the shrine a World Heritage Site in 2003.
131. Lisa Golombek suggested this to me. Préault’s drawing has been lost, but was reproduced in L. Dubeux, La Perse (Paris: 1841), plate 33 [see Blair, 1986, plate Vb]; the mosque in Samarqand is Golombek and Wilber, 1988, no. 28.
133. Komaroff, 1992, 27 and Appendix 1 with the inscriptions, Blair, 2011, figure 52.
134. Golombek and Wilber, 1988, no. 29; Blair and Bloom, 1994, 41–3.
135. This is the story recounted by the Castilian ambassador Ruy Gonzáles de Clavijo (1283–1354), who traveled to Timur’s court in Samarqand between 1403 and 1406.
136. Golombek and Wilber, 1988, 133.
137. Sims, 1982, 94 and figure 7.
139. Bloom, 2006, 296, with references.
142. Hillenbrand, 1992, note 32, enumerates various possibilities for its original function. His article gives no date at all for the building, but mentions (p. 166) that both Sultaniyya and the shrine at Natanz were built within a decade and in his later monograph on Islamic architecture, he gives c. 1320.
144. Hillenbrand, 1992, 162.
146. Blair, forthcoming (b).
147. Blair, forthcoming (c).
149. James, 1988, no. 24. 917/1511.
150. James, 1988, 182–97, dubbed them the “star polygon” group. They include three others made for Sultan Sha’ban, his nos 28–30.
152. Blair, 1986, especially plates VA and VB.
155. The description of space in Kuban, 2010, 295–312, is particularly masterful.
156. I owe this suggestion about the congruence of events to Robert Hillenbrand.
159. Many of Matrakçı’s depictions include stereotypical elements, such as bisecting rivers and small shrines topped with muqarnas domes.
160. The inscriptions are analyzed in Necipoğlu, 2005, 252–6.
162. Quchani, 1381, 15–16 and figure 24.
163. For a famous example of the scene in the splendid copy of the Khamsa prepared for the Safavid shah Tahmasp in 1539–43 [British Library, Or. 2265, folio 15b], see Blair and Bloom, 1994, 171 and figure 213.
165. Rieu, R1996, 291–2; Mir Ma’sum’s Tarikh-i-Mas’umi, also called Tarikh-i-Sind, was edited by Umar Muhammad Daudpota [Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1918]; a Persian translation by G. G. Malet is also available online at http://persian.packhum.org/persian/pf?file=14801030&ct=120
167. The worldwide community of Baha’ism maintains a website with many old photographs chronicling the development of the community (see http://communitybaha.blogspot.com/2010_07_01_archive.html). One photograph shows Muhammad Taqi Afnan holding an elevation of the new temple in Ashgabad.
168. Mason Remey was a controversial figure in the Baha’i movement. ‘Abd al-Baha was succeeded by his eldest grandson, known as Shoghi Efendi, as Guardian of the Baha’i faith (1921–57), but after he died unexpectedly without appointing a successor, Remey declared himself Guardian and split the Baha’i community.
169. This assumes that one counts hamza as 1, along with 2 for ba’, 5 for ha’, and 1 for alif. Wheeler Thackston pointed out to me that typically hamzas that sit by themselves are not counted. And this explanation for the nine sides is not universally accepted: according to another popular account (“Sacred Baha’i Architecture” at http://bahai-library.com/leiker_bahai_architecture), the nine sides symbolize the nine religions of the world.
170. The Baha’i Encyclopedia Project at www.bahai-encyclopedia-project.org/
172. Though the ultimate source seems to have escaped his colleagues: J. M. Reid [1920], for example, compared the model for it, on view at the Kevorkian Gallery in New York, to Greek, Egyptian, Romanesque, Gothic, Arabic, Renaissance, and Byzantine forms, but did not mention Persia.
173. Flandin and Coste, 1851–4, plates 12 and 13. According to World Cat, the University of Chicago owns two copies.
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174. Dieulafoy, 1883, 98.
176. Many are illustrated on the web on sites such as the Wikipedia article “Bahá’í House of Worship” and one on nonagons at http://threesixty360.wordpress.com/2008/04/08/real-life-nonagons-bahai-houses-of-worship/
177. See the anonymous article “Bahá’í Temple for South America,” The Canadian Architect 49/12 (December, 2004), 42–3.
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