The Uzbek Architecture of Afghanistan

Bernard O’Kane
Fig. 1 – Mazar-i Sharif, tombs to the south of the shrine, exterior
(photo: 1930s, Robert Byron, courtesy the Conway Library, the Courtauld Institute of Art)

Fig. 2 – Mazar-i Sharif, tomb of Kistan Qara Soltan (second half of the 16th century), east façade
(photo: 1930s, Robert Byron, courtesy the Conway Library, the Courtauld Institute of Art)
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Bernard O’Kane (Le Caire)

We are fortunate that an extensive account of the patronage of the Uzbeks in Afghanistan has been incorporated by Robert McChesney into his pioneering work *Waqf in Central Asia*. However, it is arguable that the standing remains (including those now destroyed but documented in photographs) have not received the attention they deserve. It is a measure of the underestimation of Uzbek architecture in the Balkh region that several buildings which have been ascribed to their predecessors, the Timurids, are more probably the work of various Uzbek dynasties. Chief among these is the *mazâr* (shrine) of Khwaja Abu Nasr Parsa at Balkh, the others being the *mazâr* of Khwaja ‘Akkasha at Balkh and two mausoleums at Mazar-i Sharif which were destroyed after the 1930s.

The Historical Setting

The word Uzbek today is conventionally used in two senses, firstly to refer to the political system of the khans of Transoxiana of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, and secondly to refer to the tribal groups who provided the amirial power for these ruling khans. The khans derived their legitimacy from their descent from Chingis Khan. In addition to the khans and the Uzbek amirs, the third major power group within the state, and one especially relevant to the patronage of architecture, was the uluma and sheykhds.

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The state was based upon the appanage system, the four major ones being the regions of Bukhara, Samarqand, Tashkent and Balkh. Balkh was briefly brought under Uzbek control by the founder of the dynasty, Mohammad Shibani Khan, in 1505, but only after 1526, when the Shibanid Kistan Qara Soltan began his eighteen year governorship of the town, did Uzbek rule become lasting. Kistan Qara Soltan chose to be buried at the nearby ‘Alid shrine (the mazâr-i sharif) upon his death in 1544, a move clearly in keeping with the impression of permanent Uzbek control over the region. Another long governorship of Pir Mohammad b. Jani Beg (1546-67) cemented the stability of the appanage, even if we know nothing of any patronage undertaken by this governor.

‘Abd Allâh Khan was the nephew of Pir Mohammad, and his campaign to end the internal Uzbek feuding that had broken out since the death of ‘Obeyd Allâh in 1540 was launched from Balkh. However, after Pir Mohammad’s death in 1567 ‘Abd Allâh opened hostilities against the Balkh appanage and ended by capturing it in 1573. He made a pilgrimage to Mazari Sharif at the same time. ‘Abd Allâh succeeded his father Iskandar in 1582 as Khan of Bukhara, and promptly gave his son ‘Abd al-Mo’men the governorship of Balkh.

In 1588-9 ‘Abd al-Mo’men and his father captured Herat after an arduous eleven month siege; during the next eight years, most of the cities of Khorasan fell to ‘Abd al-Mo’men’s campaigns. The booty that would have accrued from these conquests would obviously have been more than sufficient to finance his substantial building ventures in Balkh and Mazari Sharif. However, these successful military ventures and his ambitions led to strained relations with his father and his father’s amirs. As a result, when ‘Abd al-Mo’men succeeded his father in 1598 his reign lasted a mere six months before he was assassinated at the hands of those amirs who feared for their lives.

His death sparked another round of internal fighting, with a different Chingisid branch, the Toqay-Timurid Khans, emerging as the victors. The first Toqay-Timurid governor of Balkh, Vali Mohammad (1601-6, ruling subsequently as Khan 1606-12), ordered a number of improvements to the shrine, including a chahâr-bâgh surrounding it and a new tree-shaded road leading to it from Balkh, but no traces of these remain.
From the point of view of patronage, the last governor of importance for this study is Sobhan Qoli, who had an exceptionally long rule of thirty years at Balkh (1651-81) during which his brother ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ruled as Khan at Bukhara. Although the prosperity of Central Asia declined with that of the silk route in this period, there were sufficient funds available for the erection of large madrasas by both Sobhan Qoli and ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Khan. Sobhan Qoli’s reign was marked by good relations with the uluma and Sufi communities, exemplified by the foundation ceremony of his madrasa in Balkh (see below) where in a show of humility he handed bricks and mortar to various religious dignitaries.

Mazar-i Sharif

The shrine of the shah-i mardān, as the supposed tomb of ‘Ali is called locally, is the reason for the existence of the town, which in the past century has supplanted Balkh in importance. The main shrine building consists of a dome chamber and a preceding vaulted oratory. As McChesney has shown, this oratory was not part of the original Timurid construction, as had been previously suggested, but can be equated with the jami’-ye āstāna (shrine congregational mosque) which Mahmud b. Amir Vali says was built by ‘Abd al-Mo’men.

Mahmud b. Amir Vali also writes that the tomb of Kistan Qara Soltan was located on the south side of the shrine. This can probably be identified as one of two mausoleums that used to exist, until the 1930s at least, to the southeast and southwest of the shrine at Mazar (Fig. 1). One of them is illustrated in detail by Niedermayer, the other by him from afar. But fortunately extensive photographic documentation of them is present in the Byron and Schroeder archives.

The best evidence for the identification of these comes from C. E. Yate, who mentions a couple of mausoleums near the shrine. He continues:

«The eastern building apparently contains tombs only of ladies of royal descent; but unfortunately the stones mostly either have either no name or no date, and the only real legible inscriptions are those to the memory of Kansh, daughter of Kilich Kara Soltan, dated A.D. 1543, and Sharifah Soltan, dated A.D. 1619. The tombstones in the western buil-
ding are mostly similarly defaced, but among them are the names of Khan Kara Soltan, A.D. 1543; Kara Soltan, son of Jani Beg, A.D. 1545; Kilich Kara Soltan, son of Kastin Kara Soltan, A.D. 1555; and Ibrahim Muḥammad Bahadur, son of Siunj Bahadur, dated A.D. 1601.»

According to Mahmud b. Amir Vali the gonbad of Kistan Qara Soltan b. Jani Beg Khan was indeed adjacent to the south side of the shrine. In the Tārikh-i Mazār-i Sharif the tomb of Kistan Qara Soltan is called the Gonbad-i Kabud, and Kistan Qara Soltan’s wife Tursun Begum is credited with having first built it for herself. The tombstones in the western mausoleum would seem to indicate that it may well have been the tomb of Kistan Qara Soltan. Kilich Qara Soltan was certainly the son of Kistan Qara Soltan, and is mentioned in Hafiz Tanish as having been active up to 959/1552; Ibrahim Muḥammad Bahadur b. Suyunch Bahadur is probably a misreading for Muḥammad Ibrahim b. Suyunch. Perhaps Kara Soltan b. Jani Beg should be identified with Kistan Qara Soltan, although the date of his death should be 1547 and not 1545. If the tomb was first built by Kistan Qara Soltan’s wife Tursun Begum it would not be surprising to find him interred there after his death, as was the case in Herat, for example, with Gawhar Shad and her husband Shah Rukh. Both mausoleums also were transformed into dynastic ones by numerous later burials.

The identity of the other mausoleum is unclear – one would have thought that, as it is as substantial as the tomb of Kistan Qara Soltan, Mahmud b. Amir Vali would also have mentioned it in his description of the shrine surroundings in 1634. Its location does seem to correspond with the ḥazira (i.e. an open tomb with a low walled surround) of Ayum Bibi, one of the wives of Nazr Mohammad – he mentions the tomb of Kistan Qara Soltan after it, and then mentions that both were on the southern side of the tomb, the first (i.e. that of Ayum Bibi) on the right of the Khiyaban, the second on the left. However, the mausoleum is obviously a gonbad and not just a ḥazira, and, assuming Yate is right, it contained much earlier women’s tombs, including one daughter of Kistan Qara Soltan. However, it was not unusual for builders of dynastic mausoleums to re-inter their ancestors within them.

What can be ascertained about the buildings from the standing remains as they appeared in earlier photographs? The tomb of Kistan Qara Soltan shows a circular drum pierced by eight windows above an octagonal collar (Figs. 2-4). Within the drum was
a smaller octagonal lantern dome, similar to the arrangement at the madrasa at Khargird, for example\textsuperscript{21}. Between each window the drum was revetted with arched panels which alternated with geometric and floral designs. The use of small tesserae which contributed to the fineness of the designs within the arched panels is also evident on the remains of the \textit{thuluth} inscriptions above the windows which is in keeping with a date close to its Timurid prototypes, within the governorship (1526-44) of Kistan Qara Soltan.

The dome chamber was cruciform, with semi-domed niches on the main axes. A subsidiary chamber preceded it on the south, for the remains of the springing of the vault on the two flanking piers can be seen in Fig. 3. The corners seem to have been taken up with smaller subsidiary rooms, although from the meagre remains it is impossible to say whether they were bevelled to make an octagonal plan, or were square, in which case a plan similar to the Timurid Aq Saray at Samarqand\textsuperscript{22} would have resulted.

In the case of the tomb of Sharifa Soltan\textsuperscript{23} (Figs. 5-9), enough of the building was intact to show that it indeed had a plan similar to that of the Aq Saray: a cruciform dome chamber with small corner rooms, axial niches leading on three sides to \textit{eyvâns}, and on the fourth to a domed room, possibly flanked by niches (Fig. 5). The interior of the dome (Fig. 8) had a zone of transition identical to that of Khwaja ‘Akkasha, although in this case covered with unpainted plaster\textsuperscript{24}. The squinches at the base of the squinch-net had smaller versions of the inlaid stars seen at the \textit{mazâr} of Khwaja Abu Nasr Parsa. Like the tomb of Kistan Qara Soltan, it led to a lantern dome within the drum.

The tilework on the drum (Fig. 9) shows a marked affinity with

\textbf{Fig. 5} – Mazar-i Sharif, tomb of Sharifa Soltan, sketch plan
\textit{(drawn by Dina Montasser)}
Fig. 3 – Mazar-i Sharif, tomb of Kistan Qara Soltan (second half of the 16th century), southeast façade (photo: 1930s, E. Schroeder, courtesy Harvard Art Museums)

Fig. 4 – Mazar-i Sharif, tomb of Kistan Qara Soltan (second half of the 16th century), detail of drum (photo: 1930s, E. Schroeder, courtesy Harvard Art Museums)
– Mazari Sharif, tomb of Sharif a Soltan (early 17th century): Fig. 6 – east façade; Fig. 7 – north façade; Fig. 8 – interior zone of transition

(photos: 6 – 1930s, Robert Byron, courtesy the Conway Library, the Courtauld Institute of Art; 7/8 – 1930s, E. Schroeder, courtesy Harvard Art Museums)
that of the mazâr of Abu Nasr Parsa. The square Kufic around the
top of the drum is the first half of the shahâda in which the hâ’ of
illâ and allâh and the lâm-alif interlace is rendered by a square
with three smaller projecting squares; at Balkh the similar phrase
on the portal screen has identical squares on the lâm-alif interlace;
the hâ’s of illâ and allâh have one smaller projecting square. Both
inscriptions have the second half of the shahâda in a darker colour
(dark-blue at Balkh) woven amid the uprights. There is also a
remarkable similarity in the floral panels on the drums of Sharifa
Soltan and Khwaja Abu Nasr Parsa, as Byron had already obser-
ved: “These vases are repeated on the panels of the East Mauso-
leum at Mazâr-i Sharif, where the mosaic is equally coarse, but is
varied by an unpleasant pinkish ochre”. The vases indeed share
such small details as the tri-lobed flowers within their flaring
handles and their stylized stands with horizontal tentacles.

The mazâr of Khwaja Abu Nasr Parsa, Balkh

This now consists of a large domed cruciform chamber over a
crypt, a massive pishtâq flanked by two-story niches towering
over the nearby grave of Abu Nasr Parsa, and single-story niches
flanked by axial niches on the other sides (Figs. 10-14). Although
the mihrab in the main chamber indicates that it was used for
prayer, the crypt underneath the building (Fig. 15) shows that it
also functioned as a mausoleum, although who might have been
buried there remains unknown.

Following its early mentions by Diez in Niedermayer’s Afgha-
nistan and by Byron, most publications have categorised it as a
Timurid monument, probably built shortly after the death of
Khwaja Parsa in 1460. I propose that what we see of the building
today is substantially the work of ‘Abd al-Mo’men b. ‘Abd Allâh
Khan, the Shibanid governor (and later Khan) of Balkh in the late
sixteenth century. Another factor which has limited interpretation
of the building up to now is the appreciation that it is unfinished.
It will be shown how the principal eyvân was originally designed
to be supplemented by three others on the main axes (Figs. 11-12),
which establishes the monument as being in the tradition of the
great centrally-planned mausoleums of Mughal India.
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Fig. 9 – Mazar-i Sharif, tomb of Sharifa Soltan (early 17th century), detail of drum (photo: 1930s, E. Schroeder, courtesy Harvard Art Museums)

Fig. 10 – Balkh, shrine of Abu Nasr Parsa (1005/1596-7), plan and section (after Sengupta)

Fig. 11 – Balkh, shrine of Abu Nasr Parsa (1005/1596-7), exterior (photo: 1930s, E. Schroeder, courtesy Harvard Art Museums)
Recently, evidence supporting a Timurid origin for the shrine has come to light in the form of a passage from Qadi Soltan Mohammad’s Majma’ al-gharâ’eb, where the Timurid amir Mazid Arghun\textsuperscript{30} is stated to have build the lofty dome (gonbad-e ‘alî) of the mazâr (shrine)\textsuperscript{31}. This mazâr\textsuperscript{32} was also used as a mausoleum, as Khwandamir informs us that Mirak Jalal al-Din Qasem, who died on 29 April 1496, was buried within it\textsuperscript{33}. In a later passage Khwandamir also provides other interesting information regarding the plan and use of the mazâr\textsuperscript{34}. The story concerns a plot against Badi’ al-Zaman Mirza in which the conspirators unwisely tried to recruit an amir, Mohammad Baqer, who in fact was loyal to Badi’ al-Zaman. Mohammad Baqer arrived early at the rendezvous, the jamâ’atkhâna of the mazâr of Khwaja Abu Nasr Parsa, and installed another amir of Badi’ al-Zaman, Pahlavan ‘Ali, in a locked chamber (hojra) of the jamâ’atkhâna, where he could overhear the conspirators and confirm Mohammad Baqer’s account. The term used for the main room of the mazâr, an assembly-hall (jamâ’atkhâna), is that used by Esfezari to describe the shrine of Sheykh Zeyn al-Din at Taybad (848/1444-5)\textsuperscript{35}, a building which has much in common with the present shrine of Khwaja Parsa in that it has a large cruciform prayer hall with adjacent chambers built opposite the grave of the person it commemorates\textsuperscript{36}. However, neither at Taybad nor at Balkh do the adjacent chambers open on to the assembly hall, a necessary condition for the eavesdropping mentioned by Khwandamir\textsuperscript{37}. This leads to the suspicion that the edifice may have been rebuilt.

Other evidence for rebuilding is readily forthcoming, although in earlier reports it tends to emerge in garbled fashion. In 1886 Peacocke was told that the mazâr was the work of ‘Abd Allâh Khan and that there was a date and an inscription to that effect on the building\textsuperscript{38}. Dupree, writing of the shrine, mentions that Khwaja Parsa died in 1597\textsuperscript{39}, the date which Pugachenkova gives for restoration of the tilework of the building by ‘Abd al-Mo’men Khan\textsuperscript{40}. Frye and Togan had also ascribed the building to the Uzbeks\textsuperscript{41}. There are two sources for this information, one being an inscription on the building that was extant at least until the 1930’s, the other being two passages in Mohammad Yusof Monshi’s Tarikh-i Moqim Khâni. The first, in the context of describing
Fig. 12 – Balkh, shrine of Abu Naṣr Parsa (1005/1596-7), exterior, detail of dome
(photo: 1930s, E. Schroeder, courtesy Harvard Art Museums)

Fig. 14 – Balkh, shrine of Abu Naṣr Parsa (1005/1596-7), exterior, detail of foundation inscription
(photo: 1930s, Robert Byron, courtesy the Conway Library, the Courtauld Institute of Art)
the location of the madrasa of Sobhan Qoli, mentions that ‘Abd al-Mo’men was the builder of the shrine\textsuperscript{42}; the second says that he was responsible for restoring the tilework on a number of buildings, such as the arch and dome (tâq u gonbad) of the mazâr of Khwaja Abu Nasr Parsa, the portal of the gate of the citadel of Balkh (tâq-e darvâza-ye arg-i Balkh), the mazâr of Khwaja ‘Akkasha, the dome of the Baba Janbaz market (chahârsu), and the shrine of ‘Ali at Mazar-i Sharif (mazâr-i ḥażrat-i shâh-i mardân)\textsuperscript{43}.

Although the inscription has now vanished, it can be seen in a detail of a photograph of the shrine by Byron (Fig. 14). It formed part of an epigraphic medallion situated above the apex of the arch. The enlarged section of the photograph is near the limits of clarity, but on the left hand side it is nevertheless possible to make out al-‘adlabo’l-ghazi ‘Abdal-Mo’men Khan, sana 1005 (1597-8)\textsuperscript{44}.

Does this inscription commemorate just the restoration of the tilework by ‘Abd al-Mo’men, or was he responsible for more – for replacing all of the tilework, for redecorating the interior, for rebuilding the whole? As mentioned above, the description by Khwan-

\textbf{Fig. 15} – Balkh, shrine of Abu Nasr Parsa (1005/1596-7), interior of crypt
\textit{(photo: 1975, B. O’Kane)}
Fig. 13 – Balkh, shrine of Abu Nasr Parsa (1005/1596-7), exterior (photo: 1975, B. O’Kane)
damir of a room opening off the main interior space suggests that the plan has been altered since the original building of the shrine.

The scale of the monument is itself an argument for rebuilding. While it is true that some amirs or vazirs of Shah Rukh’s and Sultan Husain’s court built large monument of the highest quality, the period after the reign of Shah Rukh was one of internecine wars that considerably weakened the economy. There is little evidence for architectural patronage by the Timurid Sultan Abu Sa‘id (r. 1459-69), let alone by any of his amirs, such as Mazid Arghun. However, ‘Abd al-Mo‘men’s booty from his raids on Khurasan would have provided ample funds for an undertaking of this size.

A number of stylistic details also testify to at the very least a thorough redecoration of the building. These include the limited palette of the tilework, the size of the tile-mosaic tesserae, the form of the foundation inscription; the script used for the inscription on the mihrab, the proportions of the dado decoration, the form of vaulting in the interior, and the painted decoration. These may be examined in turn.

The poverty of the tilework has been noticed before: “It is coarse, and the palette has shrunk; the two blues and black and white are used almost exclusively.” In fact black was used here very sparingly too (Fig. A). What parallels can we find for this reduced palette? The combination of white, light- and dark-blue was a common one in fourteenth century underglaze-painted tiles, although the technique itself was not common in Timurid buildings. Shibanid buildings at Bukhara with the same colour scheme in underglaze painted tiles include the Madar-i Khan madrasa (1567) (within the entrance eyvân) and the Gowkushan madrasa (in the foundation inscription of 978/1568-9). However, the much rarer use of the palette in tile-mosaic can also be seen in Shibanid buildings. The first is the entrance portal of the Kalan mosque in Bukhara where the inscription (dated 920/1514-5) is restricted to white and dark-blue, with just occasional pieces of light-blue (Fig. B). At the khânaqâh of the Char Bakr complex outside Bukhara not only is the foundation inscription of 970/1562-3 restricted to these three colours, but the arabesque tile-mosaic decoration of the spandrels below it (Fig. C) has the same palette, providing a very close parallel to that of the shrine of Khwaja Parsa.
– Balkh, shrine of Abu Nasr Parsa (1005/1596-7), detail of tile mosaic

– Bukhara, entrance of Masjed-e Kalan (920/1514), detail of end of tile mosaic inscription

– Bukhara, Char Bakr, khânaqâh (970/1562), detail of tile mosaic

See the figures A and B on the back cover.
The decoration also displays several forms incongruous with Timurid prototypes. The foundation inscription in the medallion is admittedly as unusual in a Shibanid as a Timurid context, but the frame of the portal screen is a constant repeat of the first half of the *shahâda* in large *bannâ‘i* tiles\(^{48}\), where in a Timurid monument one almost invariably sees a foundation or Quranic inscription in fine tile-mosaic. A similar repeating inscription can be seen on top of the portal screen of the Kokeltash madrasa (1568) in Bukhara\(^{49}\). A comparison of the mihrab in the interior with that of the shrine at Azadan\(^{50}\) (Figs. 16-17) should make clear the difference between Shibanid and Timurid aesthetics. Although the palette has been widened here to include brown and green the coarseness of the tesserae, and hence of the designs, makes the mihrab seem cruder than its Timurid counterpart. At Balkh the finest tesserae are reserved for the pattern framing the mihrab, but even so they form a poor contrast to the elegant *thuluth* calligraphy of Azadan. The inscription at Balkh is in just two colours, brown on dark-blue and is in

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*Fig. 16* – Balkh, shrine of Abu Nasr Parsa (1005/1596-7), interior *(photo: 1975, B. O’Kane)*

*Fig. 18* – Bukhara, Char Bakr, *khânaqâh* (970/1562), interior *(photo: 1975, B. O’Kane)*
nasta’liq, a script virtually unknown in Timurid architecture. The bloated frame of the dado next to the mihrab is another sure Shibanid sign, as on that of the mausoleum within the Mir-i’Arab madrasa at Bukhara (Fig. 18), the thin Timurid norm being apparent at Azadan.

The vaulting of the interior (Fig. 19) is notable for the way in which the squinches composed of intersecting arches are signalled mainly by their painted outlines, rather than by three-dimensional variations in their placing. Their artificiality is further underlined by the irregular geometric figures painted above them within the cruciform niches of the dome chamber (e.g. within the semi-dome above the mihrab). This is familiar from a Shibanid monument such as the khânaqâh (970/1562-3) of Char Bakr (Fig. 20) and may again be contrasted with the Timurid example of Azadan (Fig. 21). In the corners of the dome chamber the muqarnas is decorated with a number of inset tile-mosaic stars. This was common in Timurid and Safavid buildings in southeast Iran, but not in Khorasan. However, it can be seen in the madrasa erected by ‘Abd al-Mo’men’s father ‘Abd Allâh Khan (1588-90) at Bukhara. If the painted decoration of polylobed arches on the walls (Fig. 19) clearly bears no resemblance to any Timurid scheme, neither does it conform to Shibanid models. The "polylobing," while based on a scheme that goes back to Mozaffarid and Timurid models has reached a stage of abstraction where the lobes have been transformed into floral motifs, a common form in nineteenth century Central Asia, e.g. in the Khwaja Khizr mosque in Samarqand. The astonishingly good state of preservation of the painting within the open niches flanking the pishtâq would also argue for a relatively recent date for this work.

The unusual technique of brick decoration on the pishtâq has been noted before. The brick core is set back 27 cm from the revetment. At intervals of 30 cm a row of bricks protrudes, on to which the revetment was applied. This might at first lead to the thought that it is a revetment on top of an original Timurid core. But no signs of a finished exterior are visible beneath the revetment, the only parallel for this technique being on the madrasa of Sobhan Qoli Khan, built within sixty years of Khwaja Parsa, and never subsequently repaired, as far as we know (see below). Sobhan Qoli Khan is credited with restoring the pishtâq of Khwaja Parsa, but it is unlikely
Fig. 17 – Azadan, shrine of Khwaja Abo’l-Walid (c. 1475-1500), interior (now destroyed)  
(photo: 1975, B. O’Kane)

Fig. 21 – Bukhara, Mir-i ‘Arab madrasa (942/1535-6), dado of Mausoleum (photo B. O’Kane)
Fig. 20 – Azadan, shrine of Khwaja Abo’l-Walid (c. 1475/1500), mihrab (now destroyed)  
(photo: 1975, B. O’Kane)
that he would have carried out major works and left ‘Abd al-Mo’men’s foundation inscription intact. It is more probable that this was a local building technique that made its first appearance (to us – many examples of it have undoubtedly been destroyed) under ‘Abd al-Mo’men, and which was used more extensively some sixty years later in Sobhan Qoli Khan’s madrasa. The technique undoubtedly contributed to the decay of the remaining revetment on both buildings.

At present the outside of the mazâr has a rather peculiar appearance on the three other sides than the pishtâq. The two corners have single story semi-octagonal niches each with a staircase leading to what is now a flat space with a vertical wall behind leading to the drum (Fig. 13). On the main axes are simple recesses, again with a blank wall leading up to the base of the drum. The south recess has the remains of a vault that was clearly inserted later (it is not bonded with the rear wall); these remains are part of a series of domes on this side that were visible until the 1930s (Fig. 11). On either
side of each of these three recesses the wall turns at a forty-five
degree angle to form a vertical moulding c. 70 cm wide, and as
high as the wall reaches—11 m in the case of the two mouldings
abutting the southeast and northeast sides. Neither these mould-
ings, nor the semi-circular mouldings that flank the southwest
and northwest corner niches are completed at the top. The angled
mouldings at the corners of the axial recesses are the standard
transition between courtyard (or outer wall) and eyvân in Timu-
rid and Shibanid architecture. The conclusion, strangely neglec-
ted in the literature up to now, is that the building is substantially
unfinished, and that the original scheme called for axial eyvâns
and two-story niches in between (Fig. 22).

It is not difficult to understand why it might have been unfini-
shed. Granted that the towering east eyvân and the dome behind
it were always intended to be the focal point of the complex, the
addition of three other eyvâns, even if smaller, joined by two-
story niches, would have rendered the fine tilework on the exte-
rior of the drum, and much of the dome itself, all but invisible
from ground level. However, the conception is nonetheless intri-
guing, not least for the link it provides with the plans of the great
Mughal mausoleums of India, that of Homayun and the Taj Mahal.

Antecedents

The cruciform dome chamber at the center of the plans of those
Mughal mausoleums and at Balkh had long been the standard
form for large covered spaces in Timurid architecture. These
structures could be freestanding or part of larger ensembles and of
various functions: mausoleums (Gur-e Mir, Gowharshad), khâ-
naqâhs (Aḥmad Yasavi, Mulla Kalan), mosques (Kok Gonbad), or
jamâʿatkhânas/funerary mosques (Taybad). Examples of cruci-
form dome chambers with the above functions are also familiar
from Shibanid examples. However, the exteriors of all of these
buildings are generally square. Although the tomb of Homayun is
also basically a square, it is one in which the central dome may be
thought of as having octagonal pavilions joined to it on the dia-
gonals. The two-story niches on the diagonal of these pavilions in
turn make the overall plan into an irregular octagon. Where did
the corner niches come from?
There are a number of possibilities. One is that they developed from the tradition of octagonal mausoleums, early examples of which include the Buyid Gonbad-i Jabaliya in Kerman which probably originally had entrance niches on each side, and the tomb of Oljeytu at Soltaniya, which has a single upper story of outward-facing galleries. The Mir-i Ruzadar, a Timurid mausoleum in Balkh itself, is an example of a hybrid form in which one side of its central dome chamber is square and the other octagonal, with single story outward-facing niches on the diagonal. India itself has a long tradition of octagonal mausoleums with outer arcades, particularly under the Surid dynasty which temporarily supplanted Homayun’s rule, although the alteration of eyvâns with axial niches is not to be found within them until the appearance of the very Timurid looking Sabz Burj at Delhi in the second quarter of the 16th century.

Particularly close to Abu Nasr Parsa is the mausoleum of Mohammad Sharif Khan at Ghazna, which also had four axial
eyvâns and two-story niches in between (Fig. 23). Perhaps because of this very similarity the monument has in the past been ascribed to the Timurid period. This, however, is to ignore the evidence of the tombs on the platform in the center of the building, and the style of the painted decoration. The tombs on the platform are dated, from east to west, 1544, 1590, 1564 and 1555, which suggests, in the absence of architectural evidence to the contrary, a terminus post quem of 1544 for the building and a terminus ante quem of 1590. Given that the centrally placed tombs on the platform might be those most likely to be associated with its original foundation the date of 1590 could well be the date of installation of all four, although this cannot be certain. Three other tombs outside the platform (including that of Mohammad Sharif Khan) are dated 1602, 1603 and 1611. It is difficult to argue with Orazi, who notes that “it appears evident from the position of the platform, which is situated exactly in the centre of the room, that only the graves in it can be related in some way to the original construction of the ziyā-rat, while the others may have been added later on, perhaps because they were intended for the remains of relatives.”

These dates would of course place the monument in the Mughal period. Is there any evidence from the architecture for a

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Fig. D – Ghazni, tomb of Mohammad Sharif Khan (second half of the 16th century), detail of zone of transition
Timurid dating? The links with the plan of Abu Nasr Parsa can now be seen to reinforce a date in the second half of the 16th century, rather than one a century earlier. Surprisingly, in view of their dating, the parallel adduced by Golombek and Wilber for the squinche-net vaulting is the shrine of Abo’l-Qasem in Herat, built in 941/1534-5 while the town was briefly under Safavid rule. But in any case this type of vaulting had been common in Mughal architecture since the second quarter of the 16th century. The painted decoration is also at least if not more likely to be Mughal than Timurid: that on the squinche-net at the entrance to the ‘Arabsaray of Homayun’s tomb complex and the interior of the nearby Sabz Burj of c. 1525-50 provide close parallels, and in general the slate-blue ground of the pendentives and the more naturalistic blossoms of the squinche-net (Fig. D) are more indicative of a Mughal than a Timurid date.

A second candidate for the transmission of the octagonal plan to Homayun’s tomb is garden pavilions, a link which is made all the more relevant in that Mohammad, the son of the famous landscape architect Mirak Sayyed Ghiyas, was the architect of Homayun’s tomb. Mirak Sayyed Ghiyas, in addition to being the chief landscape architect at the court of the late Timurid ruler Soltan Hoseyn Beyqara, had worked first for Babur in Agra in 935/1529 and then at the court of the Shibanid ‘Obeyd Allâh Khan in Bukhara (1533-9). Koch has noted how in Mughal architecture “ideas of funerary and residential architecture were almost interchangeable,” and some of the earliest manifestations of the hasht behesht or ninefold plan, of which the tomb of Homayun is a variation, have indeed been in garden pavilions. The two-storied octagonal Sher Mandal in the Purana Qal’a at Delhi is a Mughal pavilion in the Timurid style, although whether it dates from the before the tomb of Homayun or later is still uncertain.

Was the incorporation of two-story corner pavilions in the shrine of Abu Nasr Parsa a response to the plan of Homayun’s tomb, was it an independent development, or was it based on some now lost Central Asian prototype? The journey by Mirak Sayyed Ghiyas from Mughal India to Central Asia may have been a common one (as travel between Safavid and Mughal states was), and would have provided an easy way for information to
travel. It could of course also have been an Uzbek development, the plan of the khânaqâh of Qasem Sheykh (1559) at Karmina for instance being an oft-cited antecedent of the Mughal tombs.

As we have seen above, there is also a possibility that the earlier mausoleum at Mazari Sharif of Kistan Qara Sultan was built on a similar plan, and developed into a dynastic mausoleum. Could ‘Abd al-Mo’men’s work at the Khwaja Parsa shrine, erected just before he succeeded his father as Khan, have been intended to provide a dynastic mausoleum that would supersede that of Kistan Qara? Erected at the centre of the old city, the Khwaja Parsa shrine would have provided a most conspicuous reminder of his munificence and piety. If it was intended for himself, his plan was thwarted by his assassination in a village near Tashkent.

At any rate, his work on the building shows the continuing prestige of the Parsa’iya order. Although the founder of the order was buried in Madina, his son Khwaja Abu Nasr in whose honour the dome chamber was built was sufficiently renowned to merit inclusion in ‘Abd al-Rahman Jami’s compilation of saints, Nafahât al-Uns. Mahmud b. Amir Vali, writing around 1634, mentions that since the time of Ulugh Beg (i.e. within Khwaja Parsa’s lifetime) the post of sheykh al-islam had remained within the family, and the ties of major figures in the order and the main political rulers of the age were well in evidence within the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. I do not have any particular evidence of ‘Abd al-Mo’men’s relations with members of the Parsa family, but those more conversant with the manuscript sources may well uncover closer ties.

The mazâr of Khwaja ‘Akkasha, Balkh

The Târikh-i moqim khâni also mentions that ‘Abd al-Mo’men restored the mazâr of Khwaja ‘Akkasha, located at the northeast of the old city at one of its gates. This building, usually attri-
Balkh, shrine of Khwaja 'Akkasha (c. 1590-8), dome chamber. 25 – exterior; 26 – interior (photos: 25-1930s, Robert Byron, courtesy the Conway Library, the Courtauld Institute of Art; 26-1930s, E. Schroeder, courtesy Harvard Art Museums)

Fig. 25-26 – Balkh, shrine of Khwaja ‘Akkasha (c. 1590-8), dome chamber. 25 – exterior; 26 – interior (photos: 25-1930s, Robert Byron, courtesy the Conway Library, the Courtauld Institute of Art; 26-1930s, E. Schroeder, courtesy Harvard Art Museums)

Fig. 27 – Balkh, madrasa of Sobhan Qoli (begun 1660), entrance portal (photo: 1930s, E. Schroeder, courtesy Harvard Art Museums)
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...buted to the Timurid period, is rather enigmatic which may account for its comparative neglect in previous literature. At the time of its first publication, by Niedermayer, an entrance eyvân led to an open courtyard with semi-octagonal side recesses, and further, through another axial eyvân, to a dome chamber with a cruciform interior and a semi-octagonal exterior, with only the drum surviving above it.

Since then the dome has fallen in, and the forepart of the courtyard has entirely disappeared. What was the original composition of the building? Golombek and Wilber’s plan differs from Niedermayer’s (Fig. 24) and Foucher’s in suggesting that the central space of the forecourt was occupied by a dome. The plan is certainly amenable to this interpretation, and another factor in its favour is the inefficient uses of large masses of masonry at the north and west corners, used solely for the purpose of housing staircases – were they simply buttresses for a large dome? But another factor strongly argues against a central dome, namely the form of the vault that now stands at the entrance to the smaller dome. Had it been a semi-dome, as Golombek and Wilber suggest, it could well have led to a higher dome, but in fact it is a barrel-vaulted eyvân, a form that in Timurid or Uzbek architecture is invariably freestanding and not part of the transition to a dome. What was in the mass of masonry that formed the sides of the entrance eyvân and the now-disappeared southeast part of the forecourt? Niedermayer’s plan shows no inner rooms on this side, but just as he does not show the staircase entrances on the northwest side, he fails to signal an entrance which is visible in his photograph on the third bay from the right (the southeast corner). A finished wall of a room (or another staircase passage?) is visible in this photograph. Another area of dispute is the existence or otherwise of rooms flanking the former dome chamber. They are not shown on Niedermayer’s plan, but are “restored” in Golombek and Wilber’s. Fortunately this can be resolved by photographs taken by Schroeder and Byron, one of which I reproduce (Fig. 26). It shows clearly that the exterior at the point of the octagonal bevel is a finished wall, and that no rooms were present on this side.

The original plan thus remains a puzzle – why the masses of
masonry flanking the central space if not for a dome, and why the barrel-vaulted eyvân if there was a dome? Only one solution occurs to me: that the central space was indeed intended to be covered by a dome, but that a change of plan (such as death of the patron) led to the cheaper substitution of an open central courtyard and a smaller second eyvân (and perhaps the unfinished condition of the dome interior as shown in Fig. 27).

Even granted the slight resemblance of the original plan to that of the shrine of Khwaja Aḥmad Yasavi, there is not much about it that would determine whether the building is Timurid or Uzbek. Two elements are of use for stylistic analysis: the zone of transition of the interior dome, which has been preserved in a photograph of Schroeder (Fig. 26), and the form of the tilework on the drum (Fig. 25). The lower squinch-net has parallels with both Timurid buildings and their Uzbek copies (including the tomb of Sharīfā Soltan at Mazar-i Sharif, above [Fig. 8]), but the way in which the ribs of the abutting semi-domes do not connect with the squinch-net has more in common with the interior of the Char Bakr khâna-qâh (Fig. 20) than the madrasa at Khargird89, for instance.

The small details of tilework that survive provide a more promising basis for dating. It is surprising under either the Timurids or Uzbeks that the right hand al-mulk li’llâh in Fig. 25 was written with an extra lām. But it could be argued that the relatively spindly form of the letters has more in common with the shahāda on the pishtaq of the shrine of Khwaja Abu Nasr Parsa that with the more robust Timurid naskh in bannâ’i style90. Another feature suggests a Shibanid rather than a Timurid dating: the form of the tile-mosaic medallions visible at the top of the truncated drum (Fig. 25). Timurid medallions tend to be simpler than these composite forms, for which parallels exist on the dome of the Shir Dar madrasa in Samarqand91.

It seems again, as with the mazâr of Khwaja Abu Nasr Parsa, that we have evidence of work by ‘Abd al-Mo’men which could range from a substantial reflection of a Timurid shell to a complete rebuilding. It is probably to him that we should credit the building as we know it.
The madrasa of Sobhan Qoli Khan, Balkh

Only the portal of this monument survives (Figs. 27-8), but this and information from the waqfiya are enough to show that it was a very substantial building indeed. A vague idea of its components is given in its waqfiya: “It comprises lofty arches and vaulted niches, a majestic portal, a central courtyard and two large domed rooms, one of which is intended as a lecture hall. The other is located to the ...side of it. The structure under the dome and its adjacent area are designated for performing the prescribed prayers and serve both as a mosque and lecture hall. The madrasa also has 150 hojras on two floors.”

The description could fit any number of Timurid or Uzbek madrasas, from those of Ulugh Beg in Samarqand and Bukhara to the Mir-i ‘Arab madrasa and ‘Abd al-'Aziz madrasas in Bukhara. But the evidence that it had 75 living chambers (hojras) on each of two floors, and supported 24 salaried positions indicate that it was one of the largest buildings of its kind, despite the downturn in the economy due to the decline of the silk route after the middle of the seventeenth century. Sobhan Qoli’s control over the land available for waqf obviously was a major factor in its size: it has also been estimated that nearly 10-20% of the cultivable land in the Balkh region was allotted to its upkeep, a figure that one might suspect to have been inflated for the sake of a family waqf (waqf ahli), although such does not seem to have been the case here.

As far as the standing remains are concerned, the interior of the portal is in the form of a semi-octagon (Fig. 28), a rare example of a novelty in Uzbek architecture whose first occurrence can be traced back to the Mir-i ‘Arab madrasa in Bukhara. Even the meagre remains are enough to show that its tile decoration was lavish, it not of the highest quality. The remaining tiles are in ban-ı’i technique (including an unusual yellow ground), while the imprints of now missing square tiles appear on the spandrels of the two story niches. The more expensive tile-mosaic is not in evidence. On the soffit of the eyvân arch subhan allâh is among the phrases repeated in square Kufic, a not coincidental reminder of the name of the founder.

It was rumoured that the poor state of the tilework was due to Mohammad ‘Alam Khan when he transferred the capital of the
province from Balkh to Mazar-i Sharif and retiled the shrine buildings there. However, as he established a tile workshop there for that very purpose, this is unlikely. Foucher reported that it was the bricks that were taken, which would more effectively explain the discrepancy between the pishtaq’s survival and the disappearance of the rest of the building. As mentioned above, the technique of fixing the tiles on to a thin membrane may have had more to do with their instability.

Finally, one should note the location of the madrasa, facing the mazar of Khwaja Parsa across the meydan at the centre of the city. Paired buildings had been commonplace in earlier Uzbek and Timurid architecture, but if built at different times it was common for the later building to try and eclipse the earlier, as in the case of the Shir Dar and Ulugh Beg madrasas at the Registan in Samarqand. Although Sobhan Qoli contributed to the restoration of the mazar of Khwaja Parsa, the mass of his madrasa would certainly have overshadowed it. It was the mazar which survived, however, either because its waqfs were more numerous or more respected, or because of the honour felt for the saint in whose honour the building itself was named.

Conclusions

The four monuments on which we have concentrated are all examples of Uzbek monuments which have previously been attributed to the Timurids.
The pace of architectural change in Iran and Central Asia was slow, and the reattribution of monuments to later or earlier centuries has been a commonplace of studies in recent decades. But one must also acknowledge that the Uzbeks are partially to blame for this state of affairs: had their architecture been less derivative the confusions are less likely to have arisen.

Timurid culture was considered the epitome of many aspects of the arts at the Uzbek court. It would be surprising if the monuments above did not reflect Timurid prototypes, but, as we have seen, there is also evidence of Uzbek variations upon the original models. We are missing the great bulk of the architectural record of the Uzbeks in Afghanistan, and these monuments provide a valuable record of one facet of their artistic achievements. It is also to be hoped that this paper will restore some of the credit which should be due to Abd al-Mo’men for his architectural patronage.

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NOTES

1. A shortened form of this paper was delivered under the title “Uzbek Copy or Timurid Original? The Case of the Shrine of Khwâja Parsâ, Balkh” at the Troisième Colloque International de l’IFEAC, Tashkent, 24-26 September, 1996. I am greatly indebted to Robert McChesney for his full responses to several queries concerning Balkh under the Uzbeks. For their help with the Schroeder archives in the Harvard University Art Library collection I am indebted to Michele de Angelis and Noha Khoury.


3. A thorough summary of the political history, from which much of the following is taken, is provided in ibid., chapters 3-4 and idem, “Central Asia. vi. In the 10th-12th/16th-18th Centuries,” Encyclopaedia Iranica, vol. V, p. 176-93.


5. The dynasty is also known as Ashtarkhanid (from Astrakhan, their place of origin), or Janid, after Jâń Mohammad Khan, often but erroneously consti-
red the founder of the dynasty: see J. Audrey Burton, “Who Were the First
6. He also supposedly raised the height of the shrine building itself and expan-
ded its size, but, as McChesney points out, research at the shrine would need
to be undertaken to verify this: _Waqf_, p. 89-90.
8. _Waqf_, 128.
9. Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber, _The Timurid Architecture of Iran and
Turan_, Princeton, 1988, cat. no. 96; Bernard O’Kane, _Timurid Architecture in
Khurasan_, Costa Mesa, 1987, cat. no. 32. My ingenious arguments hypothesi-
zing a dār al-siyāda or dār al-huffāz for this space can consequently be dis-
missed. Unfortunately since my account no photographs of this space have
been published which would permit further architectural analysis.
11. _Bahr al-asrār_, loc. cit.
12. O. von Niedermayer, with contributions by Ernst Diez, _Afghanistan_, Leip-
zig, 1924, Pl. 192.
13. _Ibid._, Pl. 187, and partially on the left in Pl. 189.
15. Ḥāfīẓ Nur Muḥammad, _Ṭārīkh-i Mazār-i Sharīf_ (Kabul, 1946), p. 94. I owe
this reference to Robert McChesney.
16. _Sharafnāma-ye shāhī_, facsimile and tr. M. A. Salakhetdinova, Moscow, 1983,
ff. 68a-b, tr. p.154-5.
17. Audrey Burton, _The Bukharans: A Dynastic, Diplomatic, and Commercial
18. O’Kane, _Timurid Architecture_, cat. no. 2.
19. _Bahr al-asrār_, ff. 318b-319a; also discussed in McChesney, _Waqf_, p. 103-4.
20. For the use of this term see Lisa Golombek, _The Timurid Shrine at Gazur
Gah_, Toronto, 1969, Chapter 4.
22. G. A. Pugachenkova, “‘Ishrat-Khāneh and Ak-Saray, Two Timurid Mauso-
leums in Samarkand,” _Ars Orientalis_ 5 (1963), Fig. 5.
23. As I argue below for a date closer to the later of the two occupants of the
tomb mentioned by Yate, I have named it after her, in the absence of any other
decisive evidence.
Survey of Persian Art from Prehistoric Times to the Present_, ed. A. U. Pope
and P. Ackerman, London and New York, 1939, p. 1136, writes that it appears
not to have been painted. The zone of transition may also be similar to an-
other mausoleum that has been attributed to the 17 th century: that of Khwaja
Bajgahi at Balkh, discussed in G. A. Pugachenkova, “Little Known Monu-
ments of the Balkh Area,” _AARP_, vol. 13, June 1978, p. 35-6. However, no
photographs of its vaulting, the feature that led Pugachenkova to its 17 th cen-
tury dating, have been published.
26. Golombek and Willber, *Timurid Architecture*, p. 295, write of “a subterranean room containing a tomb,” but the form of the room leaves no doubt that it was built as a crypt. It may not be obvious at first glance from the half plan of R. Sengupta, “The Timurid Mosque at Balkh in Afghanistan and the Development of Mughal Domes in India,” *Putātattva* 9 (1977-8), p. 57-63, which I reproduce (Fig. 1), that there are three axial entrances. The mihrab which takes up the place of the fourth is missing in Niedermayer, *Afghanistan*, p. 65, Fig. 7, and only one entrance is shown on the plan in G. A. Pugachenkova, “À l’étude des monuments timourides d’Afghanistan,” *Afghanistan* 23/3 (1970), p. 35 and its copy in Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, Fig. 65.

27. p. 64-5.


30. According to Robert McChesney, “Pârsâ’iyya,” *EI2*, p. 272, he was Khwaja Abu Nasr Parsa’s patron. He had been an amir in the service of the Timurid Abu Sa’id: Khwandamir, *Habib al-seyar*, Tehran, 1333/1954, vol. 4, p. 76-7. This allegiance may have been behind the order for his execution given by Soltan Hoseyn Bâyqarâ in 1470 in Badakhshan, although it was also at the instigation of Soltan Hoseyn’s confidants: *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 157. Later, Soltan Hoseyn is known to have stayed in the chahârbâgh of Mazid Arghun in Balkh: *ibid.*, p. 190.


34. *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 295.


36. O’Kane, *Timurid Architecture*, Cat. no. 25. The main difference in the two is that the shrine of Khwaja Parsa was also a mausoleum, although as mentioned above, it is unknown for whom it was intended.
37. For the type of plan which would permit this, see the Timurid masjed-i Gonbad in Ziyaratgah: O’Kane, Timurid Architecture, Fig. 45.1


42. Royal Asiatic Society Library, London, ms. No. 160, f. 126a. I am most grateful to Robert McChesney for alerting me to this passage. In Akhbor Mukhtarov, Balkh in the later Middle Ages, tr. R. D. McChesney (Indiana University, Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, Papers on Central Asia, no. 24), Bloomington, 1993, p. 45 (this and future references to this work use the pagination of the 1980 Dushanbe edition translated by McChesney, as does McChesney’s index), he rejects Monshi’s account and accepts Mir Farid Argun as the patron, but without giving any reasons. I am again grateful to Professor McChesney for sending me a copy of his translation of Mukhtarov.

43. The same kunya, abo’l-ghazi, is used for ‘Abd al-Mo’men’s father ‘Abd Allah in an (unpublished) foundation inscription inside the Gawkushan madrasa in Bukhara.

44. Byron, “Islamic Architecture,” p. 1143; and his earlier characterisation: “The character of the mosaic faience, however, seems to correspond with a slightly later epoch: the patterns are bolder than those of Timurid monuments, and the general colouring is less rich, being confined almost entirely to dark and light blues, much white and occasional touches of black...” “The Shrine,” p. 14.

45. The examples are discussed in O’Kane, Timurid Architecture, p. 65-6. Underglaze-painted tiles also occur on the face of the Ulugh Beg madrasa in Bukhara, but they may be confidently ascribed to Uzbek restoration.


47. The monument was largely destroyed around 1987: Bernard Dupaigne, “Des
51. For a possible example see O’Kane, *Timurid Architecture*, Ghâre Darvi-shân, Cat. No. 60. The inscription is a paraphrase of verses composed by Amir Nezam al-Din Ahmad Soheyli for the tomb of Kecheq Mirza (d.889/1484): see Khwandamir, *Habib al-seyar*, vol. 4, p. 177.
57. Except on the north and south sides where a door, and above it a window, open into the dome chamber. A window was also present on the west side, but has been blocked; its placement on the interior, above the mihrab, has been plastered over. It could be argued that this points to the Uzbek restoration of the Timurid original; it is however more likely that the window was plastered over in the nineteenth century when the interior was repainted.
58. According to McChesney, *Wagf*, p. 136, four madrasas had been built beside the shrine by the middle of the seventeenth century, of which one or two were still in operation.
59. For a few of many examples see O’Kane, *Timurid Architecture*, Pls. 2.7, 22.8, 25.1, 33.2, 36.2; for Uzbek examples see Pulatov, *Bukhara*, Pls. 39, 84, 88, 100, 110, 117.
60. Sengupta, “Timurid Mosque,” p. 57, noted the missing *pishtaq* at the rear and that the original had two-story niches at each corner, but thought that the remains of the semidome on the south side (which is clearly not bonded into the wall behind [Fig. 3]) pointed to “half domed arches on the four sides.” The photograph in Foucher, *La vieille route*, Pl. XXIVa, taken from the southwest, shows the complete dome to be clearly an addition.
61. Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, Figs. 27, 75, 59, 103, 42, 96, respectively.
62. Mausoleums: in the Mir-i ‘Arab madrasa, Bukhara (G. A. Pugachenkova and L. I. Rempel’, *Vydavuschchiesya Pamyatniki Arkhitektury Uzbekistana*, Tashkent, 1958, Fig. 28); mosques: in the Tilakari madrasa, Samarqand (ibid., Fig. 35), *khânaqâhs*: Mavluda Yusupova, “L’évolution architecturale des couvents soufis à l’époque timouride et post-timouride,” *Cahiers d’Asie Centrale* 3-4, (1997) (L’Héritage timouride: Iran–Asie centrale–Inde, *XV*-XVIII* siècles*, ed. Maria Szuppe), Fig. 3C.

64. O’Kane, Timurid Architecture, cat. no. 38.

65. See Ebba Koch, Mughal Architecture: An Outline of Its History and Development (1526-1858), Munich, 1991, Figs. 7-8, 34.


68. For the dates see Orazi, “The Mausoleum,” p. 271 n. 13. The inscription on the tomb of Mohammad Sharif Khan b. Yār Mohammad al-Ghaznavi is given in Sheykh Mohammad Rezā, Riyaz al-Alvâh, Kabul, 1967, p. 126; on p. 125 the epitaph of Yār Mohammad b. al-amir Yār Moḥammad al-Ghaznavi dated 966 is given, but the date does not correspond to any in the list given by Orazi.


71. See for example the Sabz Burj and Nila Gonbad in Delhi: Koch, Mughal Architecture, Figs. 8-9.

72. Rather than either the light-blue or dark-blue, matching the typical colours of tile-mosaic, as seen in the Zarnegar-khana: colour ill. in Golombek and Wilber Timurid Architecture, Pl. X. Admittedly, great reliability cannot be placed on this as a dating criterion, since we have no definite Timurid buildings from Ghazni or its neighbourhood with which to compare it, and provinciality may have dictated different colour preferences or availabilities.


74. Mughal Architecture, p. 46.

76. Catherine B. Asher, _Architecture of Mughal India_ (The New Cambridge History of India, I: 4), Cambridge, 1992, p. 33 accepts the conventional dating to Humayun’s reign; Koch, _Mughal Architecture_, p. 39, suggests that its resemblance to the tomb of Qutb al-Din Mohammad Khan (991/1583) at Vadodara may serve as an indication of its true date.


78. Yusupova, “L’évolution,” Fig. 3C2.


80. Cited in McChesney, _Waqq_ 86n. 36.


82. See n. 24 above. Mukhtarov, _Balkh_, p. 38 notes that the identity of the legendary Khwaja ‘Akkasha, supposedly a companion of the Prophet, has yet to be satisfactorily resolved.

83. Diez, in Niedermayer, Afghanistan, p. 65, favours a Timurid date, as do Frye, “Balkh,” _EI2_, p. 1000 and Golombek and Wilber, _Timurid Architecture_, cat. no. 59. Grenet, “Balk,” p. 596, mentions it in a Timurid context. Mukhtarov, _Balkh_, p. 92 following an unnoted reference to Pugachenkova, says that it can be dated to the seventeenth century. He mentions elsewhere (p. 39) that one of the tombstones in the building was dated to 1016/1607-8. Foucher, _La vieille route_, p. 66, does not speculate on the date, although he gives some useful photographs (Pl. XXVac) of the building before it was largely destroyed.

84. Golombek and Wilber, _Timurid Architecture_, p. 297, report that “According to local report, a second monument stood opposite the ruins of what remained in 1966, when visited by Golombek.” This “second monument” is probably to be understood as the destroyed forepart of the original monument. In Golombek and Wilber’s plan, Fig. 67, the west side of the dome chamber is shown as also having been destroyed; however, this wall still standing at the time of my visits in 1972 and 1975.

85. Golombek and Wilber, _ibid._, claim that “Niedermayer’s plan shows two axial domes,” but as can be seen from Fig. 15, Niedermayer clearly shows the dotted outlines of a dome in only one part of the building, and refers to the other space in the text as “einen frien Hof” (Niedermayer and Diez, _Afghanistan_, p. 65). Foucher, _La vieille route_, Fig. 14, also shows the dotted lines of a dome in only the projecting semi-octagon. Foucher’s sketch plan shows a room to the right of the original entrance, not marked in that of Niedermayer.

86. _Ibid._, p. 297.
87. The *eyvān* is clearly visible in Niedermayer, *Afghanistan*, Pl. 203. It might be objected that the bare brick facing of this partially ruined *eyvān* might have been concealed originally by the plaster vault of a semidome. But the presence of an arched window at the rear of the *eyvān* argues against this. It also might be thought that this window suggests that it was necessary to bring light into a dim central interior, but such windows can be frequently found on *eyvāns* facing courtyards, where they might have been used for structural lightening: for Timurid examples see the shrine at Taybad and the Friday mosques of Ziyaratgah and Ghurīyān (O’Kane, *Timurid Architecture*, Pls. 25.1, 33.1, 57.2.), and for the continuation of the practice in Uzbek architecture see the lateral *eyvāns* of the Mir-i ‘Arab madrasa and the entrance *eyvān* of the Nadir Divan Beg madrasa (Pulatov, *Bukhara*, Pls. 52, 83).

89. O’Kane, *Timurid Architecture*, Pl. 22.3.
90. E. g. on the exterior of the shrine of Khwaja Ahmad Yasavi, Turkistan or the Friday mosque of Timur at Samarqand: Lentz and Lowry, *Timur*, p. 16, 45.
96. The *waqf* was administered by a *mutavalli* who could, in theory have been a member of the family, but as his share of the net income was split equally with the four madrasa teachers, it does not seem to have been skewed in his favour: *ibid.*, p. 135.
98. Yate, Northern Afghanistan, p. 280; Dupree, *Road*, p. 93-4.
100. Foucher, *La vieille route*, p. 66.
102. McChesney, *Waqf*, p. 137, lists a number of these.