Although poststructuralist theory has been applied to many areas of visual culture, little has been brought to bear upon architectural history, and even less on non-European, non-American architecture. Most of poststructuralism deals with questions pertaining to the relationship between author and text and between a text and its readers, issues that are central to representation, vision, and the viewer. However, current theories of visuality have been formulated for Renaissance and post-Renaissance Europe where the cultural determination of vision differs greatly from Islamic societies. The power of vision has been recognized and politically manipulated in both the European and Islamic contexts; but in Islam image-making and the power of vision are more sensitive issues, so much so that they were historically controlled and sometimes even suppressed. In pre-modern Islamic society the gaze was curtailed by the veiling and clothing of the body; in architecture doors, screens, and walls limited vision to select individuals; and even in urban space, there were few occasions when space was opened up by an avenue or plaza to “reveal” the city. Therefore, those occasions when views were possible were highly meaningful and warrant investigation.

Visual theory is a tool that is available for examining and discussing the meaning of view and gaze in Islamic architecture. Or to invert the statement, if visual theory is useful for analyzing the meanings of gazes, it may also illuminate problems in visuality that lie outside of the Western tradition. This paper, therefore, provides an opportunity to apply visual theory, or some form of it, to an Islamic context and thereby to open what is for me a new kind of discussion based on the visual rather than the material.

The problem of representation dominates the Western reading of paintings where (abstraction aside) the space is fictive and representation is imaginary, like the shadows projected on the walls of Plato’s cave. But the three-dimensional space of architecture has been more resilient to the application of new visual theories: the space and mass are not simulacra. The columns really are marble; the steps really do lead into a vestibule of three-dimensional space. Still, the issue of the sign system exists, for in the simplest sense, the column refers to the vertical support (yet may not actually perform that function), and what appears to be marble may be painted wood. Moreover, it may refer to other buildings, ideas, and signs (Greek temples, a tree, history, opulence).

Perhaps the most compelling contribution of poststructuralist visual theory to architecture, however, is the license to study the position of the viewer in relation to it. According to structuralist theory, the position or value of one element within a system is completely determined by its relation to the other elements. Structuralism presupposes a closed system with an external agent or catalyst that calls it into being. Deconstruction, however, dispenses with the notion of the external and proposes that nothing stands outside a relationship of dependencies since systems are enveloped by or intersect with other systems. Signification, therefore, extends indefinitely. The implication for the visual arts is enormous because it allows us to include the viewer in the picture. The viewer is no longer an inactive bystander but an important participant in the visual system. Derrida’s model of the signature or Barthes’s author can be extrapolated so that we can say that viewers constitute an institution that precedes the act of the signature or the making of a work of art because the making of art is dependent upon the recognition of the viewers. If we accept this dependency — or at least the notion that a relationship of mutuality exists between viewer and object — it follows that an art historian’s visual analysis must address the institution of vision, that is, perception, reception and the gaze.

Architecture is perceived from many points of view by a spectator who moves. While there can be a single iconic view of a palace or cathedral seen from afar, it becomes in that case like a flat representation, removed from perceptible and experiential architectural space. In this sense architecture is like traditional theater: the players are real, but their characters are not; the stage space is real, but time is not, since with each rehearsal the clock is turned back to the beginning. In both architecture and theater, there is a complex blending of real-
ity and representation. Indeed, architecture merges with theater when it becomes the stage for the performance of public ceremonies. For example, in a royal palace the central player (king) is both a real person and a character, and when the court convenes on the occasion of his ascendance to the throne, they swear allegiance to him personally and to him in his role as the leader of the institution of monarchy.  

These issues of representation and public performance are treated by Louis Marin in his 1981 study of Louis XIV, The Portrait of the King; for the study of architecture, the short chapter, “The Prince’s Palace,” is particularly interesting. He shows that since not everyone can see the king’s palace, it is represented in terms of its impact on the audience. Thus the viewer, whether actually looking at Versailles and the king or not, is implicated in a system of absolute monarchy which places the king at the center of power. The question of viewers and their participation in a spatial system that articulates institutional power is the subject of this paper as well. Modern scholars tend to be divided between those devoted to critical theory and those who reject it out of hand as unnecessary or even antithetical to the historical approach. But history and theory are not incompatible, as is clear from Marin’s Portrait. With his study as my model, in the following pages I will show that the examination of the optical system of an enclosed space such as Humayun’s tomb complements the inquiry into architectural typology and permits far-reaching conclusions about the relationship of vision to social control.

HUMAYUN’S TOMB

Humayun’s tomb, built in Delhi and finished in 1571, is the first example of a tomb set within a cross-axial garden in India. It is an enormous white-marble and red-sandstone, double-domed tomb on a plinth placed in the center of a garden in which the organization of space is marked by paved walkways and water channels, punctuated by pools and small pavilions (figs. 1–3). The present garden is probably a creation of the nineteenth century, but there is little doubt that the original was a quadruplicate, cross-axial garden as well. The tomb was built by Humayun’s son Akbar. Glenn Lowry has proposed that the plan and dome of the mausoleum served Akbar’s need for legitimacy by linking him with the architecture of his prestigious Timurid forebears, and that the red and white materials of construction linked Akbar with the regional architecture of India where his future lay. Past and present are thus united in a single building that is at once Timurid and Mughal, and thus Humayun is positioned as both descendant of Timur and progenitor of Akbar.

The tomb of Humayun is a monument designed to impress. The present entrance was not originally the primary means of access; in the sixteenth century the garden was probably entered on the south side or from the river. But then, as now, the visitor’s vision is blocked from the exterior by an enclosure wall; as one passes into the precinct, the building is unveiled. It is first seen at a distance; then looms larger and taller as one makes the approach. The intervening space that creates distance between the viewer and the tomb is necessary to the visual drama, and that space is a garden.

The idea of enclosing the mausoleum in a precinct is not original to Humayun’s tomb. There were earlier tomb enclosures in India, such as the tomb of the first Tughluq ruler Ghiyas al-Din (Delhi, fourteenth century), which was originally surrounded by water, forming a nearly inaccessible island. The tomb of Sher Shah (Sasaram, 1545) was likewise situated in an artificial lake (fig. 4). But despite these earlier experiments, Humayun’s tomb may be the earliest extant example in India, and perhaps Islam, of a tomb placed in the most formal of settings, the four-part garden commonly called a chahār-bāgh (however, given the controversy surrounding debates arising from this problematic term, “quadruplicate” or “cross-axial” will be used here).

The tomb stands at the intersection of axial walkways, a position occupied by a pavilion in many earlier gardens. Those pavilions could be single chambers open on one or more sides; or they could be larger structures such as the Tarabkhana pavilion in Timurid Herat, which was two-storied and seems, from Babur’s description, to have adopted the octagonal hasht bahisht form, divided into nine nuchs. Although the Tarabkhana pavilion does not exist today, it probably resembled the Hasht Bihisht pavilion in seventeenth-century Isfahan: a cruciform arrangement of nine units, a minimum of architectural mass, and open on four sides (fig. 5). Humayun’s mausoleum also follows the hasht bahisht plan and occupies a prominent place in the garden. It is an example of the interchangeability of funerary and “residential” architecture, and indeed the tomb is the house wherein the body eternally resides.

The synthesis of garden and mausoleum at Humayun’s tomb established a new dynastic tomb type that was repeated fifty years later at the tomb of Ittimad al-Dawla (Agra, 1626–28) and the Taj Mahal (Agra, 1632–43) (figs. 6–7). Both mausolea follow the nine-unit, hasht
bibišt plan and are in quadripartite gardens. The Taj sits at one end of its garden, but this is a common position for a garden pavilion. The Taj was accompanied by an elaborate epigraphic program that at least one scholar has interpreted as eschatological, evoking the Day of Judgment. Such epigraphy was intended (and continues) to steer viewers toward an interpretation of the monument and garden as paradisiac and religious, and guides us towards its “meaning.” But there is an aspect of meaning that is not evident in the ḥasht ḫārisūr form or inscriptions (which in any case are lacking in Hunayn’s tomb). The relationship of tomb to garden that appears simple and geometrically ordered on the plan is not the same as the relationship of a pavilion to its garden. While typologically the forms of pavilion and tomb are interchangeable, there is a profound difference in the optical ordering of site and architecture that escapes two-dimensional representation and profoundly affects meaning. Two-dimensional representations assume that the viewer is external to the system, and that the system consists of the patron, his agenda, and the stylistic genealogy of the building. But when the optical perception of the viewer is considered part of the garden system, the relationships between architecture and garden, and between center and surroundings, take on new importance as expressions of sovereignty and dominance.

Several questions arise from this. The first is the typological question of when and why the tomb and cross-axis garden were first combined; this cannot be answered definitively until considerably more work is done on Timurid gardens, particularly archaeological excavations. The second question is, does the introduction of a tomb change the meaning and iconography of the quadripartite garden? To answer this we must turn to the scopic structuring of the space within the garden.

TYPOLOGY

Instead of addressing the typological problem of when and why mausoleum and garden were united, architectural historians have been distracted by the quest for the origins of the chahārbâgh type and frustrated by the difficulty of matching terminology with any extant garden forms. As for origins, the earliest extant Islamic four-part garden was formerly assigned to mid-ninth-century Iraq, although new information from an excavation in Syria, the date has now been pushed back to the Umayyad period.

Outside the Byzantine walls of Rusafa a team from the German Archaeological Institute in Damascus has discovered the earliest known Islamic cross-axial garden; it dates to the second quarter of the eighth century (fig. 8). The garden was watered by a nearby stream and walled by mudbrick which may or may not be original. In its center was a square stone pavilion surrounded by an arcade; the entrance on each side was reached by three steps. Extending away from the steps on the west side was a rubble-and-lime walkway raised above ground level, and the excavators believe that walkways also extended from the other sides.

We can talk with confidence of a cross-axial plan when the form is revealed through excavation as at Rusafa, but it is far more difficult when the only sources are textual references, as is the case with most Timurid gardens. When De Clavijo, an envoy from the Spanish court to Timur, described the gardens of Khurasan, for example, he simply used the term huerta (gardens); the garden at Timur’s palace at Shahr-i Sabz he called a “big garden.”

Detailed descriptions are reserved for the architecture. Babur, in the Bāburnama, does distinguish between a bâgh and chahârbâgh (presumably one was a single, the other a quadripartite garden) and is eloquent and specific in his descriptions of topography, water sources, streams, landscape, and his improvements. Much of our knowledge of gardens in this period is gleaned from his memoirs. However, Babur’s gardens were rebuilt by his successors, and so the Bāburnama does not serve to match written descriptions with form.

Lisa Golombek mentions a burial place (ḥaṣira) in a garden at the mosque of Amir Jalal al-Din Khidrshah in fifteenth-century Yazd, but gives no information regarding the garden’s form. Terry Allen’s Catalogue lists the gardens of Herat in the Timurid period, the identification of which he obtained from Zainchi, Raudât al-jannât fi asâfî madinat havat, the Zafarnama of Yazdi, De Clavijo and others. He lists four chahârbâghs, but again more is known about the architecture surrounding or attached to the garden than about the garden itself. Allen’s sources were narrative histories, but even in the archive of property sales studied by Robert McChesney (and described elsewhere in this volume), it proved impossible to match terms such as chahârbâgh with modern categories such as “garden,” “orchard,” and “field.”

The overall picture from the primary sources is of a landscape of enclosed gardens with gates, water channels, pools, and often pavilions which in many cases were cruciform in plan. A cruciform pavilion implies a cross-axial context since logically the structure of the garden would respond to the axial division of the pavilion set in its midst. But one cannot know for sure which of these
gardens were quadripartite except in rare cases where the garden still exists, or when the specific term chahar-bāgh is used in the texts; and even then it is not known whether the organization was cross-axial, modular, or linear. In short, the terminology of Islamic gardens is sufficiently vague that, lacking excavations, we seldom know what kind of garden it was.

The study of tombs is similarly complicated. Of all the monumental Islamic forms, tombs are probably the most common and, since they were usually small structures that could be built by anyone with the means to do so, they were the most affected by regional practice and social norms. Furthermore, many of them have disappeared and are recorded only in texts. Here the problem is that, as with gardens, the terminology is imprecise, no doubt because people writing about them assumed the reader’s familiarity with the forms.9 The tombs that do survive are generally associated with large complexes and lack gardens.

There is, however, one extant site that might prove to be an antecedent of the Mughal tomb in a cross-axial garden: this is the tomb of the Seljuk Sultan Sanjar, in Merv (1157). A description of it was made in 1879–81 by Edmond O’Donovan which says that it stood in the center of a large enclosure “at the point where the two great causeways running respectively north and south and east and west cross each other.” O’Donovan tells us that the enclosure once contained other buildings, although nothing of them remained by his time, since the site had been quarried for material to build a later city.10 If his sketch is reliable, it shows the causeways as pavements demarcating the axes of the garden. In that case, Sultan Sanjar’s tomb stood in the middle of a quadripartite, cross-axial garden and is the earliest surviving example in the Islamic world of a tomb in such a garden (fig. 9). But before rushing to the conclusion that the cross-axial layout which O’Donovan saw in the nineteenth century dated to the twelfth century, it must be said that it is surprising that a building as important as Sultan Sanjar’s tomb should inspire no immediate copies. Why was its progeny, Oljeitu’s tomb in Sultanbey, not situated in a cross-axial garden? Clearly, O’Donovan’s observation needs to be corroborated by close archaeological examination.

Quadripartite gardens with pavilions did exist before the Timurids and Seljuqs, however. In addition to the earliest cross-axial garden with pavilion at Rusafa, there are the gardens at the Balkuwara Palace in Samarra (849–59) where the intersections of the axes are marked by pools, and pavilion-like portals are positioned at the terminal points of major axes.20 At Madinat al-Zahra3 near Cordoba (996) a pavilion stood just off center within a cross-axial garden, and another at an axial terminus (fig. 10). Nowhere in the texts is this referred to specifically as a cross-axial garden; it is instead variously called a ṭūsqa (garden) or basātin (gardens), the only hint that it had a four-part layout.21 The fact that at Madinat al-Zahra3 some of the texts refer to a single garden, while excavations have revealed a four-part garden, is symptomatic of the frustrating discrepancies between textual terminology and material form that exist also in the Timurid context.

In eleventh- and twelfth-century Afghanistan at the Ghaznavid palace of Lashkari Bazar there was a garden that is seldom discussed by historians (fig. 11).22 Its location was in the center of a square, walled enclosure that was subsequently extended westward toward the central palace. Each side of the original enclosure was pierced by a large gate from which a ramp or stairs led down to the garden. In the center of the garden was a two-story pavilion consisting of an inverted four-iwan, cruciform plan with four views directed outward from the second story. Ramps led from the center of each side of the pavilion down to the garden; these corresponded precisely with the gates’ ramps or stairs. The archaeological report which was published posthumously from the notes of the director of the excavation, Daniel Schlimmerger, is incomplete and unfortunately does not state whether there were pavements leading from the pavilion’s ramps to the garden gates. Therefore, at present we do not know if the garden was inscribed with cross-axial paved walkways, but in any case the four-part division was achieved visually in the pavilion’s plan, the placement of the gates and ramps in the garden, and the pavilion’s location at the intersection of those axes.

OPTIC ORDER

The gardens listed above are palace gardens in which the optical hierarchy of axes and points of intersection serves the king both as a person and as an institution. The pavilion fixes sight and reifies the act of vision, for it marks the central (or terminal) place around which the garden is organized and from which it is meant to be seen.23 The pavilion is the origin of vision, and the garden is the object that is viewed (fig. 12a). The pavilion represents the viewer (or subject), who in royal gardens is the king; it contains him when he is present and symbolizes him when he is absent. For example, at Madinat al-Zahra3 the caliph’s position at the political and social
center of the kingdom was symbolized by his occupation of the central place in the pavilion, the garden, and the palace. That the place was so strongly identified with him is demonstrated by the occasion when a visiting dignitary was led to the garden pavilion and spontaneously prostrated himself before the empty throne of the caliph. As his representation, therefore, a pavilion is not mere adornment. The pavilion is the king; indeed it is more than the king since its power as an instrument of sovereignty demanding obeisance functions whether or not the king is present. Sovereignty was a critical issue for the patron of Madīnat al-Zahra’, who had declared himself caliph only a few years before building his great palace.

In royal funerary gardens, the tomb marks the place of the king even more insistently than the pavilion does, for he is permanently housed there. However, the relationship of garden to architecture is reversed. Now the tomb is the object, not the subject, of vision (one looks at it rather than from it), while the garden is displaced from having been the object to its new role as mere setting, a space from which to look at the centerpiece, the mausoleum, while the ritual of circumambulation (tawfiq) is performed (fig 12b). The Akbarnāma describes one of Akbar’s visits to Humayun’s tomb where he “circumambulated the holy shrine of Humayun, and showered gifts on the custodians” and then proceeded to other tombs. Some of these were saints’ tombs at which displays of humility and piety outweighed the honoring of one’s forebears; but in the eleven recorded visits to Delhi, Akbar visited Humayun’s tomb nine times and only went eight times to saints’ tombs. Subsequent rulers, Jahangir and Shah Jahan, likewise maintained the practice of visiting Humayun’s tomb and circumambulating it.

Perhaps it is not that the architectural relationships are reversed from garden pavilion to tomb, but rather that the experience of the viewer is different. In the pavilion of a palace garden the ordinary viewer can temporarily or imaginarily substitute him or herself into that position of primacy. The pavilion, therefore, invites approach either literally or in the imagination. Then, having conceptually inserted oneself into that privileged place, one is made aware of the impossibility of it: the position is already occupied; the substitution is not legitimate.

In the palatine context, the gaze is generated from the center point and is directed outward to the garden. That center point is unique and empowering; the surrounding space is diffused and dependent. The beholder then participates in an allegory of possession and dominance in which the prime player is the king, and the central place belongs to him (centered in terms of visual perception; it is not always the exact spatial middle). However, one cannot insinuate oneself even allegorically into the center of the tomb garden, nor would one want to, for that place is occupied by the tomb of the deceased. Indeed, a seventeenth-century poet said of Humayun’s tomb: “Imperial effulgence emanates from it — the splendour of the building proclaims: ‘Stand back!’”

In Persian and Mughal tombs spatial distinction is often designated by a screen surrounding the sarcophagus. Lisa Golombek’s study of Gazur Gah traces the use of the ēzār, or barrier screen. In a funerary context a ēzār originally designated an open-air burial place, but at least as early as 707–9, the Prophet’s burial place in Medina was marked by both a tomb and an enclosure screen which barred general access to it. The practice of surrounding the sarcophagus with a screen inside the tomb continued thereafter. The screens usually have entrances so that their preventative function is largely symbolic; nonetheless the visual concealment was important, as is indicated by the Shah Jahan Name’s statement that the building of Mumtaz Mahal’s mausoleum was “to shut out the grave of the ‘World of Purity’ from the public gaze.” When the traveler Bernier visited the Taj thirty years later he stated that it was “opened with much ceremony once in a year, and once only,” and that Christians could not enter it at all. The Taj Mahal has a ēzār screen (fig. 13); in the Humayun complex, the central chamber is walled by screens of pierced stone which effectively distinguish the burial place from the space outside of the central hall and visually separate the living from the deceased. In fact the signage of displacement is extended even further, because the center of Humayun’s mausoleum, like all Mughal tombs, is marked only by a cenotaph, the actual bodies lying directly underneath in an underground crypt (fig. 14).

The cenotaph marking the sarcophagus below is positioned in the middle of the tomb in such a way that the viewer cannot even temporarily occupy it, can never stand at the exact point of axial intersection. The rightful occupant cannot be displaced; he is again both present (in body) and absent (in death), even more so than in the garden pavilion because the temporal frame of the tomb is eternity. In this sense, the royal tomb-in-garden imposes a greater or more enduring control than the garden pavilion. Ultimately what is represented in a tomb-garden is not an individual, either as himself or as an institution, but rather one link in a dynastic chain.
The garden is about sovereignty, and the mausoleum is about dynasty. When the mausoleum is implanted in a garden, as it is at Humayun’s tomb, sovereignty and dynasty are combined in a teleological statement that the king is king as he always has been and always will be. The establishment of sovereignty and dynasty were critical issues for Akbar, for, as Glenn Lowry observed, Humayun’s tomb was Akbar’s bond with the Timurid past and his springboard to the future in India.

In terms of physical design, Humayun’s tomb is still a pavilion: it occupies the center of the space, has a raised terrace, and engages with the garden via ivans that frame the view and invite one to look from the architecture outward. These attributes of positionality and visuality do not disappear when the pavilion is transformed into a mausoleum; they simply move from primary to auxiliary functions that then proceed to play upon each other. Like a pavilion, the mausoleum promises the possibility of centrality and 360-degree vision to the viewer, but unlike the pavilion, those possibilities are ultimately denied. The substitution of a mausoleum for a palatine pavilion may seem like a minor change, since the formal typology is constant, but considered in light of perception and optic order, the changes are profound. When one focuses solely on the material forms, such as the mausoleum in the Humayun complex, one may forget about the space around it and the position of the viewer in that space. This is understandable because the architectural forms are satisfyingly corporeal: they can be measured, isolated, and compared with like or dissimilar forms. It is more difficult to look at the space between that emptiness has no typology, and to take its length and breadth to miss the point entirely; yet it is the field in which vision occurs, and it is the field in which the measure of those material forms is ultimately taken.

The careful study of sites like Rusa, Madinat al-Zabara, the tomb of Sultan Sanjar, and Humayun’s tomb will answer important questions about the development of form and the relationship of form to historical context. In that sense architectural history begins — and must begin — with archaeology and the close reading of texts. But it need not end there. Visual theory can lead to a new set of questions about the scopic contextualization of architecture, such as in this case of a Mughal tomb, and what the visual ordering within it tells us about how dynastic sovereignty is established, recognized, and naturalized.

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NOTES

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1 For a comparison of vision in nineteenth-century Europe and Egypt, see Timothy Mitchell, Colonizing Egypt (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1991), chap 1


3 Unfortunately, vision in Islamic history has hardly been examined, and it is hard to talk about the institution on the basis of so few individual studies. Furthermore, few intersections have been made between the complementary fields of art history, anthropology, and the history of science. Existing studies include Gulru Necipoğlu, “Framing the Gaze in Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Palaces,” Iran Orientalis 23 (1998): 303–42; in the sciences there are A. J. Sabra’s studies of Ibn al-Haytham’s treatise on optics (al-Manazir) which he has translated, The Optics of Ibn al-Haytham: Books I–II, ed. D. H. S.精彩的, 2 vols. (London, 1989).

4 The double identity of the king as both person and state was studied by Ernst Kantorowicz, The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Theology (Princeton, 1957).

5 L. Martin, The Portrait of the King, trans. Martha Houle (Minneapolis, 1988).

6 Ibid., p 186

7 The study of institutions and vision, “of making architecture transparent to the administration of power,” was studied in a quite different context by Foucault in Discipline and Punish, p 249 quoted here.


12 Ebba Koch, Mughal Architecture (Munich, 1991), p 46


14 This is not the mudbrick-walled site excavated by Katharina Otto-Dorn in 1957. Thilo Ubert, “Ein umayyadischer Pavillon in Resafa-Rūṣāfāt Hišām,” Damascenische Mitteilungen 7 (1993):

15 Ruy González de Clavijo, Emblematum a Tunelam, ed Ramón Alba (Madrid, 1984), p 166


17 Allen, Toponymy, passim


20 The question of whether the gardens were cross-axial as indicated on the plan reproduced in K A C Creswell, Early Muslim Architecture, vol 2 (Oxford, 1932–40; rpt New York, 1979), remains open. Alastair Northedge has pointed out that Creswell relied on Ernst Herzfeld’s incomplete field reports ("Reisebericht"), Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 80 (ca 1940): 225–84, and that Herzfeld did not state categorically that the gardens at Balkhvarwa were cross-axial


22 Daniel Schlumberger, Bashār Bāzār: Une résidence royale ghazvīde et ghuride, vol 1A (Paris, 1978), pp 80–84 The information that follows is drawn from this source


24 Ruggles, “The Gardens of the Alhambra,” p 166

25 Al-Maqquārī, Anābeet, 1: 254. A related example comes from Fatimid Egypt: after the death of the Calif al-ʿAziz at the end of Ramadan 386/996, festival prayer was held in the musalla. It was led by the qadi who “ascended the minbar, kissed the spot where al-ʿAziz would have sat, and wept” (Paula Sanders, Rāʿūl, Politics, and the City in Fatimid Cairo [Albany, 1994], p 53)

26 Abū’l-Fażl ʿAllāmī, The Akbarīnāmā, trans H. Beveridge, 3 vols. (1902–21; rpt Delhi, 1977), 3: 922 (ms p 228) During Babur’s visits to tombs, his path also encircled the object of his pilgrimage (Bahārīnāmā, pp 475–76) On the political and spiritual meaning of Babur’s and Akbar’s tomb visits, see Ebba Koch, “The Delhi of the Mughals prior to Shahjahanabad as Reflected in the Patterns of Imperial Visits,” in Art and Culture. Felicitation Volume in Honour of Professor S Nurul Hasan, ed Alsan Jan Qisar and Som Prakash Verma (Jaipur, 1993), pp 3–19

27 Koch, “The Delhi of the Mughals,” p 8

28 Ibid., pp 9–10

29 Ibid., p 12, translating the poet Abū Taḥlib Kalām Kūshānī, Badshahīnāmā

30 Golombek, The Timurid Shrine at Gazor Gah, pp 102–3

31 ʿInāyat Khan, The Shah Jahan Nama, ed W E. Begley and Z A. Desai (Delhi and Oxford, 1990), p 75


33 The scenes at Humayun’s tomb may have been added by modern restorers, as Catherine Asher has cautioned me. But whether the Mughals employed a bīzār at the Humayun complex or not until the Taj hardly changes the argument that they deliberately created symbolic barriers between tomb occupant and visitor. It merely means that such devices for separation were developed over the course of time
Fig 1. Delhi Humayun’s tomb 1571.

Fig 2. Delhi Humayun’s tomb Garden
Fig. 3. Delhi. Humayun's tomb Plan (Plan: after Lehrman)

Fig. 4. Sasaram Tomb of Sher Shah (Photo: courtesy Robert D MacDougall Collection, Knight Visual Resources Facility, Cornell University)
Fig 5. Isfahan. Hasht Bihisht pavilion Plan. (Plan: after Stierlin)

Fig 6. Agra Taj Mahal Plan (Plan: after Ravindran)

Fig 7. Agra Taj Mahal (Photo: courtesy Robert D. MacDougall Collection, Knight Visual Resources Facility, Cornell University)
Fig. 8 Rusafa Umayyad garden Plan (Plan: after Ulbert)

Fig. 9 Mev Tomb of Sultan Sanjar 1157 (Plan: Edmund O'Donovan)

Fig. 10. Cordoba Madinat al-Zahra 936 Plan of upper garden (Plan: after Jiménez Martín)
Fig. 11 Lashkuri Bazar. Plan   (Plan: after Schlumberger)
Fig 12 (a) Diagram of views from a pavilion (left); (b) diagram of views toward a tomb (right)

Fig 13 Agra Taj Mahal Cenotaph. (Photo: Robert MacDougall Collection, Knight Visual Resources Facility, Cornell University)
Fig 14 Delhi Humayun’s tomb Cenotaph. (Photo: Ebba Koch)