GARDEN AND CEMETERY IN SINAN’S ISTANBUL

From much of what has been said in the course of the past three days, it would appear that, notwithstanding the excellence of many of the papers, we are in danger of losing sight of certain important factors. Sinan was no more a Turk than I am; what Sinan most undoubtedly was was a Muslim, an Ottoman, and it seems safe to conclude that he had all the enthusiasm of the convert for his adopted culture together with a correspondingly strong aversion for what he had abandoned. This much at least is deducible from the famous passage in the Tadhkira where he says that the Christians persisted in saying that the Muslims had never succeeded in building a dome to rival that of Hagia Sophia: “It greatly grieved my heart”, he said, “that they should say that to build so large a dome was so difficult a task. I determined to erect such a mosque, and, with the help of God, in the reign of Sultan Selim Khan, I made the dome of this [the Selimiye] mosque six cubits higher and four cubits wider than the dome of Hagia Sophia.” With mosques scattered throughout the Muslim world, from Yugoslavia to Turkey, from the Crimea to the Hijaz, Sinan’s heritage properly belongs to the entire Muslim Umma, not any single part of it; his genius transcends all restrictive frontiers and definitions.

Professor Kuran made a most valuable contribution when he said that the purpose of a külliye (complex) is to serve the community, and more specifically, the mahalla (quarter) where it is located; although a külliye like the Süleymaniye would, at least in certain aspects of its activity, notably education, serve the entire Empire. The külliye is a tool of colonization, which in the context of the Ottoman Empire meant Islamization. Külliyes, from the Bursa period onward, were urban nuclei. A külliye is a multi-purpose urban centre; its social and religious function is, by improving the quality of life, culture and religious observance, to facilitate the settlement of a given area. This in Arabic is called tammadun — colonization of space by means of the foundation of cities, which is coincidentally the meaning of “civilization” (from the Latin civis, meaning “citizen”). Both words came to connote refinement of manners; thus we talk of “civility” or a person being civil, meaning he is courteous.

Tammadun, a verbal noun in the fifth measure, is from a root, M-D-N, “to settle” (transitive). But it should be borne in mind that in Arabic the word for city, madina (literally, settlement) and the word for religion, din, stem ultimately from the same root, D-Y-N, which gives us the verb, dana (yadinu), “to be indebted”. The idea is that man is indebted to God for his existence, that he is himself the substance of the debt and that, therefore, he has nothing with which to repay the debt except himself. The city is a place for the exchange of services, and madina is the locus where din occurs; it is the market-place where this most basic of all transactions (tijara) takes place, which is why the Qur’an (9:111) refers to the relationship between God and man in frankly commercial terms:

“Verily God has purchased from the believers their persons and their possessions that there might be to them salvation (lit., ‘the Garden’)... Rejoice then in this bargain which ye of yourselves have made, for this (i.e., enslavement) is the supreme triumph”.

But things are seldom as simple as they at first appear. It is said that if one look up any word in an Arabic dictionary, one finds a minimum of four meanings: first, it means something; second, it means something else, the opposite of the first meaning; the third meaning is something obscene and the fourth something to do with a camel. Din likewise rejoices in a plurality of meanings, and the Qur’an often resorts to intentional ambiguity. Thus yaum ad-din in the Fatihah means not only the Day of Judgement but the Day of Requital, that is, the day on which the accounts are drawn up and man is requited accordingly. Din has four levels of meaning: it signifies first, indebtedness; then, submission; also, judicial power; and, lastly, habit, custom, innate tendency. The second level of meaning flows from its primary signification, because by putting oneself in another’s debt, one puts oneself in his power: hence the meaning of Islam (a verbal noun in the fourth measure) is “unconditional surrender of oneself to God”. The last meaning, custom, is the one which most concerns us here. It is regrettable that European languages have no other translation for this word than “religion”, which is woefully inadequate as a translation of din. A din is a system that seeks to regulate all aspects of life according to the values of revelation. Islam, Judaism, Shintoism and Confucianism (at least to a degree) are all dins; Christianity, Buddhism and Taoism are merely religions. But din, as we have seen, additionally signifies judicial power or authority. A madina is a place ruled over by a dayyan (governor, judge), and is
but the feminine form of what was originally a passive participle, madin, meaning not only “indebted” but “brought under rule”. If the impact of the külliye institution on the urban fabric is immeasurable, its impact on society is no less. Although modern Turkish loosely uses külliye substantively, külliye (Ar. kulla) is not a noun but an adjective, an adjective qualifying madrasa. Madrasa is the noun of place from darasa (to study) meaning “place of study”. Kulli is a relative adjective from kullu (all, every); and madrasa kulliya means “universal study-place”. Our term “university” is a contraction of two Latin words, universitas collegium, which are a literal translation of the Arabic madrasa kulliya. The invention of the university was a Muslim achievement because prior to Islam no civilization had the concept of universal education; since Islam does not distinguish between sacred and profane knowledge, all subjects could be and were taught under a single roof. Much of the vocabulary of education in current use is either a translation from Arabic, like university itself or licence (from ijaza, permit to teach), or pure Arabic, like baccalaureate (from bi-haq ar-rwaya, “certified as being in receipt of [knowledge]”), or else uses expressions derived from Islamic practice, like “sitting at master’s feet”, which refers to the halqa system, whereby the ustadh is elevated on a kursi (chair) level with the pupils’ heads, whence the expression, a university chair. This accounts for much of our present confusion; the Süleymaniye is not a mosque, it is a college with ancillary mosque. The foundation of the Süleymaniye represents the second phase in the development of the University of Istanbul, which was founded by Fatih; the Fatih Külliye with its eight madrasas represents the first phase. I therefore disagree with the vocabulary of earlier speakers who referred to the madrasa as amongst the dependencies of the mosque. It is easy to be misled by architecture, because the planning concept of a külliye obeys different criteria, but to this we shall revert later. The külliye was not an Ottoman invention; there had already been külliyes in Baghdad and Cairo, and universities are founded in Khorasan as early as the year 1000. There is a sequential relationship in the parts of a mosque or külliye. In using a mosque, the worshippers follows a ritual route or progression, beginning with ceremonial purification and culminating with prayer in a ritually pure environment (haram). The liturgical features are disposed along a single architec-tural axis which is also the liturgical axis (qibla): the shadirvan, the entrance into the haram, the muezzin mahfil (if occupying the middle of the floor) and, finally, the mihrab. But, behind the mihrab and, again on a liturgical axis, lies the türbe in a garden, so that one progresses from open space through covered space back to open again. (And why open? because Paradise, of which the deceased hopes to inhabit, is a garden.) There is a linear arrangement of mosque and tomb because both share the same liturgical orientation, and the axis is simultaneously a processional route. In a külliye like Fatih’s or the Süleymaniye we progress even more complicatedly from open space through enclosed space to covered space, then reverse the order from covered space through enclosed space back to open again. The türbe has its place in this logical progression all the way from the gate to the Türbedar Oda. The unfolding of the ritual elements along an axis reaches a climax in the mosque and a post- (not an anti-) climax in the türbe. All these elements define a very emphatic axiability. The türbe echoes the outline of the mosque dome on a diminished scale, like music. Domes punctuate the skyline; mosque domes dominate the rooftops of the city, with the türbe repeating the silhouette to create a rhythm on the skyline. This, perhaps the sole contribution of the türbe to town planning, is very evident in the case of the Fatih Külliye, the Selim I Külliye and the Süleymaniye, surmounting the fourth, fifth and third hills respectively. Türbe domes are independent units; unsupported by semi-domes or buttresses and isolated in a sea of greenery, they make an emphatic statement and play an important if subordinate role in the townscape. Ottoman architecture is both modular and rhythmic; it sets up a rhythm by means of dome repetition on contrasted scales: the rhythmic procession of the saucer domes on the madrasa, tab-khanem and dar ash-shifa’ — totalling hundreds — reaches a crescendo in the dome and semi-domes of the main structure. A türbe expresses the vertical axis dominant in shrines (e.g., the Dome of the Rock) and Sufi ceremonial halls (sama’-khanah), the motion of the ayin being circular, around a vertical axis, unlike mosques, which express a horizontal axis. But the design of mosques is complicated by another, transversal, axis formed by the siffs (rows). The intersection of these two axes produces a third, vertical, axis whose expression is the dome. In this
sence Ottoman architecture can be said to actualise all the potentialities present within Islamic architecture from the outset, ever since the Prophet (SAW) built the first mosque at Quba' in the year 1 AH. The dome of the türbe complements the dome of the mosque. The architectural rhythm describes an upward curve, with the türbes marking its downward turn. These visual effects occur only where the külliye is on a piazza or esplanade, when all its parts obey a logical order. The random organisation of the average külliye prevents the türbe relating in any other way than the fortuitous to the layout of the city. But, whether planned or haphazard, a funerary garden is communal space for the dead just as the mosque with its dome is communal space for the living. The concept of the Umma in Islam embraces its dead as well as its living components, as the Khatib indicates in the bidding prayer, when he prays for al-muslimin wa al-muslimat, al-mu'minin wa al-mu'minat, al-a'laa minhum wa al-amwat (“the Muslim men and the Muslim women, the believing men and the believing women, the living amongst them and the dead”). It follows that the cemetery, as distinct from a reserved mortuary enclosure, is communal space for the dead in the same way that the domestic quarters of the city are communal space for the living. The qibla forms an axis linking the quick and the dead in a single communion. The hierarchy so visible in Ottoman architecture is present because architecture reflects society. Ottoman society was hierarchical but it was a hierarchy of function, not of blood or wealth. Before Ottoman society was ruined by the Tanzimat, everyone in that society had a place, and a degree of self-fulfillment was possible that modern man, a bundle of frustrations and unfulfilled aspirations, can only wonder at. In that society a man was defined by function, whence the importance that indicates function. Everyone down to the public executioner (bustanji: gardener) wore a uniform, and one of the best insights into Ottoman society is yielded by the plates reproducing ‘Arif Pasha’s paintings of all the different costumes worn prior to the sartorial reforms of Mahmud II. Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany had the same idea. The prevalence of uniforms in fascist societies is often construed as proof of militarism, but this is a misunderstanding; its real purpose is to demarcate responsibility within a hierarchy of function (the New Order). In Islamic society, costume was all-important, for otherwise a faux pas could ensue; one has to know on which level to pitch one’s language (ta‘arruf, which literally means cognition or perception, could be translated as savoir faire); one does not address the Shaikh al-Islam in the same language one uses to one’s cook. The külliye forms the civic crown (stadtkrone) of the city, which draws up into itself, as expressed in the centrality of the dome, all the diverse aspects of Islamic life: corporate worship (salat) as represented by the jam‘i; education (dars) as represented by the madrasa; hospitality (karam) as represented by the tab-khaneh and imaret; hygiene (nadafa) as represented by the hammam and shadirvan; health (shifa‘) as represented by the dar ash-shifa‘; commerce (tijara) as represented by the bazaar and arasta. A külliye is a microcosm of society. The importance accorded the dome, whose profile dominates the complex, reflects the centrality of worship, for according to the Qur’an (51:56), worship (‘ibada) is the reason for our existence, since man has no other function than to glorify God. This applies not only to humankind but to the demonic order (and even the animal kingdom as well):

And I have only created the jinn and humankind in order that they may worship me.

That is, the primary duty of man is to serve by means of ‘ibadat the being to whose existence he owes his own.

The funerary garden is an adjunct (mulhaq) to the liturgical component of the külliye, namely the jam‘i, whose orientation it uniquely shares. The türbe is an optional addition to the külliye in the interaction of whose various parts it plays no discernible role. The reason a man’s tomb is there is simply because he wants people to pray for him. In any religion that believes in purgatory, that is, in the existence of a stage intermediate between salvation and damnation, a purgatorial phase which everyone except martyrs experiences, the good works a man does in life live on after him and benefit him supernaturally. By including his tomb in a külliye a donor intends to remind the beneficiaries of a waqf of what they owe to him personally so they will not omit to pray for him. Thus the deceased stands to benefit twice over: vicariously, from the prayers, and directly, from his good deed in endowing a charitable institution. Therefore, when I go to quench my thirst at the sabil of Ahmad III and find it locked and
barred, the Turkish authorities are not only preventing me from slaking my thirst, they are preventing Sultan Ahmet from receiving the thawab that is his due. When I go to the Süleymaniye and knock in vain on the door of its madrasa for admission, not only are the authorities preventing me from getting an education, they are denying Sultan Süleyman the consequence of his good deeds. Secularism blights not only the life of the living but the life of the dead as well.

The 13 Imperial foundations were not administered in the normal fashion, with functionaries appointed by the waqf trustees; in their case the khatib was appointed by the Shaikh al-Islam. The estates comprising the augaf were immense: a complex as big and complicated to administer as the Süleymaniye had estates as large as Yorkshire attached. A waqf (estate in mortmain) is a public utility (mosque, madrasa, fountain, bridge, etc.). The essence of a waqf is (a) permanency, and (b) inalienability. Only real estate can be used to endow a waqf because only land is permanent; money or valuables are inadmissible. The word in Arabic means immobilization, because the

normal process of transmission by inheritance is frozen. The object of the waqf is stipulated in the foundation deed (waqfiyya); and while providing for perpetual benevolence the deed also provides for perpetual maintenance. The Islamic approach to burial is eminently practical, and a tomb not infrequently serves some charitable object. Sinan sited his own in a garden equipped with a street fountain (sabil), at which the thirsty wayfarer could refresh himself, not forgetting to bless the deceased for his benevolence. Thus the tomb’s provident donor receives thawab, or supernatural recompense, for his meritorious act in endowing a college, library or foundation every time a person studies, reads or just quenches his thirst. A funerary garden included in the design visibly associates the donor with the operation of his benevolence. Gardens are the lungs by which a city breathes, but the purpose of a garden that forms part of a külliye is not decorative or recreational, it is to contain the tombs in an appropriate setting; that is, a theologically appropriate setting, one where the eschatological overtones would not be miss-
ed by anyone familiar with the Qur'an. The terms janna and rauda mean "garden" in Arabic; equally so the Persian firdaus, from which the word "paradise" derives in European languages, beginning with the Greek παράδεισος, the word used in the Septuagint for the Garden of Eden.

The Arabic language, rich in synonyms, for mausoleum uses a variety of terms where Turkish has but one, türbe, from the Arabic turab ("dust") — as the Prophet (SAW) said in the Farewell Sermon: "All of you are from Adam, and Adam was of dust." The paucity of terminology is reflected in a corresponding paucity of form. Turkish tombs are extremely conventional, and Ottoman times saw the emergence of a stereotype: octagonal, domical and two-storeyed, the upper glazed for light, the lower grilled and shuttered for ventilation. Unlike Egypt, Ottoman tombs are seldom integral to the mosque but stand apart in a funerary enclosure to side or rear. Unlike mosques, which have to be quadrangular, tombs rejoice in a variety of forms — square, hexagonal, octagonal, decagonal, duodecagonal or cylindrical — since they are not intended for liturgical use and relate rather to the garden pavilion, where a polygonal shape offers the maximum number of prospects to a person inside as of aspects to someone outside. (Sinan’s türbes are either octagonal or square; he experimented with the hexagon but once, in the türbe of Kara Ahmet Pasha in Topkapı).

Rather than a garden, türbes are sited in a funerary enclosure forming an annex to the mosque, where they stand hemmed in by the monuments of the nouveaux riches. Originally, royal tombs must have stood in splendid isolation but for the sentinel cypresses on guard at these audience halls of the dead. The cypress’s role is ambiguous inasmuch as it signifies life and death — both as an evergreen and the only tree which never sprouts again once cut down. The Romans were aware of this ambivalence: "Sometime my soul feels as mournful as a cypress tree", laments Nero in Quo Vadis. Formerly, in cemeteries people used to be seen scaling cypresses to see which was the tallest; the amount of growth over the past year would indicate the degree of glory attained by the person whose tomb was underneath it. Such a garden would probably have been populated with fruit trees, carnations, tulips, tiger-lilies and, certainly, irises. Irises still bloom round Sultan Süleyman’s tomb, and in May enliven the gardens of the dead at Eyüp. By a curious process of inversion, the tomb becomes as it were a garden turned inside-out, turning its back on the real but impermanent garden without to create an artificial paradise within. This cannot be an accident, for too many have remarked it; in the case of Shahzade Mehmet it suffices to refer to some of the superlatives lavished on this lovely building: "a heavenly meadow" (Goodwin), "a bower in Paradise" (Stratton), "a sort of fairy tale world" (Aslanapa), "a corner of paradise for the dead prince" (Aslanapa again), "truly like a garden in paradise" (Sumner-Boyd and Freely). These raptures refer to the faience but Levey describes the türbe as a "building ... set up to keep fresh the memory of Prince Mehmed, much loved and prematurely dead", and Unsall, in a conceit worthy of the Metaphysicals, holds that "Prince Mehmet in the türbe where he was buried after his tragic death, strives as it were amid the colourful arrangement of the tile panels, to prolong the springtime of his life." But in fact all of these quotations are superfluous, for the inscription over the door is explicit enough:

The resting-place of the great Sultan Mehmet is an everlasting Paradise.

The tomb is symbolical, and Sinan’s genius emerges in the way in which he makes a commission, whether mosque or tomb, reflect the personality of its founder or occupant. The tomb is a ceramic garden ensuring a fragrant memory even when the flowers outside have withered or a degenerate age has sold off the garden as grave-plots. The presumptuous graves which encroach on the Royal Presence date, as their inscriptions make plain, from the last century, when the administrators of the waqf sought to raise cash by dubious means.

Although a hideous outcrop of monumental masonry now prevents us from appreciating the original effect in the Süleymaniye, the basic layout remains unaltered. Sunken access paths, the paving of which is Ottoman, lead to the türbe or link gateways on opposite sites of the enclosure. These features are clearly original, dispensing of any speculation that the plan may have been altered. There is no evidence for the existence of the Paradise Garden in Ottoman architecture except perhaps as an influence on courtyard design. A distinction has to be made between royal and noble burials; family graveyards like the Sokollu Mehmet Külliye or the
Köprülü Külliye must have exhibited an appearance altogether different from the Süleymaniye, where the open-air burials are an intrusion.

Although the complex of which the garden forms part is a public utility, a funerary enclosure would never be a public garden open to all and sundry. Any who came to pay their respects would be admitted but the dignity of the place would be strictly upheld. A custodian's house (Türbedar Oda) stands beside the tombs in the Süleymaniye. In some complexes a separate building (Dar al-Qurra') accommodated the cantors. Their function was to recite the Qur'an every morning at the graveside for the repose of the deceased's soul. In each türbe stood a sandalwood box (kursi) to hold a Qur'an in thirty parts (ajza'). These caskets imitated mosques, with cubiform substructure and domical, hinged lid or sometimes, even more charmingly, a sweetmeat dish, with characteristic ogival lid. The auditory Qur'an had its visual analogue on the walls of the mausoleum. Lamps hung over the grave to illuminate it by night, while camphorated candles burned at the foot, at least on holy nights like Lailat al-Qadr. A türbe could hold anything from one to 60 or more graves, although three to four is average. Türbes were prone to overcrowding, especially when Faith's law was put into effect; on such occasions a türbe could fill up overnight, producing a claustrophobic interior like Murad III's mausoleum. Usually congestion has spoiled the effect aimed at by the architect; in Süleyman's türbe the adjacent tombs of Ahmet I and the Princess Mihrimah detract from the dignity of the setting. Dynastic tombs in the Mughal sense did not exist.

Whether of wood or stone the standard Ottoman tomb duplicates the bier (or coffin) in which the body is carried to the grave for burial, often on a magnified scale, as the Ottoman idea was that the tomb should reflect the moral stature of the deceased. Thus the tombs of Selim I and Süleyman are disproportionately large for the chambers they occupy. The wooden variety known as a tabut, frequently mistranslated as catafalque or, even more misleadingly, cenotaph, is gable-shaped, tapering toward the foot and with a steeply pitched roof. Even so late as the 17th century the gable coffin was in use in the West, and in the Muslim world it has always been standard, as can be seen from the miniatures. Another kind of Ottoman grave, a dirt-filled enclosure between kerbs with head- and foot-stones (as in the tomb of Jam Sultan or that of Murad II, both in Bursa) is a literal copy of the bier in stone and is flat because this type lacked a lid, the compartment for the body being covered with a shawl. By Sinan's time the more flamboyant tabut had ousted its rivals in popularity. It was variously covered with cashmere shawls, specially woven brocades, a portion of the covering (kiswa) of the Ka'ba or even the clothes of the deceased; while a pole at the head bore the turban of rank or, in the case of a woman, her head shawl. Imitating the kiswa, a special design evolved for palls (chadar), with chevroned bands containing Qur'anic inscriptions or religious formulae in black, green or burgundy damask. The interior of an Ottoman türbe before the brocades were replaced with baize after being eaten by rats, or sold off by unscrupulous custodians as souvenirs to tourists, exhibited a sumptuous appearance and must have blazed with colour. The quality of these rich but sombre textiles is attested by a number of fragments in Western collections. Royal mausolea were even more beautiful, with palls of dark colours embroidered in gold thread and seed pearls, like the tiebacks of Marie Antoinette's curtains. Ottoman embroidery is almost as famous as French. So holy is the grave of Mevliana in Konya that the girls who embroidered its pall had to take a ritual bath (ghusl) each morning before plying the needle and thread.

The enclosed structure of a türbe is intended to permit the use of a wooden tomb with concomitant gorgeousness of effect. This effectually cut the deceased off from communion with nature; the Ottoman love of nature, which found expression in the planting of irises on or around the grave or scooping out a saucer-shaped depression in the recumbent slab for birds to drink from, was transferred to the tile panels lining the interior. A tomb, says Bernardin de Saint Pierre, stands on the boundary between two worlds. In most civilizations therefore a great deal of importance attaches both to its design and symbolical status; in Islam, a garden plays this figurative role. Thus an Ottoman türbe is a double garden — within and without. Unfortunately, of Sinan as a landscape architect nothing can be affirmed with certainty, but it seems safe to conclude that he delegated this side of his work to a roadjutor, so we must perforce confine ourselves to the mausolea sited in these erstwhile gardens.
The Tadhkira lists twenty works of a funerary character in Istanbul (if we include Scutari), several of which we must examine in detail. The Ottoman tomb, like the Seljuk model from which it derives, is extremely conventional—a faceted structure culminating in a dome, which took even all of Sinan’s versatility to render interesting. Sinan rings the changes on the octagonal stereotype besides experimenting with square, rectangular or even arcaded tombs. By Sinan’s period the burial crypt, a hangover from Seljuk times, had gone out of fashion.

Although it can no longer be sustained that the Khusrau Pasha Mosque in Aleppo is Sinan’s earliest work, since the discovery of an earlier mosque in Kosovo (in Albanian Yugoslavia) disproves that contention, Sinan’s earliest funerary commission is known for certain. This was for a distinguished client, the admiral Barbarossa. Khair ad-Din Barbarossa’s türbe is dated to 948 (1541-42) on inscriptive evidence; Aslanapa is altogether mistaken in stating the Shahzadeh mausoleum to be Sinan’s earliest work of any kind. The inscription over the door acclaims the admiral as “conqueror of Tunis and Algiers”. The türbe is at Beshiktash, where the galleys moored. It was traditional in Turkey for admirals to be buried beside the sea, and here, before the shore was embanked, waves sometimes used to lap the foot of the building. By turning on his right side the deceased admiral might review the fleet. Enclosed within a maqṣura (railing) are four graves: Barbarossa, his wife, his son, Hasan Pasha, and his spiritual son, Ja’far Pasha. This austere work is an octagon with a dome resting on an octagonal drum. Windows are recessed, the lower ones rectangular within an incised arch, the upper filling the arch. The recessed panels above are smaller so the building “tapers” nicely toward the resolution of the dome. The ceiling with ceramic bosses inset in white on a terracotta ground gives a foretaste of the Süleymaniye.

The Shahzadeh türbe is arguably Sinan’s masterpiece. This graceful building is of the same octagonal type as Barbarossa’s but there the resemblance ends; for here both dome and drum are gadrooned, and this cantaloup shape with its 36 ribs recalls both the Gür-i-Amir and Meylana’s tomb at Konya. It is not the first Ottoman dome to be so treated, for Selim I’s türbe is also fluted. With its polychrome exterior of marble inlaid with breccia verde and terracotta, Shahzadeh Mehmet’s tomb is an exotic amongst Ot-
1. BARBAROSSA TÜRBE; 2. SHAHZADEH TÜRBE; 3. HASEKI KHURRAM SULTAN TÜRBE; 4. SULTAN SULAIMAN TÜRBE; 5. KILICH 'ALI PASHA TÜRBE; 6. ZAL MAHMUT PASHA TÜRBE (FROM TÜRK MİMARİSİNİN GELİŞİMİ VE MİMAR SINAN, 1973)
mosque, so türbe and jamī' form a continuum. The masonry is marble, from a church in Chalcedon. Internally, the design surpasses in subtlety any of Sinan’s previous essays in this genre, with an arcade of (mostly) porphyry columns linked by arches to the corners, producing a narrow ambulatory. Like Shahzadeh, there is both an inner and an outer dome. Kuran, commenting on the subtlety of the design, observes that “the domes in the Suleimaniye Türbe and supported by their own lower structures and relate to two separate types of space, one set inside the other. The inner dome on columns covers the octagonal central space. The outer dome spreads over the main walls.” If we treat the gallery outside as another ambulatory, there is an analogy with the Dome of the Rock, which Suleyman restored. The tomb is pompous because pomp was part of the Ottoman way of life. Levey says that “Khurram’s tomb remains unostentatious where his asserts rank”, and Stratton declares that “its magnificence is official”. It must not be forgotten that Süleyman reigned for 46 years: he was, therefore, an institution. The Suleymaniye is a monument to an age, like the Albert Memorial. Stratton avers that the “rich and sombre building was designed and built not to receive the dead body of a man, but to contain a living tradition, a principle, and an ideal”. If Stratton be right, then the whole Suleymaniye is a species of Ottoman Escorial, and the vainglorious inscriptions over the cenotaphs of Charles V and Philip II have their parallel in the three foundation inscriptions of the mosque, which communicate the same sense of dynastic mission. Stratton emphasises that “Khurram’s tomb is lyrical; Süleyman’s is an epic monument”. In sum, it proclaims Ottoman absolutism.

Next to be considered is the türbe of Sokollu Mehmet Pasha, who chose not to be buried in his own mosque, opting instead for the holier earth of Eyüp. Anyone who has the good fortune to die in Istanbul has two options: one is to be buried in Eyüp beside the Golden Horn and thereby benefit from the baraka of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, the Prophet’s standard-bearer, who fell before the land walls of Byzantium during the second Arab siege of the city (674-78), or, by paying the ferry fare, one can be transported across to Asia (cemetery of Karaja Ahmet) and thus lie in the same continent as the Prophet. Cemeteries in Islam are never planned like Père Lachaise in Paris or Mount Auburn in Boston; they expand by a process of organic growth around a focus of supernatural power (baraka), the tomb of some saint or martyr. Eyüp, perhaps the most beautiful cemetery in the world, is an instance of natural landscaping.

The türbe Sinan erected in 1575 for the most discerning of his patrons, Sokollu Mehmet Pasha, is modest and unpretentious, like the rest of the complex (madrasa, dar al-hadith and dars-khanеh). The türbe and dars-khanеh (lecture hall) are connected by a loggia open on both sides and admitting to a small family graveyard behind. This dispenses with the usual porch, for either structure, so that the doors match one another. Except in colour: the entrance into the türbe has interlocking voussoirs of breccia verde and Marmara marble; that of the dars-khanеh red conglomerate and the same marble, so that alternate green and white confronts alternate red and white. Inside, the windows alternate too, between green and blue, the latter of a particularly beautiful hue, while the arched lunettes of the casements beneath are filled with perforated stone screens of the kind known in India as jali. This means that when the shutters are closed the hall is filled with diffused and tinted light.

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Contemporary with Sokollu’s understated masterpiece is the türbe of the admiral Kilich ‘Ali Pasha, built in 1598 (1580). Though often referred to as of the conventional octagonal type, the design evinces Sinan’s ingenuity; from the outside it appears to be just another octagon, inside it is a truncated octagon with three sides replaced by a single straight wall, so that it is like a magnified mihrab. The remaining five sides are not uniform either, for they are alternately pierced with single and double windows. The türbe forms part of a külüye situated on the seashore, so, like Barbarossa, Kilich ‘Ali permanently rejoices in the presence of the element he loved. Cannon barrels were rolled down the hill at this point from the foundry (top-khaneh) to be mounted on the galleys moored offshore.

In any catalogue of curious deaths, Zal Mahmud Pasha’s deserves a place; it is recorded that he and his wife died on the same night. This is better than the scoundrel deserved, for it was he who strangled Prince Mustafa. The date of the türbe is not known for sure: hence its inclusion at this point in the narrative, before we return to the sequence of royal tombs. Goodwin26 quotes Eyije as advancing a date for the külüye in which it stands in the early to mid-1560s but Sumner-Boyd and Freely27 incline toward a date some ten years later. This large building is far removed from the conventional octagon it is sometimes confused with;28 although seen from without, it appears to be just another octagon, within, it reveals itself as a cruciform Timurid-style mausoleum of considerable grandeur and lit by pairs of windows cut in the walls of the three iwans (the fourth is the entrance), leaving each alternate wall blank on the exterior. The three iwans, or suffas, in the form of recesses leave a sunken depression (sahn) in the middle to accommodate the burials in rows facing the iwan al-qibla. This arrangement looks forward to the great mausoleum of Selim II.

In 1573, whilst Sinan was working on his masterpiece in Edirne, (1569-75), he had the misfortune to lose his granddaughter Fatima, whose father had fallen a martyr on the field of battle. He buried her under an open türbe in the beautiful cemetery that flanks the Istanbul road to the right as one enters the city. This arcaded türbe is rectangular because it follows the axis of the grave. The gravestone is of the usual inclined, coffin-shaped type raised off the floor by a sequence of diminutive arches on all four sides. Referring to it, Stratton says: “For the dead child, he carved a tombstone, that, in Islamic art, is as a Kouros by Phidias”.29 This türbe anticipates Sinan’s last work in the mortuary vein, his own tomb.

Selim II finished the portico of his father’s tomb in the Süleymaniye after Süleyman’s death but neglected to make similar provision for himself, so when he died in 1574 he had nowhere to be buried, and the embalmed body lay for two years under a tent in the grounds of Hagia Sophia pending erection of a mausoleum. This, the fourth and last of Sinan’s royal commissions of this kind, raises an important question: How did it come about that Selim was not buried in his own foundation at Edirne? It has been hazarded that this was because Sinan was working on the renovation of the fabric at this time, besides adding two more minarets on the north front (one dedicated to each sultan) to match the earlier two on the south, thereby endowing the Byzantine building with a decidedly Islamic appearance. But the answer to the conundrum would seem to lie elsewhere. No Ottoman sultan is buried in Edirne. It should never be forgotten that Hagia Sophia has tremendous symbolic importance for Muslims as standing for the fulfillment of prophecy, prophecy contained in a hadith which is probably apocryphal. Three times the Arabs attempted to fulfill this prophecy and failed. Mehmet II achieved it in 1453, when he converted Hagia Sophia into a mosque. On taking Constantinople the Ottomans adopted the Byzantine cap, winding around it the Muslim imama (scarf) in token of conquest. By erecting his own mosque on the ruins of the Church of the Holy Apostles Fatih sought less to obliterate than to supplant the Palaeologues, whose burial-place it was; a Muslim Constantine takes over. (And if Mehmet were a Muslim Constantine, Süleyman was a Muslim Justinian.) Fatih passed a law forbidding the burial of any Ottoman sultan elsewhere than in Istanbul.30 Since Selim had left no foundation of his own in the capital, Murad sought to Islamize Hagia Sophia definitively by turning it into a royal pantheon, a pantheon that would in time hold not only his father and himself but, subsequently, his son, Mehmet III, as well as the princes (in the Shahzadehleri türbe). Since it was reserved for the sons of Osman to fulfill the Prophet’s prediction, this means that the Ottomans are an elect, or providential, nation.

The importance accorded this decision is reflected both in the scale of Selim II’s türbe and the time it took to build, from 1574 to 1577. The building is 16 metres square but it is not a pure square because the corners are
FUNERARY CIPPI IN VARIOUS CEMETERIES OF ISTANBUL
chamfered. The plan is an octagon described in a square, with the dome resting on the walls and a false dome inside supported on columns, exactly as in Suleyman’s case. The stalactite capitals are noteworthy, and arches connect not only the columns with each other but the columns with the wall, again as in Suleyman’s case. The graves lie in a square trough, with the columns standing on the edge. The whole arrangement is nothing if not ingenious, producing four diminutive exedras in the corners and an ambulatory wider than in Suleyman’s türbe. A triple-domed porch enhances the importance of the entrance. The central arch is surrounded by a dome to which the projecting entrance facade acts as a backdrop. The masonry is Proconnesian marble, white with grey streaks. The same material was used for the later türbes in the same enclosure. Perhaps the most beautiful of the royal türbes, Selim’s is by far the most ingenious as well as the most imposing; a string-course separating the two arcades at window level divides the main mass, producing in effect a four-tiered structure, whilst slender colonnettes at the corners enhance the verticality of the design. Filled with light, Selim’s tomb stands at the opposite remove from the sombre grandeur of his father’s. Light is reflected from the tiled pendentives onto the black, cream and terracotta interior of the dome. Externally, the imposing mass has a robust appearance emphasized by the unusual dormers lighting the space between the inner and outer domes. Though Selim’s immediate successors were to revert to the octagonal plan, Ahmet I would opt for the square in his immense mausoleum in his own complex nearby. The Selim II türbe has its lineal descendant in Mehmet Reshad V’s mausoleum at Eyüp. Of the tile panels flanking the doorway, that on the right is original, that on the left a copy (the original is in the Louvre). During the years of official closure as part of an anti-royalist campaign the Imperial mausolea must have suffered notable depredations. Both here and at Shahzadeh a dentist was employed to repair the tiles; he substituted painted plaster and sold the originals to the Staatliche Museum and the Louvre.31

After so atypical a design one might think that Sinan’s fertility of invention would have been finally exhausted, but from Selim II’s tomb Sinan passed to what is perhaps his most original essay in the field of funerary architecture. Istanbul rejoices in two kinds of mosque: hilltop mosques and seashore mosques, in which the effect aimed at is deter-
wheel design rails off the garden from the street, but opposite the head of the grave is a large rectangular opening filled with a metal grille so that one can look through and see the tomb. The grille is set in a stone frame projecting above the line of the wall for some height to accommodate a poem composed by his friend, Mustafa Sa‘i. The tomb probably dates from 1585, the date of the second waqfiyya. The sabil has six sides from which to serve the water, and the foundation deed makes provision for an attendant in charge. The water was served in a cup of tinned copper with a fish formed of chain links squirming inside. Water has in Islam an almost sacramental status: Sinan could have chosen no better way to keep his memory fresh.

The hallmark of Sinan style is originality; his work is characterized by an almost inexhaustible fluency. From the austere, military türbe of Barbarossa, through the floral tombs of Shahzadeh Mehmed and Haseki Khürrem and the imperial pomp of Süleyman I and Selim II, not forgetting the exquisite understatement of Sokollu Mehmet Pasha, right down to the simple open türbe he designed for himself we have traversed half a century of Ottoman architecture in which time Sinan never once repeated himself. If the purpose of a tomb is the preservation of the historical fact committed to its care, Sinan added a fresh dimension to its meaning. He not only ensured the perpetuation of a memory but did so in a way that the flavour of the personality is conveyed, at least in the form in which the subject’s contemporaries viewed it. By doing so, Sinan raised the intellectual horizons of architecture in the same way that Michaelangelo, equally an intellectual, did so in the West, working in the same genre at the same time, but under very different constraints. Michaelangelo, in the tomb of Julius II or the Medici tombs, could use sculpture as the vehicle of an idea; Sinan, as a Muslim, was faced with problems arising from the Islamic taboo on figural representation, obliging the artist to resort to other, more difficult modes of expression.

James Dickie (Yaqub Zaki)
3. Prof. Kuran informs me that in Sinan’s time a külliye was known as a i mamet (personal communication).
4. In the case of the Süleymaniye a taqsim (system head) replaces the shadirvan.
15. The design of the covering (kiswah) of the Ka‘ba in Mecca, which is annually embroidered, an embroidered black damask, goes back to the occupation of the city in the 16th century by the Ottomans and is clearly based on tomb covers of the time. The cubic shape of the Ka‘ba may have suggested the analogy with a tomb.
17. See Raphaela Lewis, Daily Life in Ottoman Turkey, London, 1971, p. 105. Algerian tombs have two depressions, one to hold water, the other couscous. The curious boat-shaped finial of the dome of Imam ash-Shafi‘i’s mausoleum in Cairo is a bird feeder. Imam ash-Shafi‘i loved birds, as did the great German mediaeval poet Walter von der Vogelweide, who made similar provision in his will for birds to be fed at his tomb in the cloister of the Neumünster Church at Würzburg, where the tomb incorporated a stone basin specially designed for this purpose. In Islam, pigeons are mosque fowl with special status, and numerous awqaf existed for their feeding at Mecca and elsewhere.
21. Levey, p. 84.
22. Stratton, p. 152.
23. Ibid.
25. Stratton, ibid.
27. Sumner-Boyd and Freely, p. 415.
28. Ibid., p. 416.
29. Stratton, p. 211.
30. I owe this information to Prof. Aiptullah Kuran (personal communication).
32. For example, the putative tomb of Zabinda Begum at Nawan Kot or the shrine of Milan Mir in the suburb of that name or the Sarwala Maqbara off the Grand Trunk Road.


SULTAN SELIM TÜRBE: UPPER STOREY PLAN (FROM KURAN)