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## The Turbah of Tankizbughā

### *TURBAH: A NEW INTERPRETATION*

The *turbah* developed in the Mamluk period from a simple tomb or mausoleum into an independent multifunctional complex consisting of several architectural units. The building of large *turbahs* became widespread and popular due to the vital role they played in Mamluk society. The *turbah* not only provided a place for burial and tomb visitation, but also became a focal point for many other activities. Religiously, it served as a place for worship, the reading of the Quran and hadith, and Sufi rituals such as *dhikr* and *ḥuḍūr*. On the social level it was the venue for charitable and philanthropic acts serving the community by providing free water, food, clothing, and education for orphan children. Politically, it served as a monument for the commemoration of the Mamluk elite, a phenomenon hitherto reserved only for the Prophet, his family and companions, and other religious figures. Such commemoration of the elite was justified on the grounds that they served to protect Islam against attack, while at the same time upholding Sunnism and the shari‘ah internally. Finally, the *turbah* served an important economic function through the institution of *waqf*, a means of transmitting wealth and protecting it from the threat of confiscation. This was particularly important in a society known for meteoric changes in the fortunes of the elite, which often led to the seizure of private property by those in power.

The architectural form of the *turbah* reflected these functions, and thus consisted of several units. These included a courtyard as a burial place for the founder’s dependents; a grand portal which sometimes included a minaret; a dome and a *maqṣūrah* (pavilion) for burial of the founder and other religious rituals; and often a *sabīl* (public fountain) and *kuttāb* (elementary Quranic school) which served charitable functions. A residential section and the *maq‘ad* (loggia) provided the setting for tomb visitation and served as living quarters for the *turbah* residents.

The *turbah* of Tankizbughā is a prime example of such a multi-functional building complex, as will be shown in the present article.<sup>1</sup> The remains of Turbat Tankizbughā,<sup>2</sup> known also as Tankizīyah, are located in the south-east of the

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<sup>1</sup>This new interpretation of the *turbah* and most of the research here were part of my unpublished Ph.D. dissertation presented to the Faculty of Archaeology of Cairo University in January 2004.

<sup>2</sup>Survey of Egypt, *Index to Mohammedan Monuments in Cairo* (Cairo, 1951), 85, 764/1362. Many contemporary sources refer to it as a *khānqāh* but I will refer to it as a *turbah* in line with the foundation inscription.



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Northern Cemetery outside its boundaries on an outcrop at the foot of the Muqaṭṭam Hill. Early photos taken at the beginning of the twentieth century show it as a solitary building in a deserted area (fig. 2). Today it is completely surrounded by the buildings and workshops of the slum of Manshi'at Nāṣir that sprang up at the beginning of the 1970s.

The significance of this *turbah* lies in its unique plan and architectural features as well as the ambiguity of its function. The plan is unusual for having a dome in the middle of an *īwān* and two side enclosures which were added to the *turbah* proper at a later date. The presence of a large minaret and the combination of innovative decorative methods on the dome and the minaret are in contrast with the traditional zones of transition and the upper part of the minaret. The building site is curious and its functions are not clear; in addition to its isolated location we do not know who was buried there, or if it was a *khānqāh* as well as a *turbah*. It could also have been used for military and surveillance purposes. Who completed the building after the early death of the founder and why?

#### DATE AND FOUNDER

The foundation inscription that flanks the portal reads as follows:

Bismillāh . . . this blessed *turbah* is constructed by the order of the poor slave of God almighty Tankizbughā *amīr majlis al-aḥkām*, may God surround him with his mercy on the date of Rabī' I, the year 764.<sup>3</sup>

In spite of its brevity, the inscription provides all the data we need to date and identify the building. We learn the name of the founder was Tankizbughā<sup>4</sup> and that he served as *amīr majlis*.<sup>5</sup> The request for the mercy (*raḥmah*) of God for the founder indicates that the monument was built or at least finished after his death. It gives the date of foundation as Rabī' I 764/1362–63. Most importantly, it defines the building as a *turbah*, a distinct architectural form.

<sup>3</sup>Max Van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum: Égypte* (Paris, 1894–1903), 1:273.

<sup>4</sup>It consists of two parts: Tankiz, which means "sea" in Turkish, and Bughā, which means "bull" and can connote "big" or "strong." See: J. Sauvaget, "Noms et Surnoms de Mamlouks," *Journal Asiatique* 238 (1950): 45.

<sup>5</sup>Amir of the council chamber, which was one of the highest positions in the Mamluk hierarchy. His functions were to guard and supervise the sultan's council chamber, as well as to control and direct the court's physicians, surgeons, and oculists. See: William Popper, *Egypt and Syria under the Circassian Sultans, 1382–1468 A.D.: Systematic Notes to Ibn Taghrībirdī's Chronicles of Egypt* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1955–57), 16:92.



**WHO WAS TANKIZBUGHĀ?**

Amir Tankizbughā Sayf al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Mārdīnī was *shādd al-sharābkhānah* (superintendent of the buttery or store of the court potables)<sup>6</sup> during the first reign of Sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan (748–52/1347–51).<sup>7</sup> He was one of the sultan’s favorites and became amir of the first rank in the second reign of al-Nāṣir Ḥasan. He was appointed *amīr majlis* in 758/1357<sup>8</sup> and was married to the sultan’s sister.<sup>9</sup> Tankizbughā was appointed *nā’ib al-shām* but he refused the appointment. He fell sick and died shortly afterwards in Ramaḍān 759/1358. He was one of the state elite, known to be wise, shrewd, and efficient.<sup>10</sup> Yalbughā al-‘Umarī succeeded Tankizbughā as *amīr majlis* and received his *iqṭā’*.<sup>11</sup>

Tankizbughā died in 759/1358, four years before the date of the foundation inscription. Who financed and completed the construction of this large monument? Was it his wife, the sultan’s sister, or his successor Yalbughā al-‘Umarī? The contemporary sources did not deal with this issue, but we will come back to this point at the end of this article.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE TURBAH**

The *turbah* plan is a rough rectangular figure (fig. 1) with two parallel sides to the east and west and the two other longer sides to the north and south. It consists of six parts: the portal and minaret, the residential area (both occupying the main western façade), a courtyard (*ḥawsh*) behind the residential area, a large *qiblah iwān* to the east, a dome within the *iwān*, and what I will call a *ziyādah* occupying the north and south sides of the *turbah*. A *ziyādah* is an enclosure or space added around a mosque, serving a function complementary to the main function of the mosque.

The portal and the minaret occupy the southwest corner of the *turbah* and are

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 95.

<sup>7</sup>Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah fī A’yān al-Mī’ah al-Thāminah* (Beirut, n.d.), 1:520.

<sup>8</sup>Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma’rifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, vols. 1–2, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyādah (Cairo, 1958); vols. 3–4, ed. Sa’īd ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ ‘Āshūr (Cairo, 1972), 3:35.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 3:45.

<sup>10</sup>Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah*, vols. 1–12 (Cairo, 1929–56); vols. 13–14, ed. Fahīm Shaltūt (Cairo, 1970); vol. 15, ed. Ibrāhīm ‘Alī Tarkhān (Cairo, 1971); vol. 16, ed. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl and Fahīm Muḥammad Shaltūt (Cairo, 1972), 10:331.

<sup>11</sup>Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥanafī Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’ al-Zuhūr fī Waqā’i’ al-Duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Cairo, 1982–84), 1:1:568.



made of bare stone. The portal has a pointed arched recess containing the only entrance to the *turbah*, rectangular in shape and flanked by two stone benches (*maksalah*). The foundation inscription is written above it, and below a rectangular window. A roofless vestibule (*dirkah*) lies behind the entrance and is now filled completely with rubbish and debris (fig. 3). The northern wall of the vestibule has an arched doorway which leads into the adjacent residential area. The eastern wall, opposite the entrance, is completely covered by debris. However, Christel Kessler's plan, which I consulted at the Rare Books and Special Collections Library of the American University in Cairo, shows a door leading to a chamber, now completely hidden under the debris (fig. 4). The northern and eastern walls of the first story of the minaret occupy the south side of the vestibule.

The stone minaret is composed of a square shaft and an octagonal pavilion (*jawsaq*). The stonework of the minaret and portal walls is integrated. There is an obvious gap between the minaret walls and the adjacent wall of the southern *ziyādah*. The square part of the minaret consists of two stories with an internal spiral staircase leading to the pavilion. The lower story is the same height as the portal. The main entrance of the minaret is at the eastern wall and there is an arrow slit in the southern wall. The upper story has an opening at the eastern side overlooking the inside of the *turbah*, most probably intended for the call to prayer (*adhān*), and an arrow slit at the north wall for lighting and ventilation of the staircase. The remaining walls of the minaret are solid with no openings or ornamentation.

The top of the square section is a platform with *muqarnas* (squinches) supporting the octagonal pavilion which has arched windows on all the eight sides except the eastern side, where the entrance to the pavilion is located. It is topped by a *mabkharah*, the latest example of its kind.<sup>12</sup> The *mabkharah* rests on a platform with three tiers of *muqarnas* and a peculiar stone motif consisting of protruding triangles forming a saw-tooth pattern.<sup>13</sup> The height of the minaret and the fact that the *turbah* is built on high ground allows a wide view of the surrounding area and the towers of the Citadel, a point that will be discussed.

The minaret has an octagonal band under the *mabkharah* with an inscription of Quran 24:37, ending with "for the remembrance of Allah" (*'an dhikr Allāh*).<sup>14</sup>

The residential quarters (figs. 9 and 10) lie to the north of the portal and can

<sup>12</sup>Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *The Minarets of Cairo* (Cairo, 1985), 101.

<sup>13</sup>A similar motif appears earlier at the top of the transition zone of the dome of Tankizbughā (*Index* 298, 760/1359).

<sup>14</sup>Bernard O'Kane, *Documentation of the Inscriptions in the Historic Zone in Cairo, Prepared for the Egyptian Antiquities Project of the American Research Center in Egypt, Inc. (ARCE)* (forthcoming), inscription no. 85.5.



be entered through the door at the portal vestibule which leads to a stone cross-vaulted vestibule with two recesses in the western and northern walls and a door at the eastern wall. The door leads to a roofless passage parallel to the façade and to another door leading to the courtyard (*ḥawsh*).

This roofless passage divides the residential area into two parts. The western part has the remains of five vaulted cells (fig. 9) (the northern three have a long narrow window similar to an arrow slit for lighting and ventilation) and the eastern part has the remains of walls of several rooms which are now covered under layers of debris. The northern side of the residential part has a two-storied wall with a window at each floor overlooking the area to the north of the *turbah*. We can conclude that it consisted of two apartments (*riwāq*).

The passage's eastern door leads to the courtyard which is an open rectangular area (fig. 5). A water well is now hidden under debris. The courtyard's ground level is the same as that of the residential area.

A large roofless *īwān* (a space enclosed on three sides) lies at the eastern side of the courtyard (fig. 7); the *īwān*'s ground level is slightly higher than that of the courtyard. The *īwān* walls are thick, made up of rubble lined by dressed stone on both sides. The outer side of the eastern wall is the eastern façade of the *turbah*, now overlooking a street with modest modern buildings and workshops. The outer wall is smoothed with no decoration and reveals the outward projection of the mihrab. The other two sides probably overlooked the area around the *turbah* before the addition of the two *ziyādahs*, the walls of which are thinner and of a different material than that of the *īwān*, which indicates that they were built at different dates.

The inner eastern (*qiblah*) wall of the *īwān* has a mihrab in its middle (fig. 6). The mihrab consists of a semi-cylindrical niche flanked by two engaged columns, now lost, and a conch in the form of a semi-dome with a pointed arch profile. The conch has two layers of *muqarnas* at the base and a ribbed shell-like motif on top. It is covered by plaster painted with arabesque designs obviously added at a later stage.

The *īwān* walls are all covered by smooth plaster and have no decoration. There is a slightly recessed horizontal band running around the three sides of the *īwān*. The band is of the same width as the first layer of *muqarnas* on the mihrab and at the same level. The recessed band has nail holes indicating that the band once bore wooden panels, probably with inscriptions, which have disappeared. The *īwān* is roofless at present but it could well have had a wooden roof that was dismantled when the dome was built.

A stone domed cube stands in the middle of the *īwān* (fig. 7); its east-west axis passes through the mihrab at the eastern wall of the *īwān*. The dome consists of the three traditional sides of a cubic base, transitional zone, and domed roof.



The cubic base has four thick walls with the same height as the walls of the *īwān* and is of the open type (canopy),<sup>15</sup> as each of its four walls has a large pointed arched opening. The inside and outside walls of the cube are smooth with no decoration or recesses. An inscription runs along the top part of the four walls of the cube. It begins with Quran 2:255–56, and then reads, “This blessed dome was completed on the first of the month of Rabī‘ I in the year 764/19 December 1362.”<sup>16</sup>

The transition zone on the inside (fig. 8) is octagonal consisting of four corner *muqarnas* alternating with four recesses, each with two windows in a horseshoe arch. The transition zone thus transforms the square shape of the cube into the cylindrical base carrying the dome roof. The lower part of the base has eight keel-arched windows. Above these is an inscription of Quran 3:191–92.<sup>17</sup>

The outer transition zone is simple, consisting of a square base supporting the octagonal transition zone with eight openings corresponding to the inner windows mentioned above. The outside of the cylindrical base of the dome consists of two parts; the lower part has eight keel-arched openings corresponding to the eight inner windows alternating with eight similar blind keel arches. The upper part features an inscription of Quran 2:255–56 and 258, ending with “each one who believes in Allah” (*kull man āmin billāh*).<sup>18</sup>

The roof has the typical Mamluk keel-arched profile, bare on the inside except for an inscription of Quran 3:190–93. Verse 3:193 is not complete and ends with “Believe you in your Lord, so we believed” (*an āminū bi-rabbikum fa-āmannā*). The dome apex has a circular Quranic inscription which starts with the continuation of verse 3:193 mentioned earlier, reading “Our Lord! Therefore forgive us” (*rabbānā fa-ighfir lanā*), and verse 3:194 until “by thy messengers” (*‘alā rusulika*).<sup>19</sup>

The most striking feature of the dome is the outer ribbing of the roof which was an innovation in its time, where convex ribs alternated with concave flutings.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup>The open-type domes are not common in Mamluk Cairo. We know of only two other examples. One is the dome built by al-Ashraf Barsbāy for his brother Yashbak (d. 833/1429) at his *turbah* in the Northern Cemetery (*Index* 121, 835/1432). The other is that of Ilbāz al-Ashhab built at the rear courtyard of the *turbah* of Khayrbik in Bāb al-Wazīr street (*Index* 248, 908/1502–3), which has an octagonal plan rather than the traditional square plan.

<sup>16</sup>O’Kane, *Documentation of the Inscriptions in the Historic Zone in Cairo*, inscription no. 85.1. The Quranic verses are quoted from the monument’s file no. 85 at the archives of the Supreme Council of Antiquities at the Citadel of Cairo.

<sup>17</sup>These verses are recorded in the monument’s file no. 85 at the archives of the Supreme Council of Antiquities at the Citadel of Cairo.

<sup>18</sup>O’Kane, *Documentation of the Inscriptions in the Historic Zone in Cairo*, inscription no. 85.4.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, inscription no. 85.3.

<sup>20</sup>The same technique was used shortly before at the dome of the same Tankizbughā in the



This technique adds an aesthetic impact created by the play of light and shade when light is reflected on the ribbed dome's undulating surface.

The most controversial parts of the *turbah* are the enclosures flanking the central part of the *turbah* to the north and south which we will call *ziyādah* for reasons to be discussed shortly (fig. 11). These parts are obvious additions to the main part; they are made of different material, with obvious gaps at the points of contact with the outer walls of the central part.

The northern *ziyādah* is a rectangular enclosure adjacent to the *īwān* and the courtyard to the north. Its eastern wall is an extension, with a gap, of the eastern wall of the *īwān*.

The northern and western walls now constitute the outer walls of the *turbah*. The *ziyādah* has a large rectangular room to the east, adjacent to the *īwān*. The southern wall of this room is the north wall of the *īwān*. This room was barrel vaulted as indicated by its arched eastern wall and opens onto the courtyard through a door at the western wall. Without a *waqfiyah* or excavation it is hard to determine the function of the room. It is unlikely to have been a mosque since it has no mihrab.

The remaining part is covered up with debris. However, the upper part of a vaulted roof made of bricks protrudes from the debris. We can conclude therefore that this part consisted of windowless vaulted cells. We can distinguish the remains of a wall between the courtyard and the northern *ziyādah* that has since disappeared, giving the wrong impression that the *ziyādah* is an integral part of the *turbah* proper.

The walls of the southern *ziyādah* are also made of material different from that of the main part of the *turbah*. It is aligned with the stone façade of the *turbah* to the west and the *īwān* wall to the east, yet not integrated with either of them. The eastern part is an oblong enclosure with a recess at the short eastern side that could have served as a mihrab since the enclosure could well have been a mosque. The remaining part extends to the west adjacent to the courtyard and is totally covered by dirt and debris. Thus, without an excavation, any attempt to recreate a detailed plan or understand its function would be pure conjecture.

### WHY ZIYĀDAH?

Generally speaking the term *ziyādah* traditionally denotes a space (roofed or open to the sky) added to a mosque, intended to serve a function different from the main function of the mosque.<sup>21</sup> The most famous *ziyādahs* outside Egypt were

Mamluk Qarāfah (*Index* 298, 760/1359). See C. Kessler, *The Carved Masonry Domes of Mediaeval Cairo* (Cairo, 1976), 9.

<sup>21</sup>Creswell limited the function of the *ziyādah* to isolating and sheltering the mosque from its surroundings. See: K. A. C. Creswell and J. Allan, *A Short Account of Early Moslem Architecture*



found at the Great Mosque of Samarra (third/ninth century),<sup>22</sup> the mosque of Abū Dulaf (245/859–60), also in Samarra,<sup>23</sup> and the *ziyādah* added to the Great Mosque of Sūsah in Tunisia (236/850–51).<sup>24</sup> In Egypt several examples of *ziyādahs* are known but all vanished except that of the Mosque of Ibn Ṭūlūn. It is well known that the al-Azhar and al-Ḥākim mosques also had *ziyādahs*; however, the oldest *ziyādah* in Egypt was that of the Mosque of ‘Amr. We will discuss it here in more detail since it will help us to understand the *ziyādah* of Tankizbughā.

At the outset we have to distinguish between an addition or an extension and the *ziyādah* as defined above; for example the addition of an arcade (*riwāq*), a dome,<sup>25</sup> a mihrab, a *maqṣūrah*,<sup>26</sup> a minaret,<sup>27</sup> or even a madrasah<sup>28</sup> is not considered a *ziyādah* but an extension.

In the case of the mosque of Amr, the *ziyādah* does not refer to the extensive additions started by Musālamah ibn Mukhālād, the Umayyad governor of Egypt, in 53/672–73 and completed under ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir, the Abbasid governor, in 212/827, which doubled the area of the original mosque built by ‘Amr.<sup>29</sup> Rather, we mean here the *raḥbah* that was suggested by Bernard O’Kane and was defined by al-Maqrīzī as a spacious area.<sup>30</sup> The Mamluk documents used the term *raḥbah* to mean a spacious area within a house, a mosque, or in front of a building,

(Cairo, 1989), 395–96.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 361–62.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 369, 373.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 355.

<sup>25</sup>The most striking examples are the four arcades and the dome added to the courtyard (*ṣaḥn*) of the Azhar mosque by the Fatimid caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ during the years 524–44/1129–49. See ‘Abd al-Wahhāb Ḥasan, *Tārīkh al-Masājīd al-Atharīyah* (Cairo, 1994), 51.

<sup>26</sup>The governor of Egypt, Qurrah ibn Sharīk, added a mihrab and a *maqṣūrah* to the mosque of ‘Amr on the orders of the Umayyad caliph al-Walīd ibn ‘Abd al-Malik in 94/712. See: ibid., 24; Aḥmad Fikrī, *Masājīd al-Qāhirah wa-Madārisuhā: al-Madkhal* (Cairo, 1961), 69.

<sup>27</sup>Musālamah ibn Mukhālād al-Anṣārī, governor of Egypt under the Umayyad Caliph Mu‘āwīyah, added four minarets to the mosque of ‘Amr in 53/672. See: Fikrī, *Masājīd al-Qāhirah*, 68. Two minarets were also added to al-Azhar mosque by the Mamluk sultans al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy in 873/1468 and al-Ashraf Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī in 915/1510.

<sup>28</sup>Three madrasahs were added to al-Azhar mosque; al-Ṭaybarsīyah (*Index* 97, 709/1309), al-Aqbughāwīyah (*Index* 97, 740/1340), and al-Jawharīyah (*Index* 97, 844/1440).

<sup>29</sup>For details of such works refer to: Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad Ibn Duqmāq, *Al-Intiṣār li-Wāsiṭat ‘Iqd al-Amṣār* (Beirut, n.d.), 59–74; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Mawā‘iz wa-al-I’tibār fī Dhīkr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār* (Bulaq, 1854), 2:247–50; ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, *Tārīkh al-Masājīd al-Atharīyah*, 24–25; Fikrī, *Masājīd al-Qāhirah*, 67–73.

<sup>30</sup>Bernard O’Kane, “The Ziyada of the Mosque of Al-Hakim,” in *L’Egypte fatimide: son art et son histoire*, ed. Marianne Barrucand (Paris, 1999).



generally without a roof but sometimes totally or partially covered by a roof.<sup>31</sup> Since the *raḥbahs* in question have vanished, Bernard O’Kane depended mainly on al-Maqrīzī’s (d. 845/1442) account in his *Khīṭaṭ* and did not refer to Ibn Duqmāq’s (d. 809/1407)<sup>32</sup> account in his *Intiṣār*. Obviously, both of the Mamluk historians were quoting Ibn al-Mutawwaj (d. 730/1329–30), as acknowledged by al-Maqrīzī but not by Ibn Duqmāq. I will therefore use here Ibn Duqmāq’s *Intiṣār*, since it is the older and more detailed of the two accounts.

As a word of caution we should note that Ibn Duqmāq used the term *ziyādah* interchangeably to mean an extension as well as in the more restricted sense we outlined above. However, he uses the term *raḥbah* when he refers to the *ziyādah* in this strict sense rather than as an extension. Within his general description of the mosque, Ibn Duqmāq mentions specifically that the mosque had three *ziyādahs* at the western (opposite the qiblah) and southern façades of the mosque.<sup>33</sup>

The oldest of these was the *raḥbah* added to the south façade in 175/791–92 by Mūsá ibn ʿĪsá, the Abbasid governor of Egypt.<sup>34</sup> It had a door opening to the street and leading to the interior of the mosque, and was covered by a ceiling supported by fifteen columns.<sup>35</sup> It was designated for the court of the chief judge which convened there twice a week.<sup>36</sup>

The second *ziyādah* was built in 258/871–72 by Abū Ayyūb, the tax collector (*ṣāhib al-kharāj*) for Ibn Ṭūlūn. It occupied the remaining part of the southern façade as an extension to the *raḥbah* of Mūsá.<sup>37</sup> It had two doors opening to the

<sup>31</sup>Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn and Laila Ibrahim, *Architectural Terms in Mamluk Documents (648–923 H/1250–1517 M)* (Cairo, 1990), 53.

<sup>32</sup>Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw’ al-Lāmi’ fī A’yān al-Qarn al-Tāsi’* (Beirut, 1966), 1:145; Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi wa-al-Mustawfá ba’d al-Wāfi*, vols. 1–2, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn (Cairo, 1984); vol. 3, ed. Nabīl Muḥammad ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (Cairo, 1989); vol. 4, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn (Cairo, 1986); vol. 5, ed. Nabīl Muḥammad ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (Cairo, 1987); vol. 6, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn (Cairo, 1990); vol. 7, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn (Cairo, 1993); vol. 8, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn (Cairo, 1999); vol. 9, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn (Cairo, 2002); vol. 10, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn (Cairo, 2003); vol. 11, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn (Cairo, 2005), 1:140. This date is also given by several other contemporary historians. However, al-Suyūṭī, the late Mamluk historian, mentions that Ibn Duqmāq died in Dhū al-Ḥijjah 790/1388; Jalāl al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍarah fī Akhbār Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah*, ed. Khalīl al-Manṣūr (Beirut, 1997), 1:454. See: J. Pedersen, “Ibn Duqmāq,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 3:756.

<sup>33</sup>Ibn Duqmāq, *Al-Intiṣār*, 61.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 65.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 61.

<sup>36</sup>Al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2:253.

<sup>37</sup>Ibn Duqmāq, *Al-Intiṣār*, 66–67.



street and two doors leading to the interior of the mosque. It was also covered by a ceiling supported by forty-two columns and divided into two sections. One section was assigned to the court of the Shafi‘i judge and the other was assigned to the Maliki judge. Each section had its own mihrab flanked by two columns.<sup>38</sup>

The third *ziyādah* is the *raḥbah* occupying the northern part of the western façade, built by Ibn al-Ḥārith who became the chief judge of Egypt in 237/851–52. He built the *raḥbah* in the same year to give additional space for the congregation. It was also used for trading on Fridays.<sup>39</sup> It had three doors leading to the outside and two doors to the mosque interior. It was covered by a roof supported by twenty-four columns and a mihrab flanked by two columns.<sup>40</sup> Almost 120 years later, in 357/967–68, al-Khāzin added an arcade (*riwāq*) connected to the *raḥbah* of Ibn al-Ḥārith as an eastern extension.<sup>41</sup> This arcade is not considered a *ziyādah* in the strict sense, but as an extension to the mosque proper. Ibn Duqmāq described it as a *riwāq* and not as a *raḥbah*, as was the case in the three previous examples.<sup>42</sup>

We conclude from these accounts that a *ziyādah* could also be a roofed addition to the outer façades of a building in the form of a *raḥbah*, built at a later date than the original structure. Normally it could have doors (opening to the outside as well as to the inside of the building), windows, and mihrabs. The functions of the *ziyādah* are normally different from the functions of the building proper, as we have seen in the case of the three *ziyādahs* of the mosque of ‘Amr outlined above. Obviously they were different from those of the mosque proper whose main functions were the Friday prayer, teaching, and housing the public treasury (*bayt al-māl*).

The purpose of this long digression is to show that the features of the two enclosures added to the *turbah* of Tankizbughā are very similar to those of the three *ziyādahs* of the mosque of ‘Amr. They were built after the *turbah* proper as evidenced by the obvious separation of the walls and the use of different construction materials. They take the form of roofed *raḥbahs* added along the external façade, with doors leading to the interior of the *turbah*. The only exception is that they do

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 61.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 66.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 61.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 68.

<sup>42</sup>Bernard O’Kane mentions also *ziyādahs* for the mosque based on the account of al-Maqrīzī, who was quoting Ibn al-Muttawaj, but O’Kane combined the *raḥbahs* of Mūsá and Abū Ayyūb and considered them as a single *ziyādah* added to the western façade opposite the qiblah side. He also combined the *raḥbah* of al-Ḥārith with the arcade of al-Khāzin and considered them as the second *ziyādah* added to the southern façade of the mosque. He assumed therefore the presence of a third anonymous *ziyādah* added to the northern façade. See O’Kane, “The Ziyada of the Mosque of Al-Hakim,” 153.



not appear to have had doors opening to the outside like the *ziyādahs* of the mosque of Amr. This was no doubt for security reasons in what was then an isolated location that dictated the use of only one entrance to the *turbah*.

I therefore have called this part a *ziyādah*. Identifying a specific function for the *ziyādahs* of Tankizbughā, in the absence of *waqf* documents and with the highly dilapidated state of the *turbah*, would be sheer speculation. It suffices to say that it provided an additional space serving part of the functions of the *turbah*, as will be discussed later.

### FUNCTIONS OF THE *TURBAH*

The main function of any *turbah* is to provide a burial place for the founder, and his family and dependents. The burial courtyard and the dome served this function but it is highly unlikely that the founder himself was buried here. The *turbah* proper and the dome in particular were finished, according to the foundation inscription, in Rabī‘ I 764/1362–63, while Tankizbughā had died four years earlier, in Ramaḍān 759/1358. The sources do not mention his burial place but it is likely that he was buried in another domed mausoleum in the Mamluk Qarāfah, which is also attributed to him.<sup>43</sup> Otherwise we have no clue as to who is buried in this *turbah*.

The large residential area indicates that a reasonably large community lived on the premises, most likely to perform the normal religious, social, and administrative services for the inhabitants of the *turbah*. The religious tasks included prayer, Sufi rituals, reading of the Quran, recitation of hadith, invocation of blessings, and teaching. The social services included charitable works such as the dispensation of water, and the distribution of alms, clothes, or food. The administrative tasks were those related to the management of the establishment, including its endowed property, financial resources, and expenditures, by a hierarchy of administrators headed by the superintendent (*nāzir* or *shaykh al-turbah*). Finally, maintenance related to cleaning and guarding the building and its facilities was carried out by a staff of servants and janitors (*farrāsh*).

An outline of the general tasks that could have been performed is only tentative due to the absence of an endowment deed or contemporary sources dealing with this subject. However, the architectural units of the *turbah* could have conveniently supported many if not all the activities mentioned. There was a vast residential area, a minaret for the call to prayer, a *qiblah iwān* with a mihrab for prayer, several halls (*qā‘ah*), two *ziyādahs* for Sufi practices or teaching functions, a water well, and a large courtyard for the convenient movement of the residents among the various units of the *turbah*.

<sup>43</sup>*Index* 298, 760/1359.



Another unconventional function can be suggested for this *turbah* based on the political circumstances at the time of its foundation, its location, and its architectural features. Tankizbughā, as we have seen, died four years before the completion the *turbah*, leaving us to wonder who finished it and why. Two individuals are the most likely contenders for such a task: his wife, the sister of al-Nāṣir Ḥasan and scion of the wealthy Qalawunid family, or Yalbughā al-‘Umarī, who succeeded Tankizbughā as *amīr majlis* and was awarded his *iqṭā‘* upon his death in 759/1358.<sup>44</sup> It is unlikely that such a relatively small and simple structure would have taken four years to be completed, which would suggest that his wife must have taken a long time to mourn him after his death. Such prolonged periods of mourning were not common among the Mamluks.<sup>45</sup> Thus, Yalbughā al-‘Umarī is the more likely person to have completed the building since he was assigned his *iqṭā‘*, which probably included the *waqf* of the *turbah*. This was no doubt an act of piety and devotion, although worldly motives cannot be discounted.

The second reign of al-Nāṣir Ḥasan (755–62/1354–61) was stormy and full of political strife. Like his father al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, he eliminated members of the elite and gradually replaced them with his own mamluks. He banished from Cairo Amir Tāz, the favorite amir of Sultan al-Ṣāliḥ Ṣāliḥ (brother and predecessor of al-Nāṣir Ḥasan during the interregnum of 752–55/1351–54) by appointing him, against his will, viceroy (*nā‘ib*) of Aleppo in 755/1354.<sup>46</sup> In 758/1357 the *amīr kabīr* Shaykhū was conveniently murdered by a minor amir over a petty complaint. The sultan denied any knowledge of the crime but quickly rounded up all the senior amirs loyal to Shaykhū and promoted his own, including Yalbughā al-‘Umarī.<sup>47</sup> Finally the last of the great amirs, Sarghatmush, was arrested, exiled to Alexandria, and murdered there in 759/1358.<sup>48</sup>

In the same year that Tankizbughā died, Yalbughā was promoted to the highest military rank, *amīr majlis*, replacing Tankizbughā, and was granted his *iqṭā‘*. He became the most influential figure in the state after the sultan himself, a situation which led to an inevitable confrontation. Before long, each started to distrust the other and wait for a chance to get rid of his rival. Finally, Yalbughā prevailed and the sultan was murdered in 762/1361.<sup>49</sup> Yalbughā appointed a new puppet sultan,

<sup>44</sup>Please refer to the biography of Tankizbughā outlined above.

<sup>45</sup>Yalbughā al-‘Umarī killed his master and sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan on Jumādā I 762/Mar–Apr 1361 and married his widow Khūnd Ṭulūbiyah in Muḥarram 763/Nov 1361, less than a year after his crime. See: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 7:60, 73.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 3–4.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 33–35.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 41–42, 44.

<sup>49</sup>Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:311–14.



al-Manṣūr Muḥammad from the Qalawunid family, and became the ruler in fact if not in name.<sup>50</sup> The following seven years saw more internal struggle between Yalbughā and the rival amirs till finally he was murdered by his own mamluks in 768/1366–67.<sup>51</sup>

Under these circumstances and given the constant threat to his authority, security issues must have been of primary concern to Yalbughā. The area around the *turbah*, known as the *sharā'*<sup>52</sup> in the Mamluk period, was of strategic importance as it dominated the route to Syria, *al-darb al-sulṭānī*. The area was spacious with sparse population, representing the last line of defense of the citadel against invasion from Syria, while also providing ample space for military maneuvers among warring mamluk factions. During the Bahri Mamluk period the area was the theater of many important political events.<sup>53</sup>

The first threat to the authority of Yalbughā after the murder of al-Nāṣir Ḥasan came from Baydamur, the *nā'ib al-shām*. Thus, an invasion from Syria was a serious possibility.<sup>54</sup> Yalbughā was in the habit of visiting and staying in the *turbahs* of his lieutenants. For example, he was at the *turbah* of Maliktamur al-Mārdīnī when he received the news that Taybughā al-Ṭawīl, *amīr silāḥ* and the most influential of his amirs, was plotting rebellion in protest of his transfer to Damascus in 767/1365–66.<sup>55</sup> The ensuing military confrontation that took place between them was at the Northern Cemetery, not far from the *turbah* of Tankizbughā.<sup>56</sup>

It would not be unreasonable therefore to suggest here that Yalbughā, setting piety and loyalty to a deceased colleague aside, completed the *turbah* after the death of Tankizbughā to be used for surveillance and as a base for military operations. That it was used for both of these functions is further evidenced by its site and many architectural features.

The *turbah* was built on an outcrop near the Muqaṭṭam Hill, dominating the nearby strategic route to the north. Building a tall minaret on an already high site is not justified by the simple needs of the call to prayer in this isolated area. The open pavilion on top of the minaret provided a perfect setting for watching the road and communicating with the Citadel. An individual standing at the pavilion

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 11:3–4.

<sup>51</sup>For the turbulent events of those years see al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 7:65–137; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:4–40.

<sup>52</sup>Now called the Northern Cemetery of Cairo.

<sup>53</sup>Hani Hamza, *The Northern Cemetery of Cairo* (Costa Mesa, CA, 2001), 53.

<sup>54</sup>Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 7:66; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:4.

<sup>55</sup>Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 7:115. The contemporary sources are silent about the site of the *turbah*.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 155–56; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:30–31.



could easily see and communicate by signals with the two eastern towers of the Citadel: Burj al-Ramlah and Burj al-Ḥaddād. The size of the residential area and the addition of the *ziyādah* could have provided ample space for a garrison barracks. The *turbah* has high walls with a limited number of small windows and only one entrance that could be easily defended from the minaret roof and the arrow slits.

The use of religious buildings for military functions was known, though not very common in Cairo. Farid Shafei suggested such functions for Mashhad al-Juyūshī on the Muqāṭṭam Hill.<sup>57</sup>

### PECULIAR *TURBAH*?

The analysis of Mamluk or any other type of buildings must consider three intersecting aspects. An interactive matrix of utilitarian, expressive, and formal considerations all work together within a framework of the prevailing socioeconomic conditions and technology.

The changing utilitarian functions of the *turbah* of Tankizbughā influenced its formal and expressive aspects. The religious and charitable functions intended by the founder soon gave way to the propaganda and security needs of his ambitious successor, Yalbughā. The roof of the *qiblah iwān* was thus dismantled and an unusual dome erected overhead, creating an internal visual focus, a change which infused a new vitality into a dull sanctuary and signalled the profound changes to come. A tall and formidable minaret, which went beyond the needs of the call to prayer in this secluded place, must have been added at this time together with the solitary portal, as evidenced by the foundation inscription. Both represent a response to increasing security needs in a turbulent time. The *ziyādah* was added to meet the needs of increased Sufi activity and to serve as a garrison.

The *turbah* here, more than any other, is both an expression of religious functions and military might, typical of the Mamluk character. The decorations are scarce and subdued but innovative, best suiting a funerary, religious building which was also constructed with worldly considerations. Walls are bare, thick, imposing, with no fenestration, inspiring awe and providing security.

The richest and most popular expressive medium in the Islamic context is Quranic epigraphy. Here it was employed with discretion, as a statement and as a decorative tool to punctuate spaces. The so-called Throne Verse (2:255–56) is depicted twice on the dome. This verse is the most widely used in Islamic monumental epigraphy.<sup>58</sup> The verse 24:36–37 on the minaret is utilitarian and

<sup>57</sup>*Index* 304, 478/1085. Farid Shafei, "The Mashhad al-Juyushi (Archaeological Notes and Studies)," in *Studies in Islamic Art and Architecture in Honor of Professor K. A. C. Creswell* (Cairo, 1965), 237–52.

<sup>58</sup>Erica Dodd and Shereen Khairallah, *The Image of the Word: A Study of Quranic Verses in*



common on minarets and mosque portals as it encourages people to perform prayers and pay alms (*zakāt*).

Finally, formal analysis of the *turbah* shows some odd characteristics, in plan, form, and decoration. A glance at the plan, in addition to the rare *ziyādah*, shows that the placement of the dome at the middle of the *qiblah īwān* is unusual. Normally domes are either attached to a part of the complex or placed over the courtyard. We have demonstrated before that the eastern part of the *turbah* is an *īwān* and not part of the courtyard. It could well be that the *īwān* roof was taken off to give way to the dome. This was perhaps carried out by Yalbughā as the dome was built, which, according to its foundation inscription, was four years after the death of Tankizbughā. It is likely that Tankizbughā was content to build the *īwān* without a dome, since he had another similar dome at Qarāfat al-Mamālīk.

In form and decoration there is quite an unusual mix of the old and the new. The use of the traditional squinches on the internal zone of transition, common in the Fatimid and Ayyubid periods but not in the Mamluk era, stands out in contrast to the outer ribbing of the dome which was an innovation at the time.

The minaret consisting of a square base supporting a pavilion topped by a *mabkharah*, the latest existing example of its kind, is definitely a throw-back, yet it has a stone motif consisting of protruding triangles forming a saw-tooth formation. Again this formation was an innovation at the time sharply in contrast with the traditional shape of the minaret.

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*Islamic Architecture* (Beirut, 1981), 1:64, 2:10–17.



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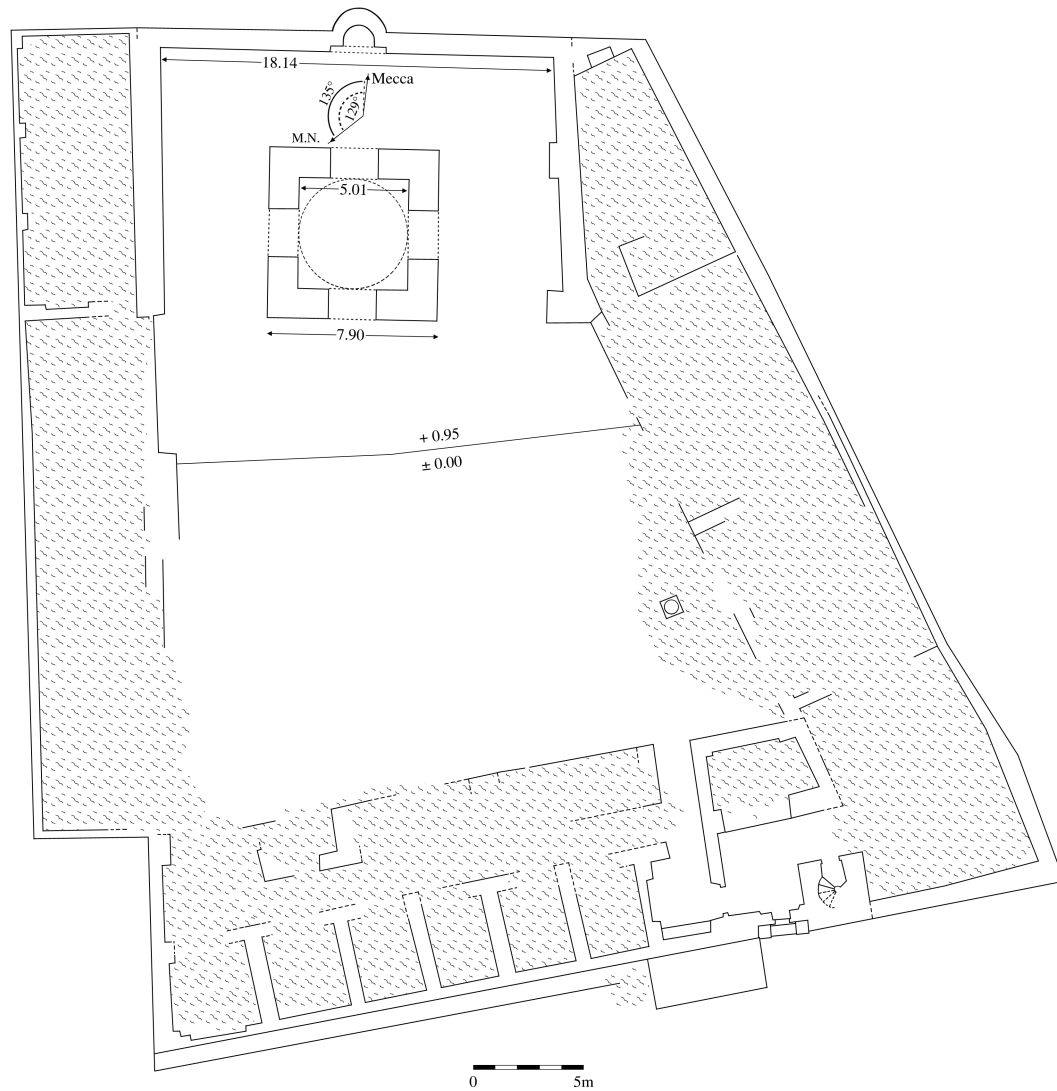


Fig. 1. Plan of the *turbah* of Tankizbughā (after Kessler)



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Fig. 2. *Turbah* of Tankizbughā at the beginning of the twentieth century (from the archives of the Egyptian Supreme Council for Antiquities)



Fig. 3. Entrance and the vestibule from inside



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Fig. 4. The minaret and a room east of the vestibule (from the archives of the Egyptian Supreme Council for Antiquities)



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Fig. 5. The court (*hawsh*)



Fig. 6. The *mihrab*



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Fig. 7. The dome within the *īwān*



Fig. 8. Transition zone from the inside



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Fig. 9. Remains of the residential area



Fig. 10. Cell (*khilwah*)



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Fig. 11. The southern *ziyadah*



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