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***CENTRAL ASIA'S PRICELESS HERITAGE: ABU SAID IBN ABI'L-  
KHAIR THE POET AND SUFI***

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**Nilgün İSMAİL**

The Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies

**Abstract**

*This paper gives an outlook of the architectural monument of the 11<sup>th</sup> century -the mausoleum of Abu Said ibn Abi'l-Khair, popularly named Meana Baba. The monument is a unique medieval architecture situated in the Central Asia.*

*The body of the paper refers to Sufism in Central Asia and gives detailed information about Abu-Said Abul Khair the poet and sufi.*

*The concluding section underlines the importance of the architectural monument.*

**Key-words:** Central Asia, cultural heritage, architectural monument, Mausoleum of Abu Said ibn Abi'l-Khair, sufi poet.

**1. Sufism and Central Asia**

**1.1. The origin of Sufism**

The origin of the word *sufi* derives from the Arabic word *ṣafa* which means purity and another origin *s ṣuf* which means *wool* referring to the simple cloaks the early Muslim ascetics wore, but many medieval scholars refers to the word *sufi* as a derivation from the Greek word *sofia* meaning wisdom.

### **1.2. The definition of Sufism**

Sufism is a mystic school of Islamic thought and it includes poets and philosophers. Sufism is based upon believe that their teaching is the essence of every religion and their central concept is led by love, as an image of the essence of God to the universe. The mystic school of Sufism sees the beauty inside the obvious image of ugly and its infinite tolerance open arms to the most evil one.

### **1.3. Dervishes**

Dervishes are ascetic Muslim monks, initiated members of sufi order. Dervishes actions include ecstatic dancing whirling. The spread of Islam and Islamic culture is linked to the spread of Sufism, especially in Asia and Africa. Recent academic works underline the role of Sufism in creating and propagating the culture of the Ottoman world and culture (See picture 1)



**Mevlâna mausoleum, Konya, Turkey)**

## **2. Abu Said ibn Abi'l-Khair the poet and sufi**

Abu Said ibn Abi'l-Khair Maihani (967-1049) was one of the greatest and most influential medieval Sufi of Central Asia. Abu Said ibn Abi'l-Khair Maihani referred to himself as “Nobody, son of nobody” and he was a contemporary of the famous philosopher Avicenna. He was one of the most fascinating and original of poets. Some of his poems are a code for the seeker treading on the path of Sufism and some serve as a sign for those lost in the labyrinth of sweet love.

### 3. The mausoleum of Abu Said popularly named Meana Baba

The mausoleum of Abu Said ibn Abi'l-Khair Maihani, popularly named Meana Baba is a unique medieval architecture, where the poet and sufi was buried. The architectural complex includes the mausoleum of Abu Said ibn Abi'l-Khair Maihani which is situated on the one of the Silk Road arteries, the route from the oasis of Sarakhs to Abivered. The mausoleum of Abu Said ibn Abi'l-Khair Maihani has an interior dado of Kashan style with eight-pointed tiles covered of plaster. After the restoration works in 2005 the tiles were removed. The entrance facade is covered with mosaic-faience in sky blue, cobalt blue and white. The monument of the 11<sup>th</sup> century continues to attract pilgrims, travelers, scholars and art historians.(See picture 2)



Abu Said ibn Abi'l-Khair Maihani

### 4. Conclusions

The mausoleum of Abu Said ibn Abi'l-Khair Maihani is restored and now is one of the key historical monuments included into the UNESCO Cultural Heritage.

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**Nilgün Ismail**, lecturer with the Department of Germanic Languages and Business Communication of the Academy of Economic Studies where she has been teaching Business English since 1997. She is the author of a text - book “PRATİK TÜRKÇE”, published in 2003, issued for students of economics studying Turkish language. Her doctoral research in Ottoman Studies has led to the publication of several articles in this domain. Her main interest is intercultural domain where she presented studies about *The Turk-Tatar Community living in Romanian Dobruja* at several national and international conferences and symposia. She is the co-author of several articles in applied economics.