

# *The Taj Mahal*

## *History and Architecture*

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&  
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*(Nov 15, 2015, April 3, 2016)*



*The wonder that was. . .*

- 
- Babur (R.1526-1530)
  - Humayun (R. 1530-40; 1555-56)
  - Akbar-e-azam (R.1556- 1605)
  - Jahangir (R.1605-1631)
  - Shah Jahan -e Azam (R. 1627-1658)
  - Alamgir Aurangzeb (R.1658-1707)
  
  - Thirteen others (1707-1857)

# *'A Tear on the Face of Eternity' . . . 1*

## *'Hi-story' of Taj Mahal :*

- *Built by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan (Rule: 1628-1658 AD),*
- *Dedicated to the memory of Mumtaz Mahal*
- *20,000 men worked for 22 years to complete it (1631-53 AD )*
- *Chief architect : Ustad Isa (Agra/Rum)*
- *Typical of Mughal architecture ( Domes and Minarets)*
- *Standing on typical Mughal gardens*
- *Eighth wonder of the world*
- *Symbol of eternal Love*

*'A tear on the face of eternity'*

*---- [Ravindranath Tagore]*

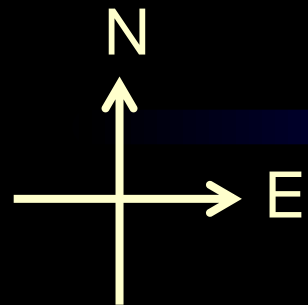
## *Some facts. . .2*

- *Arjumand Banu Begum (1593-1631), also known as Mumtaz Mahal*
- *Married to Shah Jehan (1612), died in (14<sup>th</sup>) child bed (June 20, 1631)*
- *Initially buried in Burhanpur (Madhya Pradesh) – 800 KM south of Agra – at Zainabad on the banks of Tapti River.*
- *Mumtaz's body was shifted to Agra (Jan 8, 1632), interred inside the Taj Complex (outside the Taj Mahal, S-W direction)*
- *Finally laid to rest inside the Taj Mahal (exact date is not known)*
- *Shah Jahan was laid to rest beside Mumtaz (1666)*

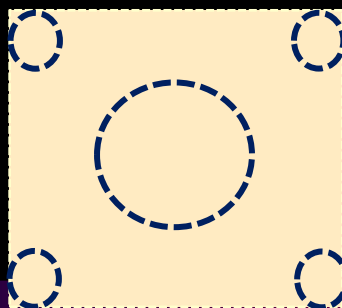
# *The Taj Complex . . . 3*

- *Located on the southern bank of Jamuna river, a little distance from the Red Fort of Agra. (Facing the cardinal South)*
- *A rectangular courtyard (1890 ft x 1000 ft) with the main Marble edifice at the Northern end facing the South. Oriented in the Cardinal directions*
- *The main marble edifice is flanked by two red-stone buildings (triple domed structures)– one is a Mosque and the other (known as the ‘Jawab’ – mirror image of the Mosque) is ‘Community hall’.*
- *The Main Gateway (Entrance) facing the marble edifice at the southern side of the rectangular courtyard (area : 140 ft x110 ft)*
- *Midway between the Marble edifice and the Gateway, at the middle of the longer side of the inner courtyard, are two double-storied buildings known as the ‘Nagar Khana’ – Drum Houses.*

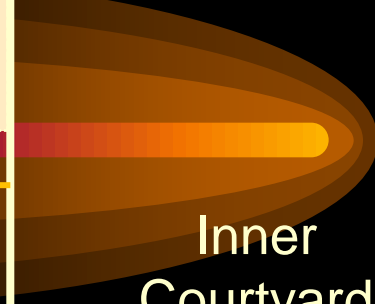
# Jamuna River



Mosque

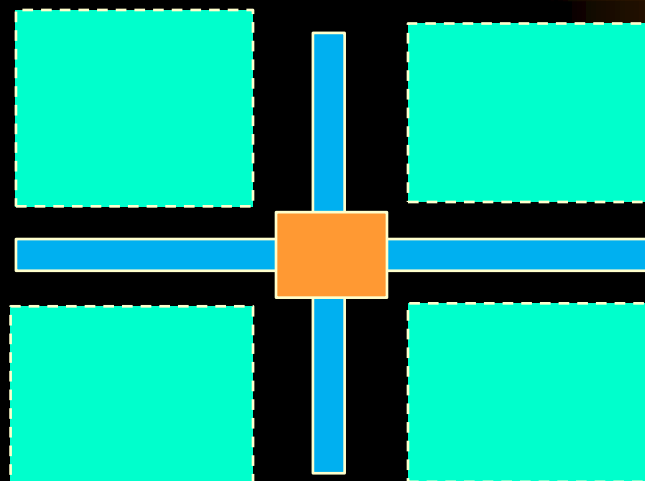


Jawab



Inner  
Courtyard  
1000'x1460'

Nagar  
Khana



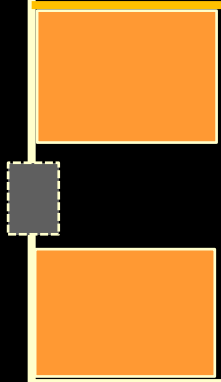
Nagar  
Khana

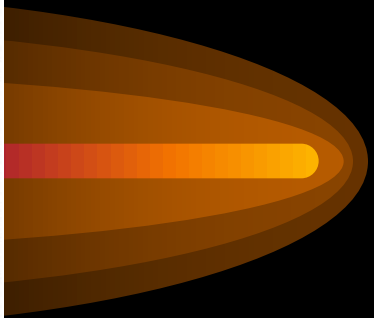
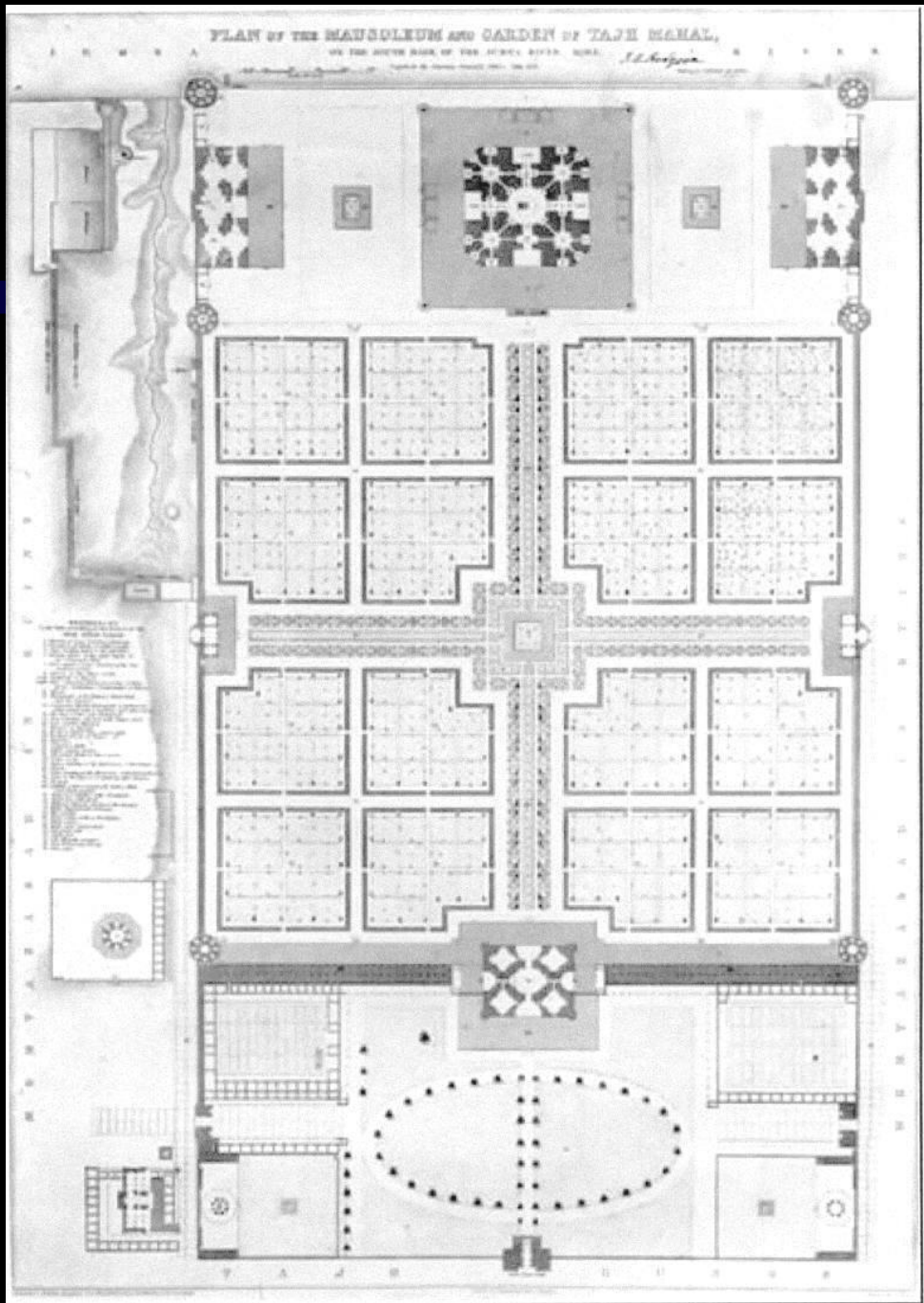
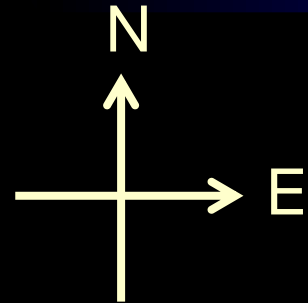


Gateway

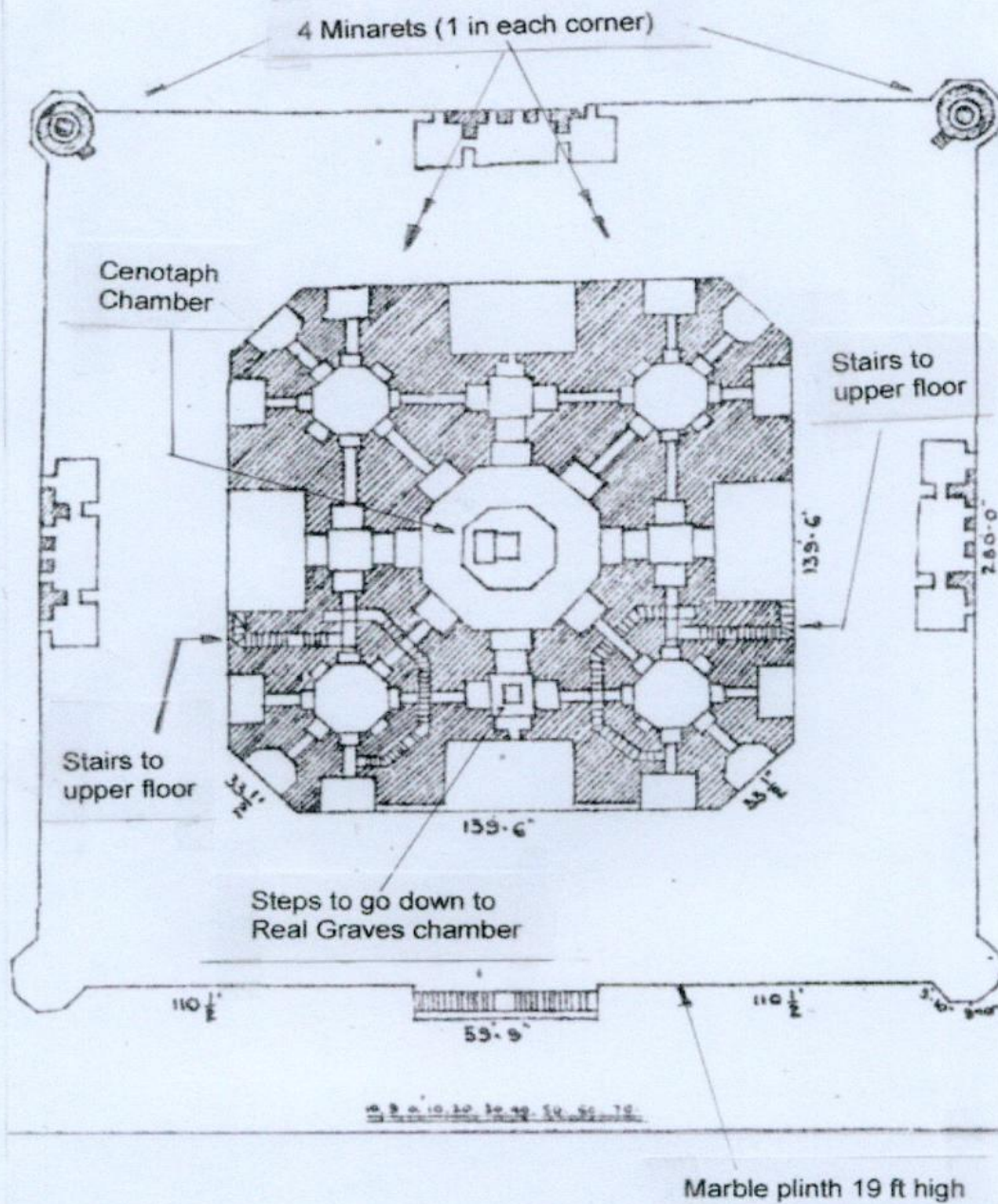


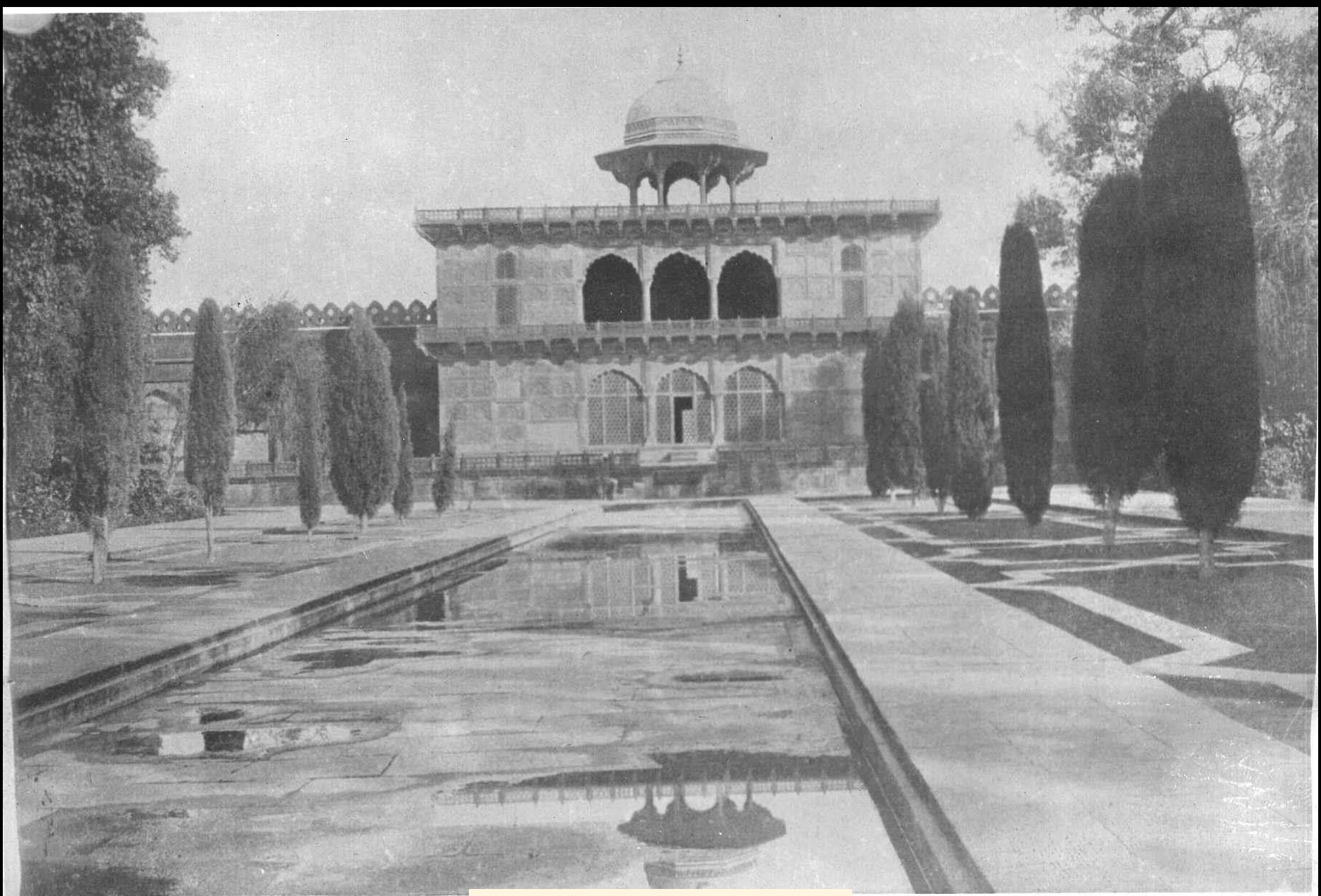
Outer  
Courtyard  
1000'x430'











'Nagar Khana'  
(Drum House?)

# *The Taj Complex . . . 8*

- *The Marble edifice stands on a marble platform (328 ft x 328 ft) with four marble minarets and five domes.*
- *Measures 243.5ft (7-storied edifice) from the plinth (upon the river bed) to the pinnacle.*
- *The skeleton of the building is of bricks and mortar, the top four floors plastered by marble slabs .*
- *There are five other buildings in the courtyard – the Mosque, the ‘Jawab’, two Nagar Khanas, and the Main Gateway separating the inner and outer courtyards.*

# *Primary Source Materials . . . 9*

- *The Court Papers of Shah Jahan*
  - *Badshahnama (vol.I &II )–by Mulla Abdul Hamid Lahori.*
  - *‘Firmans’ (Court orders) of Shah Jahan*
  - *Aurangzeb’s letter to Shah Jahan (dated 1652 AD)*
  
- *Contemporary Travelogues*
  - *Peter Mundy, (East India Company).*
  - *J. B. Tavernier, a French merchant/traveler*
  - *F.S. Manrique, a Portuguese Traveler*
  
- *Architecture*
  - *The underground corridor & chambers*
  - *The domes & minarets*
  - *The Nagar Khanas*
  - *Masonry, Calligraphy, and In-lay work*
  - *Hindu symbolism*



# *Court Documents*

# *Court Documents. . .10*

- i) The Badshahnama – official Court History of Shah Jahan by Mulla Abdul Hamid Lahori.*
- ii) Firmans (official Court orders) of Shah Jahan to Raja Jai Singh of Jaipur, regarding acquisition of marble from the Makrana quarries of Rajasthan.*
- iii) Aurangzeb's letter to Shah Jahan (dated 1652 AD) on the repairs carried out on the Taj Mahal,*

# *The Badshahnama . . . 11*

*Badshahnama (Vol. – I & II), the official Court Journal of Shah Jahan, written by Mulla Abdul Hamid Lahori, in all makes three references to Taj Mahal , and the burial of Mumtaz Mahal.*

- 1. Records the date of Mumtaz's death at Barhanpur as the “17th Zi-it Quada 1040 AH” (June 20, 1631) [ Badshahnama (vol. -I, p. 384)]*
- 2. Her body was brought to Agra on "Friday –15th Jamadi-ul Awwal” (Jan 8, 1632) [Badshahnama (vol. -I, p. 403) ]*
- 3. The gold railing around the tomb "was made under the supervision of Bebadal Khan, Master of king's kitchen". [Badshahnama (Vol.-II, pp. 325-6)]*

# *The Badshahnama . . . 12*

*Badshahnama allocates TWO pages for the burial of queen Mumtaz Mahal (Vol-I, pp.402-403). A line by line translation of these pages :*

*(On) "Friday –15th Jamadi-ul Awwal, the sacred dead body of the traveler to the kingdom of Holiness, hazrat Mumtaz-ul Zamani – who was buried temporarily. . .was brought to the capital Akbarabad (Agra)...*

*"The site covered with magnificent lush garden, to the south of that great city and amidst which (garden) the building known as the palace of Raja Mansingh, at present owned by Raja Jaisingh [Pesh az ein Manzil-e Raja Mansingh bood Wadaree Waqt ba Raja Jaisingh], grandson (of Mansingh) was selected for the burial of the queen whose abode is in heaven . . .16*



# *The Badshahnama . . . 13*

*"Although Raja Jaisingh valued it greatly as his ancestral heritage and property, yet would have been agreeable to part with it gratis for the Emperor Shahjahan. (Still) out of sheer scrupulousness so essential in the matters of bereavement and religious sanctity, in exchange of that grand palace, he was granted a piece of government land (Dar' awaz aan aali Manzil-e az khalisa-e sharifah badoo marahmat farmoodand) after the arrival of the dead body in that great city on 15th Jamadul Soniya.*

*Note the reference to the building known as 'Raja Mansingh's palace', and again, 'grand palace'*

# *The Badshahnama . . . 14*

*"Next year that illustrious body of the heavenly queen was laid to rest. The officials of the capital, according to the royal orders of the day, under the sky-high lofty mausoleum hid the pious lady from the eyes of the world, and the edifice so majestic and with a dome, and so lofty in its stature, is a memorial to the courage of sky-dimensions of the king-- and a strength so mighty in resolution so firm – the foundation was laid and geomatricians of farsight and architects of talent incurred an expenditure of Rs. 40 lakhs (chihal lakh roopiah) on this building."*

*Note the fact that the burial was a casual affair  
(done by officials; date is not recorded)  
Note the 'expenditure of **Rs. 40 lakhs**'*

# *Aurangzeb's Letter...15*

*In the year 1652 AD, Aurangzeb assumed charge as the Governor of Deccan. On his way to Deccan (from Delhi) , he visited Agra and inspected the Taj Mahal. In his letter written from Dholpur, he wrote about the state of affairs and the badly needed repairs to the Taj Mahal. (The letter was quoted by Said Ahmed in "Marakka-i-Akbarabad", 1931), Excerpts from the translation of the letter published by M. S. Vats (Archeological Dept. of India, 1945) are quoted below:*

*How does it tally with the thesis that the building was constructed between 1631-53 AD ?*

# *Aurangzeb's Letter...16*

*Aurangzeb reports Extensive Damage:*

*"The dome of the holy tomb leaked in two places towards the north during the rainy season and so also the fair semi-domed arches, many of the galleries on the second story, the four smaller domes, the four northern compartments and seven arched underground chambers which have developed cracks. During the rains last year the terrace over the main dome also leaked in two or three places. It has been repaired, but it remains to be seen during the ensuing rainy season how far the operations prove successful. The domes of the Mosque and the Jama'at Khana leaked during the rains..."*

*Note the extensive damage in 1652 !*

# *Aurangzeb's Letter...17*

*Aurangzeb carried out Extensive Repairs:*

*"The master builders are of the opinion that if the roof of the second story is reopened and dismantled and treated afresh with concrete, over which half a yard of mortar grout is laid the semi-domed arches, the galleries and the smaller domes will probably become watertight, but they are unable to suggest any measures of repairs to the main dome..."*

*Do these "master builders" appear to be the ORIGINAL builders of the Taj Mahal ?*

# *Shah Jahan acquired Marble !...18*



*There are records of three 'firmans' (Court Orders) by Shah Jahan to Raja Jai Singh of Jaipur, pertaining to the acquisition of marble during the period 1631-37. These are sighted as proof of Shah Jahan constructing the marble edifice. To take a closer look:*

*The work undertaken by Shah Jahan  
Involved marbles right in 1631?*

# *Firman (1) . . . 19*

*i) Firman dated 9 Rajab, 1041 Hijra (Jan 21, 1632) refers to a 'large number of carts' for transportation of marble , but the number is not mentioned.*

*"As a great number of carts are required for transportation of marble needed for constructing building (at the capital), a firman was previously sent to you (to procure them). It is again desired of you, that as many carts on hire be arranged as possible in the earliest time, as has already been written to you, and be dispatched to Makrana for expediting the transport of marble to the capital. Every assistance be given to Allahood who has been deputed to arrange the transportation of marble to Akbarabad. Account (of expenditure on carts) along with the previous account of **amount allocated** for the purchase of marble be submitted (to the mutsaddi in charge of payment)."*

## *Firman (2) . . . .20*

*ii) Firman dated 4 Rabi-ul-Awwal, 1043 Al Hijra (Sept. 9, 1632) refers to 'carts for transportation' of marble, but the quantity is not specified.*

*"Mulkshah has been deputed to Amber (Amer) to bring marble from the new mines (of Makrana). It is commended that carts on hire be arranged for transportation of marble and Mulkshah be assisted to purchase as much marble as he may desire to have. The **purchase price** of marble and cartage shall be paid by him from the treasury. Every other assistance be given to him to procure and bring marble and sculptors to the capital expeditiously."*



## *Firman (3) . . . .21*

*iii) Firman dated 7 Saffer, 1047 Al Hijra (June 21, 1637) instructs Raja Jaisiingh to release the stone-cutters under his employment for the purpose of procuring marble for the Taj Mahal. No details are mentioned :*

*"We hear that your men detain the stone-cutters of the region at Amber and Rajnagar. This creates shortage of stone-cutters (miners) at Makrana and the work (of procuring marble) suffers. Hence it is desired of you that no stone-cutter be detained at Amber and Rajnagar and all of them who are available be sent to the mutsaddis of Makrana."*

*It is clear the procuring of marble started some time in 1632 ,  
soon after Mumtaz's body was shifted to Agra;  
and continued till 1637 or beyond.*

*The quantity is not known.*

# *The Marble Edifice! . . . 22*

- *The Taj Mahal is a huge building on the river bed, having seven stories measuring a height of 243.5 feet from plinth to pinnacle.*
- *The marble platform itself is 323 ft x 323ft area. The main dome is 90 ft. in diameter.*
- *The entire building is of brick and mortar, the marble platform and the upper floors, are plastered with 6” thick marble slabs. The inner walls of the edifice have calligraphical work – 14 chapters of Holy Quran are inscribed on the walls – requiring enormous quantity of marble.*
- *However, the work on marble is only the final phase of the building. (as against the foundation and erection of the edifice). Did Shah Jahan work only on the final stage – modification and calligraphical inscriptions – involving marble (firmans dated 1631-37) and not its construction ?*



# *Contemporary Travelogues*

# *Foreign travelers . . . .23*

*There are three travelogue records of foreign travelers, which form important contemporary support material .*

- *Peter Mundy, an employee of the East India Company who visited Agra three times between 1631-33 AD*
- *Jeane Baptist Tavernier, a French merchant who visited India five times between 1638-68; his first visit to Agra in 1640-41 AD*
- *Fray Sebastian Manrique, a Portugese traveler, who visited Agra in the winter of 1640-41 AD*

## *Peter Mundy. . . 24*

*Peter Mundy was an employee of the East India Company, and visited Agra three times between 1631 and 1633. His last visit was between 22nd Dec, 1632 and 25th Feb, 1633. He has noted in his Travelogue (pp. 208-213):*

*"Places of note (in and about Agra) are castle, King Akbar's tombe, Moholl's tombe, garden and bazare...*

*"The king is now building a sepulchre for his late deceased queen Taje Maholl . . . There is already about her tombe a rail of gold... the building is begun and goes on with excessive labor and cost, prosecuted with extraordinary diligence, gold and silver esteemed common metal and marble but ordinary stones..."*

*Note that the 'work' involved 'gold', 'silver' and 'marble' in 1631-33 !*

# Peter Mundy...25

*Peter Mundy says he saw “a rail of gold... “ around the tomb.*

*Mumtaz’s body was brought to Agra on the 15th Jamad-ul Sanya 1041 AH (Jan 8., 1632). The exact date of final burial of Mumtaz inside the Taj Mahal is not recorded in the Badshahnama, except that it was done the ‘following year’. Mundy finally left Agra on the Feb 25, 1633 but records that he had seen the ornamentation with gold railing. This implies that the final burial was done before that date.*

*Note that the gold railing was already in place by 1633 !*

## *Peter Mundy. . . 26*

*Note that Mumtaz's body is buried on the third Floor, and the cenotaphs are on the Fourth Floor.*

*Mundy also states that the Taj Mahal was already a centre of tourist attraction (in 1632-33 AD) comparable with Akbar's tomb and the fort. ; the tourists were allowed to visit the grave. The work in progress had much to do with "gold and silver . . . and marble". Was it the erection of the edifice or was it calligraphy, decoration, and ornamentation ?*

## *J. B. Tavernier. . . 27*

*J. B. Tavernier was a French merchant/traveler who has written his travelogue. He visited India five times between 1638-1668 AD. His first visit to Agra was during the winter of 1640-41; and second visit was between Nov 10-25, 1665. During the second visit, excerpts from his Travelogue (Book I, pp. 110-111).*

*"I witnessed the commencement and accomplishment of this great work on which they have expended 22 years during which twenty thousand men worked incessantly. This is sufficient to enable one to realize that the cost of it has been enormous . . . "*  
----[J. B. Tavernier, "Travels in India", Translated by V. Ball, 1889, Book I, pp. 110-111]

*This observation forms the basis of the belief that the Taj Mahal was indeed built by Shah Jahan, with excessive cost, during the period 1631-53. AD*



## *J. B. Tavernier. . . 28*

*But the very next statement of Tavernier, is indeed startling:*

*"It is said that the **scaffoldings alone cost more than the entire work**, because, from want of wood, they had all to be made of **brick** as well as the supports of the arches. This has entailed much labor and a heavy expenditure" . . .*

*---[J. B. Tavernier, "Travels in India", Translated by V. Ball, 1889, Book I, pp. 110-111]*

*Tavernier claims that the brick scaffolding was more expensive than the **'entire work'** ! If so, what was that **'work'** which was **cheaper than the brick scaffolding** ?*

*Was it calligraphy ? Quranic inscriptions ? And that is all ?*



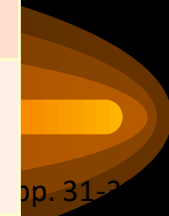
# *Persian Manuscript. . .30*

*Historian E. B. Havell [Indian Architecture, 1913] quotes a Persian manuscript which lists the names of craftsmen working in the Taj Mahal. Their salaries range from Rs. 200/- to Rs. 1000/- per month. The name of the chief calligrapher (Amanat Khan Shirazi) listed in the manuscript is inscribed inside the cenotaph chamber (Section 6). And, therefore, the manuscript seems to be authentic (Table 1). :*

*The marble walls of the cenotaph chamber are full of Koranic inscriptions, which ends with the name of the calligrapher and the date:*

*"...written by the insignificant being Amanat Khan Shirazi in the year 1048 Hijri and the 12th year of His Majesty's reign." (i.e, 1639 AD)*

<b>1. Ustad Isa (Agra/Shiraz)</b>	<b>Chief Architect</b>	<b>Rs. 1,000</b>
2. Ismail Khan Rumi (Rum)	Dome Expert	Rs. 500
3. Muhammad Sharif (Samarkhand)	Pinnacle Expert	Rs. 500
4. Kasim Khan (Lahore)	Pinnacle Expert	Rs. 295
<b>5. Muhammad Hanief (Khandahar)</b>	<b>Master Mason</b>	<b>Rs. 1,000</b>
6. Muhammad Sayyid (Multan)	Master Mason	Rs. 590
7. Abu Torah (Multan)	Master Mason	Rs. 500
8. - - - (Delhi)	Master Mason	Rs. 400
9. - - - (Delhi)	Master Mason	Rs. 375
10. - - - (Delhi)	Master Mason	Rs. 375



pp. 31-2

11. Amanat Khan Shirazi (Shiraz)	Calligrapher	Rs. 1,000
12. Qadar Zaman	Calligrapher	Rs. 800
13. Muhammad Khan (Bagdad)	Calligrapher	Rs. 500
14. Raushan Khan (Syria)	Calligrapher	Rs. 300
15. Chiranji Lal (Kanauj)	Inlay Worker	Rs. 800
16. Chhoti Lal (Kanauj)	Inlay Worker	Rs. 380
17. Mannu Lal (Kanauj)	Inlay Worker	Rs. 200
18. Manuhar Singh (Kanauj)	Inlay Worker	Rs. 200
19. Ata Muhammad (Bokhara)	Flower Carver	Rs. 500
20. Shaker Muhammad (Bokhara)	Flower Carver	Rs. 400

, pp. 31-2

# Persian Manuscript. . .33

21. Banuhar	Flower Carver	- - -
22. Shah Mal	Flower Carver	- - -
23. Zorawar	Flower Carver	- - -
24. Pira (Delhi)	Carpenter	- - -
25. Ram Lal Kashmiri (Kashmir)	Garden Expert	- - -

1. The net salary of 20 of these craftsmen exceeds Rs. 127,380/- per year.
2. The list contains the names of *one* – (only one) – chief architect (*Ustad Isa*), *one* dome expert (*Ismail Khan Rumi*), *two* pinnacle experts, *four* calligraphers, *four* inlay workers, *five* flower carvers, *six* master masons, etc.. If so, what is the *nature of work* carried out by Shah Jahan ?

## *Persian Manuscript. . .34*

3. While the name of the Chief Calligrapher – *Amanat Khan Shirazi* – is inscribed in the walls of cenotaph chamber, the Chief architect's is not found anywhere in the Taj Mahal !

4. Note that the (so called) 'Chief architect' (Ustad Isa), the Chief Mason (Muhammad Hanief) and the Chief Calligrapher (Amanat Khan Shirazi) – each was drawing the highest – *and EQUAL* – salary of Rs. 1000/- per month. If the 'Chief architect' were the one who conceived and designed the Taj Mahal, is it likely that he would be treated at par with the Chief Mason and the Calligrapher ?

# *The legend as history...35*

- *Badshahnama (Vol. II, pp. 325-6) states that the gold railing around the tomb of Mumtaz "was made under the supervision of Bebadal Khan, Master of king's kitchen". But does not say anything silent on the identity of the architect.*
- *The name of the Chief Calligrapher – Amanat Khan Shirazi – is inscribed in the cenotaph chamber. But the name of the 'Chief Architect' (Ustad Isa) is not found anywhere in the Taj Mahal.*
- *Ustad Isa was drawing the salary on par (Rs. 1000/- per month) with the Chief Calligrapher (Amanat Khan Shirazi) and Chief Mason (Muhammad Hanif ).*
- *Aurangzeb says that his master builders were are unable to suggest any measures of repairs to the main dome..." (1652 AD)*

*Could it be that Ustad Isa only a manager of the alterations in the Taj Mahal?*



## *J. B. Tavernier. . . 36*

*The Badshahnama (vol. I, p. 403) claims that the net expenditure incurred by Sha Jahan was Rs. 40 lakhs (chihal lakh roopiah) . Tavernier records the salary he used to pay his attendants ('paalakeen' bearers) :*

*"...you pay each attendant for everything only 4 rupees a month, but up to 5 rupees when the journey is long. . . ."*

*---[J. B. Tavernier, "Travels in India", Translated by V. Ball, 1889, Book I, pp. 46]*

*Comparing the salary of an average worker in the Taj Mahal with that of the attendants of Tavernier , it was tune of*

*Rs.4- 5/- per month. (Rs. 50-60/- per year)*

*Considering 20,000 workers in the Taj Mahal,*

*the labor charges alone would exceed Rs. 10,00,000/- . per year*

*Note that 20 top level workers' salary itself was Rs. 1,27,380/- per year,*

## *F. S. Manrique . . . 37*

*Fray Sebastian Manrique, a Portuguese traveller who visited Agra around the same time (winter of 1640-41) as Tavernier did. Excerpts from his Travelogue:*

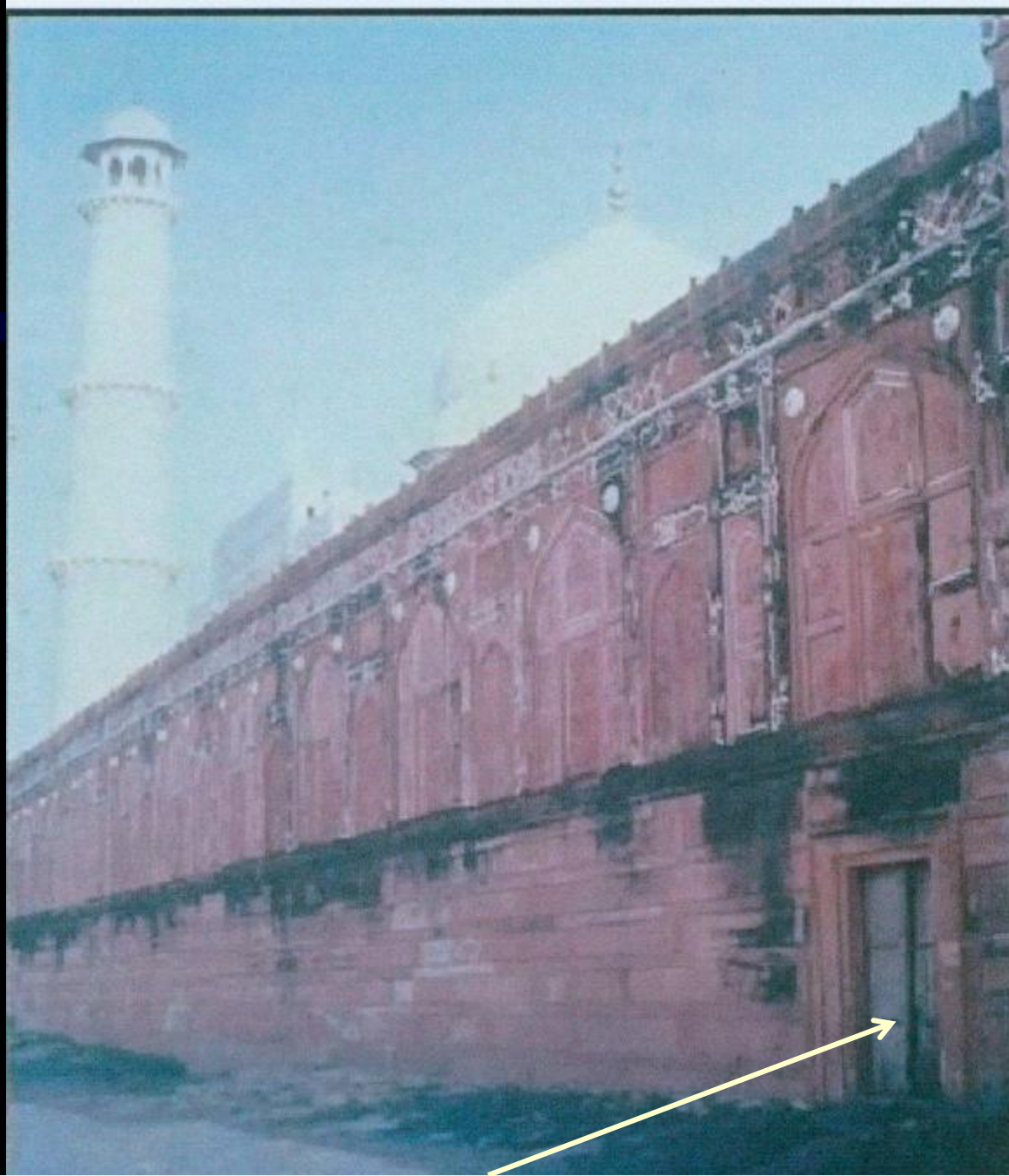
*"On this building as well as other works, 1000 men were usually engaged as overseers, officials and workmen; of these many were occupied in laying out ingenious gardens, others planting shady groves and ornamental avenues; while the rest were making roads and those receptacles for the crystal water, without which their labour could not be carried out.*

*Note that Manrique did not see much activity upon the building; was the work already over ? (Was the Marble work complete by 1639AD ?)*  
*Note that 'the number of workers usually engaged was 1000, quite different from the 20,000 workers quoted by Tavernier.*

## *Age of the Edifice. . . 38*

*Modern techniques of Archaeometry are used to determine the approximate age of historical buildings with reasonable accuracy. Prof. Marvin Mills (Pratt Institute, New York) reports about the 'Carbon-14' dating of the Taj Mahal:*

*"Another item of evidence concerning the alleged date of the Taj is adduced from a radiocarbon date from a piece of wood from a door on the north facade of the Jumuna River's bank. The sample was tested by Dr. Even Williams, Director of the Brooklyn College Radiocarbon Laboratory. The date came to 1359 AD with a spread of 89 years on either side and 67% probability, Masca corrected."*



*The timber door used for Carbon dating by Marvin Mills in 1974*



*The timber door used for Carbon dating in 1974, now bricked up*



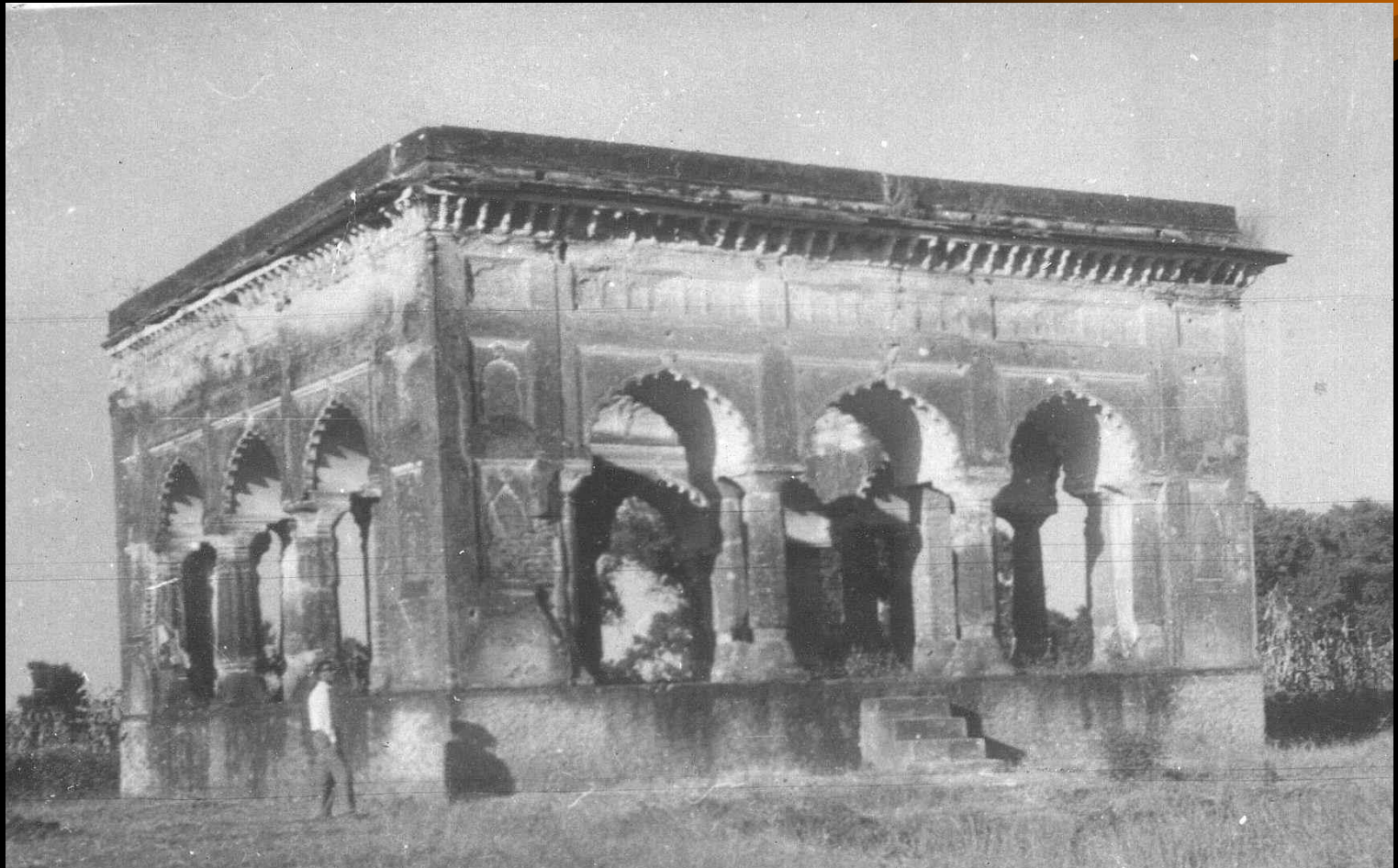
# *Architecture*

*Mumtaz Mahal died here. . . 41*



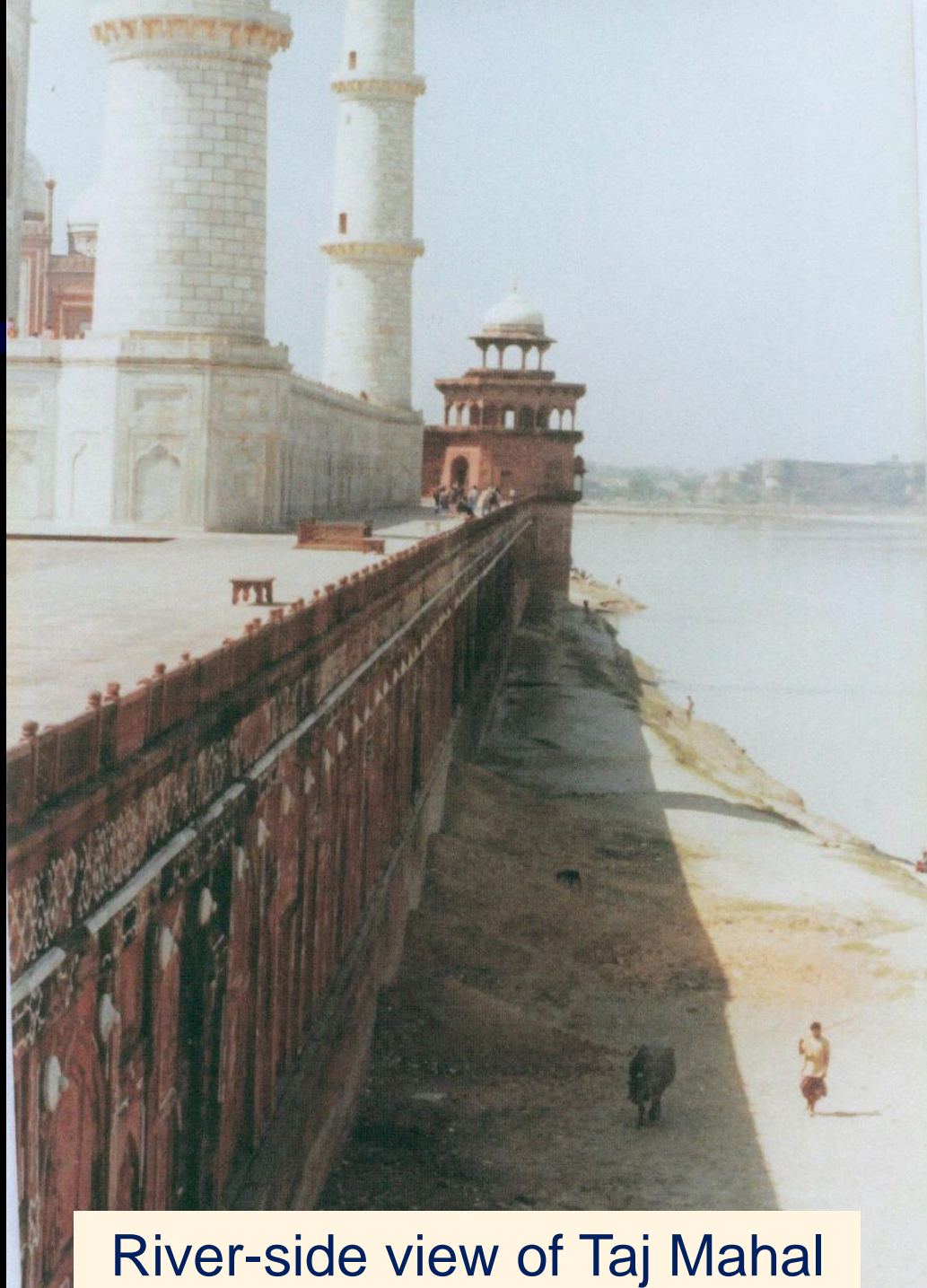
Burhanpur, Madhya Pradesh (940 KM from Agra)

# *Mumtaz's first burial . . . 42*

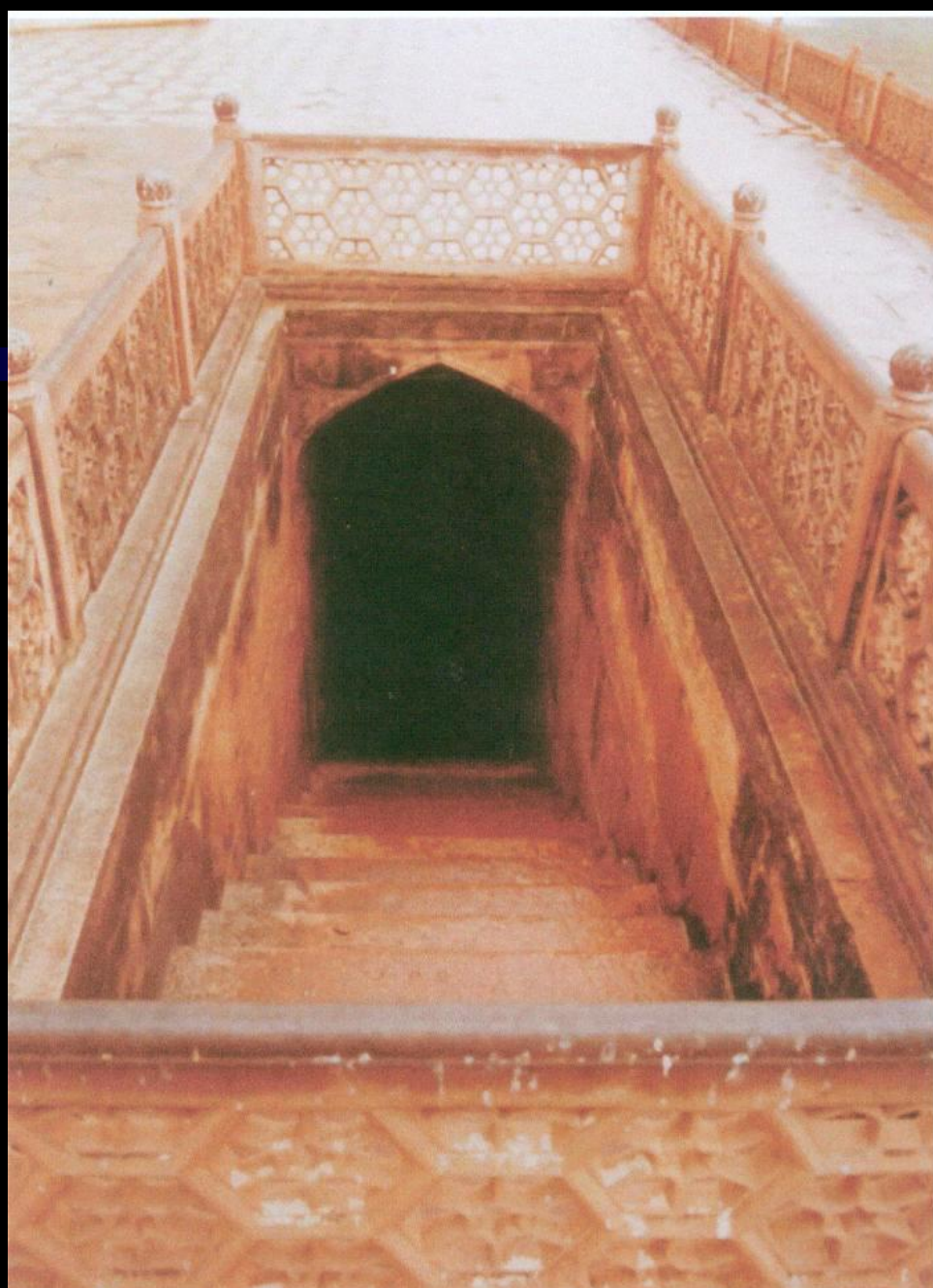


Mumtaz's Tomb at Burhanpur, Madhya Pradesh





River-side view of Taj Mahal



*Staircase entrance to the sealed floor below*

*322' Long corridor. . . .45*



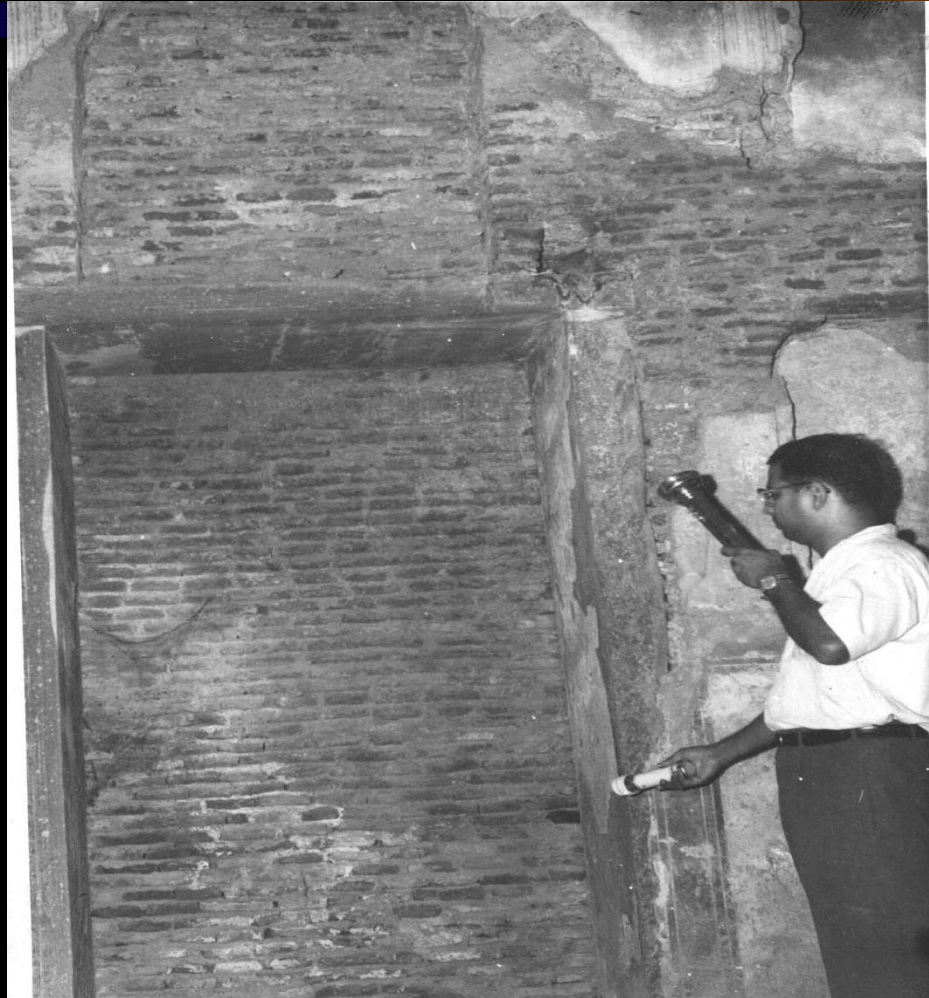
*322' to the sealed floor below*

# *Interior of sealed chamber. . . 46*



*Plastered and well made chamber, not useful in a tomb*

# *Sealed windows. . .47*



*Windows opening to the Riverside – now sealed with bricks*

# *Sealed doorway. . .48*



*Who sealed them ? Shah Jahan ?*

# *Sealed doorway. . . .49*



*Who sealed them ? Shah Jahan ?*

# Who sealed them ? . . . .50

In 1896, Syad Muhammad Latif wrote :

. . . that the building "was originally a palace of Raja Man Singh but now it was the property of his grandson Raja Jai Singh. His Majesty gave the Raja a lofty edifice from the Khalsa estate in exchange of this building; and the spot was used for the mausoleum of the deceased empress." (p.105)

---[Syad Mohammad Latif, "Agra – Historical & Descriptive", 1896, p. 105 ]

- Obviously derived from the *Badshahnama* and other Court papers



# Who sealed them ? . . . .51

The 22 basement rooms were detected in 1900 AD (under the British). In 1903, Moin-ud-din Ahmed discussed them in his book ["History of the Taj", 1903, pp. 35-36 ] and stated that,

*"The real object of building them remains a mystery."*

*---[Moin-ud-din Ahmed , "History of the Taj", 1903, pp. 35-36 ]*

- *It was detected by the British in 1900 AD; obviously, they were closed and sealed during an earlier era (Mughal era ?) Why ?*
- *'Mystery' only if we ignore the fact that it was 'Raja Mansingh's palace' before being converted into a tomb.*

# *Drum Houses near a Mosque? . . . 52*

*Two of the six buildings in the Taj Complex are “Nagar Khanas”: Midway between the main gateway and the marble edifice, on either side of the courtyard, two identical domed buildings are the “Nagar-khanas” (Drum Houses).*

*Is it plausible that Shah Jahan, who was very “scrupulous...in the matters of bereavement and religious sanctity“ [Badshahnama, Vol.-I, p.403] would have built these drum houses? Drum beats are taboo in Islam – there is a mosque nearby. And a mausoleum is certainly not a place for festivity!*



## *'Gow Shala' in a tomb ?...54*

*A "Gow-Shala" within the precincts (outer courtyard) of the Taj Mahal, to the east of the Main Gateway, at the extreme end of the courtyard.*

*Note that the "Gow-Shala". Is a pure Samskrit (not Persian) name . What purpose does a cow-shed serve in a mausoleum? Was that too part of the temple or palace complex?*



# *Hindu Symbolisms*

# *Main gateway. . .55*



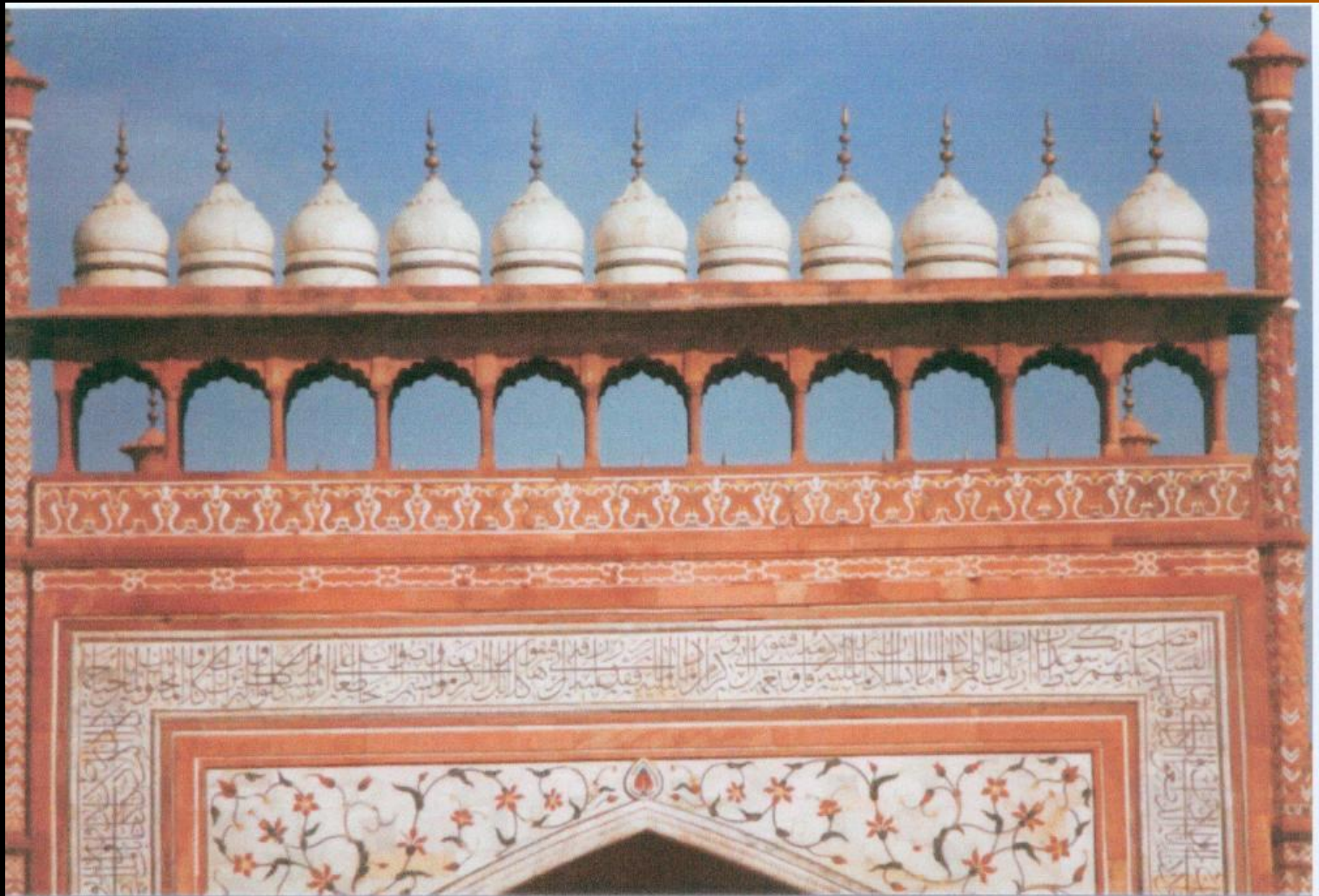


*Eleven mini-domes ! . . . 57*

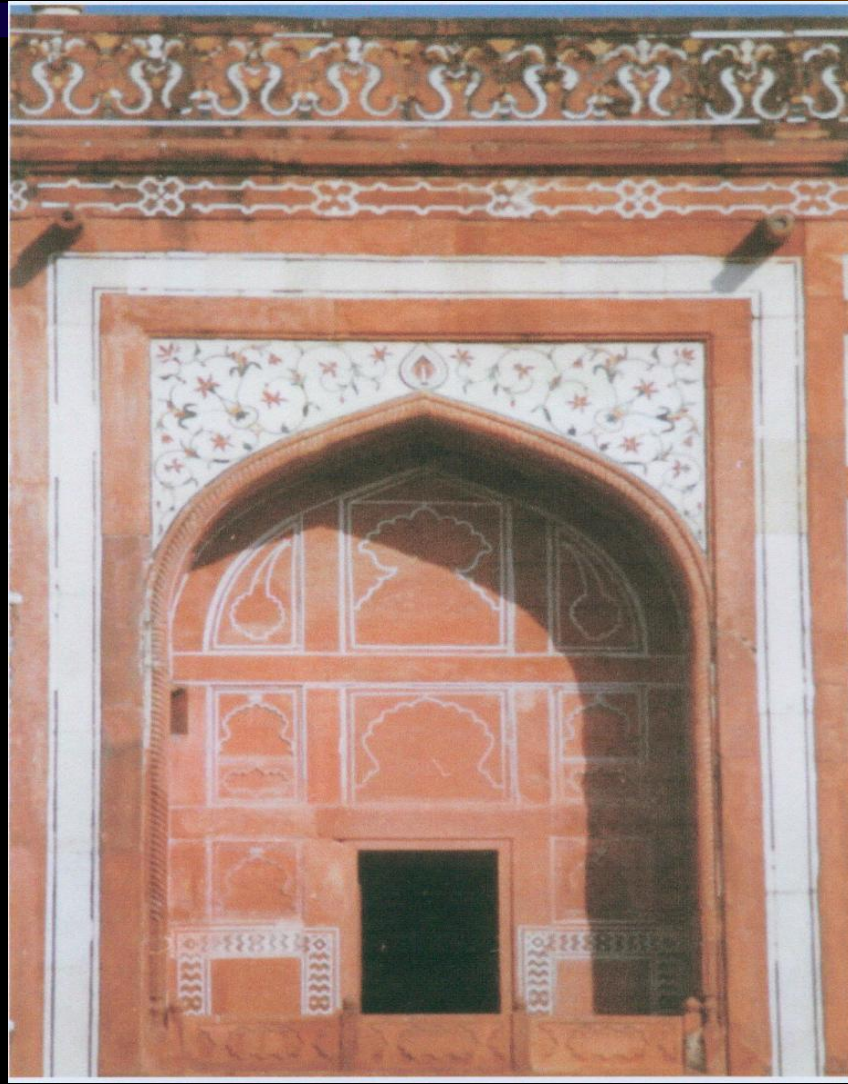




*'Eleven' mini-domes ! . . . 58*



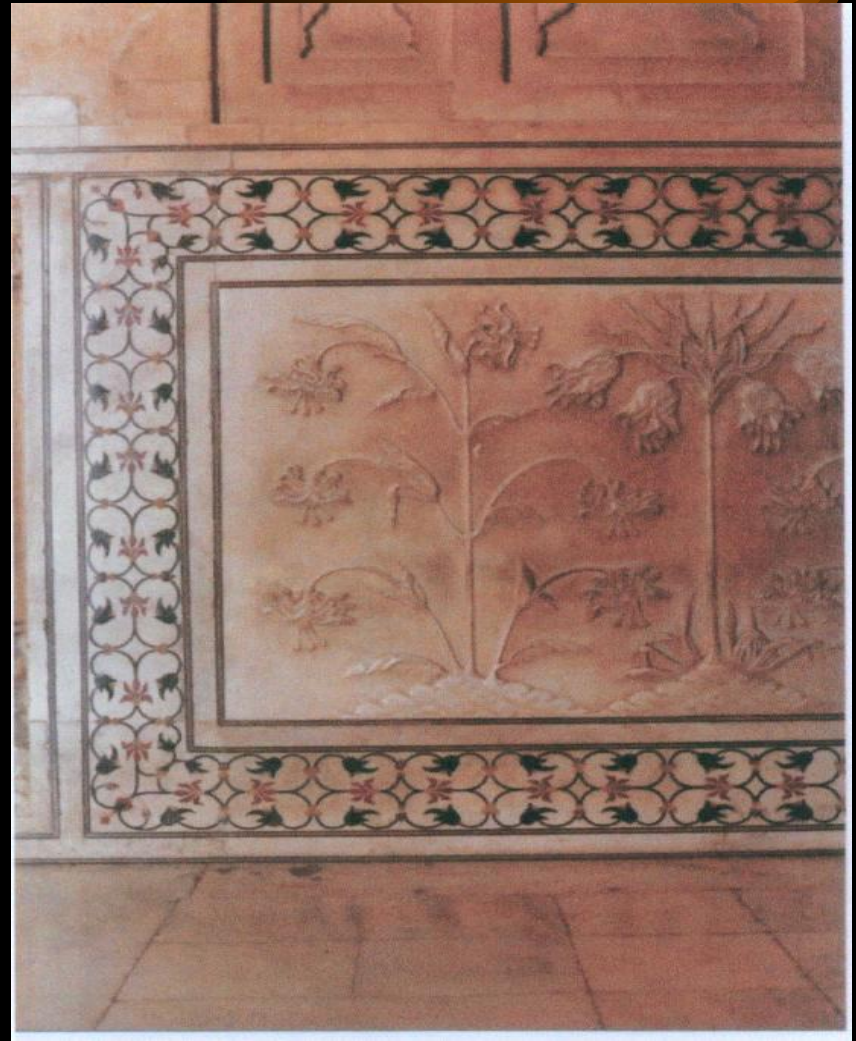
*Main gateway. . .  
Welcome signs. . . .59*



*Main gateway. . .  
Ganesh Torana. . . .60*



*Main Edifice. . .  
Bell flower carvings . . . 61*



*Bell flowers on marble . . . 62*



*Hindu religious symbol ?*

*Flowers or conch-shells ?...63*



# *Marble carvings . . . 64*



# *The Pinnacle on the Dome. . .65*



Pinnacle size:32.5 ft; Shape: Kalash & coconut ? Trident ?



# *The Pinnacle on the Dome. . .66*



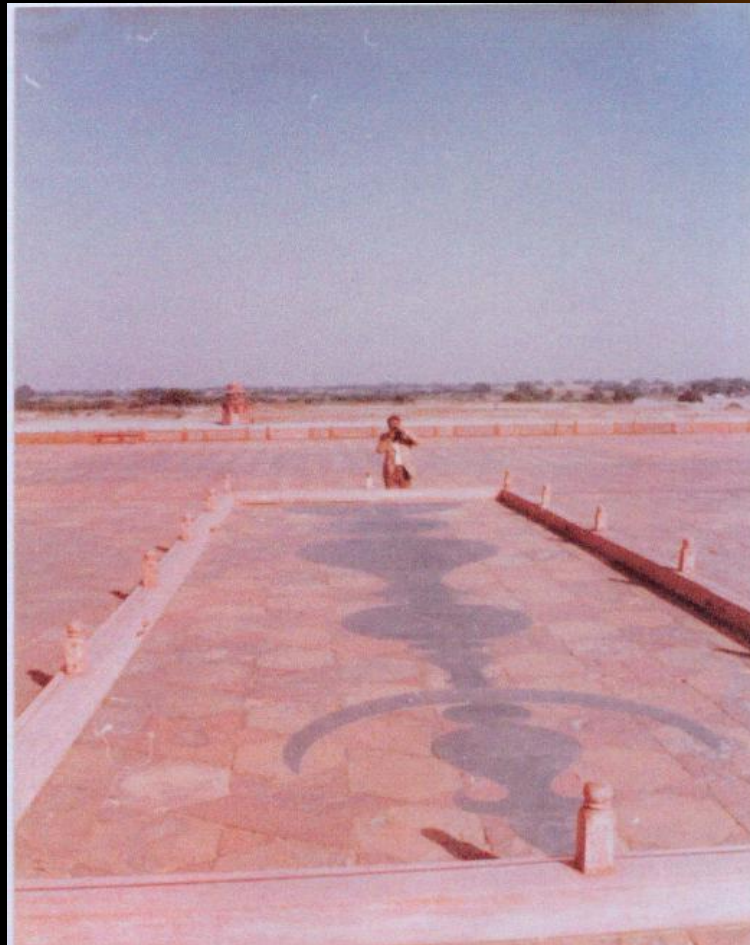
Finial size:32.5 ft; Shape: Kalash & coconut ? Trident ?

# *The Pinnacle on the Dome. . .67*



Kalash, mango leaves and coconut ? Trident ?

# *In-laid Replica of the finial . .68*



Inlay work size: 30.5 ft : Kalash, and coconut ? Trident ?

## Pure Gold ?...69

On top of the central dome of the Taj Mahal, there is a copper pinnacle which measures a height of 32' 5 ½". On the eastern red-stone courtyard, in front of the community hall, there is a figure of the pinnacle inlaid in black marble which measures a length of only 30' 6".

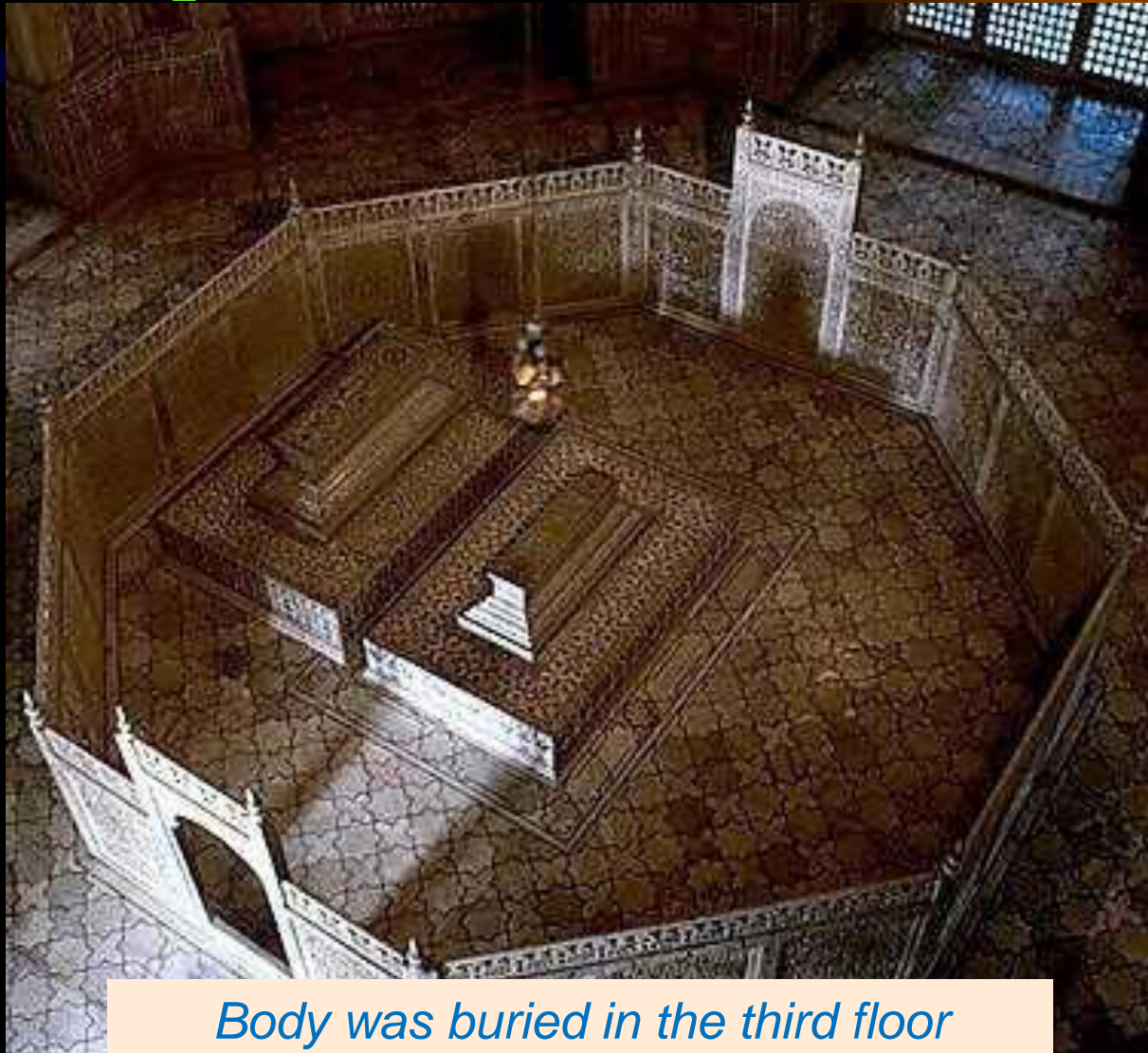
The Shahjahannama of Muhammad Salah Kumbo mentions that the pinnacle was **pure gold**. But by 1873-74 it was already of copper and when it was taken down for re-gilding, the words "Joseph Taylor" were found engraved on the copper. **Captain Taylor** was the British official who carried out the repairs to the Taj Mahal in **1810 AD**. It is reasonable to assume that the original gold pinnacle was replaced by either Joseph Taylor or his predecessors.

The discrepancy between the lengths of the pinnacle and its figure in the courtyard supports this conclusion.

*Crude patchwork  
- blocked Doorway. . . .70*

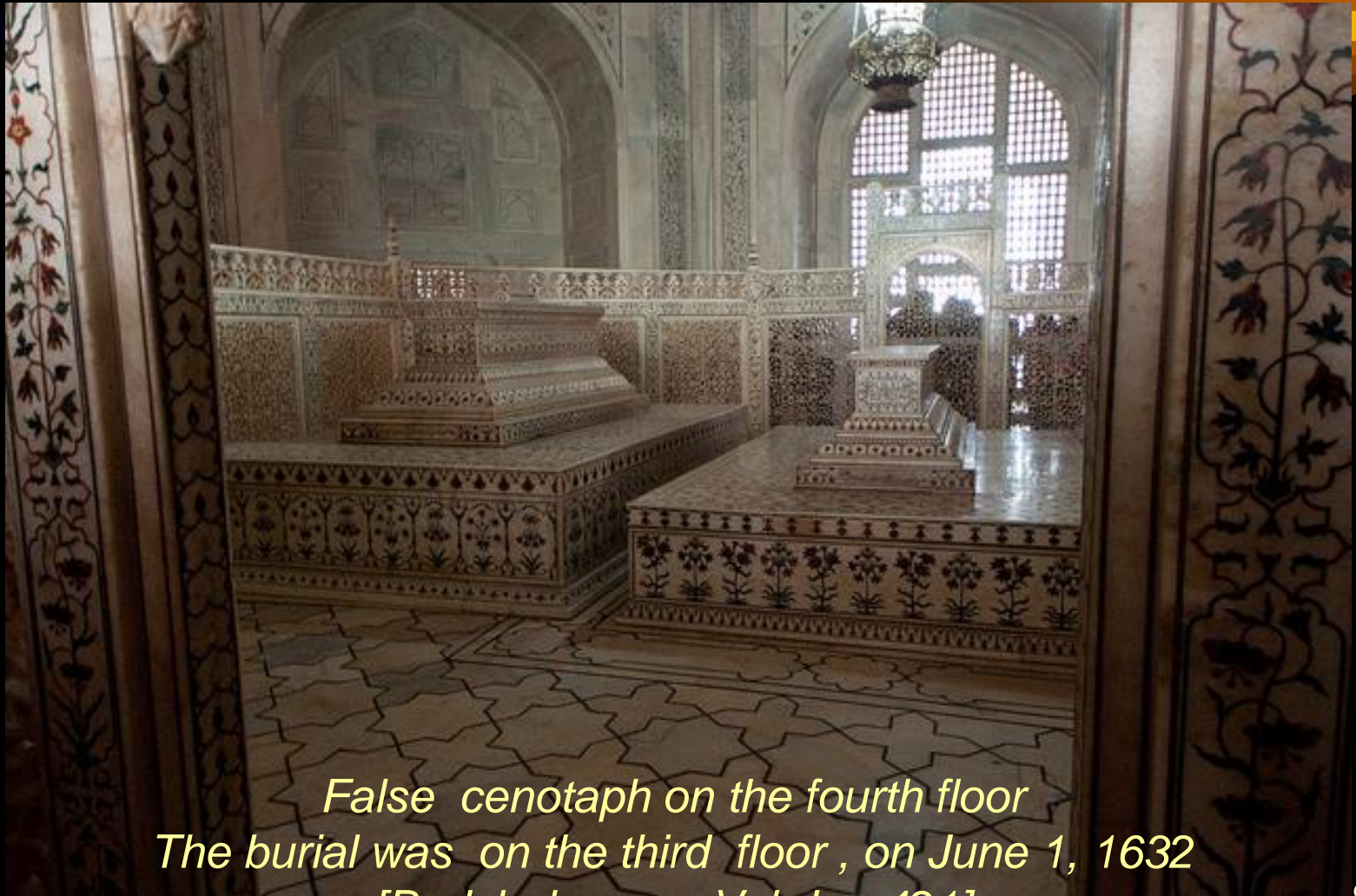


# *Cenotaph in the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor !...71*



*Body was buried in the third floor*

# *Cenotaph (Fourth Floor). . .72*



*False cenotaph on the fourth floor  
The burial was on the third floor, on June 1, 1632  
[Badshahnama, Vol.-I, p.421]*

# *Underneath of Central dome. . .73*



*Sun god is a typical Rajput symbol*



# *Shah Jahan's Tolerance. . . 74*

Regarding Shah Jahan's religious tolerance, his own court journal *Badshahnama* records:

*"It has been brought to the notice of His Majesty that during the late region many idol temples had begun, but remained unfinished at Benaras, the great stronghold of infidelity. The infidels were now desirous of completing them. His Majesty, the defender of the faith, gave orders that at Benaras and throughout all his dominions at every place, all temples should be cast down. It was now reported from the province of Allahabad that 76 temples had been destroyed in the district of Benaras."*



# *Ornamental Minarets*

# *The Minaret . . . .75*



# *Minaret in Islamic Architecture. .76*

*In the mediaeval architecture of Persia and Bagdad, the minaret had a functional utility – to give the call of prayer (Azan) to the faithful – from the mosque. But in the northern Gangetic plain, during the first three centuries of Pathan architecture, did not use minarets with the sole exception of the first mosques built by the invading Afghans at Ajmer. (The mosque of Ajmer was one of the earliest buildings attempted by the Afghans, and subsequently its minarets fell off due to the faulty construction.)*

# *Minaret in Islamic Architecture. .77*

*James Fergusson was the pioneer in the field of Indian Archaeology and was the first – also considered the most authoritative – historian, to propound that the Taj Mahal was a typical Mughal architecture originated in Samarkhand. Says Fergusson (pp.219-20):*

*"...minarets...so far as I know, were not attached to mosques during the so-called Pathan period. The call to prayer was made from the roof; and except the first rude attempt at Ajmer, I do not know an instance of a minaret built solely for such a purpose, though they were, as we know, universal in Egypt and elsewhere long before this time, and were considered nearly indispensable in the buildings of the Mughals very shortly afterwards."*

# *Islamic Minaret. . . Oman . . .78*



Mosque with a golden crescent moon and a minaret,  
Bahla, Ad Dakhiliyah, Oman

# *A Mosque in Egypt. . .79*



# *A Mosque in Bagdad. . .80*





# *A frame of reference on the skyline . .81*



The tomb has Minarets  
The Mosque (on the left) does not have minarets

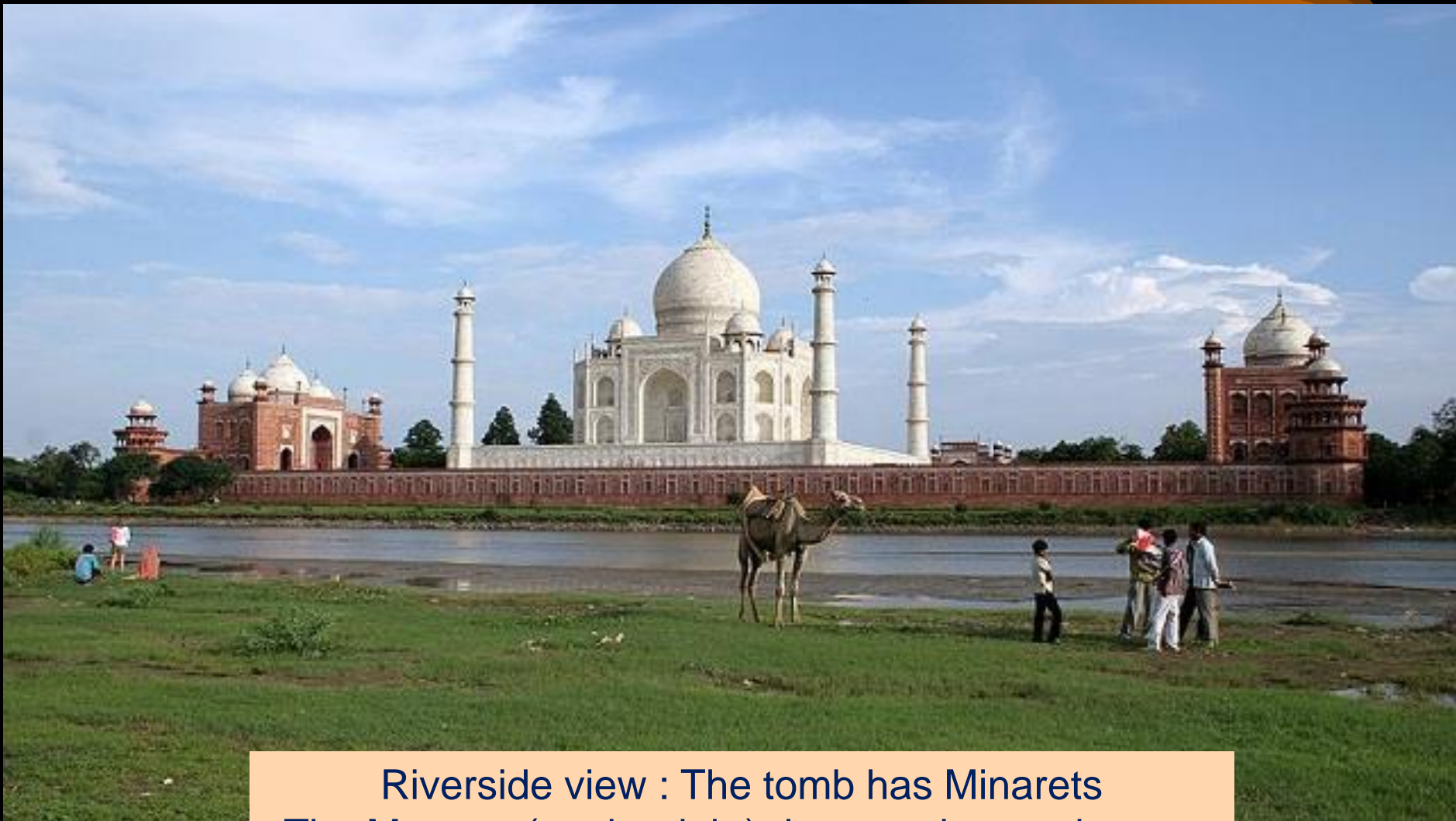
# *The mosque has no minarets . . .82*



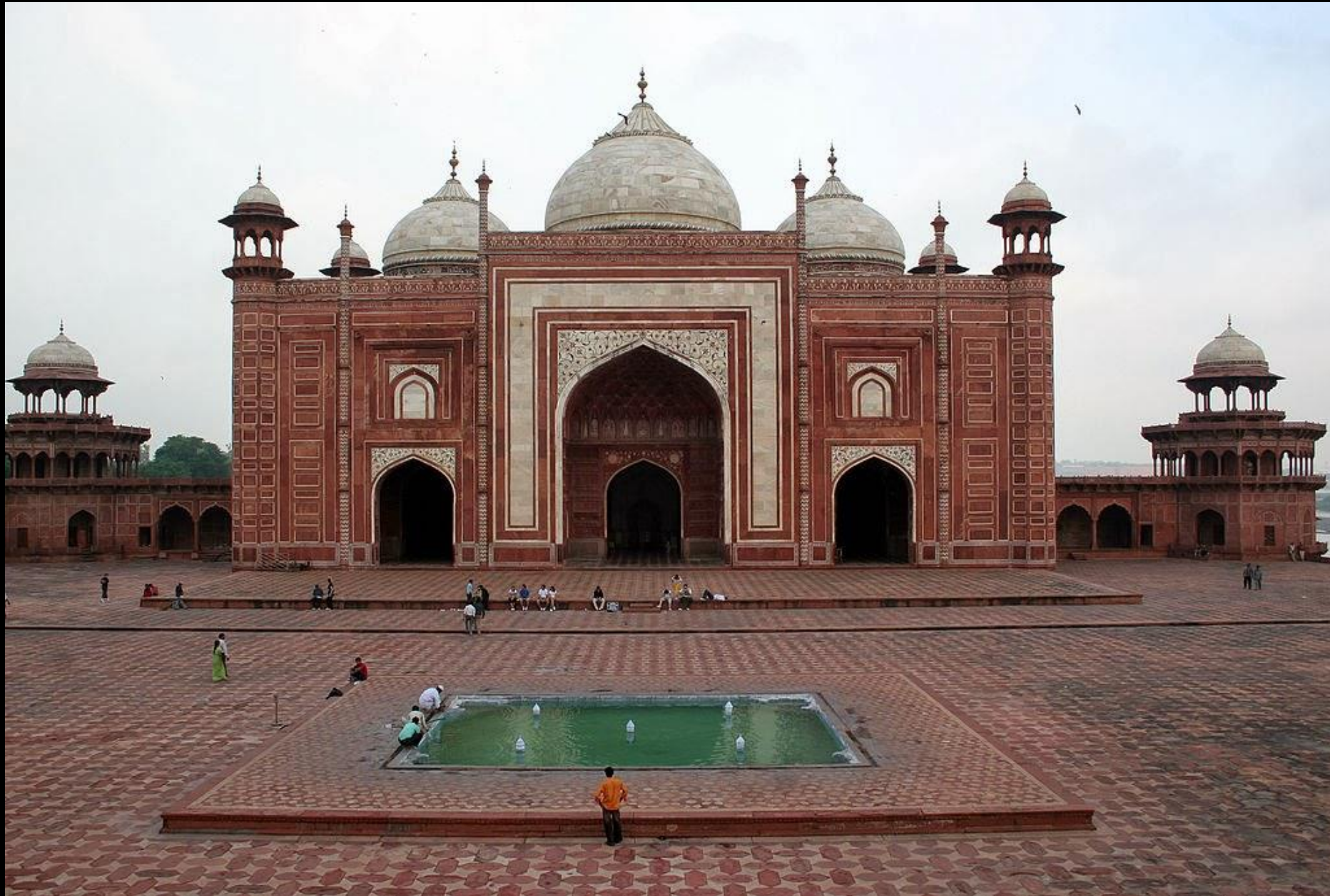
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The tomb has (ornamental) Minarets  
The Mosque (on the left) does not have minarets

# *Ornamental Minarets . . . .83*

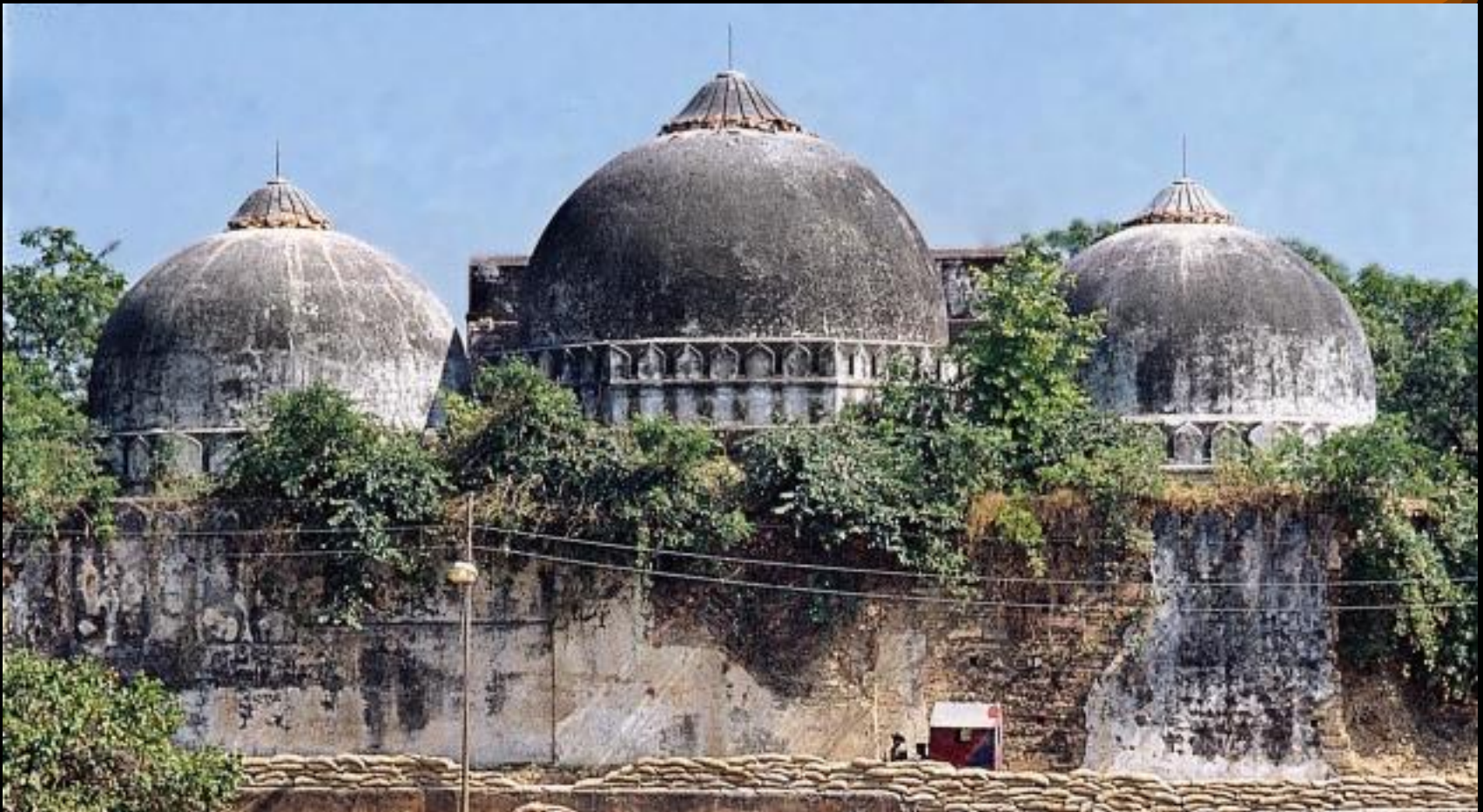


Riverside view : The tomb has Minarets  
The Mosque (on the right) does not have minarets



The Mosque: Triple domes, **no minarets**, facing the cardinal<sub>2</sub> East

# *Baburi Masjid, Ayodhya . . .85*



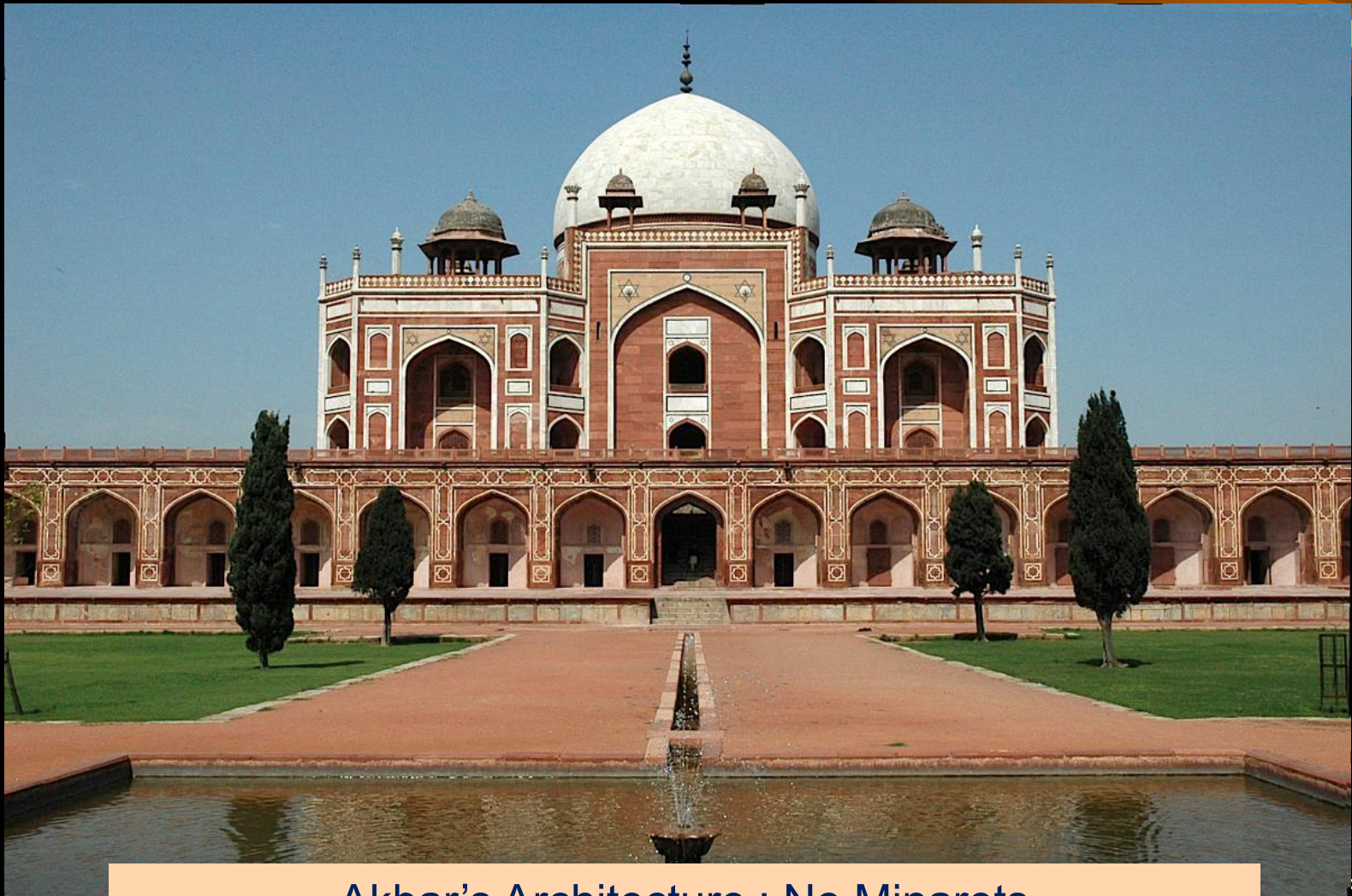
Babur's Architecture : No Minarets

# *Jama Masjid, Fatehpur Sikri. . .86*



Akbar's Architecture : No Minarets

# *Humayun's Tomb, Delhi. . . 87*



Akbar's Architecture : No Minarets

# *Humayun's Tomb, Delhi. . . 88*



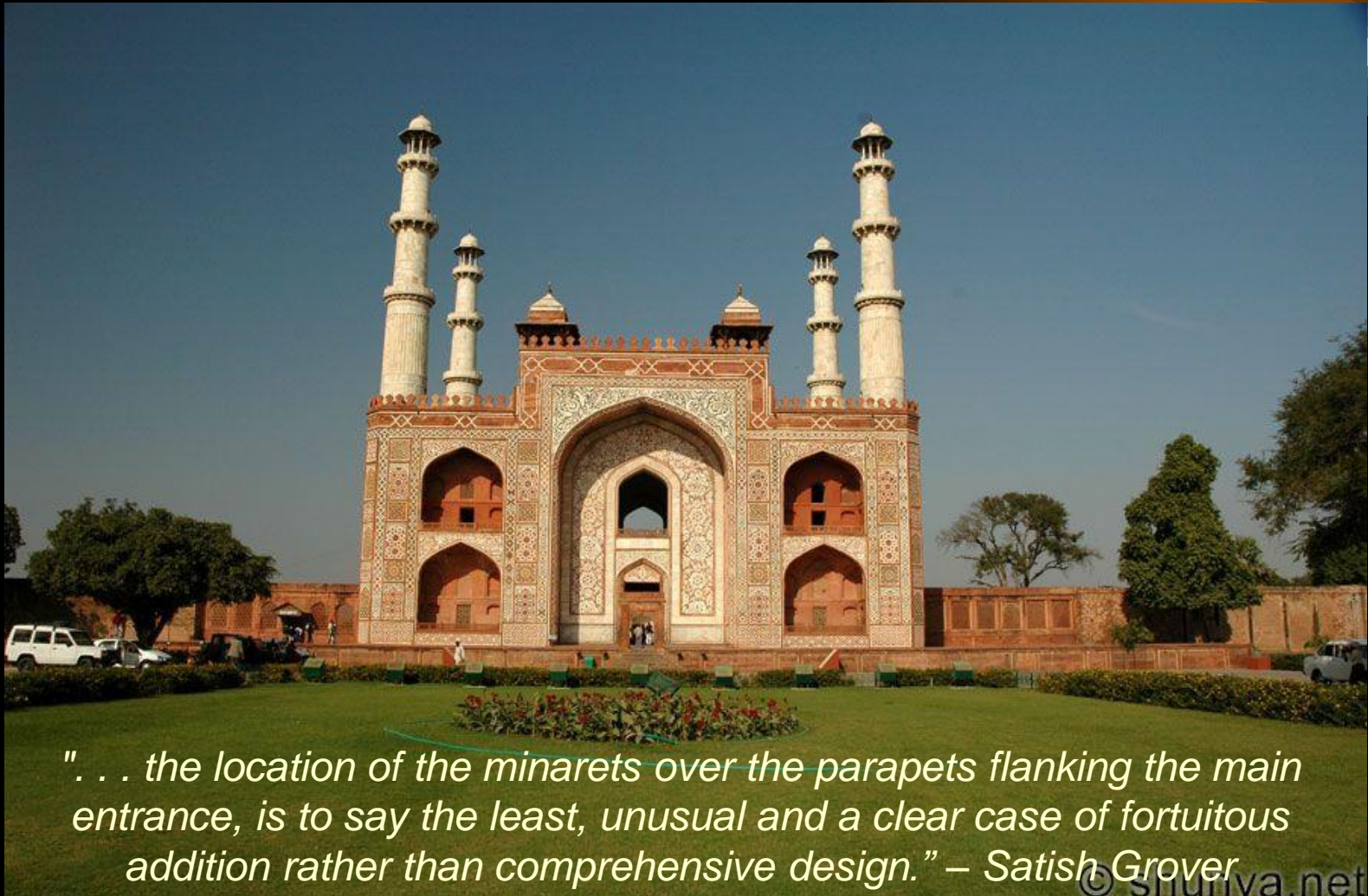


# *Sikandara, Akbar's Tomb, Agra. .89*



Akbar's (sic) Architecture : Akbar's tomb, Sikandara : No minarets

# Gateway Sikandara, Agra. . .90



*“ . . . the location of the minarets over the parapets flanking the main entrance, is to say the least, unusual and a clear case of fortuitous addition rather than comprehensive design.” – Satish Grover*

South Gate of Sikandara (Agra) : Minarets on the Gateway

# *Era of Minarets in India. . . 91*

*In fact, the "era of minarets" in Mughal Architecture seems to have begun with Taj Mahal itself. Among the buildings of Shah Jahan's predecessors, only one – the south gateway to Sikandara (Akbar's tomb) in Agra – contains four marble minarets. But there is good reason to believe that those are subsequent additions (probably by Shah Jahan himself) and not part of original design. To quote Satish Grover ["The Architecture of India", 1981, pp. 190-193. ]:*

*". . . the location of the minarets over the parapets flanking the main entrance, is to say the least unusual and a clear case of fortuitous addition rather than comprehensive design. These minarets were certainly built either as experiments before erecting those at the Taj or immediately thereafter – more probably the latter."*

*Both Sikandara and Bibi-ki-Maqbara are TOMBS, not Mosques*

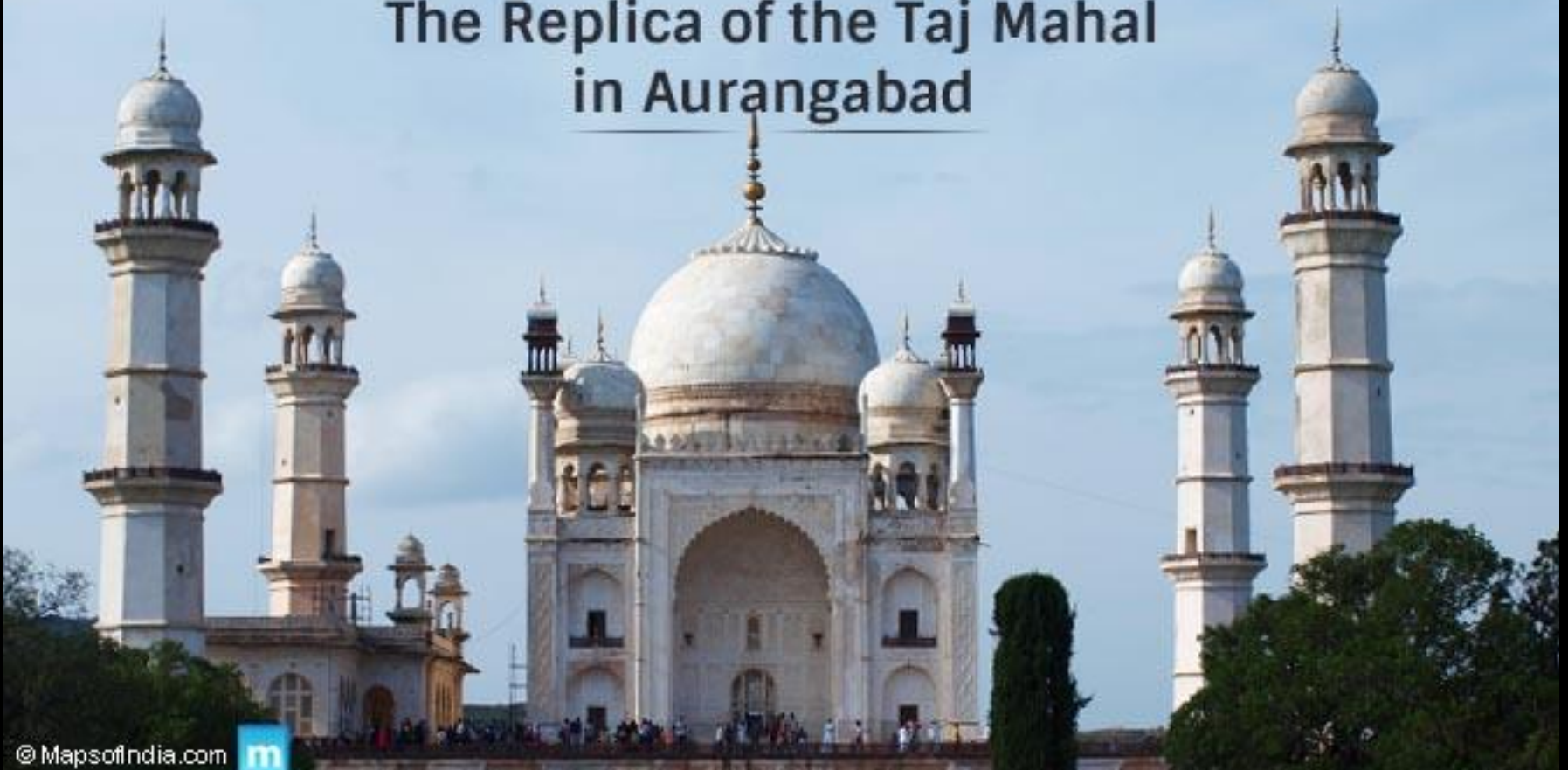
# *Jama Masjid, Delhi. . . 92*




*Shah Jahan's Architecture : Jama Masjid , Delhi.(1658AD)*

# *Poor man's Taj... 93*

The Replica of the Taj Mahal  
in Aurangabad



© Mapsofindia.com 

*Biwi-ka-Maqbara , tomb of Rabia Daurani, wife of Aurangzeb  
Designed by Ata Ullah, s/o Ustad Ahmed Lahouri*

# *The Taj Mosque. . .94*



Triple domes, No minarets, facing the cardinal East



The Mosque: Triple domes, no minarets, facing the cardinal East

# *Mosque facing the West ?...96*

Normally mosques are built facing the Holy Mecca, the direction in which the faithful is commanded to turn while he prays. But the mosque inside the Taj Complex is facing the cardinal West instead of the Holy City. Marvin Mills (Pratt Institute, New York) states:

"... by the **ninth century**, they (Muslims) were able to calculate the direction of Mecca within **two degrees** from any city... the mosque that is part of the Taj complex faces due West whereas Mecca from Agra is **14 degrees 55 minutes** south of West."

Had Shah Jahan, 'built' this mosque in the 17th century, would he have committed such an error? Note that Shah Jahan was scrupulous 'in the matters of bereavement and religious sanctity' !  
[Badshahnama, Vol.-I, p.403]





Interior of the Mosque:

Mostafa, the author of the book, is a member of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He is a member of the Islamic Republic of Iran.



*Majestic, exquisite . . .*



# *Single Pointed Arch*

## *Single pointed arches. . .98*

*It is not necessary here to go into the debate whether the single pointed arch (and the arcuate style of constructing it) was exclusively of Saracenic origin. Even if it were so, it was well assimilated into the Hindu architecture by the middle of the 14th century. In the latter half of the 14th century the rulers of Vijayanagara (1346-1563 AD) in South India employed the single pointed arch in their construction. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to assume that it was used in the Hindu architecture of North India several decades earlier. This tallies well with the approximate period of construction of the Taj Mahal, as suggested by the radio-carbon dating (i.e. 1359 AD).*

# *Vijayanagara Architecture . .99*



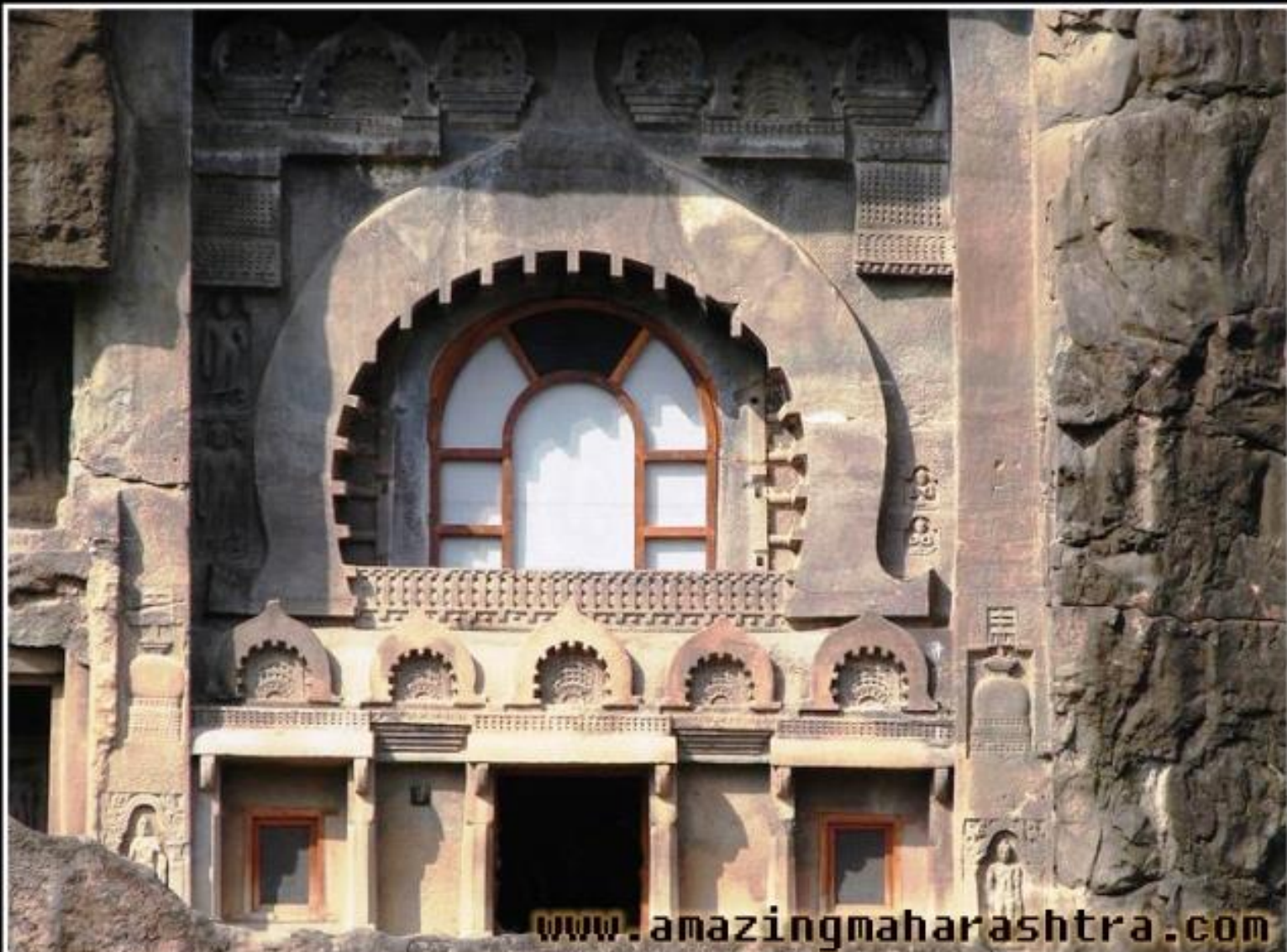
*Vijayanagara (1363-1565AD) used single pointed Archs before the Mughals*

# *Vijayanagara. . . Elephant stables . .100*



*Vijayanagara (1336-1565AD) used single pointed Archs before the Mughals*

# Ajantha caves, Maharashtra .101



Ajantha Caves (1<sup>st</sup> Century AD ?) pre-cursor of single pointed arch ?

# *Ajantha caves, Maharashtra. . .102*



*Ajantha Caves (1<sup>st</sup> Century AD ?) pre-cursor of single pointed arch ?*



# *Ajantha caves, Maharashtra . .103*



*Ajantha Caves (1<sup>st</sup> Century AD ?) pre-cursor of single pointed arch ?*

# *Taj Mahal . . . Semi-domed arches . . .104*





# *The Bulbous Dome*

# *Bulbous dome - of Mughal origin ?*

*It is also generally believed that the bulbous dome seen in the Taj Mahal, migrated to India from Samarkhand, subsequent to the establishment of Mogul dynasty by Babur in 1526AD. There are significant differences between the Arab domes seen in Bagdad and Egypt and the dome of Taj Mahal, the bulbous dome of Samarkhand forming the link between the two. Since the arcuate style of constructing the arches and domes is **believed** to be exclusively of Saracenic origin, it is also **believed** that the bulbous dome originated outside India.*

# *Saracenic Dome, Egypt. . .106*



*Abu Abbas Al-Mursi Mosque, Alexandria, Egypt*

# *Timur's Samarkhand . . . 107*



*Saray Mulk Khanoum Mausoleum(left); dome of a side mosque (right)*

# *Humayun's tomb, Delhi. . . 108*



Akbar's Architecture : Plain dome

# *Humayun's tomb, Delhi . . . 109*



Akbar's Architecture : No Lotus Flowers upon the dome



# *Taj dome . . . 110*



# *Jama Masjid , Delhi . .111*



Shah Jahan's Architecture (1658)

# *Poor man's Taj. . . 112*



*Bibi-ki-Maqbara, Aurangabad.*

# *Badshahi Mosque, Delhi. .113*



Badshahi Mosque

# *Samarkhand to India ?...114*

*Fergusson himself recorded (p. 286) this uncertainty and inconclusiveness, while discussing the basis of his assumption:*

*"It is probable that very considerable light will yet be thrown upon the origin of the style which the Moguls introduced into India, from an examination of **the buildings erected at Samarkhand by Timur**, a hundred years before Babar's time (A.D. 1393-1404). Now that the city is in the hands of Russians, it is accessible to Europeans. Its buildings have been drawn and photographed, but not yet described so as to be available for scientific purposes..."*

*---[J. Fergusson, "History of Indian & Eastern Architecture", 2nd Ed, p. 286]*

*Fergusson draws conclusions without adequate data*

# *Timur sacked Delhi (1398) . . . 115*

*The medieval architecture of Samarkhand is attributed to Timurlung (1394-1404 AD), the 6th generation predecessor of Emperor Babur. He invaded India in 1398 AD and after sacking Delhi and surrounding cities, carried off a large number of architects and other craftsman as captive labour to build his capital Samarkhand. A passage from his autobiography (Malfuzat-i-Timuri) would be illustrative:*

# India to Samarkhand ?...116

Writes Timur in his autobiography (Malfuzat-i-Timuri) :

"I ordered that all the artisans and clever mechanics who were masters of their respective crafts should be picked out from among the prisoners and set aside, and accordingly some thousands of craftsmen were selected to await my command. All these I distributed among the princes and amirs who were present, or who were engaged officially in other parts of my dominions. I had determined to build a Masjid-i-Jami in Samarkhand, the seat of my empire, which should be without a rival in any country; so I ordered that all builders and stone masons should be set apart for my own especial service."(p.448)

---[Elliot and Dowson, "History of India", Vol. III, 2nd Edition, 1953, p. 448]

Timur carried off thousands of builders to Samarkhand

# *Akbar to Shah Jahan . . . 117*

Says Fergusson: :

*“It would be difficult to point out in the whole history of architecture any change so sudden as that which took place between the style of Akbar and that of his grandson Shah Jahan nor any contrast so great as that between the manly vigour and exuberant originality of the first, as compared with the extreme but almost effeminate elegance of the second. Certainly when the same people, following the same religion, built temples and palaces in the same locality, nothing of the sort ever occurred in any country whose history is now known to us.” (p.307-8)*

*-[J. Fergusson, "History of Indian and Eastern Architecture", 2nd Ed, p. 307-8]*

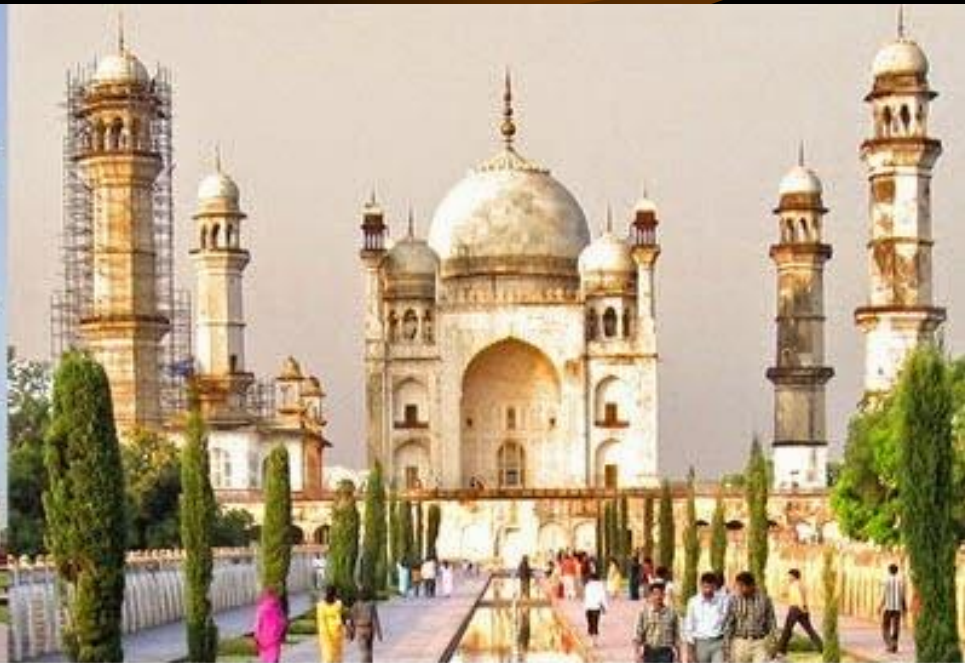
*Taj Mahal is entirely different from the Mughal architecture of Babur, Akbar & Jahangir*



# *Travesty of Taste. . .118*



*Taj Mahal*



*Bibi Ka Maqbara*

# *Taj is not Mughal architecture. . . 119*

*Aurangzeb constructed a memorial – ‘Bibi-ki-Makbara’ – for his wife at Aurangabad, where she had died while in Deccan – which failed to meet the quality standards of its model, the Taj Mahal. Says Fergusson: :*

*“Few things can show how steadily and rapidly the decline of taste had set in than the fact that. . . , the tomb in honour of her memory (Rabia Daurani) which . . . was intended, it is said, to reproduce an exact copy of Shah Jahan's celebrated tomb, the Taj Mahall. But the **difference between the two monuments**, even in so short an interval, is **startling**. The first stands alone in the world for certain qualities all can appreciate; the second is by **no means remarkable** for any qualities of elegance or design, and narrowly escapes **vulgarity** and bad taste. . . . ” (p.321)*

*---[J. Fergusson, "History of Indian and Eastern Architecture", Vol.-II, 1910, p.*

*Taj Mahal is entirely different from the Mughal architecture of Aurangzeb*

## *E.B Havell (1913 )... 121*

*Writing in 1913, Historian Ernest Havell, asserted that the Taj Mahal is essentially Indian in origin, style and taste:*

*“In two of the most important, namely the Mogul and Bijapur styles, Fergusson and all other writers have ignored the Hindu element entirely and treated them both as foreign to India. Here, I think, they are as mistaken as the archaeological experts who have attributed the inspiration of Indian sculpture to the Graeco-Roman craftsmen of Gandhara. **It is Indian art, not Arab, Persian, or European,** that we must study to find whence came the inspiration of the Taj Mahal and great monuments of Bijapur. They are more Indian than St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey are English.” (p.13)*

*----[E.B. Havell, “Indian Architecture”, 1913, p.13]*

## *E.B Havell (1913 )... 122*

*Writing in 1913, Historian Ernest Havell, asserted that the Taj Mahal is essentially Indian in origin, style and taste:*

*“The beauty of the Taj, so far as the structure is concerned, culminates in the supreme grace of the central dome. The dome of Humayun's tomb differs from that of the Taj in many essential points. The former is of the Saracenic type of Persia and Central Asia i.e. it is not stilted, like the domes of Arab tombs in Cairo, and instead of springing directly from the drum in which it is built, it is corbelled out so as to overhang the drum slightly at the base. Otherwise it resembles the Arab type of dome in having an unbroken contour from the springing to the crown; the pinnacle or finial being only an insignificant metal spike coming out of the crown. (p.23)*

*Taj Dome is not Saracenic*

*ure”, 1913, p.23]*

## *E.B. Havell (1913)... 123*

*Writing in 1913, Historian Ernest Havell, asserted that the Taj Mahal is essentially Indian in origin, style and taste:*

*“The dome of the Taj, on the other hand, is . . . growing up from the base with exquisite tenderness and subtlety, as if the master-craftsman would sum up in its perfect contours all the grace of ideal womanhood. We shall see that the curve is not a single unbroken one, as in the typical Arab dome, but has three marked divisions : first, the incurving at the base, where a band of inlaid decoration marks the springing, and suggests a lotus flower holding the dome within its unfolded petals; secondly, the main structure or centre of the dome; and, thirdly, the pinnacle, which does not rise abruptly from the crown, but is connected with the centre of the dome by another lotus-like member which has the petals turned downwards instead of upwards.(p. 23-24)*

*----[E B. Havell “Indian Architecture” 1913, p.23-24]*

*Taj Dome is described in Indian ‘Shilpa Shastras’*

# *‘Griva’, ‘lupamala’, ‘shikhara’, ‘malabaddha’, ‘pattica’ . . 124*

Writing in 1913, Historian Ernest Havell, asserted :

“Now if we refer to the *Shilpa Shastras*, . . .

“Above the *adhithana* . . . . there is the *griva*, the neck of the dome, which is the drum or polygonal base on which it rests. The *griva* is crowned by a projecting cornice called the *lupa-mala*. Above this is the *sikhara*, or main portion of the dome itself, which is bulbous shaped like that of the Buddhist dagaba, and springs from a composite lotus moulding consisting of three parts, two rows of lotus petals connected by a bead-moulding called the *malabaddha*.

“The *sikhara* is surmounted by the *stupi* or pinnacle, which has two principal members, the *Maha-padma*, or great eight-petalled lotus 'joined to the sikhara by a moulding called *pattica* ; and the *kumbha* or *kalasha*, the symbolic water pot .(p.25-26)

# *The 'Pancharatna' style . . . 125*

*Writing in 1913, Historian Ernest Havell, asserted :*

*“ . . .this structural arrangement is not Saracenic, but essentially Hindu. It is known in Hindu architecture as the panch-ratna, the shrine of the five jewels, or the five-headed lingam of Siva, symbolising the five elements, earth, water, air, fire, and ether. A typical example of it is found in one of the small shrines of Chandi Sewa at Prambanam in Java, which has an arrangement of domes strikingly similar to that of the Taj . . . .The date of the completion of the Chandi Sewa, given by Sir Stamford Raffles and accepted as approximately correct by Mr. Phene Spiers, is A.D. 1098, nearly five and a half centuries before the Taj was begun.”*

*----[E.B. Havell, “Indian Architecture”, 1913, p.22]*

*Earlier Prototype : Chandi Seva Temple, Java*

# *Taj Mahal belongs to India. . . 126*

*Writing in 1913, Historian Ernest Havell, asserted :*

*“The Arabs, Tartars, Mongols, and Persians who came into India had much to learn from Hindu civilization, and it was from what they learnt and not from what they taught that Muhammadan art in India became great. The Taj Mahall belongs to India, not to Islam.(p.21).*

*----[E.B. Havell, “Indian Architecture”, 1913, p.21]*





# *The Legend*

# *The classification of Fergusson. .*

*.127*

*Classification of the Taj Mahal as a typical Mughal architecture was done by British historians of 19th century – most notably by James Fergusson around 1855, 1867, 1876. Fergusson was the pioneer in the field of Indian archaeology and was the first – also the most authoritative – historian, to propound that the bulbous dome (The Taj Dome) originated in Samarkhand, the original seat of the Mughals.*

# *Uniqueness of Taj Mahal. . . 128*

*Fergusson identified Shah Jahan's architecture with the Taj Mahal. And noted explicitly, the contrast between the styles of Akbar and Shah Jahan, He wrote:*

*"Certainly when the same people, following the same religion, built temples and palaces in the same locality, **nothing of the sort ever occurred in any country** whose history is now known to us."  
(p.307-8)*

*He also made equally strong observations about the complete break of architectural of Shah Jahan (Taj Mahal) and that of Aurangzeb:*

*"But the difference between the two monuments, even in so short an interval, is startling. The first stands alone in the world for **certain qualities all can appreciate**; the second is by no means remarkable for any qualities of elegance or design, and narrowly escapes **vulgarity and bad taste. . . .**" (p.321)*

# The 'pleasure palace'! . . . 129

Ferguson identifies the Taj Mahal with Shah Jahan. But a few pages later in the same book, he makes a **brief but startling** remark implying that the Taj Mahal was indeed a 'pleasure palace' earlier !  
Writes Fergusson (p.316):

"When used as a Baradhari, or **pleasure palace**, it must always have been the coolest and loveliest of garden retreats, and now that it is sacred to the dead it is the most graceful and the most impressive of the sepulchers of the world."(p.316)

**'used as a pleasure palace'** , by whom ? Raja Mansingh ? Raja Jaisingh ? If so, by what logic does it become 'Mughal architecture' ?

## *The legend and history. . . 130*

*The above ('pleasure palace') sentence not only appears in all the three major publications of Fergusson (1855, 1867 and 1876), but also was quoted in the 9th edition of Encyclopaedia Britannica (1875) – it was omitted in the 11th edition (1910) – and also in "Murray's Handbook (for travelers) to India and Ceylon" (1891) .*

*As late as 1896, Syad Muhammad Latif wrote :*

*. . . that the building "was originally a palace of Raja Man Singh but now it was the property of his grandson Raja Jai Singh. His Majesty gave the Raja a lofty edifice from the Khalsa estate in exchange of this building; and the spot was used for the mausoleum of the deceased empress." (p.105)*

*---[Syad Mohammad Latif, "Agra – Historical & Descriptive", 1896, p.*

*The legend and history were existing side by side*

# *The 'architect' anonymous. . . 131*

*In 1903, Moin-ud-din Ahmed quoted Badshahnama (Vol. II, pp. 325-6) and wrote that the gold railing around the tomb "was made under the supervision of Bebadal Khan, Master of king's kitchen". But the identity of the architect of the monument remained unsolved.*

*The 22 basement rooms were detected in 1900 AD, The staircase leading to a long corridor and 22 basement rooms below the red-stone terrace were detected in 1900 AD. Moin-ud-din Ahmed discussed them in his book and stated that,*

*"The real object of building them remains a mystery."*

*---[Moin-ud-din-Ahmed, "History of the Taj", 1903, pp. 35-36]*

*The builder of the a gold railing around the tomb finds a place in the Badshahnama, but not the 'architect' of the edifice ! ?*

# Legend as history. . . 132

Translation of Tavernier's "Travels in India" was published (edited by Valentine Ball), was published in 1889. Tavernier visited Agra for the first time during the *winter of 1640-41*. and again in Nov 1665.

The legend drew support from his casual remark that he was a witness to the "the commencement and accomplishment of this great work, on which *22 years* have been spent, during which *20,000 men* worked incessantly; . . ."

But Taverneir also stated that "It is said that the *scaffoldings* alone *cost* more than the *entire work*".

What is that '*work*' which was cheaper than the *scaffolding* ?  
Was it the construction of the building, or was it *calligraphy* ?

# *Tavernier is Unreliable. . . 133*

*By 1925, William Crooke, Editor of Tavernier's "Travels in India" (1925) , wrote that Tavernier was not always reliable on matters of details . In his Introduction to the Travelogue , he wrote :*

*"The most important question connected with Tavernier's work is the **credibility of the narrative**. . . . he had little or no acquaintance with any of the languages of India, and he was always obliged to do his business through an interpreter. . . . For matters of **which he was not an eye witness he depended on merchants' tales** current in the ports and cities which he visited. A somewhat parallel case is that of Dr. John Fryer, who visited India about the same time. He includes hearsay information with the record of his personal experiences. (p. xxxii-xxxiii)*



# *Tavernier is Unreliable. . . 134*

*William Crooke, Editor of Tavernier's "Travels in India" (1925), wrote :*

*. . . Unfortunately neither of these writers thought it necessary to distinguish clearly between information based on his own experience and that acquired, in the case of Tavernier, from shipmasters or other travellers, particularly the priests and friars of the Roman Catholic Church, whose friendship he enjoyed." (p. xxxii-xxxiii)*

*"We must remember that Tavernier was not a scientifically trained observer who visited India with the intension of describing the ountry and its people. He observed it from the point of view of a marchant." (p. xxxv)*

*But the legend of Shah Jahan constructing the Taj draws heavily from Tavernier's notings!*



# *The Bias*

## *'Turanean blood' . . . 135*

Note how Fergusson approaches his study of Indian Architecture. His classification is based on his belief in the *racial superiority* of the *'Turanean blood'*. On the architecture of invading Afghans, he wrote:

*The architecture of the nations under the Arab Khalifat . . . . is of very minor importance. The ruling people were of Semitic race, and had no great taste for architectural magnificence. . .*

*With the Northern hordes the case was widely different; they were of *Turanean blood*, more or less *pure*, and wherever they went their mosques, and especially their *tombs*, remain to mark their presence, and to convey an idea of their splendour. In order to understand what follows it is necessary to bear in mind that . . . The *Turanian* conquest, from Bukhara and Balkh as centers extended from Constantinople to Katak, and covered the whole intervening space with *monuments of every class*.(197-8)*

## *'a nation of soldiers'..136*

James Fergusson writes on the invading "Northern hordes":

"Nothing could be more brilliant, and at the same time more characteristic, than the commencement of the architectural career of these Pathans in India. So soon as they felt themselves at all sure of their conquests, they set to work to erect two great mosques in their two principal capitals of Ajmir and Delhi, of such magnificence as should redound to the glory of their religion, and mark their triumph over the idolaters. *A nation of soldiers* equipped for conquest, and *that only*, they had of course brought with them *neither artists nor architects*, but, like other nations of *Turanian origin*, they had strong architectural instincts, and having a style of their own, *they could hardly go wrong* in any architectural project they might attempt. At the same time, they found among their new subjects *an infinite number of artists* quite capable of carrying out any design that might be propounded to them.

---[J. Fergusson, "History of Indian and Eastern Architecture", Vol.-II, p. 197]

## *Pure racism. . . 137*

*The above passage raise pertinent questions on the basis of Fergusson's logic. He says:*

- *The “Northern hordes” (who had no experience of architecture in the place of their origin) , but were of “Turanean blood, more or less pure”*
- *Whereas the Hindus (the conquered nation) had “an infinite number of artists” quite capable of carrying out any design that might be propounded to them (by the invading Pathans).*
- *The Pathans are “a nation of soldiers equipped for conquest, and that only”*
- *They had “brought with them neither artists nor architects”*
- *“But, like other nations of Turanian origin, they had strong architectural instincts (sic), and having a style of their own, they could hardly go wrong in any architectural project they might attempt”<sup>49</sup>*

# *Alberuni noted otherwise . . . 138*

*Alberuni, the Arab historian who visited India in the beginning of the **eleventh century** (contemporary of Mohammad Gazni) and knowing all the architectural splendour of Baghdad at the height of its glory, before it was laid waste by the Mongols, expressed his astonishment at and admiration for the works of Hindu builders. (Alberuni wrote):*

*"Our people," he said, "when they see them, wonder at them and are unable to describe them, much less to construct anything like them."*

*----[E.B. Havell, "Indian Architecture", 1913, p.11]*

## *Ghazni said otherwise . . . 139*

*Ferishta tells us that after the sack of Mathura he wrote to the Governor of Ghazni extravagantly extolling the magnificence of the buildings and the city.*

*" There are here," he said, "a thousand edifices as firm as the faith of the faithful; nor is it likely that this city has attained its present condition but at the expense of many millions of deenars nor could such another be constructed under a period of two centuries."*

*When he returned to Ghazni he brought back 5,300 Hindu captives, doubtless the greater number of them masons and craftsmen, for building the magnificent mosque of marble and granite known by the name of the Celestial Bride, which he caused to be built to commemorate his triumphs.*

----[E.B. Havell, "Indian Architecture", 1913, p.12]

# Fergusson's 'Mughal style' . . .140

To quote Fergusson [vol.-II, p.286]:

“It is probable that very considerable light will yet be thrown upon the origin of *the style which the Mughals introduced into India*, from an examination of the buildings erected at Samarkand by Timur a hundred years before Babar's time (A.D. 1393-1404). Now that city is in the hands of the Russians, it is accessible to Europeans. Its buildings have been drawn and photographed, but not yet described so as to be available for scientific purposes, ..... Though a frightful savage in most respects, Timur was possessed of a *true Turki love for noble architecture*; and though he generally massacred the inhabitants of any town that resisted him, he *always spared the architects and artists*, and sent them to work on the embellishment of his capitals. *Samarkand* was consequently filled with splendid edifices, but, so far as can be judged from the materials available, *more resembling in style those of Persia than anything now known to exist in India*. The bulbous dome appears everywhere, and was not known at that time in India, . . .



# *Timur's wrote otherwise. . . 141*

Timur wrote in his Autobiography [Malfuzat-i Timuri] , how much the Samarkhand architecture owes to India. After the sack of Delhi in 1398, writes Timur :

*"I ordered that all the artisans and clever mechanics , who were masters of their crafts, should be picked out from among their prisoners and set aside, and accordingly some thousands of craftsmen were selected to await my command. All these I distributed among the princes and amirs who were present, or who were engaged officially in other parts of my dominions. I had determined to build a Masjid-i Jami in Samarkhand, the seat of my empire, which should be without a rival in any country; so I ordered that all builders and stone masons should be set apart for my own especial service. . . ."*

---[Elliot and Dowson, "History of India", Vol-III, p.447]

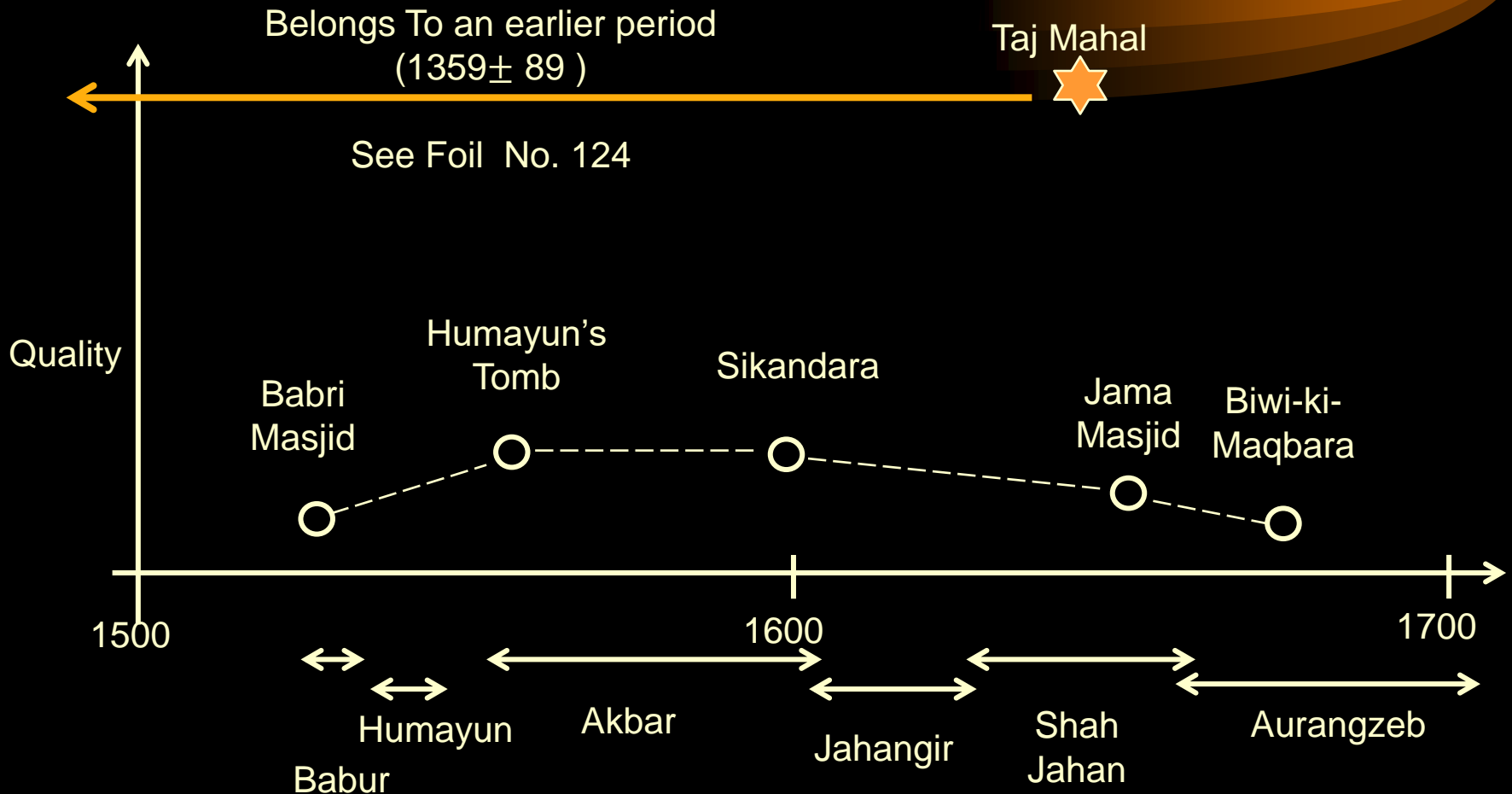
# *Fergusson's classification. . . 142*

However, James Fergusson's pioneering work on the classification of medieval Indian Architecture is considered authentic. Havell writes (1913):

*". . . . The history of architecture is not, as Fergusson thought, the classification of buildings in archaeological water-tight compartments according to arbitrary academic ideas of style, but a history of national life and thought. . . . At the same time Fergusson's authority among archaeologists has been so great that, . . . his views of Indian history have never been seriously disputed; and the ever-increasing quantity of most valuable material collected by the Archaeological Survey of India year by year is still religiously docketed and labelled according to the scheme laid down by him forty years ago. (p.v)*

*That was 140 years ago. Fergusson helped a legend become 'history'; and the legend continues to be 'hi-story', even today.*

# Mughal architecture ?...143



# *Fatehpur Sikri. . . Jama Masjid. . .144*



*Note the 'purdah' (main entrance) covering the main dome!  
Did the same hand build the Dome and the Entrance ?*

# *A 'purdah' over the Dome ! . .145*



*Note how the main dome is covered by the main entrance ! Hid  
the same hand build the gate way and the dome ?*

# *Salim Chisti's tomb, Sikri . . . 146*



*Salim Chishti ki Dargah, Fatehpur Sikri.*

*An imposition on a red-stone environ, Fatehpur Sikri*

# *Salim Chisti's tomb, Sikri . . .147*



*The only marble item, in red-stone environ, Fatehpur Sikri*

# *Jama Masjid, Delhi (1656)...148*



*'Shah Jahan's Architecture'(1656AD)*

*Note the 'purdah' (entrance) obscuring the main dome*



# *Jama Masjid, Delhi (1656). . . 149*



*'Shah Jahan's Architecture' (1644-1656AD)  
Note the 'purdah' (entrance) obscuring the main dome*



*Memorial of a bygone era . . .*



*Memorial of a bygone era !  
Mejestic, exquisite . . .*

# *Negationism in India ! . . . . 152*

*The Badshahnama, the official court history of Shajahan (Vol-I, pp.402-403) declares in clear and ringing tone:*

*(On) "Friday –15th Jamadi-ul Awwal, the sacred dead body of the traveler to the kingdom of Holiness, hazrat Mumtaz-ul Zamani – who was buried temporarily. . .was brought to the capital Akbarabad (Agra)...*

*"The site covered with magnificent lush garden, to the south of that great city and amidst which (garden) the building known as the palace of Raja Mansingh, at present owned by Raja Jaisingh [Pesh az ein Manzil-e Raja Mansingh bood Wadaree Waqt ba Raja Jaisingh], grandson (of Mansingh) was selected for the burial of the queen whose abode is in heaven . .164*

# *‘Assumptions based on assumptions!’ ... 152*

*In the Introduction of the book, Author Satish Grover writes:*

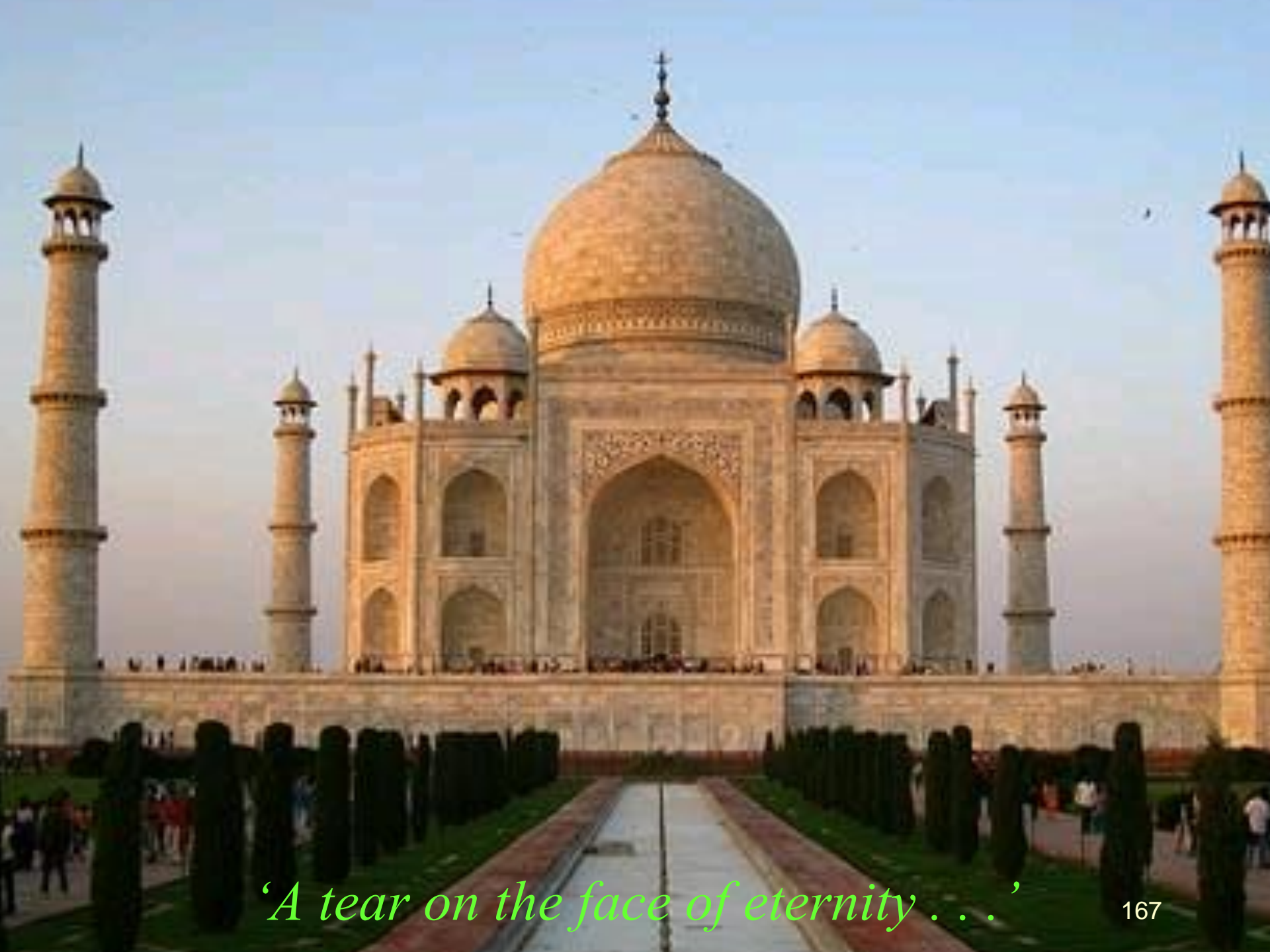
*“The Qutub Minar at Delhi. . .the city of Fatehpur Sikri and the Taj at Agra are all undoubtedly and distinctly Islamic.” (p. vii)*

*“Under his (Akbar’s) benevolent but powerful guiding hand, all that is best in the building tradition of India suddenly came to life . Humayun had brought back from his exile courtiers and craftsmen brimming with Persian ideas. During Akbar’s rule these were blended with Hindu and Buddhist traditions into a style as unique as the eclectic personality of Akbar. This is seen at its best in Humayun’s tomb at Delhi, in the numerous structures of Akbar’s new capital city at Fatehpur Sikri and his own tomb at Sikandara.”(p.xiv)*

*----[Satish Grover, “The Architecture of India, Islamic”, 1981,p.vii, p.xiv]*



*'A tear on the face of Eternity. . .'*



*‘A tear on the face of eternity . . .’*



Thank You



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