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ORTHODOXY, INNOVATION, AND REVIVAL: CONSIDERATIONS OF THE PAST IN IMPERIAL MUGHAL TOMB ARCHITECTURE

Between 1606 and 1608 Mughal architects committed a blunder of monumental proportions. Working in the absence of their imperial patron, they constructed a royal tomb considered so inappropriate that when the emperor first saw it he immediately ordered its destruction. In the words of the emperor Jahangir, it "did not come up to my idea of what it ought to be."[1] The structure that had risen at Sikandra, one stage out of the Mughal capital Agra on the road to Delhi, was intended to serve as the tomb of Jahangir's father, the radical but long-serving emperor Akbar who had died in October 1605. The problems began almost as soon as work commenced.

In April 1606, Jahangir's son Khusraw rebelled and headed off towards Lahore, leaving the new emperor with no option but to follow in hot pursuit. Perhaps because Jahangir had once rebelled against his own father, Khusraw escaped fatal punishment when captured the following month near Lahore. Jahangir spent most of the next year based in Lahore consolidating his position and monitoring the situation on the northwest frontier. Khusraw was subsequently blinded in the aftermath of an abortive coup during an expedition to Kabul in mid-1607. The royal cavalcade finally returned to Agra in 1608, with Jahangir later conceding that it was his absence from Agra for the two years that it took him to crush Khusraw's rebellion that allowed his architects to run rampant at Sikandra.

Beyond the immediate question as to whether the original tomb constructed in Jahangir's absence was deemed too radical or too conservative, this strange episode raises two other issues that will serve as theme and sub-theme throughout this essay. The first is that almost a century after the establishment of the Mughal dynasty in northern India there was apparently still no consensus as to what constituted an appropriate imperial tomb. The second is that the patronage, design, and construction of these crucial markers of political intent were often heavily informed by the storms of dynastic rebellion that clouded the issue of Mughal succession. As a first foray into these areas, this essay can only deal with the death, burial, and entombment of the first six Mughal emperors: Babur (1483–1530), Humayun (1505–56), Akbar (1542–1605), Jahangir (1569–1627), Shah Jahan (1592–1666) and, finally, Aurangzeb (1618–1707). The generalizations are intentional, and no attempt will be made to discuss either finer architectural details or broader themes of landscape context. Burials without major tomb structures, however, will be given equal treatment here for the first time.

Descendants of the great Central Asian amir Timur (1338–1405), the Mughals described their dynasty as "Timurid" rather than the now more commonly used "Mughal" but ruled India as permanent residents.[2] The first Mughal emperor Babur had won and lost the great Timurid capital of Samarqand twice before he gave up on his attempts to revitalize the fading Timurid empire in its home territories and turned his sights towards India, where he established himself on the throne of Delhi in 1526. Because Timur had captured Delhi in 1397, however, he saw this challenge as one of reconquest, not invasion.

Despite an increasingly secure power base in northern India, Mughal power, like that of their late-Timurid forebears, seldom perpetuated itself smoothly. The Mughal imperial system was particularly susceptible to rebellion when it came to deciding matters of succession. The eldest prince was not automatically entitled to follow his father on the throne, and the picture was often further complicated by different wives of the emperor pushing their own progeny towards power. More often than not, violent rebellions relating to succession broke out before the emperor's death. As Jahangir said in 1606, "Kingship regards neither son nor son-in-law. No one is a relation to a king."[3]

Because of the complexity of this Mughal polity it is hardly surprising that the artistic and architectural forms it gave birth to raise so many interesting questions. And

no Mughal architectural type is more paradoxical than the imperial tomb. It is equally surprising, therefore, that a satisfactory monograph on Mughal architecture has yet to be written. Those who have discussed Mughal architecture as part of larger surveys of Indian art have inevitably faltered when dealing with the Mughal imperial tombs.[4]

Percy Brown might be taken as an example. Writing in 1942, his treatment of Mughal tombs is littered with qualifications that highlight the shortcomings of applying an approach based on the chronological development of forms to the study of Mughal architecture. Humayun's tomb is described as "an outstanding landmark in the development of the Mughal style" but one that "emerges however before its time." In comparison to this monument, Akbar's tomb is written off as "an architectural retrogression." The Taj Mahal, of course, scores top marks as "the 'perfect moment' in the evolution of architecture during the Mughul period," while the burials of Babur and Aurangzeb are totally ignored. The latter's reign is described as marking "the decline of the building art" due in large part to the emperor's "faulty ideals."[5] More recently, both Grover (1981) and Harle (1986) have repeated this notion of a grand evolution towards an "age of marble" with the Taj Mahal as its climax. The other tombs are seen again as unfortunate detours, or wrong turns, along this noble path. For Harle, Humayun's tomb is successful as a "foretaste" of the Taj Mahal, while those of Akbar (a "relative failure") and Jahangir are "marred by eccentricities" and "perhaps ... incomplete."[6] Grover describes Aurangzeb as buried in "an ordinary grave," presumably just reward for someone having died "broken in body and spirit."[7]

Such constant exceptions to a "rule" must always be met with skepticism. This popular belief in a smooth evolution towards the "perfection" of the Taj Mahal, with Aurangzeb's grave written off as nothing more than a post-climactic decline, needs to be seriously reconsidered. The conceptual design of these first six Mughal imperial tombs clearly needs to be set within a more satisfactory explanatory framework.

In his *Formation of Islamic Art,* Oleg Grabar postulates a first classicism of Islamic art ending around the year 1000.[8] With the recent wave of new research on Timurid art and architecture, the recognition of a subsequent Timurid classicism now seems inevitable. The likelihood of recurring direct reference back to such a dominant set of "classical" aesthetic norms has great consequences for the study of Mughal art and architecture in India. An initial attempt will be made in this essay to demonstrate that the development of at least certain aspects of Mughal architecture might better be seen as a cyclical process complete with Timurid revivals rather than a simple linear progression replete with notions of "perfection" and the inevitable "decline". A challenge for Mughal art historians in the future will be to investigate the deeper nature and causes of these "classical" revivals. Will we also be able to go a step further and weigh "*classical*" revivals against "*anti-classical*" revolutions? Such terms obviously need to be treated with care: Stendhal, after all, once defined Classicism as nothing more than the art of pleasing ones grandfathers.[9]

Three social and historical factors came into play when the Mughal emperors and their architects thought of burial and entombment: their religion (Islam), their ancestry (Timurid), and their empire (India). To begin with, it is in the Qur'an that Muslims are instructed in the rudiments of how to bury their dead: after Cain had killed Abel, God sent down a raven which "dug the earth to show him how to bury the naked corpse of his brother."[10] An uncovered grave exposed to the purifying moisture of rain and dew is considered a symbol of humility. Nothing more is required. On the other hand, saints' tombs, which were often covered and occasionally monumental, became an alternative model for royal burial. A variety of responses were thus possible on the occasion of the death of a significant Muslim personage. In imperial circles, however, few opportunities were lost to create a funerary monument of the most impressive and lasting kind. The dichotomy between orthodox prescriptions and imperial practice is a constant issue in the history of the Islamic tomb.

Apart from the strictures of religion, the Mughals were also guided in their entombment practices by their knowledge of two traditions of funerary architecture: one gained through ancestry, the Timurid, and one through conquest, that of pre-Mughal Islamic India (the so-called Sultanate period). When Amir Timur died in 1405 he was buried in a mausoleum in Samarqand known as the Gur-i Amir (fig. 1).[11] As more of Timur's sons and grandsons were buried there over the next half-century, it became a true dynastic mausoleum. For such a historically important building, the form of the Gur-i Amir is quite simple: a modified octagon with a projecting portal.[12] The monument's most obviously Timurid features are its double dome, which rises to a height of thirty-seven meters from an exceptionally tall drum, and its magnificent glazed tile revetment. Although no contemporary painted images of the Gur-i Amir are known, the basic form of this building must have been famous

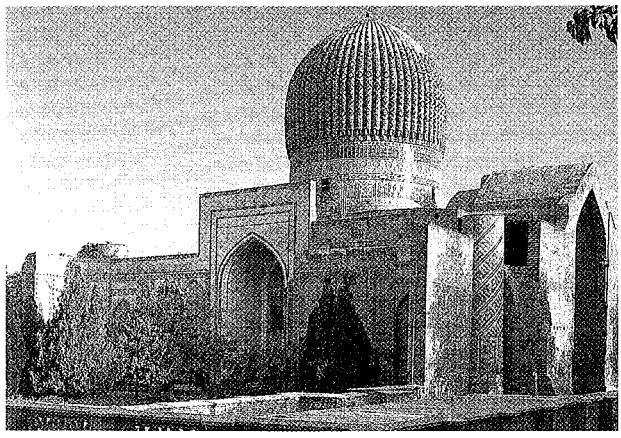

Fig. 1. Samarqand. Gur-i Amir. (Photo: from Lisa Golombek, *Asian Art*, spring 1989, fig. 22)

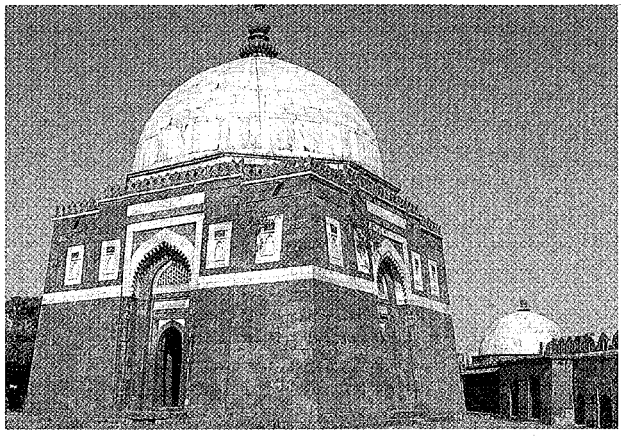

Fig. 2. Delhi. Tomb of Ghiyas al-Din Tughluq. South façade.

throughout the Timurid world. That few, if any, Timurid buildings carried more prestige is attested by the fact that both Jahangir and Shah Jahan later sent funds to Samarqand for the upkeep of the Gur-i Amir.[13]

On the Indian side of the equation, the Mughals inherited a veritable museum of architecture, as well as teams of architects and masons skilled in the erection of both Islamic and Hindu monuments. Their most direct encounter was with the architectural remains of the fourteenth-century Tughluq dynasty in Delhi. One of the most impressive structures was the tomb of Sultan Ghiyas al-Din Tughluq (r. 1320–25), whose mausoleum lies in a miniature fortress on an artificial island connected by a causeway to the Tughluq citadel (fig. 2). It is a square structure, sixteen meters to a side, faced with red sandstone highlighted with white marble. The dramatically battered walls and squat white marble dome with no drum create a stern aesthetic far removed from what the Mughals would have recalled from their Timurid homeland. These themes — the correct manner of Islamic burial and the relative merits of Timurid and Indian architecture — are barely mentioned in the Mughal histories, but physical evidence suggests that they were the subject of significant intellectual debate.

Babur, the author of a deservedly famous autobiography in which he shows himself to be a keen observer of everything from the architecture of Herat and Samarqand to the flora and fauna of India,[14] had ruled northern India for barely four years when he died in 1530. Even so, the struggle for succession had already begun. The previous year Humayun, his son and heir-apparent, had ridden back to Agra from Badakhshan in contradiction of orders when he heard word of a rumor that his uncle Mahdi Khwaja was being prepared to succeed Babur. Once back in India, however, Humayun fell seriously ill and after the leading imperial physicians had failed to cure him, Babur is said to have decided to offer his own life in return for Humayun's recovery.[15] The exact chronology is sketchy, yet the twenty-two-year-old prince recovered while Babur died on 26 December 1530. Humayun ascended the throne four days later with, as the above story had aimed to show, his late father's blessings.

Babur's death presents our first paradox. Despite being the first Timurid ruler of India and having died at a point when their power was in desperate need of legitimacy, no major dynastic monument was conceived to commemorate his passing. It was marked, instead, by the orthodox burial Babur is said to have requested before his death. He is commonly thought to have been buried first in the so-called Aram Bagh on the opposite side of the Yamuna river in Agra, but there is no contemporary textual evidence to this effect.[16] Babur's daughter Gulbadan Begam mentions a first assembly at his "tomb" (*mazar*), to which sixty Qur'an reciters had been assigned, but gives a description neither of the grave nor of its location.[17]

At some point between 1539 and 1544, allegedly in compliance with Babur's wishes but perhaps more because of Humayun's flight from India after his defeat by Sher Shah Sur, Babur's body was moved from Agra and re-interred in Kabul.[18] Over the next century his grave was frequently visited by his descendants. As described by the Shah Jahani historian Qazwini, embel-

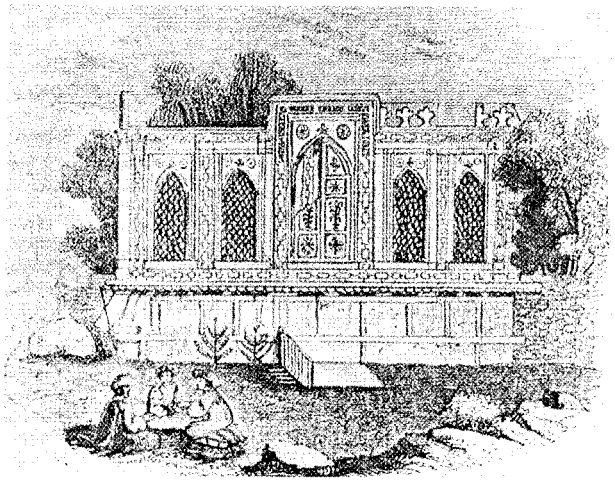

Fig. 3. Kabul. Babur's grave. From Charles Masson, *Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan and the Panjab* (1842). (Photo: from Parpagliolo, fig. 25)

lishments contributed by Jahangir and Shah Jahan were always in line with Babur's original wishes:

> The burial-garden was 500 yards (*gaz*) long; its ground was in 15 terraces, 30 yards apart [?]. On the 15th terrace is the tomb of Ruqaiya Sultan Begam; as a small marble platform (*chabutra*) had been made near it by Jahangir's command, Shah-i-jahan ordered both to be enclosed by a marble screen three yards high. — Babur's tomb is on the 14th terrace. In accordance with his will, no building was erected over it, but Shah-i-jahan built a small marble mosque on the terrace below. It was begun in the 17th year [of Shah-i-jahan's reign (1643–44)] and was finished in the 19th [1645–46].[19]

Although a garden is not a necessary adjunct to Islamic burial, it is clear that Babur's stipulation that he be buried in an uncovered grave reflects a wish to be seen to adhere to orthodox practice (fig. 3). That the minimal nature of such an important memorial could survive almost a century and a quarter of later Mughal attention is clear evidence of the great respect orthodox burial enjoyed at the Mughal court. Since then, however, this original Mughal context of Babur's grave has been totally destroyed.

Humayun does not appear to have had a chance to plan his own burial. Exiled from India by the Afghan Suris in 1540, this mystical and eccentric ruler eventually recaptured Delhi in 1555 only to die in a freak accident the following year. Until the thirteen-year-old Prince Akbar could be brought back from Kalanaur in the Panjab, a local mulla was disguised as Humayun and presented at the times of regular audiences in order to reassure the public about the stability of Timurid rule in India. Humayun's body was at first interred in one of his palaces in Delhi, but afterwards was moved to Sirhind in the Panjab, where Akbar paid homage to the curtain-shrouded coffin in 1558.[20]

Akbar's grip on power was far too insecure at this stage to embark upon any major building projects. With the help of his regent Bayram Khan, three of the main obstacles to Mughal power — Hemu, Sikandar Shah Sur and ʿAdil Shah Sur — were vanquished by 1557, and an internal rival — Adham Khan — was dispatched (literally, over a parapet at Agra fort) in late November 1561.[21] Thus it was not until 1562 that he ordered work to commence on a tomb for his father in Delhi.[22] Six years after Humayun's original burial, and thirty-six years after the establishment of Mughal rule in India, the symbolic potential of mausoleum architecture had finally proved irresistible.

The site chosen for Humayun's tomb was between the new city of Din-Panah that he had founded in 1533 and the *dargah* of the great Chishti saint Nizam al-Din Awliya. By late 1568 or early 1569, when Akbar sought blessings in Delhi on his way to attempt the capture of a major Rajput fortress, Humayun's remains had already returned to Delhi, but his tomb was not fully completed until 1571.[23] The eight or nine years of construction resulted in a remarkable building the likes of which had never been seen in India (fig. 4). Designed by the emigré Iranian architect Mirak Mirza Ghiyas, who had previously worked in Timurid Herat and Bukhara as well as India, it first impresses by its sheer scale. The mausoleum proper, square in shape with chamfered corners and faced with red sandstone inlaid with white marble, measures almost fifty meters to a side. Its double dome, sheathed in white marble and flanked at each corner by a very Indian chatri (a small pillared pavilion surmounted by a cupola), rises to a height of over forty-two meters from a tall drum. The radially symmetrical floor plan consists of an octagonal central tomb chamber surrounded by four corner chambers, with the addition of an ambulatory on the upper level. Also provided by Mirak Mirza Ghiyath was an enclosed garden, almost 350 meters square, replete with paradisiacal allusions.

The form of the building, especially its dome, elegant iwans, and radially symmetrical floor plan point conclusively to Timurid models even though more decorative features, such as the striking juxtaposition of red sandstone and white marble, show a desire to invoke Tughluq or Indian models.[24] The spaciousness of the mausoleum

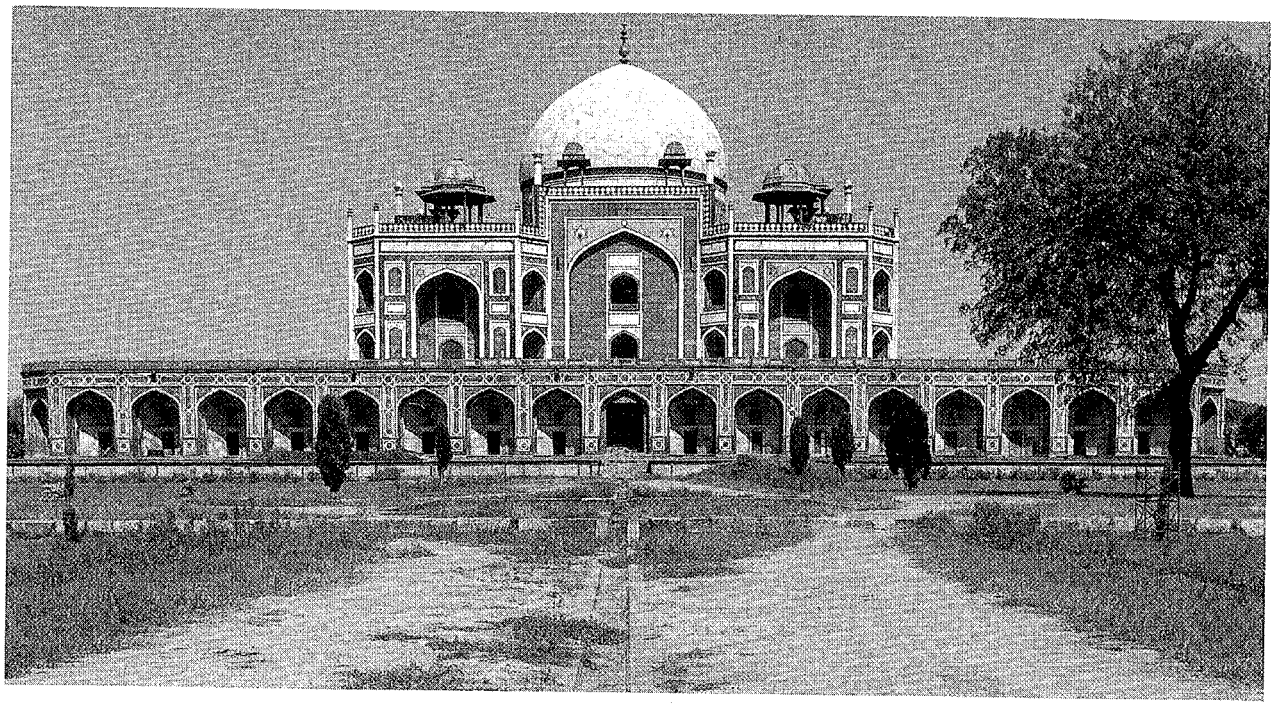

Fig. 4. Delhi. Humayun's tomb. South façade.

and its many cells suggest that Akbar might originally have intended Humayun's tomb to serve as a dynastic mausoleum, the Mughal equivalent to the Gur-i Amir in Samarqand.

Political instability during the first six years of Akbar's reign had delayed the commissioning of a tomb for Humayun. After three decades of remarkable territorial conquest and political reform, the last five years of Akbar's reign proved to be equally tense as Prince Salim (the future emperor Jahangir) tested his father's strength and resolve. By 1604 Salim was in danger of being pushed aside in the battle to succeed the ageing Akbar by his own seventeen-year-old son Khusraw, but when Akbar presented Salim with his most potent imperial regalia (including Humayun's sword) shortly before he died in 1605 Salim had reason to believe that most of his problems were over. He ascended the throne and adopted the title *jahangir* ("seizer of the world") on 24 October 1605, one week after his father's death.

There is no concrete evidence that Akbar had either planned or started construction of his own tomb in the Agra suburb of Sikandra before he died.[25] As mentioned earlier, Jahangir was in power for six months before he set off in pursuit of the rebellious Khusraw in April 1606. From his comments when he visited the tomb on Akbar's *ʿurs* (death anniversary) in October 1608 that the rebellion had started "at the time of erecting" the tomb and that work had proceeded for three or four years, it may be surmised that work had commenced on the basis of a presumably hurried commission in those first six months after Jahangir ascended the throne. From an inscription on the south façade of the tomb's southern gateway it is known that the tomb was completed in the seventh year of Jahangir's reign, corresponding to 1612–13, after seven years of work.[26]

Akbar's tomb is a highly unusual building that has consistently defied description and analysis. Fergusson was so baffled that he ventured to suggest its design had been based on a Hindu or Buddhist model and that a "domical chamber" crowning the whole structure would have been part of the original design.[27] It is certainly a far cry from Humayun's tomb in Delhi, with almost the only features in common being its scale and setting in the center of a large walled garden. The tomb, which is also primarily constructed of red sandstone, can perhaps best be described as a series of progressively smaller single-story pavilions set directly on top of each other (fig. 5). The lower level, surrounded by small cells opening onto an arcade, is over 100 meters to a side. Timurid references are largely confined to the arched iwans in the

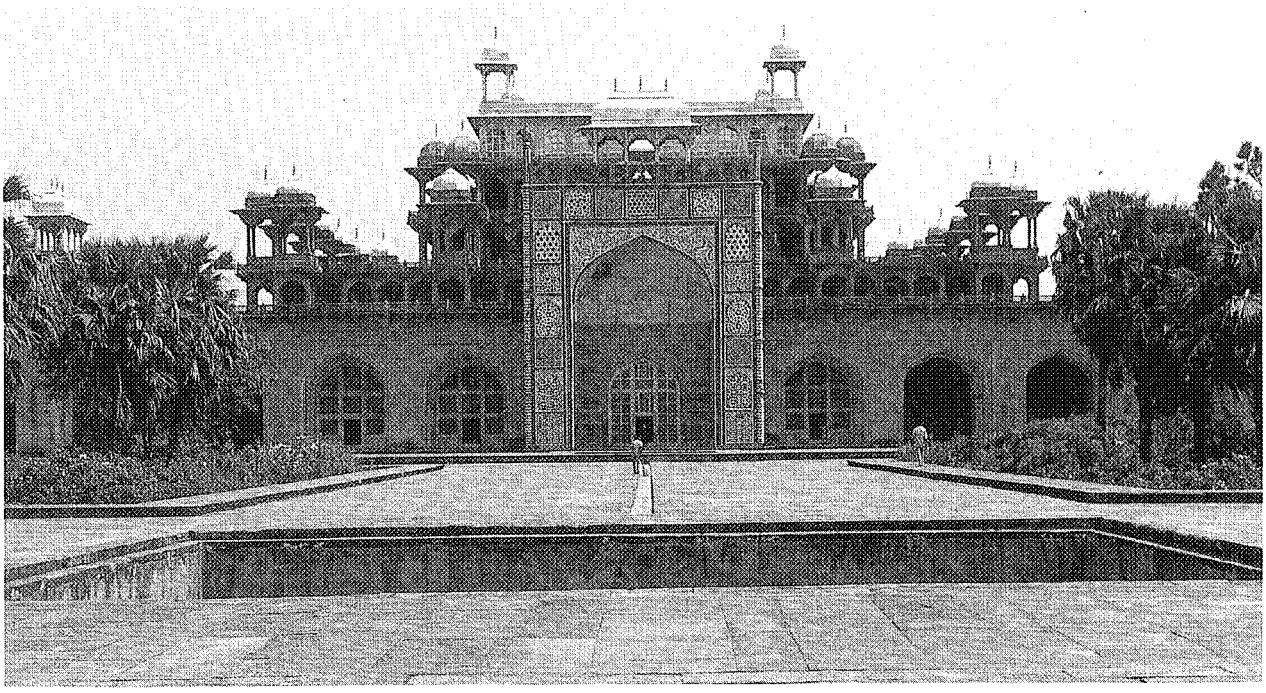

Fig. 5. Sikandra. Akbar's tomb. South façade.

center of each façade decorated with stone inlay work in geometric patterns somewhat reminiscent of bana^{c}i or hazarbaf decoration. A womb-like hall, reached by a single dark passageway sloping down from the main entrance, holds Akbar's sarcophagus. The three additional upper floors with their numerous chatris are crowned by a beautiful but incongruous white marble pavilion with a central courtyard open to the sky (fig. 6). In the center of this twenty-five-meter-square terrace, directly above the tomb chamber, lies a cenotaph carved out of a single block of white marble and decorated with floral designs and the ninety-nine names of God. At its head is a marble pedestal that perhaps functioned as a *mibkhara* (censer), but is also said to have once held the Koh-i Nur diamond.

Jahangir had gone through the usual difficult times with his son and heir-apparent Khurram, who was awarded the title Shah Jahan while still a prince in 1617. At first his claims as heir-apparent were supported by his mother, Nur Jahan, but she eventually transferred her support to his brother Shahriyar. By 1622 Shah Jahan was in open revolt against his father, and remained that way for most of the last four years of Jahangir's reign. When Jahangir died on his way back to Lahore from Kashmir on 29 October 1627, Shah Jahan was in the Deccan, and it was only through the tactical brilliance of Asaf Khan (Nur Jahan's brother and the late emperor's governor in the Panjab) that Shah Jahan was able to ascend the Mughal throne in Agra on 24 January 1628.

Almost immediately upon his death, Jahangir's body was dispatched to Lahore for burial in an unnamed garden constructed by Nur Jahan in Shahdara, a recreational zone across the Ravi river.[28] Nur Jahan also returned to Lahore where her family held large tracts of land. It is possible that Nur Jahan, languishing in Lahore in what amounted to internal exile, was partly responsible for the construction of her late husband's tomb, but there is no contemporary evidence to support this frequently made claim. Jahangir's memoirs do not mention how and where he wished to be buried, so the earliest details are provided in a telling passage by another Shah Jahani historian, ^{c}Abd al-Hamid Lahori:

> A paradise resembling edifice, in one of the gardens on the other side of the river [Ravi] was constructed as the sacred tomb. As His Majesty [Jahangir], following the tenets of the sunni faith, and the example laid by the late king Babar had willed that his tomb should be erected without the ornamentation of a building, and be entrusted to Divine propitiation in an open space, so that it may always benefit from the countless clouds of Divine forgiveness

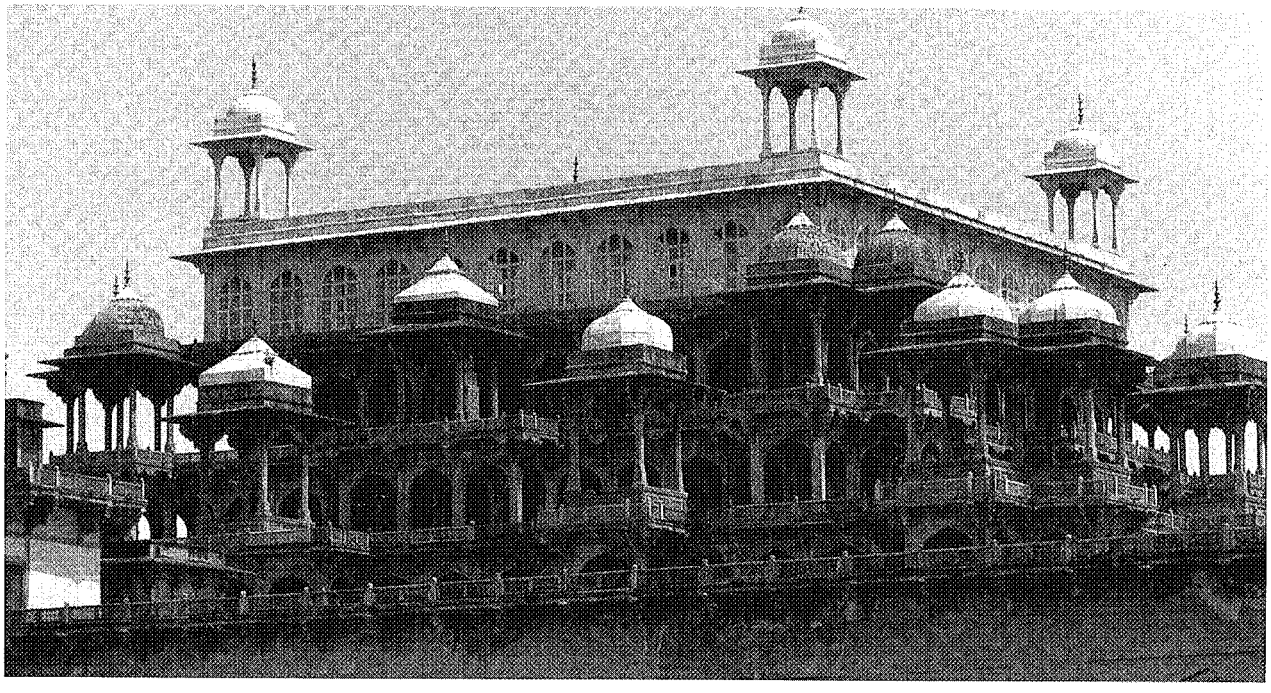

Fig. 6. Sikandra. Akbar's tomb. Detail of upper stories.

> without any obstruction, his successor [Shah Jahan], in pursuance of His Majesty's will, built an elevated platform of red sand-stone measuring hundred by hundred *zira*ʿs round the tomb, surmounted by a white marble *Chabutra* (podium), twenty by twenty, inlaid in a fashion better than mosaic work, in the exact middle of which was placed a replica of the sarcophagus of the king living in paradise [Jahangir]. Notwithstanding the minimum formalities it cost ten lakhs of rupees and took ten years to build.[29]

Although his sarcophagus is dated 1037 (1627), Jahangir's tomb would thus have been completed in about 1637 and, it would appear, cost thirty percent less than Akbar's at Sikandra, even though the latter was begun over twenty years earlier.

Jahangir's wish that there should be no structure over his grave elicited a unique response from the tomb's unknown architect, which combined open-air orthodoxy with the fundamentals of Mughal monumentality (fig. 7). It is set in the center of a garden enclosure, like Humayun's and Akbar's tombs, almost five hundred meters square and entered through a gate in the eastern wall of a large serai. The arcaded single-story structure lined with cells, in effect a glorified plinth 110 meters to a side, is faced with red sandstone inlaid with white marble (which would all have to have been brought to the Panjab from a great distance). The white marble tomb chamber, where Jahangir's remains lie in a white marble sarcophagus decorated with magnificent pietra dura designs and the ninety-nine names of God inlaid with black marble, is set within its solid center. A minaret inlaid with chevron patterns and topped by a white marble chatri rises thirty meters from each corner of the terrace above.

But, in what must rank as the boldest gesture in the history of Mughal architecture, the center of the upper terrace has been left completely empty (except for the small platform or pavilion directly above the tomb chamber, mentioned in Lahori's description, that has since disappeared). So powerful is the vast scale of emptiness created by the terrace and the minarets that the viewer is almost compelled to imagine the large domed mausoleum in their midst that Jahangir so expressly forbade. In fact there has been much speculation ever since about whether or not the architect had still actually intended such a chamber to have been built.[30] No one else was buried in Jahangir's tomb, but Asaf Khan's tomb enclosure was attached to the west of the serai in 1641, and Nur Jahan's still further to the west (but separated from the rest of the complex by a narrow roadway) in 1645.[31]

Three of the six Mughal tombs that form the subject of

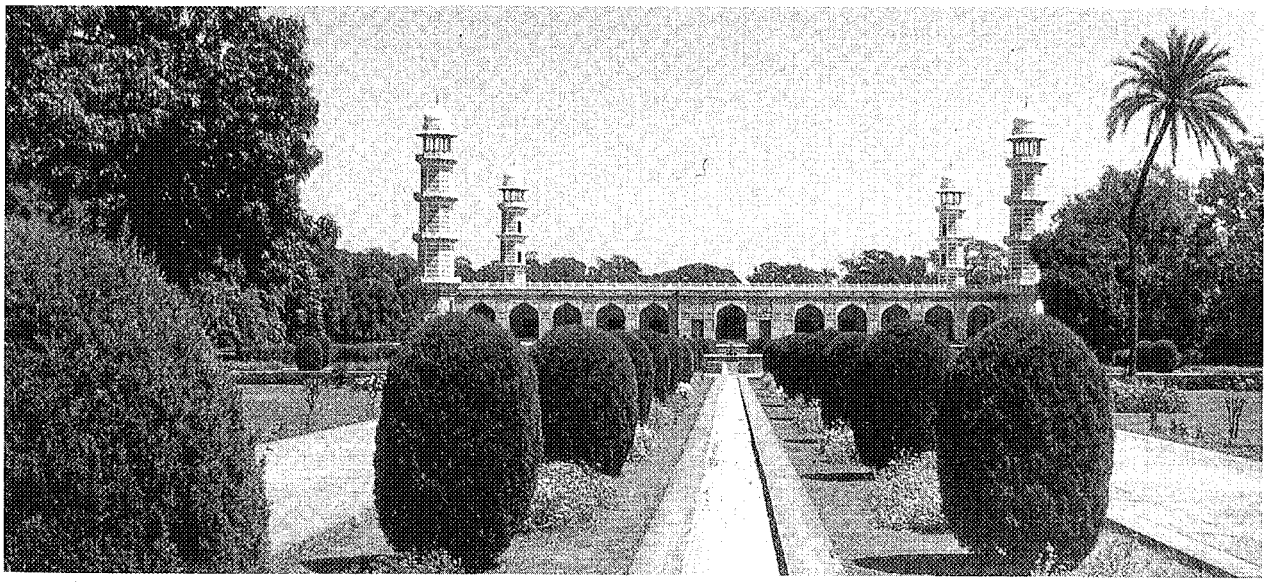

Fig. 7. Lahore. Jahangir's tomb. West façade.

this essay were built, or modified, during the reign of Shah Jahan: the marble enclosure and mosque for Babur's grave in Kabul, Jahangir's tomb in Lahore, and his own, the famous Taj Mahal in Agra. Shah Jahan, Akbar's favorite grandson and a self-styled "second Timur," is thus the only Mughal emperor to have been buried in a tomb designed and built during his own lifetime. Behind this deviation from established Mughal practice lay his wife's premature death in June 1631.

When Mumtaz Mahall died from complications after childbirth in Burhanpur she was given a temporary burial (*amanat*) in a garden there before her body was moved back to Agra, where it arrived in January 1632.[32] Work on the Taj Mahal began almost immediately and Mumtaz Mahall's first *ʿurs* was celebrated at its foundations in June 1632. The tomb was sited on land resumed from one of Shah Jahan's courtiers, Raja Jai Singh of Amber, on the banks of the Yamuna river to the east of the city. Shah Jahan is known to have played a leading role in architecture during his reign,[33] and there is no reason to believe he did not continue this practice with the Taj Mahal during the eleven years of his construction. The architect with overall responsibility for the project was probably Ustad Ahmad Lahori who, as his name suggests, was a local rather than an emigré from Iran or Central Asia.

It was at Mumtaz Mahall's twelfth *ʿurs* on 6 February 1643 that the completion of the "Illumined Tomb" (as it was known in Mughal histories) was celebrated. The entire complex had cost the imperial treasury 5 million rupees, five times the cost of Jahangir's tomb.[34] While Shah Jahan ruled confidently and largely without internal challenge during the construction of the Taj Mahal, he was eventually deposed in 1658 by his son ʿAlamgir, who ruled under the title Aurangzeb after imprisoning his father in Agra fort. Shah Jahan died there on 22 January 1666 and was buried next to his wife in the Taj Mahal the following day, after a modest funeral. Aurangzeb was in Delhi when his father died but came to offer prayers at his tomb the following month.

Serais and bazaars, which also contributed revenue to the maintenance of the Taj Mahal, sit directly to the south of the main gateway balancing the mausoleum itself, which sits on a raised marble plinth occupying a similar area on the other end of a formal garden 300 meters square. The whole complex stretches approximately 545 meters from the north to south. The square white marble mausoleum with chamfered corners is almost 60 meters to a side and 35 meters tall (fig. 8). Its central double dome sitting on a tall drum, rising to a total height of about 60 meters, is balanced by 44-meter-tall minarets at each corner of the plinth. The floor plan is radially symmetrical, focusing on an octagonal domed hall above an octagonal crypt. A matching pair of cenotaphs for Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahall, surrounded by a pierced marble screen, lie in the upper chamber and another pair of sarcophagi in the lower; all are of white marble and decorated with magnificent pietra

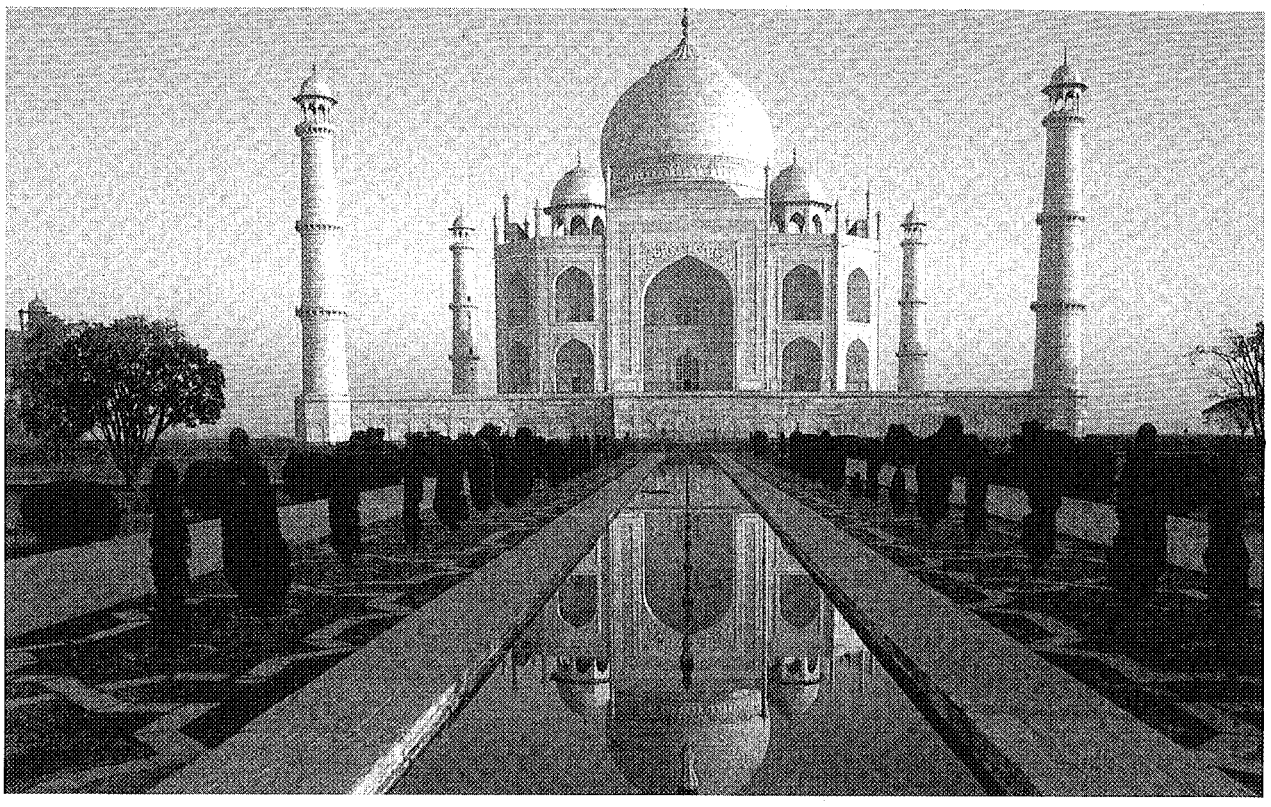

Fig. 8. Agra. Taj Mahal. South façade.

dura inlay as well as the ninety-nine names of God. A distinguishing feature of the Taj Mahal is the first use on a Mughal imperial tomb of a significant inscriptional program, consisting mainly of verses from the Qurʾan.[35] The white marble mausoleum is flanked to the west and east respectively by a red sandstone mosque and resthouse (*mihman-khana*).

Aurangzeb has a reputation for being a far more orthodox Muslim than his predecessors. While this reading of his character is not unwarranted, his policies were not always far removed from prior Mughal practice. When his main consort Dilras Banu, known as Rabiʿa al-Daurani, died in Aurangabad in 1657 he had her buried in a tomb designed by ʿAta Allah, the son of Ustad Ahmad who is presumed to have designed the Taj Mahal. Bearing a striking resemblance to the latter building and now known as the Bibi ka Maqbara (the Wife's Tomb), it was completed in 1660–61. It was towards the end of his life, when grand political failures wrecked his ambitious plans in the Deccan, that Aurangzeb became even more devout and orthodox in his beliefs. By 1667–68 he had memorized the entire Qurʾan (an endeavor that took him seven years) and written it out a number of times in his own hand. He also issued a decree stating that visiting graves is contrary to the shariʿa.[36]

Aurangzeb died in Ahmadnagar on 20 February 1707 at the age of 91. According to his ardent wishes, his burial was, not surprisingly, a very simple affair:

> The Qazi, scholars, and pious men engaged in furnishing and shrouding his corpse for burial, in the terms of his last will, performed the funeral prayer, and kept his body in the khabgah, till at last ... Prince Muhammad ʿAzam ... arrived on Saturday, the 22nd February. ... According to His Majesty's last will, he was buried in the courtyard of the tomb of Shaikh Zainuddin [at Rauza, near Daulatabad] in a sepulchre built by the emperor in his own lifetime. ... The red stone platform (*chabutra*) over his grave, not exceeding three yards in length, two and half yards in breadth, and a few fingers in height, has a cavity in the middle. It has been filled with earth, in which fragrant herbs have been planted.[37]

This is the scene that still greets the many pious visitors to his grave in Khuldabad, just outside Aurangabad in the Deccan (fig. 9). A Taj Mahal it is not, but what it lacks

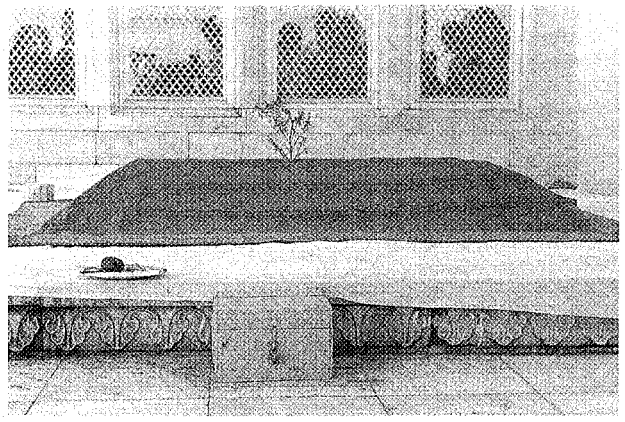

Fig. 9. Khuldabad. Aurangzeb's grave. (Photo: Robijn Ong)

in monumentality is certainly makes up for with its powerfully conceptual aesthetic.

The preceding survey of these six imperial Mughal graves and tombs — Babur's in Kabul, Humayun's in Delhi, Akbar's at Sikandra, Jahangir's at Lahore, Shah Jahan's in Agra, and Aurangzeb's near Aurangabad — highlights a number of important facts. The first, and most obvious, is that the Mughals did not construct a single dynastic mausoleum. If, as is quite possible, Humayun's tomb was intended by Akbar to serve such a function, then Jahangir's construction of a tomb for Akbar at Sikandra was an implicit rejection of the notion. None of these Mughal emperors were even buried in the same city (although, admittedly, Sikandra was only one stage out of Agra). Nor was one form or style adopted for all the tombs we have looked at, although Humayun's tomb and the Taj Mahal do share similar forms, and certain themes, such as the use of white marble and garden settings, do recur. Furthermore, this diversity of form does not even develop in a single direction. There are clearly too many missing links and throwbacks to support a theory of evolution marching resolutely towards the Taj Mahal.

Rebellions, wars of succession, and, in one case, the premature death of a wife further cloud the history of Mughal tombs in terms of both chronology and patronage. Final embellishment of Babur's grave in Kabul, for example, was only completed in 1645–46, two years after the Taj Mahal was finished in Agra. Between 1632 and 1637 the last five years of construction work at Jahangir's tomb in Lahore overlapped with the first five years of work at the Taj Mahal. Although Fergusson wrote that the "princes of the Tartar races, in carrying out their love of tombs, made it the practice to build their own in their lifetime, as all people must who are really desirous of sepulchral magnificence,"[38] the Mughals were seldom able to plan ahead. In fact, while Babur and Aurangzeb willed their own simple burials, only Shah Jahan designed and built the tomb in which he was buried. Humayan, Akbar, and Jahangir were all entombed in structures built by their sons and successors (perhaps with the assistance of his wife in the latter case). In this context it might be asked whether Mughal tombs were really erected to commemorate dead emperors or as victory monuments for the survivors of internecine warfare.

Patterns do emerge, however, in the development of Mughal tomb architecture. Babur and Aurangzeb were buried in accordance with orthodox Muslim practice. Their simple graves are open to the sky and free from any other superstructure. Only stone screens and formal gardens define any kind of commemorative space. Both Humayun and Shah Jahan, on the other hand, were buried in tombs that, rejecting the precedents set by their own fathers' tombs, can only be described as Timurid revivals. Huge double-domes set on elevated drums, lofty arched iwans, and radially symmetrical floor plans all point towards the Timurid past, even if other key Timurid elements such as multicolored glazed revetments are nowhere to be found. Of course, neither building is a complete appropriation of a Timurid design, but the effect on the Indian viewer would hardly have been diminished.[39] After all, less goes further on the frontier. The tombs of Akbar and Jahangir, however, fit into neither category. Tentative steps towards the dramatic design of Jahangir's tomb were admittedly taken a few years earlier at ʿItimad al-Dawla's tomb in Agra (1622–28; perhaps commissioned by Nur Jahan, his daughter), but nothing would have prepared the viewer for Akbar's tomb at Sikandra. Neither tomb follows a known imperial model, Indian or Timurid. The highly adventurous nature of these buildings is reflected in the way they attempt to memorialize an individual in a monumental way while still adhering to the orthodox notion of open-air burial. They are among the most radically innovative structures in the history of Indian and Islamic architecture.

During the almost two centuries between Babur's death in 1530 and Aurangzeb's in 1707, the concept of the Mughal tomb turns full circle from the orthodox, to the Timurid revival, to the radically innovative, and then back again.[40] The identification of these three themes in the history of Mughal tomb architecture allows each of these six imperial mausolea to be considered in its own

light rather than to be judged solely against the Taj Mahal in its popular role as the paragon of Mughal architecture.

The tombs constructed for Akbar and Jahangir, for example, can thus be appreciated for their truly revolutionary design and not as "failed" victims of an architectural "retrogression." Just as importantly, the Taj Mahal itself can be seen not as the climax of an interrupted evolution, but as a conscious revival of an earlier style with its inherent political symbolism reinforcing Shah Jahan's view of himself as the "second Timur." This pattern of revival and innovation, and its enduring dialogue with orthodox tenets, is highly informative with respect to the use of the past in Mughal architecture. It shows how in the case of funerary architecture the Mughals considered the past as something to be appropriated and adapted at will rather than polished generation by generation to an absolute perfection. In other words, ideology took precedence over purely formal considerations.

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NOTES

Author's note: This article is based on a paper delivered at the Australian National University in August 1989 as part of a series entitled "Art and Revolution" organized to celebrate the bicentenary of the French Revolution. The links were admittedly tenuous. I would like to thank James L. Wescoat, Jr., for his comments on the revised version.

1. Nur al-Din Jahangir Padshah, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri,* trans. Alexander Rogers, 2 vols. (1909–14; rpt. Delhi, 1968), 1:152.
2. For the renewed interest in the Mughals as Timurids, see Michael Brand and Glenn D. Lowry, *Akbar's India: Art from the Mughal City of Victory* (New York, 1985); Thomas W. Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., 1989), pp. 319–24.
3. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri,* 1:52.
4. Ebba Koch's *Mughal Architecture: An Outline of Its History and Development (1526–1858)* (Munich, 1991), appeared only after this article was written. This excellent work, with many newly drawn plans, contains concise descriptions of the imperial Mughal tombs within a chronological framework, and with special emphasis on their stylistic development. Of particular interest are the descriptions of important "sub-imperial" tombs.
5. Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Islamic Period)* (1942; 6th rprt. Bombay, 1975), pp. 89, 99, 107, and 108.
6. J. C. Harle, *The Art and Architecture of the Indian Subcontinent* (Harmondsworth, 1986), p. 437.
7. Satish Grover, *The Architecture of India: Islamic (727–1707 A.D.* (Delhi, 1981), p. 221.
8. Oleg Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art,* 2nd ed. (New Haven and London, 1987), pp. 11–12 and 201–2.
9. Charles Rosen and Henri Zerner, *Romanticism and Realism: The Mythology of Nineteenth-Century Art* (New York and London, 1984), p. 18.
10. Qur'an, 5:31.
11. Timur might originally have planned to be buried in his Dar al-Siyadah at Shahrisabz before he made Samarqand his new capital; see Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan,* 2 vols. (Princeton, 1988), 1:68.
12. For a detailed description and analysis of the Gur-i Amir, see Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture,* 1:260–63 and vol. 2, fig. 27.
13. Lentz and Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision,* p. 324.
14. Zahir al-Din Babur Padshah, *Babur-nama (Memoirs of Babur),* trans. Annette Beveridge (1922; rprt. Delhi, 1979). Babur also described a number of examples of India's architecture and visited several tombs after arriving in Delhi.
15. Abu'l Fazl, *Akbarnama,* trans. H. Beveridge, 3 vols. (1902; 2nd rprt. Delhi, 1979), 1:275–76.
16. See, for example, Syad Muhammad Latif, *Agra Historical and Descriptive* (1896; rprt. 1981), p. 189. More information about the name and history of this garden can be found in Ebba Koch, "Notes on the Painted and Sculpted Decoration of Nur Jahan's Pavilion in the Ram Bagh (Bagh-i Nur Afshan) at Agra," *Facets of Indian Art,* ed. Robert Skelton et al. (London, 1986), pp. 51–65.
17. Gulbadan Begam, *The History of Humayun (Humayun-Nama),* trans. Annette Beveridge (1901; rprt. Delhi, 1972), pp. 110–11.
18. Mirza Kamran visited his father's grave in Agra just after Humayun's defeat at the battle of Chausa in 1539 (Gulbadan Begam, *History of Humayun,* p. 138); for evidence of the body's being in Kabul by 1544, see Jawhar Aftabchi, *Tazkirat al-Vaqi'at,* trans. Charles Stewart (1832; rprt. Delhi, 1972), p. 83. For a study of the site with plans, see Maria Teresa Shephard Parpagliolo, *Kabul: The Bagh-i Baburi* (Rome, 1972).
19. Qazwini, *Padshahnama,* as translated and quoted in a translator's note to the *Baburnama,* p. lxxx. Ruqaiya Sultan Begam (d. 1626) was a granddaughter of Babur who, as Akbar's first wife, brought up Shah Jahan as a child.
20. Abu'l-Fazl, *Akbarnama,* 2:102.
21. This was one case where any sibling rivalry for succession was entirely overshadowed by external threats to Mughal power.
22. For detailed analyses, with plans, of Humayun's tomb, see Glenn D. Lowry, "The Tomb of Nasir ud-Din Muhammad Humayun," Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1982, and idem, "Humayun's Tomb: Form, Function, and Meaning in Early Mughal Architecture," *Muqarnas* 4 (1987): 133–48. In the latter article (p. 136), Lowry rejects the popular belief that the tomb was built by Humayun's widow Haji Begam.
23. Abu'l-Fazl, *Akbarnama,* 2:489; 'Alad al-Qadir Bada'uni, *Muntakhab at-Tavarikh,* trans. G. S. A. Ranking et al. (1898–99; reprt., Delhi, 1973), 2: 135.
24. For the Timurid connection, see John D. Hoag, "The Tomb of Ulugh Beg and Abdu Razzaq at Ghazni, a Model for the Taj Mahal," *Journal of the Society for Architectural Historians* 27, 4 (1968): 234–48; Lisa Golombek, "From Tamerlane to the Taj Mahal," *Essays in Islamic Art and Architecture in Honour of Katherina Otto-Dorn,* ed. A. Daneshvari (Malibu, Calif., 1982), p. 49; and Lowry, "Humayun's Tomb." For the Tughluq connection, see ibid., p. 136.
25. Most writers seem to follow James Fergusson, who provided no evidence for his claim to this effect: *History of Indian and East-*

ern Architecture (1876; revised ed. 1910; rprt. Delhi, 1972), 2:298.

26. Smith, *Akbar's Tomb*, pp. 33–34.
27. Fergusson, *History*, 2:298–302.
28. Muʿtamad Khan, *Iqbalnama-i Jahangiri*, partially trans. in H. M. Elliot and John Dowson, *The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians*, 8 vols. (1867–77; rprt. Allahabad, 1981), 6:436.
29. Muhammad Salih Kanbu, *ʿAmal-i Salih*, trans. and quoted in Muhammad Baqir, *Lahore Past and Present* (Lahore, 1984), pp. 423–24.
30. For an early (1910) discussion of this question, see J. P. Thompson, "The Tomb of the Emperor Jahangir," in *Selections from Journal of the Panjab Historical Society*, ed. Zulfiqar Ahmad, 3 vols. (Lahore, 1982), 1:31–49.
31. For more details about the Shahdara complex, see James L. Wescoat, Jr., Michael Brand, and M. Naeem Mir, "The Shahdara Gardens of Lahore: Site Documentation and Spatial Analysis," *Pakistan Archaeology* 25 (forthcoming). A more comprehensive volume on the subject is also currently under preparation by Brand and Wescoat.
32. For textual and epigraphic sources on the Taj Mahal, see W. E. Begley and Z. A. Desai, *Taj Mahal: The Illumined Tomb* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989). For a more speculative analysis of the Taj Mahal's possible symbolism, see W. E. Begley, "The Myth of the Taj Mahal and a New Theory of Its Symbolic Meaning," *Art Bulletin* 61 (1979): 7–37.
33. ʿAbd al-Hamid Lahori, *Padshahnama*, quoted and trans. in Begley and Desai, *Taj Mahal*, pp. 9–10.
34. Ibid., pp. 81–82.
35. The inscriptions, designed by Amanat Khan, are fully listed in Begley and Desai, *Taj Mahal*, pp. 187–246. See also, W. E. Begley, "Amanat Khan and the Calligraphy on the Taj Mahal," *Kunst des Orients* 12 (1978–79): 5–60.
36. S. M. Azizuddin Husain, ed., *Kalimat-i-Taiyibat (Collection of Aurangzeb's Orders): Inayatulla Khan Kashmiri* (Delhi, 1982), p. 47.
37. Saqi Mustʾad Khan, *Maʾasir-i ʿAlamqiri*, trans. Sir Jadunath Sarkar (Calcutta, 1947), pp. 309–10.
38. Fergusson, *History*, 2:289.
39. As an example of direct Mughal borrowing from the past, Muhammad Waris relates in his *Padshahnama* that Shah Jahan's architects consciously emulated Akbar's jamiʿ masjid at Fathpur-Sikri (completed in 1571–72) when planning his jamiʿ masjid in Delhi in the 1650's: Ebba Koch, "The Architectural Forms," in Michael Brand and Glenn D. Lowry, eds., *Fatehpur-Sikri* (Bombay, 1987), p. 146, n. 3.
40. The symmetry in this pattern is intriguing: Babur's tomb (orthodox), Humayun's (Timurid revival), Akbar's (radically innovative), Jahangir's (radically innovative), Shah Jahan's (Timurid revival), and Aurangzeb's (orthodox).