

Evolution and Development of Mughal Architecture in India

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ABSTRACT

Mughal architecture is one of the most important periods in the history of Indian art and architecture from the 16th to the 18th centuries. This study looks at how Mughal architecture has changed throughout time, starting with the early work of Babur and Humayun and focusing on the big changes that happened under subsequent kings. Babur and Humayun set the basic rules, but they couldn't do much in the way of architecture because of political instability. The building of Humayun's Tomb marks a crucial turning point since it brought Persian styles into Indian architecture. The research also highlights the important significance of the Sur dynasty, especially Sher Shah Sur, whose architectural achievements, such the mausoleum at Sasaram and Purana Qila, laid the groundwork for the mature Mughal style. The study shows how Mughal architecture changed from a mix of Persian and native Indian styles by looking at these early changes. This established the foundation for its subsequent greatness.

Keywords: *Mughal, Architecture, Evolution, Development, Persian, Influence.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The examination of Mughal architecture in India offers an in-depth comprehension of a significant era in the history of Indian art and culture. This study examines the inception, evolution, and metamorphosis of architectural styles under the Mughal Empire from the early 16th to the 18th century. It looks at how political stability, cultural interchange, and imperial sponsorship affect the building of massive monuments. This leads to the development of a unique architectural style that mixes Indian and Persian characteristics.

The introduction starts by talking about the history of the Mughal Empire, which Babur started in 1526. His rule is brief and mostly about strengthening the military, but it sets the stage for future architectural advancements. The research then looks at what Humayun did, as his time in exile in Persia had a big impact on the style of Mughal architecture. The building of Humayun's Tomb is analysed as a seminal instance of the integration of Persian aesthetics with Indian workmanship, signifying a pivotal moment in architectural development.

This study also examines the significant interregnum of the Sur dynasty, especially during the reign of Sher Shah Sur, whose architectural initiatives introduced improvements in design, construction, and materials. People look to buildings like his mausoleum at Sasaram and the Purana Qila in Delhi to see how they changed the future of Mughal architecture. These changes are seen as very important for closing the gap between the early experimental period and the later mature style.

The introduction also talks about how Mughal architecture became more refined and spectacular under kings like Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan. There is a lot of focus on things like symmetry, the use of red sandstone and marble, enormous domes, arches, minarets, and detailed decoration. The research shows that these things not only show good taste, but they also stand for political power and cultural integration.

II. MUGHAL ARCHITECTURE

The history of architecture from the 16th to the 18th century is mostly about the Mughal Emperors' architectural projects. There was a short break of around ten years while the Sur dynasty reigned in Delhi.

Beginning of Mughal Architecture

The Mughal style of design did take shape during Akbar's reign, but Babur and Humayun, Akbar's two predecessors, were the ones who came up with the essential ideas for Mughal architecture.

Buildings of Babur

Babur ruled for just five years, much of which he spent waging conflicts to make the new Mughal kingdom stronger. However, it is known that he was very interested in establishing secular endeavours. Sadly, hardly much of this work is still around now. The only buildings that are still intact from Babur's time are two mosques that were erected in 1526 at Panipat and Sambhal. But both of these buildings are quite common and don't have any architectural value. The primary things Babur did that were not religious were building gardens and pavilions. One of the miniatures shows him looking over the layout design for a garden in Dholpur. Today, you can only see the remnants of this garden that have been dug up. He is also credited with building two other gardens in Agra: Ram Bagh and Zahra Bagh. But it seems like the way these gardens are now has changed a lot. People have not seen any of Babur's pavilions that are still standing today.

Buildings of Humayun

The structures that are still standing from Humayun's time are just as unimportant as those from Babur's time. The Mughal rule over India was too unstable to allow for the creation of any major works of architecture. In addition, Humayun had to spend fifteen long years in exile in Persia while the Sur dynasty was rising to power in Delhi. But two mosques are still standing from the initial part of his rule, along with a few other structures. One of these is in bad shape at Agra. The other one is at Fatehabad (Hissar). But neither of these buildings has any unique architectural features, much as Babur's mosques.

The return of Humayun to Delhi in 1555 was short-lived. There are no significant structures from this period. One construction that was influenced by Persian culture is Humayun's mausoleum, which Humayun learned about when he was in exile. This building is really important in the history of Mughal architecture. Hamida Bano Begum, Humayun's widow, paid for the building to be built following his death in 1564. Mirak Mirza Ghiyas, who was from Persia, was the building's architect. He brought a lot of Persian craftsmen to Delhi to work on the building, and they used their skills and methods freely. The mausoleum is now a symbol of how Indians adapted a Persian idea. It should be remembered that, properly speaking, Humayun's tomb was built during Akbar's rule. But because of its unusual traits, it has been addressed differently.

Interregnum: The Sur Architecture

Sher Shah Sur took over India from the Mughals in 1540. For the following fifteen years, the Surs ruled the Empire and started big building projects. The Mughals constructed on the foundations of their structures.

The architectural legacy created under varying circumstances and in two different regions of the Surs may be categorised under two distinct eras. He supported the adoption of various new architectural ideas, which later became the Mughal style in its full form.

Sher Shah wanted to construct bigger monuments than anything else in Delhi, and tile structures show that. The initial part of this plan was to build the mausoleum of Hasan Khan, Sher Shah's father, in 1525. But this was a typical Lodi design exercise. The mausoleum of Sher Shah (Sasaram) was the most important example of this type. It was a work of art in architecture. The architect made the old structure much bigger than it was before and put it in a lovely tank that could be reached via a causeway. He also added further storeys, creating a stunning pyramidal structure in five separate levels. The best Chunar sandstone was used to build this monument.

The mausoleum of Sher Shah is on a stepped square plinth on a terrace that may be seen via a gateway and across the tank by a bridge. There is a mistake in how the bottom platform of the tomb is aligned with the main axis. But the axis of the superstructure placed over the lower platform is skewed to fix it. The main structure has an octagonal room in the middle and an arcade around it. In each corner of the platform, there are domed canopies. The Indian architect did a great job with the declining phases and the smooth transition from square to octagon to spherical.

The second stage of growth happened in Delhi. The Purana Qila was created by Sher Shah to be the sixth city of Delhi. There are just two solitary gates left today. The Qila-i Kuhna Masjid, erected in 1542 inside the Purana Qila fortification, was far more significant. The prayer hall's front is made up of five arched bays, with the middle one being bigger than the others. Each bay has an open archway that is set back from the rest of the building. The front is beautifully carved in black and white marble and red sandstone, and there are slender, fluted pilasters on each side of the central arch. There are five stair towers on the back of the mosque, and the windows are held up by brackets.

The design of the arches is one of the most interesting things about this architecture. The curve toward the crown has a little decrease or flatness. It is a sign that the four-centered "Tudor" arch of the Mughals is about to be built.

III. MUGHAL PAINTINGS

The 16th century, particularly its latter half, signifies a pivotal moment in the evolution of painting in India. During Akbar's reign, he was very supportive of the expansion of the fine arts. His successors were likewise very interested in these arts, and by the end of the 17th century, painting at the Mughal court had reached new heights.

At the same time, another great style of painting was developing in the Deccan, apart from the Mughal style. In the 18th century, the Mughal government stopped supporting painting and provincial kingdoms like Rajasthan and Punjab took over. In this Section, we will concentrate on the changes in painting that happened before and during the Mughal period, not on the many types of painting that were popular in different parts of the world.

Antecedents: Painting in the Fifteenth Century

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- A lively tradition of murals and painted cloth during the 13th and 14th centuries (Sub-section 17.4.1),
- A simultaneous tradition of the Qur'anic calligraphy, lasting up to the end of the 14th century (Sub-section 17.4.2),
- A tradition of illustrated Persian and Awadhi manuscripts, originating probably at the beginning of the 15th century (Sub-section 17.4.3).

Of this last tradition, a notable number of illustrated manuscripts from the period between the 15th and 16th century have become known. Some of these works were commissioned by independent patrons in the Sultanate located outside the court. From the former category mention may be made of:

- a) The Bostan of S'adi, illustrated by the artist Hajji Mahmud, and
- b) Ni'mat Nama (a book on cookery)
- c) Miftah-al Fuzala by Muhammed Shadiabadi

These manuscripts were illustrated at Mandu (Malwa) during the second half of the 15th century. A fine example of the latter category is the illustrated manuscript of Laur Chanda (in Awadhi) executed for a patron seemingly not related with the court.

It is, thus, evident that at the time of the advent of the Mughals in India there did exist a live tradition of painting focussed mainly on illuminating manuscripts, made possible by the use of paper as the new material.

Painting Under Early Mughals

Babur, who started Mughal authority in India in 1526, only governed for four years. He did not help painting develop in any way. Humayun, his successor, spent much of his time keeping his enemies at bay until Sher Shah pushed him out of India in 1540. Humayun developed a passion for painting while seeking sanctuary in the court of Shah Tahmasp of Persia. Humayun was so inspired by the art there that he hired two Persian artists, Mir Syed Ali and Khwaja Abdus Samad, to draw pictures for his manuscripts. These two artists travelled with Humayun on his victorious return to India.

Humayun's role in the development of Mughal art is highly crucial. The paintings from Humayun's time appear to have given rise to many essential aspects of the Mughal School. One of the most notable paintings from Humayun's time is called "Princes of the House of Timur" and was made about 1550. It is made of fabric and is rather huge, around 1.15 meters square. This size is uncommon for paintings in Persia, and some people think it could have something to do with the Mongol habit of keeping paintings in their tents.

Evolution of the Mughal School Under Akbar

The Mughal School of painting became a separate style from all others partly because Akbar was so interested in promoting this art.

Establishment of the Royal Atelier

The first big thing that Akbar did when he was in charge was to paint the Hamza Nama. It started in 1562, and the court hired a number of artists to work there. Tasvir Khana was the name of the site where the artists worked. Abul Fazl only lists the names of seventeen artists, but we now know that there were a lot more. S.P. Verma (1978) made a list of 225 artists who worked in Akbar's studio. Most of these artists were Hindus, although they came from diverse areas. Interestingly, some persons from lower castes were made royal artists because they were good at painting. One example is Daswant, who was the son of a Kahar (palki-bearer). A group of gilders, line-drawers, and pagers helped the painters. The artists worked for a salary. S.P. Verma says that the lowest-paid worker in the atelier made between 600 and 1200 dams (40 dams = one rupaya).

Some artworks have the names of two painters on them. There were occasions when three painters collaborated on one painting. Four painters collaborated on one artwork from Akbarnama. So, the painting was a group effort. There were two distinct painters that drew the figurines and coloured them. When three painters collaborated on a piece, one artist did the outline, another artist painted the faces, and a third artist coloured the rest of the figure. We don't know how such a complicated arrangement was made, however. In all likelihood, several artists did the drawing and colouring for this squad.

As mentioned before, daroghas and clerks were in charge of the atelier. They were in charge of making sure that painters could conveniently get painting supplies and keeping an eye on how their work was going. They also set up regular times for the Emperor to see the painters' work.

Style and Technique

The illustrations created during Akbar's court are regarded as exemplary representations of Mughal Art. However, it is clear that the style and technique of these paintings are changing throughout time. The early phase's graphics are obviously based on the Persian style, which is known for the following traits:

- a) Symmetrical compositions,
- b) Restricted movement of figures,
- c) Fineness of the lines of drawings,
- d) Flat depiction of architectural columns, and
- e) Profuse embellishment of buildings in the manner of jewels.

Later, the paintings acquired a distinctive character of their own. They assumed a more eclectic character composed mainly of the Persian and Indian traditions with touches of European influence.

IV. CONCLUSION

Mughal architecture in India represents a significant and transformative phase in the history of art and construction, reflecting a harmonious blend of indigenous Indian traditions and Persian influences. The evolution of this architectural style begins with the early efforts of Babur and Humayun, whose contributions, though limited, establish the foundational principles for future developments. The construction of Humayun's Tomb marks a turning point, introducing a more refined and structured approach influenced by Persian design. The interregnum of the Sur dynasty, particularly under Sher Shah Sur, plays a crucial role in advancing architectural techniques and innovations, thereby laying a strong groundwork for the Mughals. Subsequently, under rulers like Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan, Mughal architecture reaches its peak, characterized by grandeur, symmetry, and intricate ornamentation. Overall, the development of Mughal architecture not only reflects artistic excellence but also symbolizes cultural synthesis and imperial power, leaving behind a lasting legacy that continues to influence architectural practices and heritage in India.

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