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ANALYZING THE TOMB OF BABUR IN KABUL

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ABSTRACT

In this given article we will try to analyze the Tomb of Babur in Kabul. Moreover, we will try to answer to questions like, why did Babur choose this style of open mausoleum? Did such tombs exist before? From what tradition did this style of open mausoleum originated, and finally did this type of mausoleum influence later Islamic architecture?

KEYWORDS

Islamic architecture, Persian architecture, Central Asian architecture, Timurid architecture, Indian architecture, Baburid architecture, Tomb architecture, Baburs Tomb in Kabul.

INTRODUCTION

Analyzing the creativity of Babur period, it becomes clear that in all the constructions of this period, the architects were from Central Asia and Iran. Most of them were from Timurid Dynasties. Bricklayers, builders, and tilers were recruited from the local Indian land. Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to say that the beginning of the style created by Babur was the result of joint actions of the representatives of the two

countries. Despite Babur's short-lived reign, he managed to bring the essence of Timurid architecture to this country. [1][2] According to Davis Philip: "Babur is considered to be the founder of the great architectural tradition formed by Akbar and Shah Jahan, and it is Babur who sowed and inspired the seeds of this great architecture." [3]

According to Havell: "Just as the Byzantine and Gothic traditions were the main reason for the emergence of Renaissance architecture in Europe, the new tradition introduced by Babur stimulated the flowering of Indian architecture." [4] Lanepool writes: "Babur is not only a bridge between Central Asia and India, but also a person who united the architecture of Great Amir Temur and Akbar." [5] According to George Michel: "In the first half of the 16th century, Babur, who ruled the northern and western parts of this areas, ushered in a new and innovative era of Islamic architecture in India. The architecture of Central Asia, shaped by Babur's ancestors over the centuries, was rapidly absorbed into the traditions of South Asia. [6]

Babur returns to Agra on June 20, 1530. Constant difficulties in life, battles and experiences in campaigns, mental and physical stress do not affect Babur's health, and as a result, he feels strong mental fatigue. When he lived in Agra, he spent most of his time in the Zarafshan Garden, he was involved in the construction of the city and the creation of a garden on the banks of the Jumna River. [7] Gulbadan claims that Babur said many times that he was tired of state affairs at this time, and he wrote: "Governing has touched my soul, it is better for me to enjoy this Zarafshan garden, and for me the services of Takhir – "oftobachi" are enough." [7] Babur's son Alwar Mirza's death and Humayun's serious illness make Babur's condition worse. Babur dies on December 26, 1530. [8]

Babur's body was first buried in the Nurafshan Garden in Agra. [9] And later, "as he willed, he will be buried in a garden of his choice Baghi Babur (Babur's Garden in Kabul) without any buildings, in an open-air grave." [10] Undoubtedly, such a command is an aspect of Babur's personality. Because, during his lifetime, he loved the open sky and undoubtedly the gardens of Kabul. [11] Babur's burial in Kabul may also be due to difficult

political situation [12]. Because the construction of a majestic mausoleum became a very difficult issue during this period.

When analyzing Babur's open mausoleum, first of all, a small sketch (6.5x8 cm) drawn by Charles Masson in 1832 is very important. [13] In the sketch, the style of the open mausoleum is five-arched, with the central arch having a larger entrance gate and the two wings are made of marble with double arched grills, and the surrounding area is decorated with plant wreaths. The central arch is closed with a double door. The upper circumference of the central arch is connected with decorative inscriptions, and the two wings are finished with a parapet with a floral pattern. The most remarkable part of the mausoleum is the intricately carved "jali" bars on the arches.

Studying the sketch, why did Babur choose this style of open mausoleum? Did such tombs exist before? From what tradition did this style of open mausoleum originated, and finally did this type of mausoleum influence later Islamic architecture? questions arise.

First, Babur's body was buried in the fourteenth terrace of Babur's Garden near Mount Sher Darwaza in Kabul. The open mausoleum in the sketch drawn by Charles Masson in 1832 will eventually become a complete ruin.

From the above information, it is known that Babur died in 1530. And his body was temporarily buried in Agra until 1539. [7] After some time, before 1544, his body was moved to Babur Garden in Kabul. [14] The transfer of Babur's body dates from around 1539 to 1544, that is, the period of Humayun's withdrawal from Agra under the pressure of Sher Shah, a very difficult political situation. According to Laura Parodi, Kabul was under Humayun's brother Kamran during these times. That is probably why Babur's tomb and the

"hazira" on it were built by Babur's second son Kamron. [15]

In 1607, Jahangir visited Kabul. [16] Jahangir ordered inscriptions to be written on Babur's tomb and on the tombs of his son Mirza Hindol and grandson Muhammad Hakim, who were buried near Babur's tomb. [17] Jahangir Mirza came to Kabul with his aunt Ruqiya Sultana Begum. Ruqiya Sultan Begum had visited the grave of her father Mirza Hindol. [16] After the death of Ruqiya Sultan in 1626 [7] she also buried on the fifteenth terrace of the Babur Garden. Also, Jahangir orders to build a platform in the grave. [18] Shah Jahan, who visited Kabul in 1639, ordered to build an open mausoleum with a marble grill over the grave of his great aunt Ruqiya Sultan Begum. In addition, he ordered the construction of a mosque on the thirteenth terrace near Babur's tomb, which was completed in 1646. [18] We can conclude from the fact that Shah Jahan did not build this type of mausoleum over Babur's grave, but built an open mausoleum with a fence over the tomb of Ruqiya Sultan Begum, that there was an open mausoleum of Babur during this period. That is, this open mausoleum must have been built when Babur's body was brought to Kabul.

Babur's open mausoleum has no roof design. [19] It is interesting to note that it is not known where this type of open mausoleum with a white marble grid came from and in what tradition it was formed. However, very few similar mausoleums are known to have existed in the post-Babur period. However, the mausoleums in the few preserved areas of Aswan, Sindh and Baluchistan are of brick construction and do not resemble Babur's Mausoleum at all. [20] Even the marble enclosure surrounding the tombs in the Gur-e-Amir mausoleum in Samarkand bears no resemblance to the type in Babur's mausoleum. None of the lattice devices in the miniatures resemble this type of open

mausoleum, either in pattern decoration or device type. [19]

At that time, the tomb of such a great ruler as Babur was chosen as an open-air mausoleum in such a series. A positive aspect of this mausoleum is its design, which is made of high-quality marble using very fine stonework. It is known that at the time of moving the tomb, the masters skilled in making Indian "jali" silent fences were also sent to Kabul together. Despite the simplicity of the mausoleum, Babur's mausoleum with open-air "jali" latticework is considered the first new innovative structure of this series in architecture, and created a new model of mausoleum construction in this series. [20]

A further development of this type of mausoleum can be found in the Makli Hill tombs in the Sindh areas. These open type mausoleums are not made of marble but of sandstone. One of these mausoleums belongs to Emir Sultan Muhammad and was built in 1556. The second belongs to Mirza Isakhon Tarkhan. [20] However, Babur's Tomb is the more advanced of the two Sindh tombs in its grandeur, structure and decorative design. But, despite this, while studying these three open mausoleums, we can see similarities in them: all three mausoleums are built on a platform, each of them has arches on the walls, and the central arch is raised to make it more majestic. Further development of this type of mausoleums continued in this areas and led to the construction of Baqi Khan Tarkhan 1585 and Hansa Bay 1585 mausoleums. All these mausoleums corresponded to the period of representatives of the Tarkhan dynasty, Arguns and Tarkhans were supporters of Babur. [21] When Babur occupied the areas of Sind, these descendants migrated with Babur from Kabul and Kandahar. That is why, recognizing Babur as their leader, they allowed

their mausoleum to be built in imitation of Babur's Mausoleum.

The main reason why Babur's Tomb was built in such an open structure may be his will. Despite its simplicity, the mausoleum of such a great ruler under the open sky with a fine marble lattice-like mausoleum leads to the formation of a unique new series in mausoleum architecture. Although Babur's Tomb did not influence the architecture of Humayun, Akbar, and Jahangir, the later representatives of Babur, we can see the use of octagonal "jali" fences surrounding the tomb of Mumtaz Begum in Taj Mahal, Shah Jahan's architecture. In addition, Aurangzeb also bequeathed to settle for an open mausoleum like his grandfather Babur.

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