

**ARCHITECTURAL PERMEABILITY:
STYLISTIC ENCOUNTERS IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE
MAKLI NECROPOLIS
(14TH – 16TH CENTURIES)**

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RABELA JUNEJO

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Science

Prof. Dr. Meliha Altunışık
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as the thesis for the degree of
Masters of Arts

Prof. Dr. Güven Arif Sargın
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully
adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

Prof. Dr. Ali Uzay Peker
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Prof. Dr. Ömür Bakırer (METU, Arch. History) _____

Prof. Dr. Ali Uzay Peker (METU, Arch. History) _____

Asst. Prof. Dr. Fatih Müderrisoğlu
(Hacettepe Unv, Art History) _____

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last Name: Rabela Junejo

Signature:

ABSTRACT

ARCHITECTURAL PERMEABILITY: STYLISTIC ENCOUNTERS IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE MAKLI NECROPOLIS (14TH – 16TH CENTURIES)

Junejo, Rabela
M.A., Department of Architectural History
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Ali Uzay PEKER

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The aim of the study is to focus on the site of Makli Necropolis from fourteenth to sixteenth century and make study into the permeability of the funerary architecture of Samma Period. For the stated purpose the monuments of Samma period are described with special focus on Tomb of Jam Nizam al Din the most glorious of the Samma rulers and having the most elaborate structure in the Samma Cluster.

Makli, one of the largest necropolises in the world is believed to be the burial ground of some 125,000 Sufi saints, located on the outskirts of Thatta, the capital of lower Sindh, until the eighteenth century. It is a hill like outcrop of a rock formation from the Kirthar system around which are the agricultural plains. It was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1981 under the name, Historical Monuments of Thatta.

Samma were local rulers with their capital based in Thatta. The study concentrates on the time period in the history of Sindh when the Samma ruled i.e. from 14th to

16th century. It investigates and analyzes the encounter between the central Asian/Iranian architecture and Indian architecture of Gujarat with the monuments at Makli. The study will also remarks on some symbolic elements attached to the funerary architecture of the Islamic world and its application on the Samma tombs especially on the tomb of Jam Nizam al-Din.

Keywords: Makli Hill, Tombs, domed-square chamber, trabeate/arcuate construction, architectural permeability.

ÖZ

GEÇİRGEN MİMARLIK: MAKLİ MEZAR ANITLARI MİMARİSİNDE ÜSLUP ETKİLEŞİMLERİ (14 – 16. YÜZYILLAR ARASI)

Junejo, Rabela

Mimarlık Tarihi Yüksek Lisans

Danışman: Prof. Dr. Ali Uzay Peker

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Bu çalışmanın amacı on dört - on altıncı yüzyıllar arası Makli Kabristanı'na odaklanarak Samma Dönemi mezar mimarisinin geçirgenliğini araştırmaktır. Bu amaçla, özellikle, Samma hükümdarları arasında en şöhretlisi olan Jam Nizam al Din'in yaptırdığı ve Samma yapı grubunun en büyük özenle inşa edilmiş Türbesi üzerine odaklanılarak Samma dönemi anıtları betimlenmiştir.

Thatta'nın dışında konumlanan, on birinci yüzyıla kadar da aşağı Sindh'in başkenti olan Makli, 125,000 kadar sütünün gömüldüğü yer olarak dünyanın en büyük kabristanlarından biri kabul edilir. Makli, etrafında tarım arazileri bulunan Kirthar sistemindeki bir kaya formasyonundan uzanan tepedir. 1981 yılında, Unesco Dünya Mirası Listesi'ne Thatta Tarihi Anıtları adı altında eklenmiştir.

Samma, başkent olarak Thatta'da yerleşik yerel hükümdarların adıydı. Bu çalışma, Sindh tarihindeki 14 – 16. yüzyıllar arasında Samma'nın yönettiği döneme yoğunlaşarak, Orta Asya, İran ve Hindistan Gujarat mimarisinin karşılaşmasını Makli anıtları aracılığıyla inceler. Ayrıca, Samma türbeleri ve özellikle Jam Nizam al-Din Türbesi'nde uygulanan, İslam dünyası mezar sembolğine ait öğelere de dikkat çeker.

Anahtar sözcükler: Makli Tepesi, türbeler/mezar mimarisi, kubbeli kare yapı, kemerli ve kemersiz yapı sistemleri, mimari geçirgenlik

To my mother

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The site of Makli near Thatta is one of the largest necropolises in the world having funerary monuments of rulers' nobles and their families. It was established as a funerary site during fourteenth century and since then was used as the burial ground for four hundred years by the ruling dynasties. At present it is declared as protected world heritage site by UNESCO. It is regarded as a sacred site by the local populous even today as was the case in the past. The focus of this research undertaking is to look at the site of Makli having a permeable quality and establish the architectural permeability by looking at stylistic encounters on the site during Samma Period. For this purpose the funerary monuments of the Samma period from fourteenth to sixteenth century, during which Sammas ruled parts of lower Sindh with their capital based at Thatta, are studied. Permeability means the flow from one condition to the other. A permeable object or membrane allows that flow with ease. Here the use of the term for the site of Makli in particular implies that the site had the quality of assimilation and dissemination of architectural ideas from Islamic culture and the indigenous Hindu/Buddhist traditions. Makli site for me act as a membrane that was permeable in nature. It was resilient to the new concepts and did not hesitate to borrow and merge them with local architectural practices in the region. The builders of the Sammas erected some of the most magnificent tombs and pavilions in the history of architecture of Sindh, sitting gracefully atop the Makli hill. The monuments are highly ornamented and decorated with stone carving having a range of floral and geometric patterns. The thesis examines these structures with focus on the form, structural techniques and ornamental details and draws out parallels with earlier and contemporary (with the Samma period) funerary monuments.

The Samma monuments can be classified under brick built and stone built structures. The stone built structures are the main focus of the study as they are most ornamented and encounter the borrowing from both the indigenous and the foreign architecture and decorative elements. The second reason is the present condition of the stone built structures that are less damaged by the ravages of time compared to the depleted condition of the brick monuments, hence making the present on site surveys and study easier to conduct. We know that stone is a more durable and lasting material compared to the bricks. The third reason is that the major resource material for the study was the documentation work carried out in 1997 by the Heritage Foundation and it covers the Samma monuments. The work is published in a book format containing plans, elevations and sections of all the standing monuments of the Samma period. The book is titled “Jewel of Sindh: Samma monuments on Makli Hill” by Suhail Zaheer Lari and Yasmeen Lari. It proved to be a useful resource on the Samma period and was referred throughout the study. Many other resources on history of Sindh and Samma rulers written mainly in English were studied but some of the sources were in Sindhi and Urdu as well. The bibliography duly mentions all the resource material.

The second chapter introduces the site of Makli necropolis. It establishes the context of Thatta city at the time of Samma rule and how for the next 400 years Thatta kept its status as the capital of the lower Sindh, despite the changes in the ruling dynasties. In context of a flourishing capital with all the riches sits at the outskirts, Makli hill containing final abodes of the deceased nobles. The ruling dynasties having funerary monuments at Makli are briefly described in the chapter along with a flow chart of Samma genealogy. The chapter discusses briefly the type of structures on the site both funerary and non funerary like tombs, graves and *khanqahs* etc. The different types discussed are duly illustrated. The monuments from other time periods are also illustrated along the Samma period. The chapter also ascertains the visual and physical linkage between the site and the city of Thatta. The Makli-Thatta link is supported with the help of maps produced by overlaying the images taken from Google maps of the site and the vicinity.

In chapter 3 the necropolises and funerary monuments around the Islamic world from different time periods and geographies are discussed and illustrated. Despite the restriction on construction of tombs they were constructed throughout the Islamic lands. The reasons are discussed and explained referred from different sources. The main focus of the chapter is to discuss the use of domed square pavilions as popular funerary structure and establish their prevalence throughout the Islamic world despite the geographical distance and stylistic variation. There have been two extant forms used as funerary structures in the Islamic architecture i.e. the domed square chamber and the tomb towers, where the former is prevalent throughout the lands dominated by Islamic rule, the latter being more famous around the Asia minor and Central Asian/ Iranian regions. The chapter proceeds with the discussion on the funerary monuments from present day Pakistan where the site of Makli is located. The Multan based tombs and the tombs around the vicinity are discussed. The sites at Multan and Uchh Sharif are highly venerated sites even more than the site of Makli. The reason for this may be that the tombs are of Sufis and spiritual leaders. At these sites their teachings are still preached by their disciples. Multan and the vicinity formed the parts of Upper Sindh (present day Punjab and north of Sindh) where as Thatta was part of Lower Sindh region. The illustrations show the stylistic variations in architecture not only around the Islamic world but also in the Upper and Lower Sindh. We see more Central Asian and Delhi Sultanate influence on the Multan based and other Upper Sindh monuments. The later part of the chapter discusses the funerary monuments of Samma period focusing on their architectural detailing and decoration. The monuments are classified under brick built and stone monuments and further discussed under building types. While explaining the monuments due references to the indigenous and foreign elements are made.

The next chapter takes the discussion forward while mentioning the context of Thatta and neighboring region pre-Samma period. The main focus of the chapter as the name indicates is the Tomb of Jam Nizam al-Din. The chapter is mainly divided into 2 parts the first part discusses the architecture, form, elements and decoration on the tomb of Jam Nizam al-Din. The second part focuses on the meaning and

associated symbolism with form and ornaments. The tomb is the most sophisticated and magnificent structure of the Samma time completed in 1509 CE, a year after the death of the ruler. It was conceived as a prototypical domed square chamber but unfortunately the dome was never built. The form of the chamber is the main reason for discussing the mausoleum and necropolises in the earlier chapter. The plan section and elevations are discussed and illustrated in detail in the chapter. The ornamental bands on the interior and exterior of the tomb and the balcony projection on the west faced are the major elevation features of the tomb. The carved patterns and motifs have underlying symbolic connotations that are explained in the next part of the chapter along with the form.

The fifth chapter of the thesis undertakes the pictorial analysis of the example from neighboring Gujarat architecture with the architecture at Makli, Samma period. The analysis sheds light on the flow and permeability of ideas within the region reflected in architecture. There are huge similarities between the construction technique and the style of architecture within the region which predate the Samma rule. The indigenous elements are rooted in the region of lower Sindh also encompassing the Gujarat and Rajasthan regions. The structural trabeate system prevailed in Indian Sub-Continent and was widely used. The coming of Islam brought new forms that were adopted by the local crafts people and were adapted according to the system of construction they were conversant in, that is the trabeate system. Hence what prevailed for the many centuries to come was a hybrid system that constructed on trabeate technique and reflected arcuated vocabulary of forms. The stone carving also predates the arrival of Islam in the region. The coming of Islam added to the repository of the patterns as it forbids human and animal motifs that were common in Hindu and Buddhist iconography prevalent in the region. The structural system, motifs and their flow are the major discussions of this chapter.

The thesis is concluded in the last chapter that is the sixth chapter, with recommendation on future research trajectories. For the purpose of study site visits were carried out during the summer break and local libraries were searched for

resource material. After collecting the relevant resource materials and site visits with photographic survey, review of the literature was conducted. The library of Institute of Sindhology in Jamshoro, Sindh and library of Department Archaeology in Karachi provided major resources on history of Sindh and Thatta. However there are very less number of books catering to the architecture on Makli hill and the material available focuses mainly on documentation. Some books written in Sindhi language were also referred (as Sindhi is my mother tongue). The major handicap in the research was non availability of written resource material from the time of Samma. The earliest resources are written later in seventeenth and eighteenth century most of them in Persian and Arabic with some translated into Sindhi and English. Mostly secondary sources are cited that refer the earlier works. A session of discussion was undertaken with Yasmeen Lari the architect who documented the Samma monuments with her team and published the book 'Jewel of Sindh' mentioned earlier.

This thesis is a humble attempt to bring forth the architectural history of Sindh. It also attempts to encourage local scholars to conduct research on the architecture of the region. There is a requirement for contemporary research and study on History of architecture of Sindh. As contemporary researchers we should to look into the past according to present day research paradigms. The scholars should look into history of architecture from a new perspective. Historically we should question and reevaluate the findings made in the past and modify them according to the new discoveries in the field. The architectural permeability is one such topic that I have tried to touch upon in this thesis. It has potential a lot of potential for future research as we expand the time frame and the geographic nexus. For the purpose of this thesis focus on a certain period and portion of Makli site was nevertheless necessary so as not to lose the grip on the research.

CHAPTER 2

MAKLI HILL: SITE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

The site of Makli is located near the town Thatta¹ the capital of lower Sindh until 1789. Thatta is located some 55 miles east from Karachi the capital of present day Sindh province of Pakistan. Makli is essentially a cemetery revered to date by the people of Sindh as a sacred site where 125000 saints and nobles are buried.² It is one of the largest necropolises in the world and is listed in UNESCO world heritage sites. Makli rose to importance as a burial site during the Samma rule (1351/52-1524) in the history of Sindh, before which Pir Patho³ located south of Makli, was the sacred burial place for the people of Thatta and vicinity.

2.1- THE CITY OF THATTA:

For a larger period of time the history of Sindh was synonymous to the history of Thatta, as it was the capital of the Samma rulers (1352 – 1524) and a flourishing trade center. There are various accounts on how and when Thatta was established. Some historians' state that Thatta was Daibul, Schimmel writes,

The name of Thatta is not mentioned in the earlier historical sources which speak of Daibul as the capital of Sindh, the problem whether Daibul and Thatta are exchangeable, has been discussed for a long time; Cousens, in his *Antiquities of Sind* maintains that they are the same place, Tarikh-i-Tahiri written in 1621 claims that it was founded instead of Samui, by Jam Nizam al-Din shortly after he ascended the throne in 1461-62.⁴

Arabs conquered Sindh in 711 CE they do not mention the name Thatta but there is mention of Daibul (Debal) and M. A. Gafur in his book "Calligraphers of Thatta" maintains the possibility of the city being a *qasbah* (small town) of Daibul. The

name “Thatta” according to him came into use at a later date. The earliest mention of name Thatta was in 13th century when it was mentioned in the verse by Amir Khusrao (1253-1325) the court poet of Delhi Sultanate.

*A cypress like you is not in Ucch or Thatta;
A rose like your pretty face is certainly not existent*⁵

In 1362 when the city was conquered by Feroz Tughluq, his court poet Mutahhar Kara in celebration of the victory wrote in one of the *qasidas* (a form of lyrical poetry),

And among all the conquests, the rose of conquest was Thatta⁶

M. Idris in his booklet “Thatta” introducing the city writes,

For 400 centuries Thatta was one of the seats of Islamic learning, fine arts and handicrafts, as well as a flourishing port of continental trade in the East. Its commercial intellectual and cultural greatness attracted travelers, traders, and scholars from different countries of Asia and Europe. To traders and travelers from west Thatta was practically synonymous to Sindh. In 1607, the East India Company instructed its agent to sail ‘to Laurie (Larri Bandar) – a good harbor within two miles of *Nagor* Tuttie (Nagar Thatta) – as great and as big as London’. In 1613, Captain Paynton describes Thatta as one of the most celebrated markets of India. Alexander Hamilton in 1699 mentions Thatta as densely populated and a very rich city about 3 miles long and one and a half mile broad; there are 400 educational institutions where students from all over Asia learnt philosophy, politics, and different branches of speculative sciences in addition to theology.⁷

The city is popularly known as ‘*Nagar* Thatta’ where *Nagar* means town, and Thatta points towards close proximity of town from river.⁸

All accounts written about the city describe it, as a populous and flourishing city, a trading post which connected Sindh with outside world, a city which was a refuge of saints and scholars and was located in such a strategic position that it remained capital of Sindh until 18th century.⁹

M. A. Ghafur writes,

In the days of Mughals, Sindh became a hunting ground of the European traders particularly of the Portuguese and the English. The travel accounts left behind by these foreigners are of primary importance for the reconstruction of social and economic history of Thatta under the Mughals. From the accounts of foreign travelers and local historians, it is gathered that, in the 17th Century Thatta was a cosmopolitan city.¹⁰

For almost four centuries (1351/52 – 1739) Thatta city saw the rise and fall of various dynasties namely Sammas (1351/532 – 1524), Arghuns (1524-1555), Tarkhans (1555-1592) and Mughal Sultans of Delhi (1592-1739). The dynasties are discussed briefly with focus on the Sammas as the thesis is based on Samma period funerary structures at the site of Makli.

The decline of this cultural center of Sind started around 1739 when Nadir Shah (1736-1747) took power of Delhi and the province came under his rule. He made Mian Nur Mohammad Kalhora, the religio-political ruler of the clan of Kalhoras, administrator of Sindh. He ruled Sindh from Khudabad and not Thatta. Henry Pottinger in 1809 found the city to be uninhabited with population reduced from 2 lacs to 20000.¹¹

2.2- IMPORTANT RULING DYNASTIES OF THATTA:

The chief ruling dynasties and proto dynasties for four centuries when Thatta was capital of Sindh were:

1. Sammas (1351/52-1524).
2. Arghuns (1524-1555).
3. Tarkhans (1555- 1592).
4. Mughals in Lower Sindh (Thatta, 1592-1739)

2.2.1- THE SAMMAS: (1351/52-1524):

Many theories have been put forward about the origins of Sammas. S. Z. Lari in his book ‘History of Sind’ mentions,

They are believed to have derived their name from ‘Sam’ (Shem), the eldest son of Prophet Nuh (Noah). Some suggest Samma is the corruption of the word ‘Shami’ (Syrian). Since as rulers they used the title ‘Jam’, the Sammas are also considered by some to be the

descendants of 'Jamshid', the legendary Persian King. Those searching the roots of Sammas in Indian soil consider the Sammas to be Rajputs of Yadava stock.¹²

Many scholars maintain Sammas to be native people belonging to Rajput clan and later convert of Islam. They were land owners in Sindh and had relations with the rulers in Kutch and Gujarat in present day India. During 1351/52 taking advantage of the estranged relations of Delhi Sultanate (Tughluq Dynasty 1320-1414) and the local Soomra chiefs (ruling dynasty pre-Samma for approximately 350 years) established their rule in the lower Sindh basing their capital at Samui North of Makli Hill. Jam Unar son of Bhambhina-I was the founder of Samma Dynasty. The later Jams ('Jam' is the title used by Samma rulers) were sons of Jam Unar and Jam Juna (brother of Jam Unar). Samma dynasty like any other has been tainted with blood feuds and power struggle between the families of Jam Unar and Jam Juna. They ruled Sindh for almost 150 years almost independent from the pressure of Delhi. The reign of Jam Nizam al-Din II (1461-1508) was the most prosperous and he has been called Harun-ul-Rashid of Sind.¹³ During his reign the capital was shifted from Samui to Thatta possibly due to shifting of the course of river Indus. His son Jam Feroz (1508-1524) was last of the Samma ruler where his incapability and power feuds led to the fall of Samma Dynasty and Qandahar based Arghuns, who were called for help by Jam Feroz against his cousin Jam Salah-al-din of Juna family, over threw him and established their rule in Lower Sindh.

2.2.2- THE ARGHUNS (1524-1555):

Arghun and Tarkhan rulers were from Central Asian region belonging to the Turkic tribes and sons of Arghun Khan tracing lineage to Genghis (Chingiz) Khan. After the Safavids (1501-1736) domination in most parts of Persia, members of Timurid dynasty, prince, dependants and nobles etc. established their rules in eastern parts of Asia as is the case with Babur (1526-1530) the Mughal ruler establishing himself in India. The Arghuns wanted to secure a region for themselves amidst all the tension both internal and external. Shah Shuja Beg Arghun advanced in Sindh during the rule of Jam Nizam-al-Din around 1490 AD but was defeated and Sultan Muhammad

Samma Genealogy ^[14]

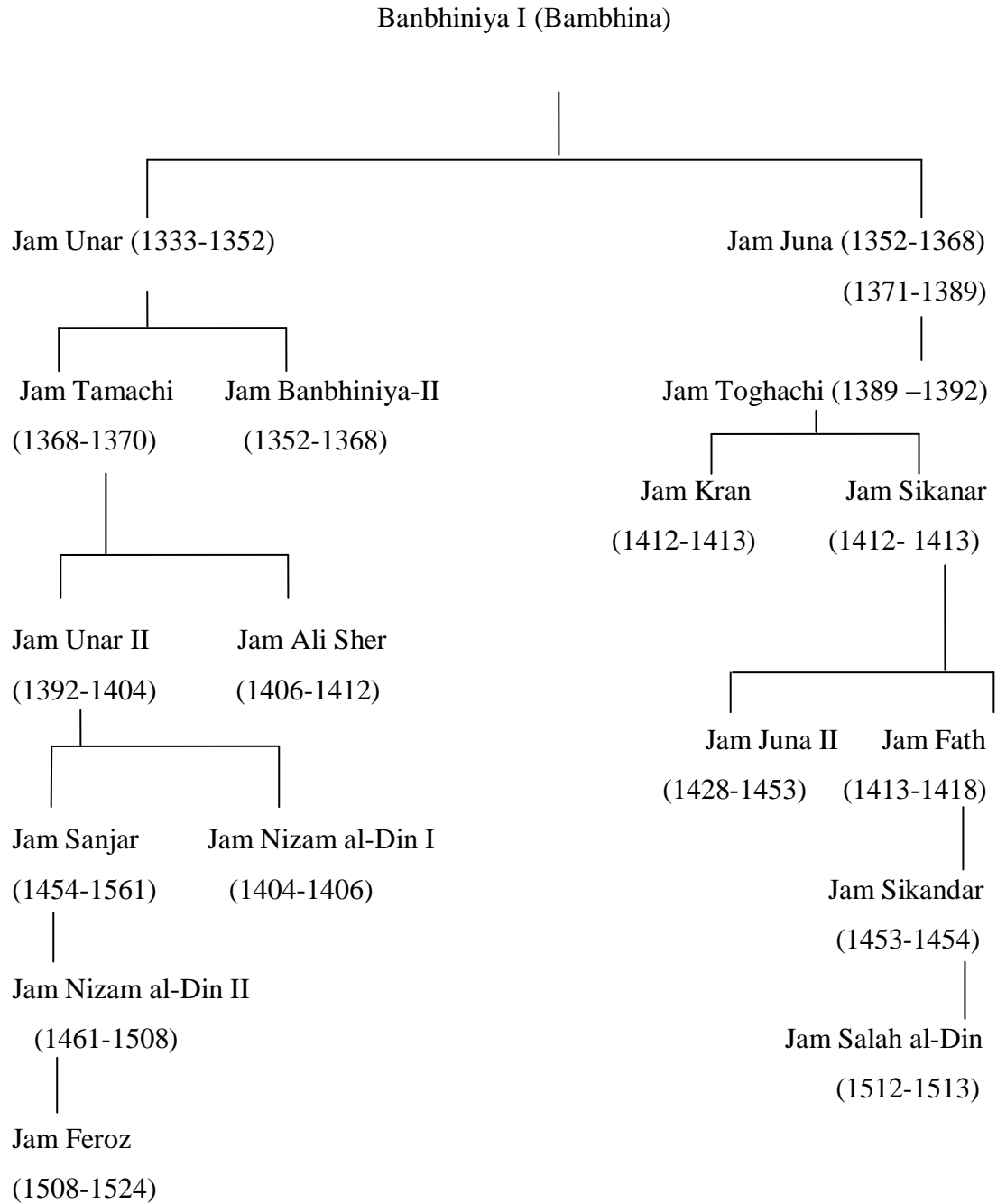


Figure- 2.1: Samma Genealogy (Lari 1994)

Beg brother of Shah Shuja Beg was killed. During the rule of Jam Feroz, Arghuns again advanced towards Thatta and in 1520 defeated the Samma army but handed back Thatta to Jam Feroz. Finally in 1524 after the death of Shah Shuja Beg his son Shah Hasan established his rule in Thatta and the Samma rule ended. After the death of Arghun ruler Shah Hassan in 1555 their cousin dynasty of Tarkhans established themselves as rulers of Thatta and Sindh.

2.2.3- TARKHANS (1555-1592):

The rulers of Tarkhan dynasty have been mostly written as oppressive. Mirza Isa Tarkhan I (1554-1565) and later his sons ruled over Thatta. Mirza Jani Beg (1593) and Mirza Ghazi Beg (1614) ruled as governors of Mughal Emperor Akbar (1556-1605) and Jahangir (1605-1627).

2.2.4- THE MUGHALS IN SIND (1592-1739):

From 1592 till 1737/39 appointed Mughal governors ruled over Thatta. After the last Mughal governor of Thatta handed the power to Mian Nur Mohammad Kalhora, Thatta lost its political ascendancy and Makli its architectural and spiritual hegemony in Sindh, as the Kalhoras who were themselves religious leaders established a new spiritual and political capital at Khudabad.¹⁵ The glory of those 400 prosperous years of supremacy of Thatta over lower Sindh is visible not in the city of today but the nearby cemetery of Makli. The remains at Makli of tombs, enclosures, stone-carved and brick-clad edifices and graves speak volumes about the city that once was.

2.3- MAKLI HILL:

Many anecdotes are attached as to how the site got the name “Makli”. Some associate it with the traveler going for a holy pilgrimage to Mecca stopping at the site and when seeing the *Jamia masjid*¹⁶ and surroundings exclaimed “*Hadah Makkah li*” (this is Mecca for me) and kept on repeating in state of ecstasy. Shaikh Hammad Jamali the saint, (revered by Samma ruler Jam Tamachi to whom is attributed the founding of the site of Makli) named the *masjid* as *Makli masjid* after the happening. Another story narrates of a pious lady by the name of *Mai*¹⁷ Makli who is buried abutting the wall of the *Jamia Masjid* on Makli hill near the Samma cluster.¹⁸

2.3.1- MONUMENTS ON MAKLI HILL:

The site is essentially a cemetery consisting of tombs as mentioned earlier. The monuments belong to the rulers, nobles, governors and families of the ruling dynasties mentioned above. The construction of these funerary structures continued for 400 years when Thatta as a capital city reigned supreme. The monuments can be divided into categories by building type and material of construction.

The main building types¹⁹ are:

1. **Tombs**, (Fig: 2.3, 2.4, 2.7 – 2.11) mostly square chambers with graves inside and a dome on top built both in stone masonry and bricks with or without tile decoration.
2. **Canopies**, (Fig: 2.2) hexagonal or octagonal “*chattri*” structures open from sides built mostly of stone masonry with dome on top.

3. **Enclosures**, (Fig: 2.4, 2.8 – 2.10) these are open to air enclosures having graves inside and quadrangle in shape built of stone masonry or bricks. Mostly members of the same family are buried inside the enclosure walls.
4. **Graves**, (Fig: 2.2) open air highly adorned, are spread all over the cemetery having the finest of stone carving patterns on them built mostly of stone. These stone carved graves are found not only in Makli but all around Sindh and Baluchistan areas. Chaukandi graveyard (fig: 3.1) in Karachi has one of the finest of stone carved graves.

The above are major burial structures there are other building types on Makli hill like,

5. A **Masjid** (mosque), Makli masjid is the only mosque on the hill and it is a *Jamia masjid* built of brick with arcuated structure.
6. "**Khanqas**" are learning spaces where saints teach and preach the disciples and followers. Makli hill has Khanqas mostly from Samma period of Shaikh Hammad Jamali and Isa Langoti and other revered saints.

The study does not include mosque and *khanqahs*; it is centered around the funerary architecture on Makli hill with major focus on Samma period (135/52 -1524).



Figure 2.2- View of stone built canopies or '*chattri*' and open graves, Samma period. (Taken by the author)



Figure 2.3 – Stone masonry tomb of Jam Nizam al-Din, Samma Period. (Taken by the author)



Figure 2.4 – Stone masonry tomb ‘enclosure’ of Mubarak/Darya Khan, Samma Period. (Taken by the author)



Figure 2.5 – Brick built tombs with stone masonry till dado level, Samma period. (Taken by the author)



Figure 2.6 – View of funerary monuments Samma Cluster
(photograph taken by the author, from top of tomb of Jam Nizam al-Din)



Figure 2.7 – Brick masonry tomb of Dewan Shurfa Khan, Arghun period.
(Taken by the author)



Figure 2.8 – Stone masonry tomb and tomb enclosure of Isa Khan Tarkhan II
Tarkhan period. (Taken by the author)



Figure 2.9 – Outside view of Tomb enclosure of Isa Khan Tarkhan II,
Tarkhan period (Taken by the author)



Figure 2.10 – Brick masonry tomb enclosure and tomb of Mirza Baqi Beg Uzbek, Mughal Period. (Taken by the author)



Figure 2.11 – Brick masonry octagonal tomb of Mirza Jani and Mirza Ghazi Beg, Mughal Period, (Taken by the author)

2.3.2 - MAKLI HILL AND THE CITY:

Makli hill had orientation link (fig 2.13-2.14) with both the capitals, the earlier capital Samui towards north and later Thatta towards east. The location of the Samma Period monuments (fig 3.15) is mostly concentrated towards northern side reinforcing the visual Samui-Makli link; also the *Khanqah* of Isa Langoti (revered saint) and Pir Murad's tomb are concentrated towards the northern extreme. There is a possibility of access to the site of Makli from Samui. There is not much written about this earlier capital of Samma rulers. Dani expresses north of Makli as the possible location for the site where a mound is located today. Most of the land around is used for agricultural purposes. In figure 2.12 and 2.13 keeping with the accounts of Dani I have marked the probable location for Samui. The location does correspond with the visual Samui Makli link.

Arghun, Tarkhan and Mughal monuments specially the Mughal were located more towards the southern side of the Makli hill indicating the shifting of the capital and establishing the visual Thatta-Makli link where today is located the main entrance, coming from the highway connecting Thatta with Karachi city. Another interesting phenomenon is the concentration of tombs and graves toward eastern periphery of the Makli hill, scattered graves and a few tombs are found on the western side as well. This concentration can be justified as the visual Thatta-Makli link was towards north and eastern side. The activity happening on the western side of Makli hill during heyday of Thatta is difficult to establish. It is said in *Maklinama* that people used to visit the site regularly. It was considered a sacred site and also favorite picnic spot with small water bodies and greenery, of which nothing is seen today except barren land with few arid trees. Schimmel quoting from *Tarikh-i-Tahiri* writes,

There they spend every day in felicity till evening prayer and then go back to their houses ... On top of Makli hill there is a tank (*talab*) which is called *khira*, i.e. "sweet". At the time when the rain water is in the tanks all sorts of men and women, Muslims and Hindus come there, row after row, day and night, and cook food there and celebrate in such a way as if Id and wedding had fallen together.²⁰

How the city and the populous perceived the necropolis cannot be stated with certainty. Makli stand on a higher ground being a hill outcrop, the view of tombs of the noblest and learned men may have been mesmerizing, as the funerary architecture immortalizing those buried was of a very high quality. The tombs and graves standing gracefully atop the hill awe inspiring the dwellers of the Thatta city than and for centuries to come.

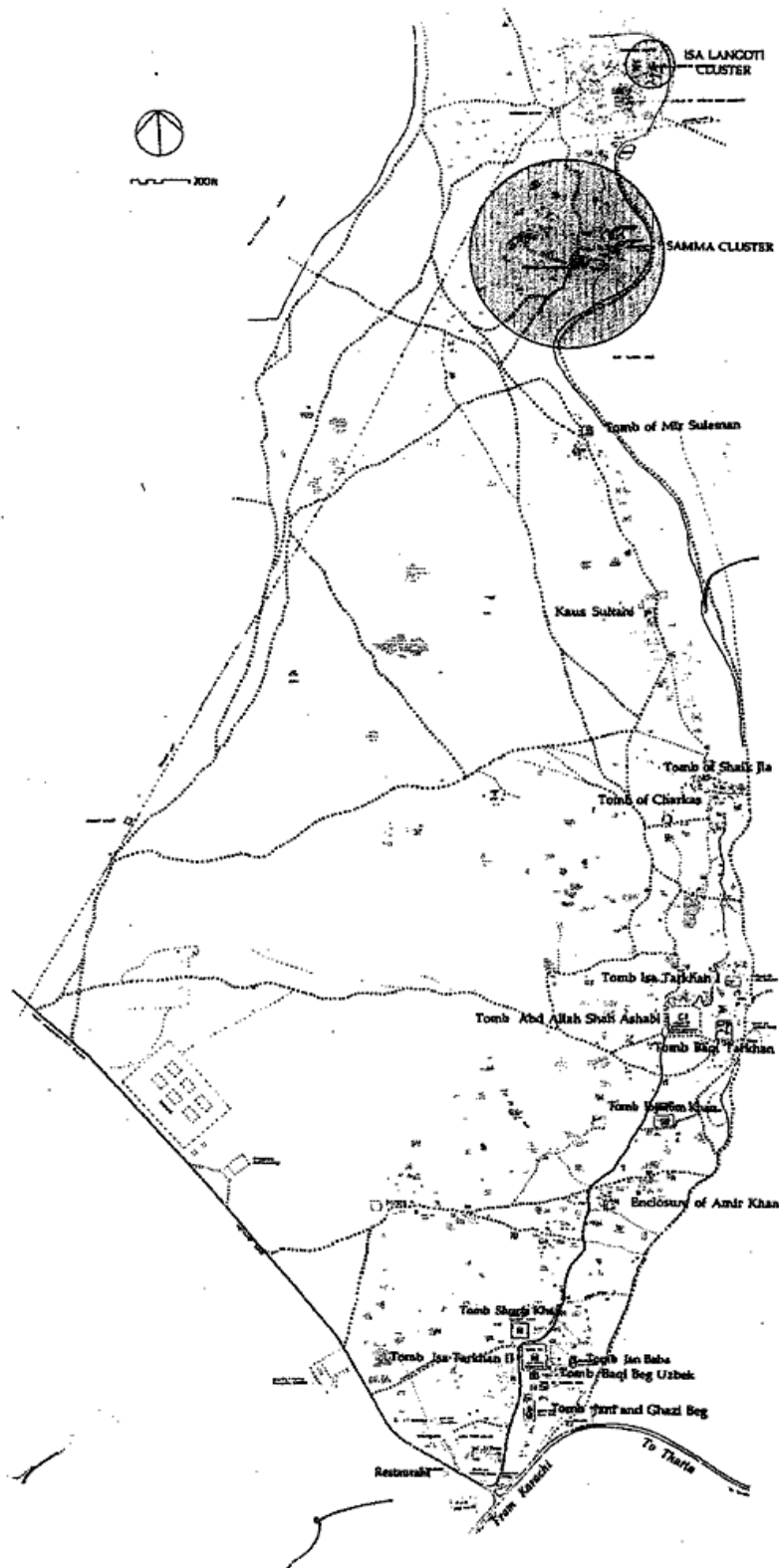


Figure 2.12 – Map of Makli Necropolis with location of the Samma Cluster highlighted. (Lari, 1997)

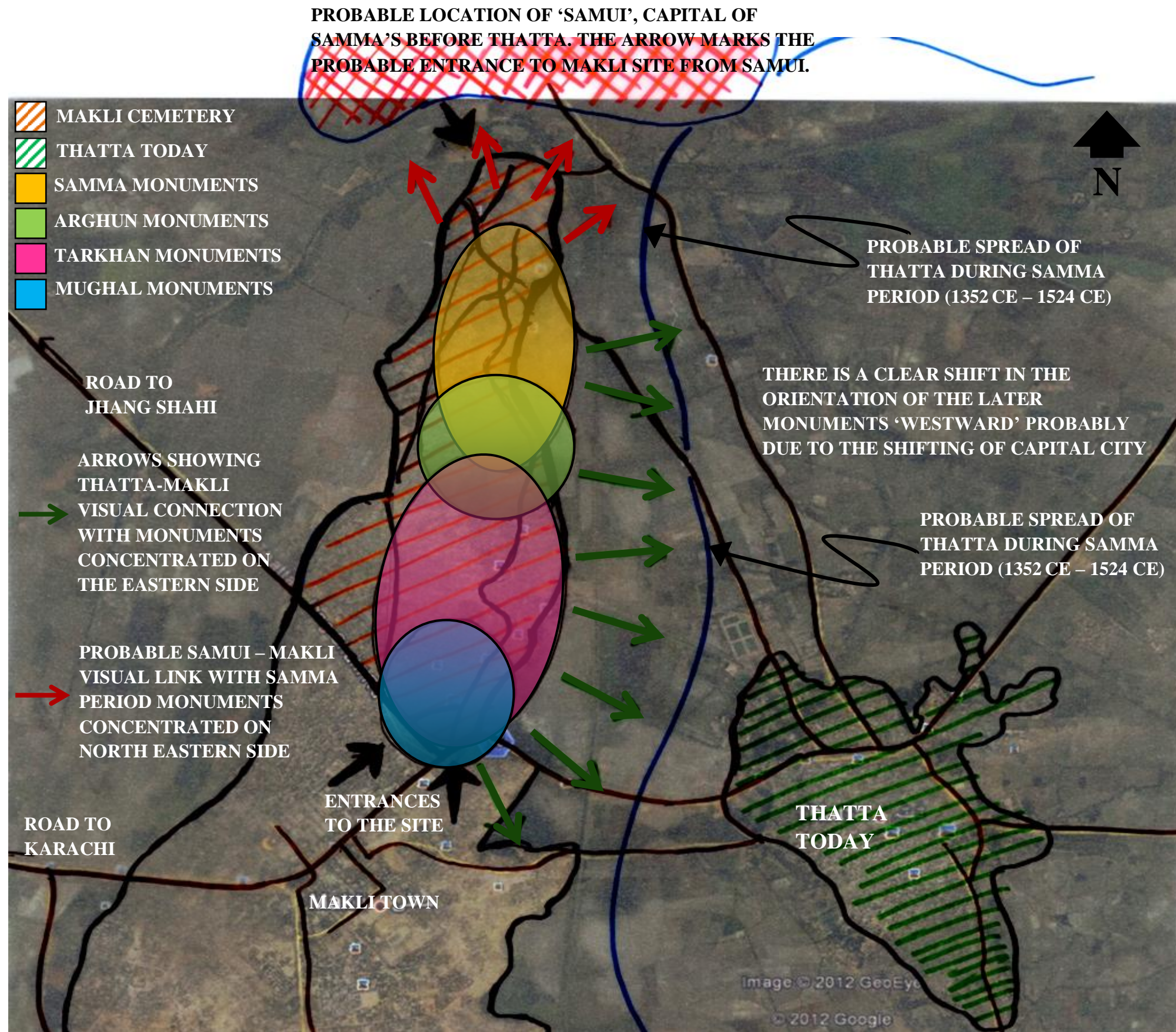


Fig 2.13: Map Showing Makli hill, distribution ^[21] of monuments on site and visual links with Thatta and Samui, (prepared by overlaying on Google earth, by the author)

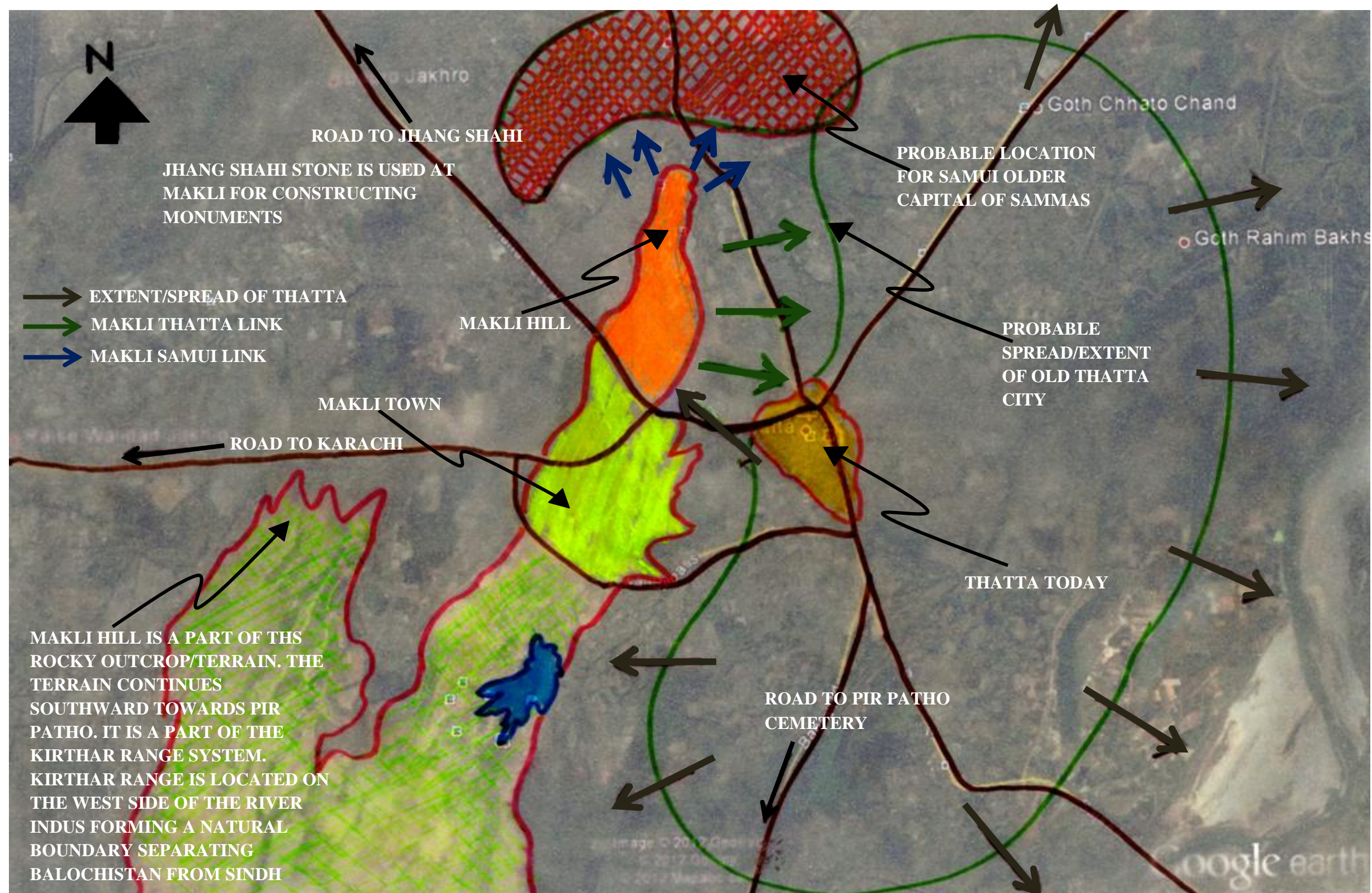


Fig 2.14: Map showing Makli hill and vicinity (prepared by overlaying on Google earth, by the author)

Notes:

1. Thatta has been spelled as *Thatt*, *Thatti*, *Thatto*, *Tatta*, in various historic accounts the modern spelling now used is 'Thatta' from, Dani, Ahmad Hasan. 1982. *Thatta Islamic Architecture*. Islamabad. Institute of Islamic History Culture and Civilization.
2. Lari, Yasmeen, Suhail Zaheer Lari. 1997. *The Jewel of Sind Samma Monuments on Makli Hill*. Karachi. Oxford University Press. Quoting from "Maklinama", translated from Persian by Pir Hissam-ud-din Rashidi
3. Pir Patho marks the end of the hill outcrop on the north of which Makli is situated and the National Highway cuts through it. The establishment of Makli as the new burial site broke the hegemony of Multan based sufis who kept Pir Patho site as sacred and revered. It is still considered sacred and people visit it even today. The author does not have information if the site of Pir Patho has any tombs as elaborate as tombs in Makli cemetery.
4. Cousens, Henry. 1929 *Antiquities of Sind*. Calcutta quoted in a lecture by Schimmel, Annemarie. 1983 *Makli Hill*. Karachi. Institute of Central and West Asian Studies University of Karachi.
5. Schimmel, Annemarie. 1983 *Makli Hill*. Karachi. Institute of Central and West Asian Studies University of Karachi.
6. Ibid
7. Siddiqi, M. Idris. 1970. *Thatta*. Department of Archaeology and Museums Pakistan.
8. Baloch, N. A. on the Origin of Thatta, writes, the classical meaning and concept of *nagar* or *nageri* in Sindhi is that of a Principality/State and its capital where the ruler resides. 'Thatti', 'Thatt' and 'Thatto' all have the common connotation of a settlement on the bank of the river, including any of its perennial branches. To be given these names such settlements must be rooted on the bank of the main river or on a subsidiary stream of it. There were many *Thattis* (a small town) and *Thatts* (bigger and better) on the bank of Indus River and its streams but the biggest *Thatto* (biggest and best one) was only one. To this day, the more popular name for 'Thatta' with the rural population of Sindh is 'Thatta Nagar' or simply *Nagar*. Refer appendix, Dani, Ahmad Hasan. 1982. *Thatta Islamic Architecture*. Islamabad. Institute of Islamic History Culture and Civilization.
9. Lari, Yasmeen, Suhail Zaheer Lari. 1997. *The Jewel of Sind Samma Monuments on Makli Hill*. Karachi. Oxford University Press.
10. Ghafur, M. A. 1968. *The Calligraphers of Thatta*. Karachi. Pakistan-Iran Cultural Association.
11. Siddiqi, M. Idris. 1970. *Thatta*. Department of Archaeology and Museums Pakistan.
12. Lari, Suhail Zaheer. 1994. *History of Sindh*. Karachi. Oxford University Press.
13. Lari, Yasmeen, Suhail Zaheer Lari. 1997. *The Jewel of Sind Samma Monuments on Makli Hill*. Karachi. Oxford University Press.

14. Lari, Suhail Zaheer. 1994. *History of Sindh*. Karachi. Oxford University Press. There have been discrepancies in the dates in different sources. Lari 1994 has the most detailed genealogy and is hence been selected by the author.
15. Lari, Suhail Zaheer. 1994. *History of Sindh*. Karachi. Oxford University Press.
16. *Jamia Masjid* means Friday Mosque which relatively is larger in capacity than regular neighborhood mosques.
17. 'Mai' is a Sindhi language word meaning lady or woman, mostly older age ladies are referred to as 'Mai'.
18. Dani, Ahmad Hasan. 1982. *Thatta Islamic Architecture*. Islamabad. Institute of Islamic History Culture and Civilization.
19. Building types are based on personal observation of the site and summarized from Dani, Ahmad Hasan. 1982. *Thatta Islamic Architecture*. Islamabad. Institute of Islamic History Culture and Civilization.
20. Schimmel, Annemarie. 1983 *Makli Hill*. Karachi. Institute of Central and West Asian Studies University of Karachi.
21. The distribution of the monuments on Makli site, in the figure is taken from/based on the map in the booklet, *Damage Assessment Mission to the Necropolis of Makli at WHS Thatta, Pakistan*. 2011. The study was conducted by Heritage Foundation and supported by Prince Claus Fund for Cultural and Development.

CHAPTER 03

FUNERARY MEMORIAL ARCHITECTURE



Figure 3.1: Intricately decorated grave cenotaphs at Chaukhandi graveyard Karachi.
(Taken by the author)

In Islamic architectural practice I feel, typologically funerary memorials (fig-3.1) commonly coined as tombs or mausoleums are a significant building type. Tombs were exquisitely decorated and meticulously designed. A good deal of human labor went into erection of these edifices for the dead. It would not be an overstatement if said that after Mosque design, tombs are the most important building type in Islamic architecture. The remains of the tombs are in abundance spread from Asia to Africa, material of construction and technique of design may be one of the reasons for their survival. The tombs become a site of pilgrimage and are continuously in use and are maintained accordingly. Similar can be the case with the Mosques and their survival as they are continually in use as the place for prayers and hence are duly maintained.

3.1- RESTRICTION ON TOMBS IN ISLAM:

The most beautiful tombs says the Prophet (P.B.U.H) is the one that vanishes from the face of the earth.²¹ Tombs or structure of any kind over grave even a temporary one like a tent is forbidden in Islam. It's a paradox that great many tombs are found in Islamic architecture glorifying the dead, who were. Abbas Daneshvari in his book 'Medieval tomb towers of Iran' explains in detail the restriction on structure of any kind over graves in Islam,

The literary evidence of the ban against raising funerary structures is extensive. All traditions indicate that Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H) had strictly forbidden construction of a building on a grave. Veneration of dead through commemorative structures, lamentations and funerary ceremonies was considered unlawful and was viewed as aspects of pagan or the Judaea-Christian heritage.²²

Then why the violation of this restriction is a full topic in itself and is not in the scope of this thesis to be discussed. Although some points summarized below came across in different readings dealing with the topic. They are added here as they seemed most relevant to me and gave satisfactory explanation for the construction of these commemorative structures;

3.1.1- SHADE:²³

Shade was provided over graves as it was the characteristic of Paradise by trees or erecting tents. There are numerous burial grounds in Iran that are covered. The shade was considered to be protective in an esoteric and religious sort of way.²⁴ In an attempt to provide the burial ground of a human with characteristic 'Paradise' feature, shade acted as an indicative marker for the residing of the deceased, in Paradise. Later the temporary tents and trees became more permanent structures like chambers with domed roof or towers etc. and hence started the tradition of building of more elaborate tomb structures both in design and detail.

3.1.2- ASCENSION: ²⁵

The verticality in design of sacred buildings is often related to ascension. The height signifies rising to the heavens or to the realm beyond. The tomb towers, for example Gonbad-e-Qabus (fig – 3.2) built around 1007 CE imposes verticality in its design reinforcing the concept of rise to heavens of the deceased. So the tower can be seen as something bringing the deceased closer to the heavens acting like a stair or a mountain. An intermediary structure where the remains of the deceased are, which points towards heaven and reaches it through its soaring height. The more earthly and humble structures were either located on a higher ground or had a dome on top. Dome itself symbolizes heaven and the domain of the celestial beings. Ascension can also be highlighted by ‘axial’ design as was the case in many temples of the pre Islamic era.

3.1.3- VENERATION: ²⁶

The wish of the deceased that the soul will benefit from the prayers offered at the tomb is also one of the reasons for its construction. The visitors making a pilgrimage to the grave of a revered saint, a king or noble will be facilitated better if there is a provision of a shelter over it. It is not a strong argument that the facilitation of the visitors was major concern of the people ordering their funerary abode in their lifetime nevertheless; if not a major it may be a consideration while ordering and constructing these structures.

Titus Burckhardt in the book ‘Islamic Arts’ states,

Despite official distaste for the custom of visiting graves including those of the descendants of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and other pious individuals, many people did so to VENERATE the memory of the deceased, and the simple burial was often embellished with such signs of honor as grilles, tombstones, tomb-covers and even small buildings.²⁷



Figure 3.2: Gonbad-e-Qabus (1007 CE) view from outside. (wikipedia)

The people visiting graves and offering prayers for the deceased is also a major factor why some people wish to be buried in close proximity of the tombs of revered saints, as the prayers offered for the saints might as well benefit their soul.

The reason for these structures can simply be the desire to be remembered by the living, after one has passed onto the journey of afterlife. To be commemorated as a glorified leader, a savior, a noble person and soul purifying saint etc. at the last place the deceased resides, and an eternal wish to be living amongst those not dead. Whatever may be the case, construction of tombs continued and homage to the buried is paid to date by the people.

3.2- A GLANCE AT FUNERARY ARCHITECTURE IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD:

Remains of tombs and necropolises are extant in the lands dominated by Islamic empires, dynasties and proto-dynasties. The earliest tomb to survive anywhere in the Islamic lands is the Samanids' (819-1005) tomb (Fig – 3.3) at Bukhara who were descendants from Old Persian noble family.²⁸ They recognized the Abbasid caliphate and controlled the lands between Baghdad and India. The tomb is associated with Ismail-ibn-Ahmad, but it is considered a family tomb by scholars and was built after his death. The form of the tomb is a cube topped with a dome constructed in baked brick masonry. It is a simple form but is elaborately decorated with patterns in baked brick.



Figure 3.3: Ismail Samanid Tomb in Bukhara (wikipedia)

There were many funerary complexes built by rulers which served as family burial places for them and the nobles belonging to ruling class. The shrines and tombs of Sufi saints and revered elders were also ordered by the rulers either separate or built within the noble cemetery.

3.2.1 – ASWAN NECROPOLIS:²⁹

Aswan necropolis is located outside the town of Aswan in Upper Egypt and is considered a significant architectural remain of the Fatimid period. The inscriptional data from the necropolis dates it to 11th and 12th century. The necropolis consists of a strip 500 m wide stretching along the side of the road for nearly 2 km. There are around a 1000 tombs on the site. The necropolis has maintained a reputation of having the finest examples of Middle Eastern funerary architecture in medieval period. The form of the tombs is mostly a square or rectangular chamber topped with a dome having a polygonal transition zone. The drums have a unique horn like projections at the corners of the octagon supporting the dome as shown in figure 3.6. The tombs are built of bricks both baked and burned and plastered with lime mortar which is mostly absent today. The tombs said to have examples of the earliest use of muqarnas and squinches.



Figure 3.4: Necropolis in Aswan view of tombs (wikipedia)

3.2.2 – THE TOMB OF SHAMS AL-DIN ILTUTMISH

The tomb of Shams al-Din Iltutmish (reg. 1211-1236), is located in the northwest corner of the Qutb complex next to Iltutmish's own extensions to the Qutb Mosque in Delhi.³⁰ It is a sand stone structure a cube which probably had a dome but is open to sky at present. Unlike many other monuments in the Qutb Complex it does not reuse material from dismantled Hindu Religion temples. It has three entrances, on the north, east, and south elevations and a *mihrab* niche at the west side. The square base of the tomb structure is transformed into an octagon overhead with use of squinches. Corbelling technique is used for constructing arches. The tomb is richly decorated having floral and geometric motifs carved on the sand stone with panels of calligraphy in *Kufic* and *Nakshi* scripts. The tomb having a formal vocabulary of domed cube and arches, structurally remains true to trabeated system this will later be discussed while explaining tomb of Jam Nizam al-Din at Makli necropolis. The fact that the symbolism and formal elements were Islamic but the workmanship and building technique was local is not only evident from the post and lintel structure but also the motifs like lotus flowers and bells on chains are regional.

3.2.3 – SHAH-I-ZINDA COMPLEX:

The Shah-i Zinda meaning “The Living King” is a funerary complex (fig – 3.4.1, 3.42) in the city of Samarqand. Some scholars suggest that the site of the complex was a venerated place before the arrival of Islam, in part because of the reference to prophet Khizr and story of the Source of Life, but also due to the existence of a spring, historically associated with immortality.³¹

The complex developed around tomb of companion of the Prophet who was believed to be martyred in the vicinity earlier in Islamic period. The tombs were



Figure 3.5: Interior of Tomb of Ilutmish (archnet)



Fig 3.6: Shah- I- Zinda Complex (Burckhardt, 2009)

constructed during 1370 CE – 1405 CE and many graves belong to Timurid Princesses. The cemetery got a monumental gateway in 1434-5 CE at the southern end built by Ulugh Beg (1394 CE – 1449 CE) which added to the grandeur and majesty of the sacred burial site and acted as a well defined ceremonial entrance. The gateway connected the necropolis to the city. There are around forty funerary buildings on the either side of 200 meter alley.³²

A typical mausoleum at Shah-i Zinda consists of a square tomb chamber, covered with a double shell dome and fronted by an arched portal (called *pishtaq*) oriented toward the corridor.³³ The entrance portals of the tombs facing the alley were decorated with tile cladding but the other sides were left unadorned or having geometric motifs in brick. The interior was adorned with tile mosaic or carved and painted plaster. The complex contains rich epigraphic program and inscriptions on the portal of the tombs are either Koranic verses or poems and saying in Persian. The most noticeable feature of the necropolis is its tiling work. The inscriptions also give the names of the patrons and the craftsmen. Shah-i-Zinda complex is included in the World Heritage List and the vicinity of the necropolis is still used for burials.



Figure 3.7: Shah- I- Zinda Complex view of cluster of tombs (wikipedia)



Figure 3.8: View of Mamluk Necropolis in Cairo Egypt (Burckhardt, 2009)

The above cited examples are a few of the many funerary complexes of the Islamic period. The form of the tombs in the cited examples is a cube topped with a dome having an octagonal (in most cases) transitional zone formed by squinches. The Mamluk necropolis in Figure 3.8 is illustrated (only) to reinforce the above mentioned use of domed cube as a well accepted form. The illustrated tomb of the Samanids and Fatimids predate the Makli necropolis but the Timurid dynasty ruled Central Asia and parts of India at approximately the same time Sammas ruled Sindh as independent rulers i.e. from 14th to 16th century. Another detail evident while looking at the examples is that the form of domed cube may be extant over the Islamic lands but when it came to stylistic expression, ornamentation of the façade and articulation of the elements of architecture, the appearance give us a wider palette making every tomb as much universal in form and at the same time regional and local stylistically. It is unity and diversity, similar yet very different at the same time. Unity is the core concept of Islam and diversity or multiplicity within unity is the characteristic/quality of the Divine.

The Sub-Continent (present day India and Pakistan) saw encounters between the post and lintel highly figurative Hindu architecture (sacred in particular) and Islamic arcuated construction of dome, arches, minarets and decorative floral and vegetal

motifs. Tomb of Iltutmish is a minor example considering the tomb repository of the region, where the Mughal rulers gave tomb complexes a totally new dimension in terms of scale and design, but it contains elements of Islamic architecture merged with Hindu/Indian structural and ornamentation style. This phenomenon will be more apparent at the Makli Necropolis where the image of Islam was endorsed through use of domes and arches but the workmanship was local therefore, in the stone monument the trabeated architecture marries the arcuated and where Hindu regional floral motifs come side by side with calligraphy on the exterior and interior, hence creating a hybrid complimenting both traditions. Before discussing the Samma period monuments in detail we will look and briefly discuss the prevalent tombs in Pakistan region specially Multan and Uchh where the shrines and tombs of Sufi saints are extant.



Figure 3.9: Map showing sites of Multan Uchh Sharif and Thatta in present day Pakistan (Google Maps)

3.3 – FUNERARY ARCHITECTURE IN PAKISTAN:

The pre-Mughal period in the regions now part of Pakistan had regional diversity in tomb architecture. These have been in detail explained by a Pakistani scholar Shaikh Khurshid Hassan in his book, “The Islamic Architectural Heritage of Pakistan: Funerary Memorial Architecture”. The book discusses in detail the pre and post Mughal funerary architecture. Some examples from the book are illustrated below.

3.3.1 – TOMB OF SHEIKH BAHA AL-DIN ZAKARIYA

Baha-ud-din Zakariya (died-1262) was a Sufi of Suhrawardiyya order he was the disciple of Shaikh Shahab al-Din Suharwardi and was ordered by him to preach in Multan where his tomb is situated today. Characteristic features³⁴ of the tomb are,

- Square plan on 3 tiers.
- Ambulatory gallery on first storey.
- A high and pronounced octagonal drum with clerestory
- Hemispherical dome crowned by a well designed finial
- Battered walls.
- Wood framing in the walls (brick construction)
- Exposed brick construction with tile decoration both in exterior and interior.

Baha-ud-Din Zakariya was a well travelled saint and Hassan argues that on his travels he must have had a unique experience of seeing monumental buildings at various Islamic centers and while planning his own mausoleum in Multan these experiences may have been useful. The tomb is earliest example of tiered tomb in the region and is fairly monumental in terms of scale, 53’x53’ internally & 61’-9”X69’-9” externally with total height 80’-8”.³⁵



Figure 3.10: Tomb of Sheikh Baha-ud-Din Zakariya

(http://multan.reemakhan.info/monument/index/SHRINE_OF_HAZRAT_BAHAUDDIN_ZAKARIYA.html)

The inspiration according to Hassan is central Asian but he further adds that similar (in style) tombs were built in Gomal valley area in Dera Ismail Khan Region and coin it as Seraiki³⁶ style,

..... the style of architecture has got its roots in Central Asia. It was however, first developed in Seraiki speaking area of Gomal valley, and even in certain areas of Baluchistan like, Sibi and Kharan maturing finally in Multan. Being spread over different Seraiki speaking areas of Pakistan, it would therefore be quite logical to name it as “Seraiki Style” of architecture.³⁷

3.3.2 – MAUSOLEUM AT GOMAL VALLEY IN SERAIKI STYLE:

The tombs illustrated above are from Gomal valley, west of Mahra village in Dera Ismail Khan built in Seraiki Style and dated somewhere around 11th and early 12th century. The characteristic features³⁸ are summarized under:

- Majorly 2 types having rounded corners like of a fortress and tombs having sharp corners.
- They are built in burnt brick with exposed brick facades.
- Square plan, 3 arched entrances with mihrab niche on the 4th side.
- Embellished in blue colored tiles (also visible in tomb of Baha-ud Din Zakariya) creating geometric and floriate motifs on the exterior mostly in bands.
- Brick domes surmount the monuments but there are also flat roofed tombs. (Flat roofs are indigenous construction of the region)



Figure 3.11: Unknown Tomb at Lal Mahra, District Dera Ismail Khan view

(<http://www.danialshah.com/historic-places/>)

3.3.3 – TOMB OF SHAH RUKN-I-ALAM:

Shah Rukn-i-Alam (1251-1335) was the grandson of Shaikh Baha al-Din Zakariya and a Sufi saint like his grandfather belonging to Suharwardi order, based in Multan. His tomb is the one of the celebrated architectural monuments of Pakistan.



Figure 3.12: Tomb of Shah Rukn I Alam at Multan.

(http://multan.reemakhan.info/monument/index/SHRINE_OF_HAZRAT_BAHAUDDIN_ZAKARIYA.html)

His tomb is unique as the plan is octagonal rather than square which was generally the tradition. Hassan in his book argues that the Dome of Rock (691 AD) having an octagonal plan may have been inspiration for the plan of the tomb, which in turn was based on Byzantine architecture, considering it a symbolic representation of the sacred building. It is also dubbed by scholars as having typical Tughlaq (Delhi Sultanate 1320-1414) style as it was considered to be built by Ghias-ud-Din Tughlaq (reign 1320-1325) for himself during the days of his governorship of Depalpur, between 1320 and 1324 AD, but was given by his son, Muhammad bin Tughluq to the descendents of Shah Rukn-e-Alam for the his burial in 1330.³⁹ The tomb has similar tiered construction as can be seen in figure 3.12. It is a monumental construction having the diameter of the base as 90 feet and total height till the finial 115 feet.⁴⁰



Figure 3.13: Tomb of Shah Rukn I Alam photo taken by Willliam Henry Baker 1865
(wikipedia)

The tomb gives an impression of a fortress having a huge dome on top and having battered walls, these were the characteristic features of Tughlaq style also and maybe the reason for generically putting it under Tughlaq style. The tomb is built in brick and decorated with blue glazed tiles similar to the tomb of Baha-ud-Din Zakariya.

The similarity in the above examples is the material of construction that is brick and the use of blue glazed tiles in bands for the embellishment of façade, monumental construction which is accentuated by rounded fort like corners giving the tombs grace and strength in appearance. These are all pre-Makli monuments which according to Hassan had both Persian/Iranian and Central Asian elements but stylistically local. The tombs illustrated are of venerated saints of the region and not of the nobles or the royalty.



Figure 3.14: Tomb of Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughlaq (d 1325) near Tughlaqabad Fortress, Delhi, (Wikipedia)

Multan is to date called the city of Saints having numerous saintly figures buried in the city. It had spiritual hegemony as far as Sindh, where the site of Pir Patho (cemetery) near Thatta was revered site. This all changed when the saint named Shaikh Hamad Jamali established himself at Makli hill site and separated from the spiritual attachment with Multan. Yasmeen Lari, in her book “The Jewel of Sindh: Samma Monuments on Makli Hill” briefly describe this,

The credit for establishing Makli as a holy place for worship and burial goes to Shaikh Hammad Jamali and his royal devotee Jam Tamachi. They provide it with spiritual and architectural magnificence not known to any other place in Sindh. Before the victory of the alliance between Shaikh Hammad Jamali the immigrant saint, poet and scholar and Jam Tamachi, the people of Thatta use to bury their dead in the cemetery of Pir Patho who belonged to the Sufi *silsila* of pirs from Multan and Uchh, who acted as the main power brokers of the Sultans of Delhi in Sindh.⁴¹

Not only the power center shifted but Makli tombs are unlike the tombs at Multan, here the Indian stone carving tradition fuses with the Islamic image and we see architecture that is highly ornate in design.

3.3.4 – SAMMA MONUMENTS AT THE NECROPOLIS OF MAKLI:

In chapter 2 under the heading 2.3.1 the monuments are described under building type. The thesis concentrates mainly on the 14th to 16th century Samma Monuments discussing the tomb of Jam Nizam al-Din II (1461-1508) in detail. The Samma Cluster spreads over to 5 acre of land.⁴² The beginnings of this cluster, indeed of the whole Makli were made when Sufi *pir* Shaikh Hammad Jamali established his khanqah close to the ridge during the 14th century. The cluster grew as a result of the veneration felt towards the Shaikh by the ruling Samma prince, Jam Tamachi and his followers who preferred to be buried in the vicinity of the *maqbara* of their *pir*.⁴³

There are both brick and stone monuments built on the site, where the stone monuments exhibit an outward expression of Islamic architecture (of dome and arches) using trabeated system, which was prevailing building technique in the region, pre-Islam and the brick monuments used true arches domes and vaults. The main difference between the two techniques is arches and vaults expressed in trabeated system use corbelling technique where as arcuated system uses voussoirs and the latter is the true arch system.



Figure 3.15: View of the Samma monuments looking from south toward north.

(Taken by the author)

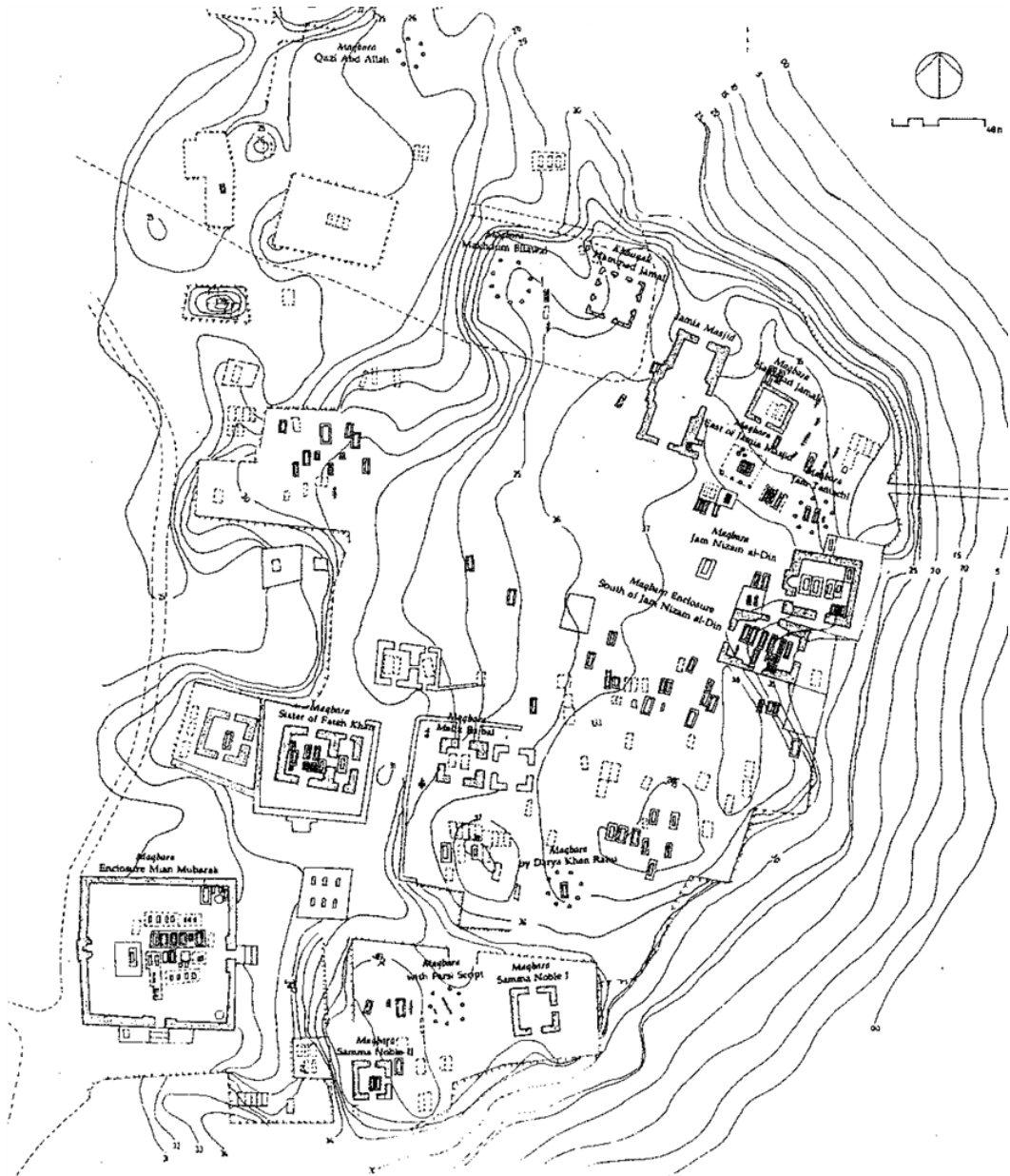


Figure 3.16: Location map of Samma Monuments. (Lari, 1997)

In figure 3.15 remains of the monuments of Samma Cluster can be seen where the construction material and different building types are clearly visible. The monuments on Makli site are generally classified under material of construction by scholars who have written about the site. Similar classification under stone and brick built monuments is adopted here,

3.3.4.1 – STONE MONUMENTS:

Stone monuments on Makli hill display exquisite relief work. The carvings are floral and geometric in nature and are coupled with calligraphic carvings for both interior and exterior. There are canopies, enclosures, graves and tombs all built in stone.

Canopies (fig 3.17) or *chattri* are polygonal in shape mostly octagon with one hexagon (standing) if there were other variations of polygons cannot be said with surety. The common features are;

- Decorated columns with segmented panels of motifs having four bracketed capital.
- Architraves (slabs) above the capitals supporting the dome on top.
- There are projections called *chajja* that mainly is a dripstone and the parapet is shaped as a battlement (they are called *kangura* battlements).
- The dome is erected by using corbelling technique, where the rings inside are decorated with carving. The rings end in a hanging chandelier like detail called ‘pendant’ by Lari.
- The dome has a *kalasa* (*Kalasa* represents a jar of nectar of Gods, symbolizing immortality⁴⁴) detail on top. The outside of the dome is covered with layers of lime plaster⁴⁵ to give an impression of a true hemispherical dome.

The inner detail of the corbelled dome in a canopy structure is shown in fig 3.18. The carving on the receding rings of circle and the culminating hanging pendant detail are clearly visible. The pendant below has the *kalasa* detail at the finial / apex when seen from outside as shown in fig 3.17.

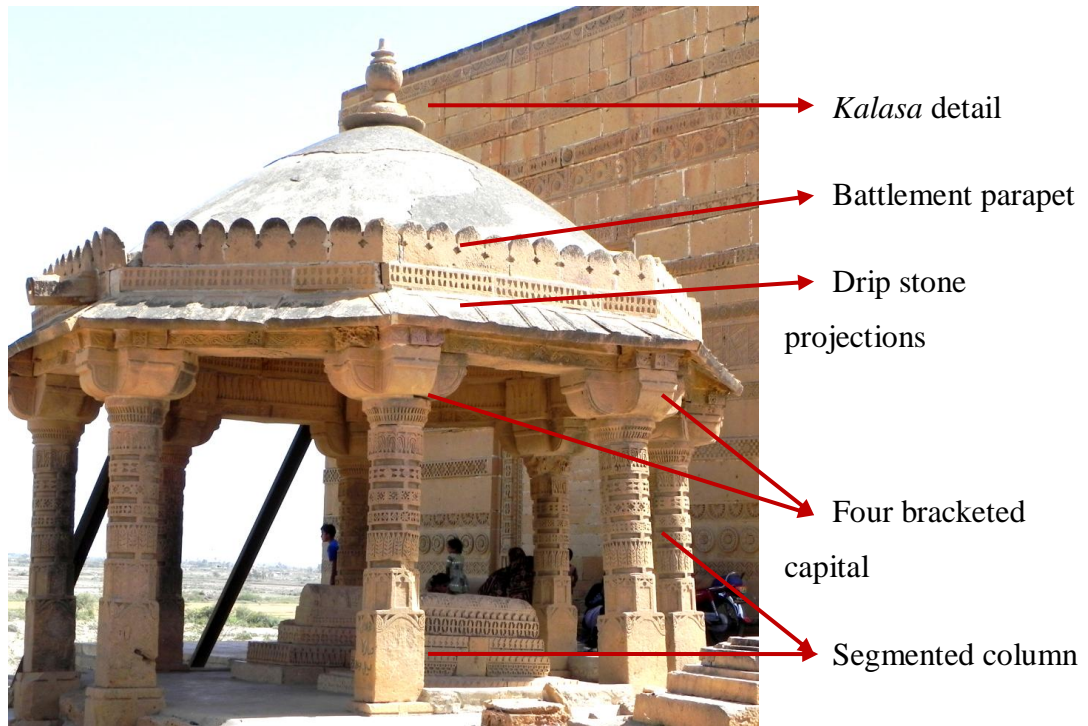


Figure 3.17: Canopy tomb of Jam Tamachi ⁴⁶, the details are typical for canopy type tombs in the Samma cluster. (Taken by the author)



Figure 3.18: Inner detail of the canopy dome
(Taken by the author)

There is one fine example of tomb enclosure in the Samma cluster that is the tomb of Mubarak Khan alias Darya Khan (fig 2.3). He was the vizier during Jam Nizam al-Din's time period and was the adopted son of the ruler. The main features of the enclosure are;

- Stone masonry walls culminating in the battlement (*kangura*) detail, having low carved relief patterns (fig 3.19).
- The walls have openings on the southern and eastern facades, where the western wall has a *mihrab* niche (fig3.23). The frames of the openings vary in height from the rest of the enclosure wall.
- The relief work is more elaborate around the frame of the openings (fig 3.19) and inside around the *mihrab* niche.
- Relatively simple considering the stone carvings not only in Samma cluster but the necropolis itself.
- There are 2 bands of carved motif running and wrapping around the enclosure.
- The wall has blind arches from outside, in low relief.
- The unique feature of the frame is a small niche like element (fig 3.21) (it is more like a typical Indian *jharoka* detail) adorning both the sides of the opening.
- The enclosure is raised on plinth approximately 5 feet. ⁴⁷
- Within the enclosure are carved grave cenotaphs most probably from the family of Mian Mubarak. One of the graves is in front and at right angle (almost) with the *mihrab* niche containing a turban/crown like detail on top, signifying important status of the person buried.



Figure 3.19: Frame detail of the entrance of enclosure.
(Taken by the author)



Figure 3.20: Grave with a turban inside the enclosure.
(Taken by the author)

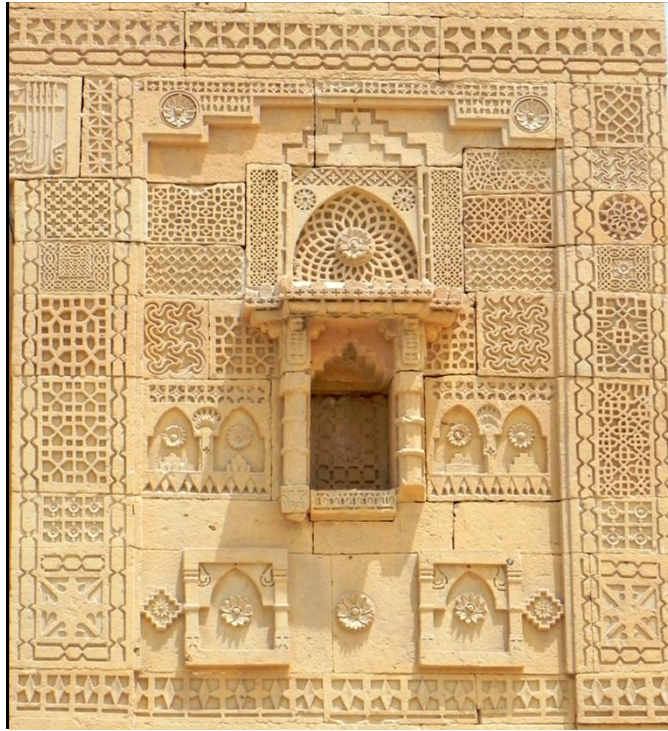


Figure 3.21: Detail of the *Jharoka* element. (Taken by the author)



Figure 3.22: Enclosure wall with blind arches. (Taken by the author)



Figure 3.23: Interior of the enclosure with *mihrab* niche.

(Taken by the author)

The tomb of Jam Nizam al-Din is the most outstanding monument not only in the Samma cluster but on the entire Makli site. It is the only stone tomb in the Samma cluster. The major features are:

- It's a square chamber open to sky at present but was suppose to have a dome on top of it. Many scholars (Lari, Dani, Hassan) agree that the dome was never constructed instead of it being collapsed at a later time.
- It is decorated having carved bands (13 to 14 in number) with floral and geometric patterns wrapping around the square tomb.
- It has opening from all four sides.
- The most striking feature of the elevation is the *jharoka* (here a true full scale *jharoka* rather than like we saw in the tomb enclosure in the earlier example).
- The *mihrab* niche like the enclosure is highly decorated with carved motifs.

- The structure is based on trabeated system, where in the interior the transition from a square dome to an octagon and sixteen sided polygon is apparent only missing the dome.



Figure 3.24: West façade of tomb of Jam Nizam al-Din
(Taken by the author)



Figure 3.25: Transition from square to sixteen sided polygon.
(Taken by the author)

The tomb will be discussed in detail in the case-study chapter as it is the most important monument in the Samma cluster unique in its own way having the remains of the most celebrated ruler.

3.3.4.2 – BRICK MONUMENTS:

Many tombs were built in bricks but the remains are in a decaying condition and not one of them is intact entirely today. The major features of the brick tombs are;

- The brick built tombs remain true to the arcuated system.
- Dani is of the view that the surfaces of the brick built monuments had plaster from both inside and outside and it has worn off.
- The walls taper from bottom toward the top as is seen in Multan monuments but the inclination is not as pronounced due to difference of the scale of monuments.
- The use of true arches, squinches, muqarnas and domes with visible drum is seen when it comes to brick built monuments, reflecting the availability of labor for both type of construction.
- Stone has been applied till dado level in some brick monuments. Door frames are also in stone.
- Dani is of the view that the labor lacked in skill when it came to brick construction basing it on the present condition of the tombs and as not a single dome is intact. He says,

Although squinches are used above the cornice level to change the square of the room into octagon yet it seems the builders were not sure of the strength of the squinches and hence they buttressed them by further corner pendentives.⁴⁸

In the figures 3.26-3.27 the building in the front and left are tombs, where the stone construction till dado level is apparent. On the right is the Makli mosque also constructed in brick, the walls are supported by tiers due to dilapidated present condition of the structure.



Figure 3.26: Brick built tomb in Samma cluster. (Taken by the author)



Figure 3.27: Ensemble of Brick built buildings in Samma cluster.
(Taken by the author)

The examples illustrated in this chapter of the funerary memorial architecture reflect on one major point. The attachment with archetypical domed cube as a tomb. Even the idea of constructing tombs in the first place, owing to the prohibition in Islam, persisted throughout the Islamic lands. The compulsion to build a certain morphological design is the question to be asked. The other important factor while looking at the Makli necropolis, Samma cluster is its uniqueness.



Figure 3.28: Interior of a brick built tomb showing the corner squinch detail.

(Taken by the author)

There is a conscious or unconscious stylistic detachment from its Central Asian counterparts and also from the more nearer and influential Multan and Gommal valley monuments (other than the form). Here we see it is closer to the Delhi Sultanate architecture as is seen in tomb of Iltutmish. Even in the brick built monuments there

is very little if any tile work evident. The coming chapters will deal with the encounters of Indian (Kutch, Gujrat and Delhi) pre Islamic and Islamic architecture with the architecture at Makli hill, Samma period. The archetypical domed-square form and its meaning will also be dealt with. The highly ornate tomb of Jam Nizam al-Din is discussed in detail to study/analyze the above mentioned topics. The tomb is where the indigenous trabeate Indian building and decorative practices marry the domed-square arcuate Islamic formal vocabulary to produce a crowning gem for the Samma monuments befitting the ruler buried inside.

Notes:

21. Titus Burckhardt. 2009. *Art of Islam language and meaning*. World Wisdom Inc. (ebook).
22. Daneshvari, Abbas. 1986. *Medieval Tomb Towers of Iran: An iconographic study*. Mazda Publication.
23. ibid
24. ibid
25. ibid
26. Titus Burckhardt. 2009. *Art of Islam language and meaning*. World Wisdom Inc. (ebook).
27. ibid
28. Bloom, Jonathan, Sheila S. Blair. 1997. *Islamic Arts*.
29. www.archnet.org
30. ibid
31. ibid
32. ibid
33. ibid
34. Hassan, Shaikh Khurshid. 2001. *The Islamic Architectural Heritage of Pakistan: Funerary Memorial Architectue*. Karachi. Royal Book Company.
35. http://multan.reemakhan.info/monument/index/SHRINE_OF_HAZRAT_BAHAUDDIN_ZAKARIYA.html
36. Seriaki is a language spoken in regions of Punjab province in Pakistan for detail read Hassan 2001.
37. Hassan, Shaikh Khurshid. 2001. *The Islamic Architectural Heritage of Pakistan: Funerary Memorial Architectue*. Karachi. Royal Book Company.
38. Ibid
39. http://multan.reemakhan.info/monument/index/SHRINE_OFHAZRAT_SHAH_RUKN-E-ALAM.html, quoting from the website; Ahmad Nabi Khan however, does not agree with this popular assertion. On the contrary he believes that the tomb was constructed by the Saint himself but when he died, the construction work was not yet complete.
40. Hassan, Shaikh Khurshid. 2001. *The Islamic Architectural Heritage of Pakistan: Funerary Memorial Architectue*. Karachi. Royal Book Company.
41. Lari, Yasmeen, Suhail Zaheer Lari. 1997. *The Jewel of Sind Samma Monuments on Makli Hill*. Karachi. Oxford University Press.
42. Ibid
43. Ibid
44. Ibid
45. Lari 1997suggested that lime plaster was used.
46. Lari 1997asserts that the tomb belongs to Jam Tamamchi but Hassan 2001defers from that view.
47. Lari, Yasmeen, Suhail Zaheer Lari. 1997. *The Jewel of Sind Samma Monuments on Makli Hill*. Karachi. Oxford University Press.
48. Dani, Ahmad Hasan. 1982. *Thatta Islamic Architecture*. Islamabad. Institute of Islamic History Culture and Civilization.

CHAPTER 04

CROWNING GLORY OF SAMMA CLUSTER: TOMB OF JAM NIZAM AL-DIN

The Samma Jams ⁴⁹ were the rulers of lower Sindh from 1352 – 1524 CE. They enjoyed autonomy over the region of lower Sindh with their capital based at Thatta. The Sammas as previously stated, were Rajputs ⁵⁰ and later converts to Islam as was the case with their predecessors Sumras ⁵¹ who ruled regions of Sindh under the Abbasids and Delhi Sultanate prior to Sammas. Sindh before the Muslim conquest was the land of people belonging to Hinduism and Buddhism. The archaeological remains at Bhambhore/Daibul ⁵², Mirpurkhas ⁵³, Meonjo-Daro ⁵⁴ and many existing temples and shrines are proof of polytheistic religious practices of people of Sindh. The conquest of Mohammad bin Qasim in 711/712 CE established Sindh as the gateway of Islam. Concept of Islam was not new to this region as there were missionaries sent here during the Caliphate period. The conquest took Sindh under the fold of Muslim rule and it became the province governed under Ummayyads and later Abbasids, by their deputed governors. The earliest cities were established at Bhambhore/Daibul and Mansura (capital of the Abbasid's).⁵⁵

The Samma rulers were the first to attain autonomy from Delhi and ruled as stated above parts of lower Sindh free from the central pressure. Their capital was at Thatta not much remains of the glorified capital city of theirs, but the remains of tombs and other funerary structures at Makli Necropolis (discussed in the earlier chapters) reflects upon the architectural brilliance of the region. The different types are discussed in both chapter 2 and 3 in detail, in this chapter the focus is the monument which commemorates the most celebrated ruler of the time Jam Nizam al-Din (1416-1508) also called as Jam Nindo. His rule lasted almost half a century and is considered most glorious in the history of Sindh. This made historians like Suhail Zaheer Lari (History of Sindh) call him Harun-ul-Rashid of Sindh.

4.1 – TOMB OF JAM NIZAM AL-DIN: ⁵⁶

The construction of this stone masonry tomb of Jam Nizam al Din (fig 2.2, 3.24, 3.25) was completed during 1509 CE as mentioned in the inscription on the tomb. Yameen Lari says,

The construction of this remarkable square chamber *maqbara* was commenced in 915/1509, a year after Jam Nindo's death as recorded in the inscription on its western and northern entrances. The inscription on the northern entrance clearly credits Jam Firuz, and not Mubarak Khan, as speculated by some, as the builder of this edifice.⁵⁷

Ahmad Hassan Dani on the other hand has different view for the construction of the tomb, he states referring to Pir Hussamuddin from Maklinama, "Pir Hussamuddin Rashidi gives whole credit to Darya Khan, alias Mubarak Khan, whose genius is believed to have created this building."⁵⁸ Further stating,

However, it is probable that the construction of the tomb started in the life time of Sultan Nizamuddin himself, who is generally believed to have died in A.D. 1508, and that the tomb was completed in A.D 1509 in the present form when his son Firoz Shah was on the throne. It is necessary to give some longer time, probably a few years, to complete the rich ornamentation that is seen in the tomb. Such painstaking engravings, is a work of the time when there was peace and prosperity in the country rather than of a period of war and trouble as is known during the reign of Firoz Shah.⁵⁹

The argument made by Dani is more plausible for me, since such a huge undertaking is time consuming and it is historically established that many rulers ordered the construction of their tombs during their lifetime. I would like to add that it is possible that the concept and design were the wish of the Nizam-al-Din himself, a majestic abode for his remains in the world, a commemoration of the peace and prosperity during his rule. As for Lari's argument negating the credit to Mubarak/ Darya Khan and going with the inscriptional record is more pragmatic and evidence based approach. Whoever may be considered responsible for the conception and building of the edifice what is important is, not to overlook the craftsmanship of the stone carvers and the masons. The Samma monuments are built both in stone and brick masonry, following both arcuate and trabeate construction technique, as discussed in chapter 3. The labor/craft-persons/masons knew both the construction techniques and materials well enough to build with ease in either of them. For the

tomb of Jam Nizam al-Din the material was stone the technique was trabeate, but the apparent form deceives the technique and gives an impression of arch/squinch based construction. There is use of squinches in the transition phase but the structure works on corbelling, an inherent post and lintel method for construction. This phenomenon is prevalent in the region and will be discussed in the later chapter. Let us look at the tombs plan, elevation, section, decorative and details in this part of the chapter.

4.1.1 – PLAN AND SECTION:

The plan of the tomb is a square with entrances on 3 sides, northern, southern and western; the eastern side has an opening with a *jali* (stone carved screen) detail. The walls have different thickness but generate an approximately square interior chamber. The southern and western walls have thickness of 6 feet, where the southern wall accommodates the narrow steps leading to the upper balcony (*Jharoka* element mentioned in chapter 3) and finally to the rooftop. The western wall on the other hand accommodates the interior triple *mihrab* niche and the flight of steps after the first landing. The northern and eastern walls are approximately 3 feet 6 inch thick. The western wall externally supports the oriel/balcony (*Jharoka*), dubbed as *darshan jharoka*⁶⁰ by Yameen Lari. The square chamber plan is converted to an octagon by the use of squinches at the height of approximately 12 feet and into a hexadecagon i.e. a sixteen sided polygon at the height of approximately 23 feet, the total height of the chamber is approximately 28 to 30 feet. The square chamber is converted into an octagon through lancet shape arches constructed with the help of corbelling, as is visible in the section in fig 4.2. The corner squinches form a pointed half vault supported by carved bracket molding visible in fig 4.3 and fig 4.4. The corners are deeper for the octagon and become shallower as the hexa-decagon appears on top of it. This transformation was meant for a dome on top of the chamber to give the tomb the archetypical ‘domed square’ form, but the dome was never built.

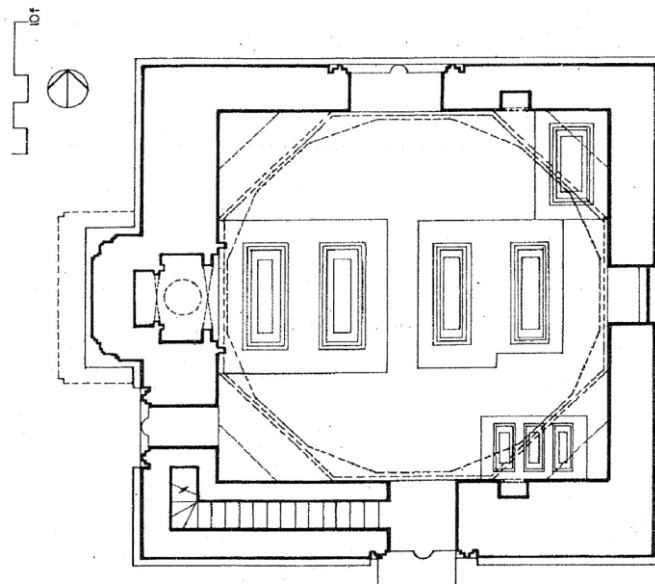


Figure 4.1: Plan of Tomb Jam Nizam al-Din dotted lines indicate the transformation of plan into an octagon and hexadecagon to support the dome (Lari, 1997)

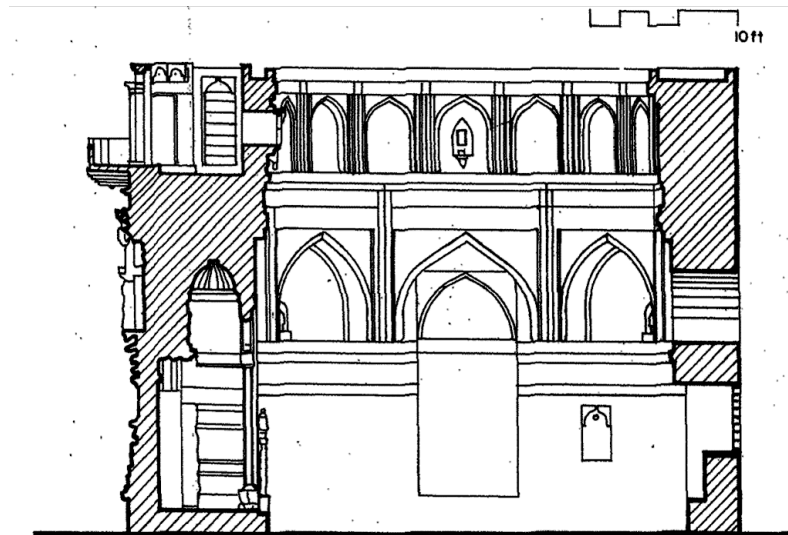


Figure 4.2: Cross section through mihrab niche (Lari, 1997)

The political uncertainty in the region was the reason for incomplete construction, as pointed out by Scholars. There are other incomplete features like the linear carved bands on the southern façade and the unadorned graves inside the chamber. There are eight graves inside the tomb and they are unmarked, therefore the grave of Jam Nizam al-Din cannot be identified. There are no characteristic features or elements on the graves as seen in the enclosure of Mubarak/ Darya Khan where one of the graves has a turban signifying the importance of it over other graves (Fig 3.20). The grave cenotaphs are plastered with cement mortar (most probably done at a later time for conservation purpose as the chamber has no roof).



Figure 4.3: View of the corner squinch, tomb of Jam Nizam al Din.
(Taken by the author)

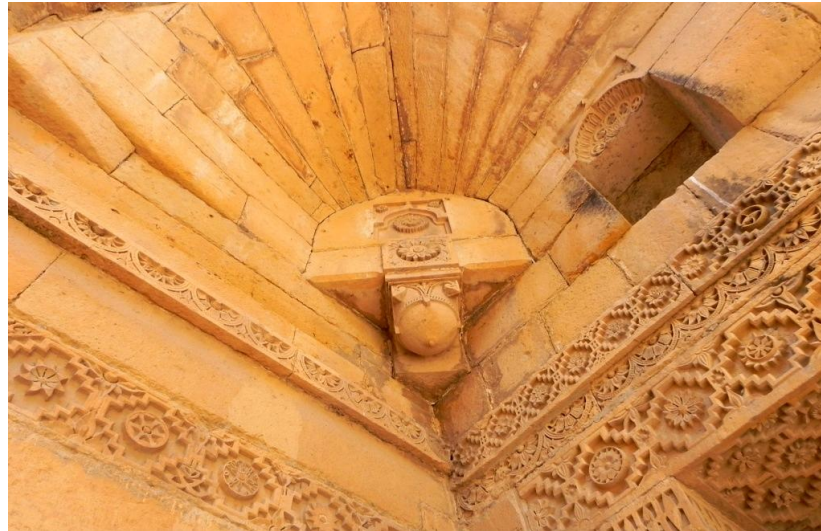


Figure 4.4: View of the bracket detail and bands of carving below,
Tomb of Jam Nizam al Din. (Taken by the author)

It can be argued that the graves were meant to be unadorned but this negates the prevalent practice on the site, highly decorative stone carved graves are a norm at Makli and it continued to be the case in the later periods of Arghuns, Tarkhans and Mughals.

4.1.2 – ELEVATIONS:

The elevation/facade of the tomb is of dressed limestone having bands of carved motifs wrapping around the square chamber. There are in total 14 bands of relief (both high and low) and incised carvings including a single band of calligraphy in classical *thulth* script. Yasmeen Lari writing about the façade of the tomb says,

The severity of the crystalline cube is reinforced due to the crispness of dressed stone walls which rise to a height of almost 30 feet above the ground. The harshness of the walls is palliated by the openings punctured in the façades as well as the ornate projecting balcony-ensemble on the west wall. The austerity of the façade is also abated by fourteen decorative bands, carrying varied geometrical and floral devices and calligraphic inscription.⁶¹



Figure 4.5: View of the zone of transition from square to octagon and hexadecagon, Tomb of Jam Nizam al Din, (Taken by the author)

The north south and west elevations have entrances to the chamber. The northern entrance has been closed now and is no more in use. The entrances all have a lancet arch shape with a beam separating the tympanum area from the opening below. The entrances like the rest of the tomb have highly carved architraves. One peculiar feature at the threshold is a ‘moonstone’⁶² which is derived from the Hindu - Buddhist temple design and has symbolic importance. There are calligraphic inscriptions on the entrances other than the regular floral and geometric motifs creating an ornate whole to enter the tomb. The eastern elevation has a lancet shaped opening covered with a stone carved screen, which seems as if carved from a single piece of stone. This screen detail is the only one seen in Samma monuments. The southern façade has incomplete bands of carvings reflecting upon the fact that it might be the last to be assembled. The entrances on the south and west façade are off center, where the southern entrances is narrower than the rest accommodating from inside the chamber, steps leading to the balcony on the west wall. The west wall has the most striking of feature of the elevation the ornate projecting balcony.



Figure 4.6: Moonstone detail from the western entrance,
Tomb of Jam Nizam al Din. (Taken by the author)

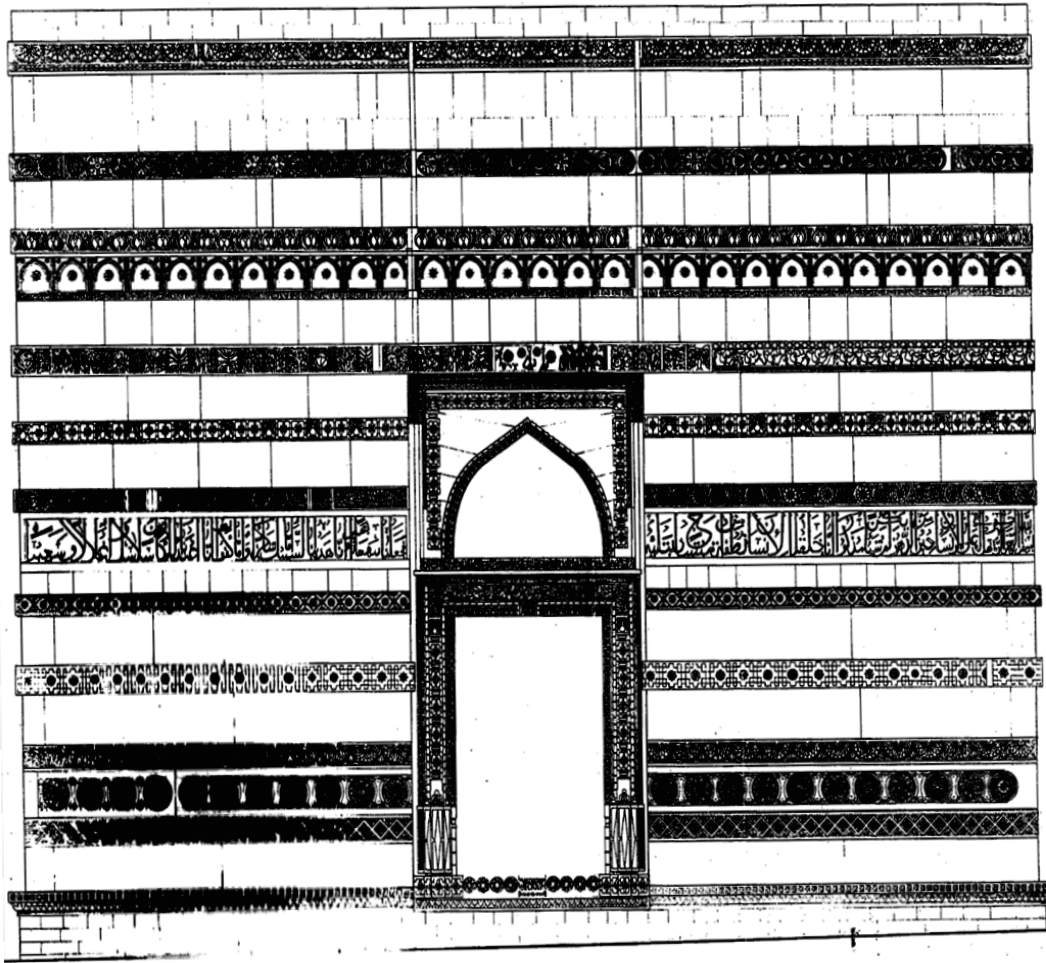


Figure 4.7: North Elevation, Tomb of Jam Nizam (Lari, 1997)

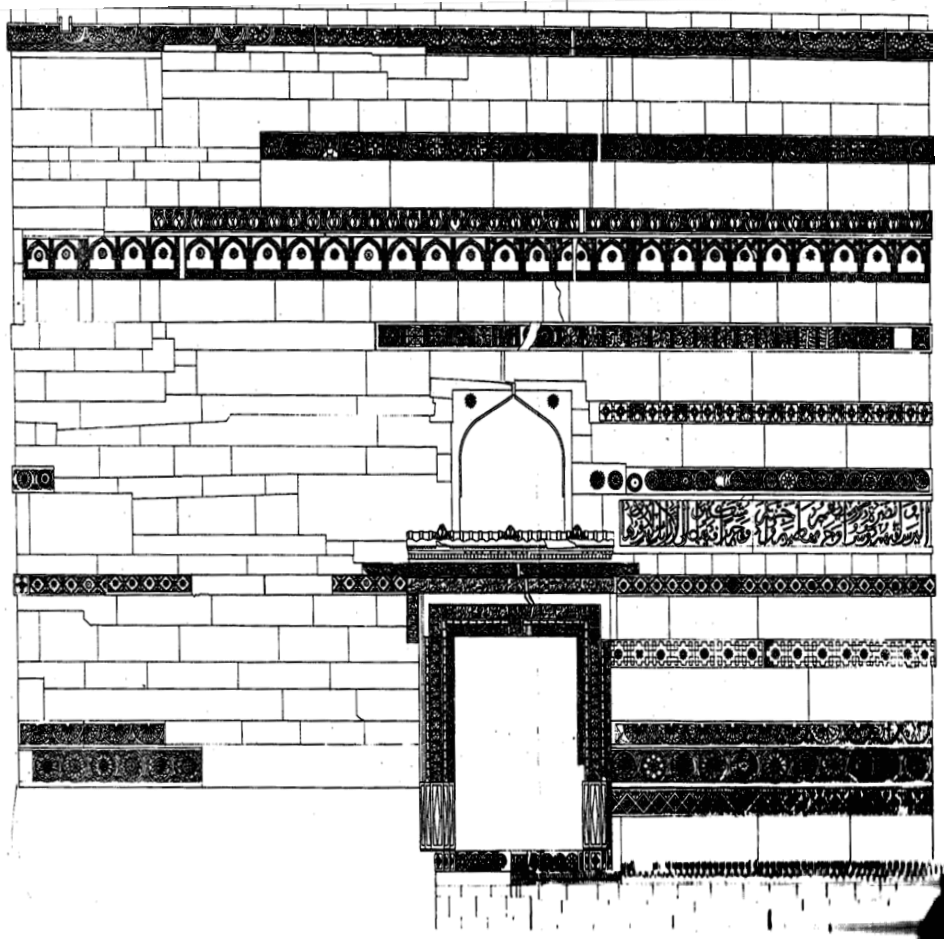


Figure 4.8: South Elevation, Tomb of Jam Nizam (Lari, 1997)

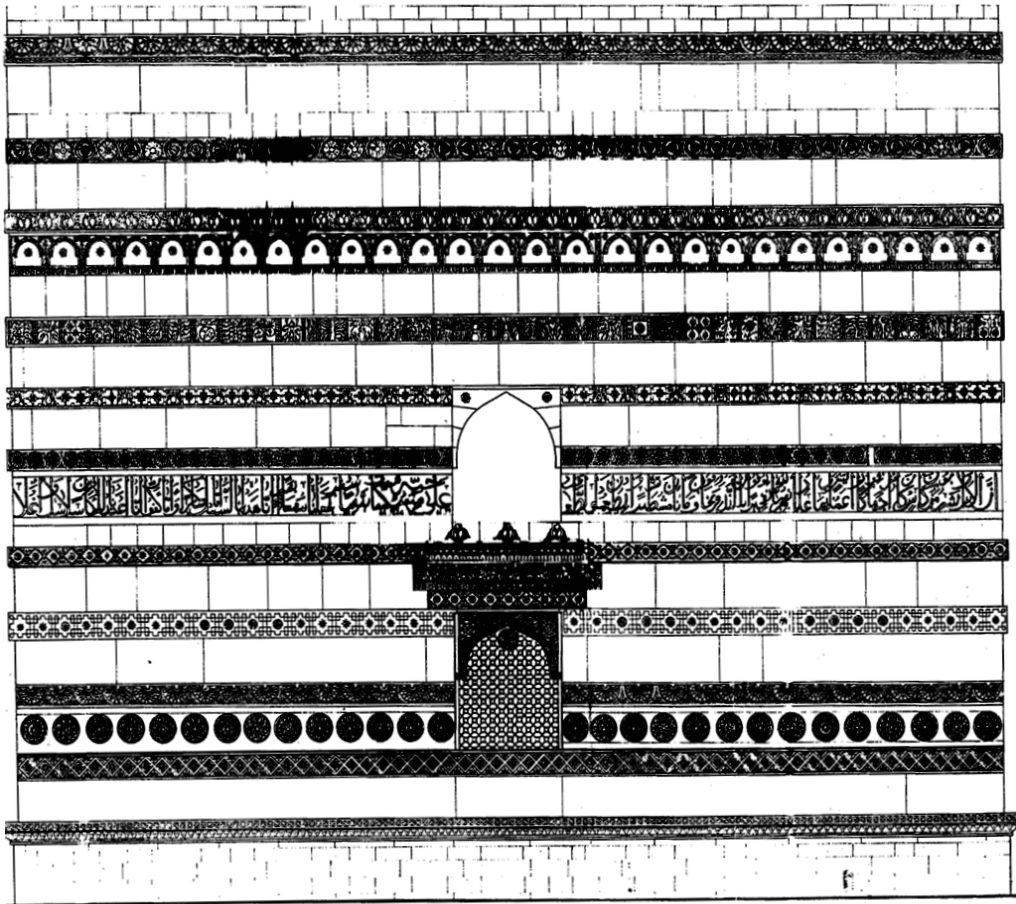


Figure 4.9: East Elevation, Tomb of Jam Nizam (Lari, 1997)

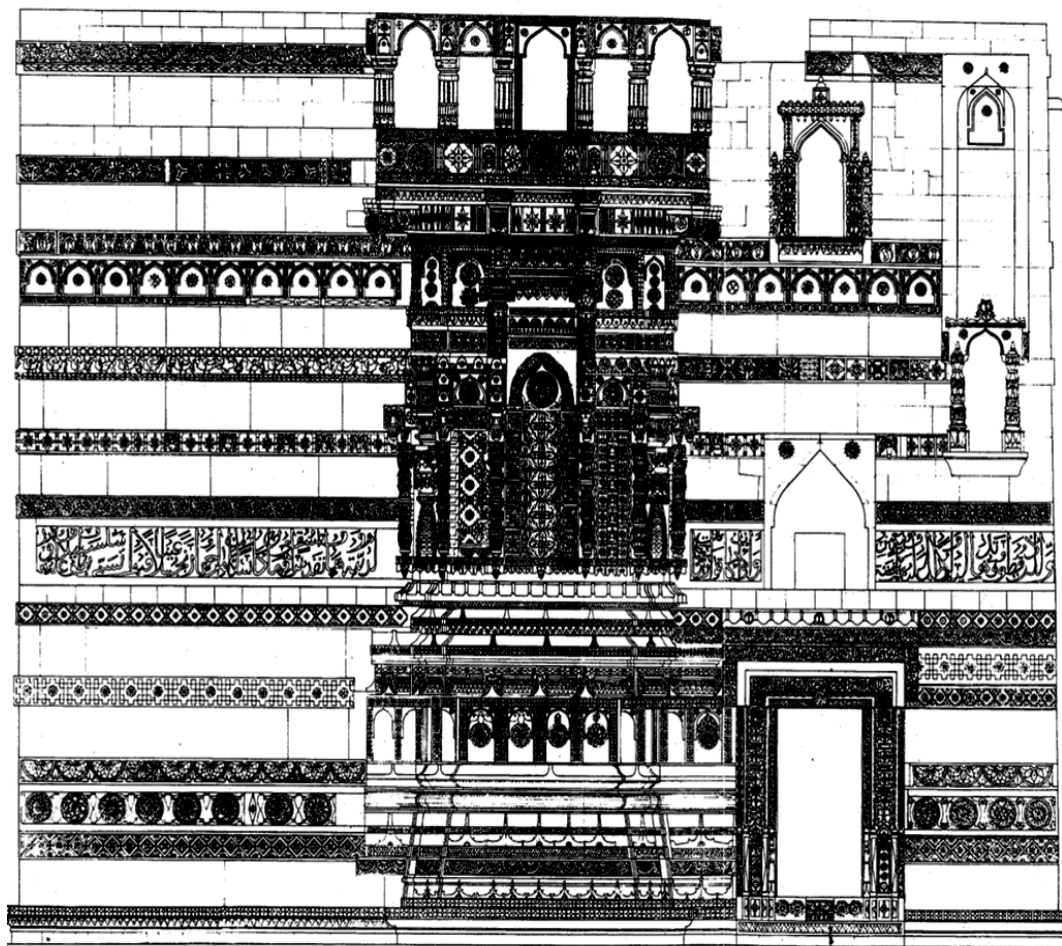


Figure 4.10: West Elevation with the highly carved balcony (*jharoka*),
Tomb of Jam Nizam, (Lari, 1997)

The elevations as seen in the drawings above are not covered entirely with carved stone instead there are 14 linear bands of decorative motifs carved on stone with courses of plain dressed masonry. The first linear decorative band of the fourteen is at the plinth level it has what can be called a floral projecting detail at the bottom topped with geometric diamond shaped carving. The second third and fourth band are together, where the second band has diamond square shape with inner floral carving, third band has lotus (according to some scholars lotus and sunflower) detail inscribed in a circle where not one flower resemble the other entirely. The fourth band has again the half lotus flower detail this time in a semi circle.



Figure 4.11: First decorative band, Tomb of Jam Nizam.
(Taken by the author)

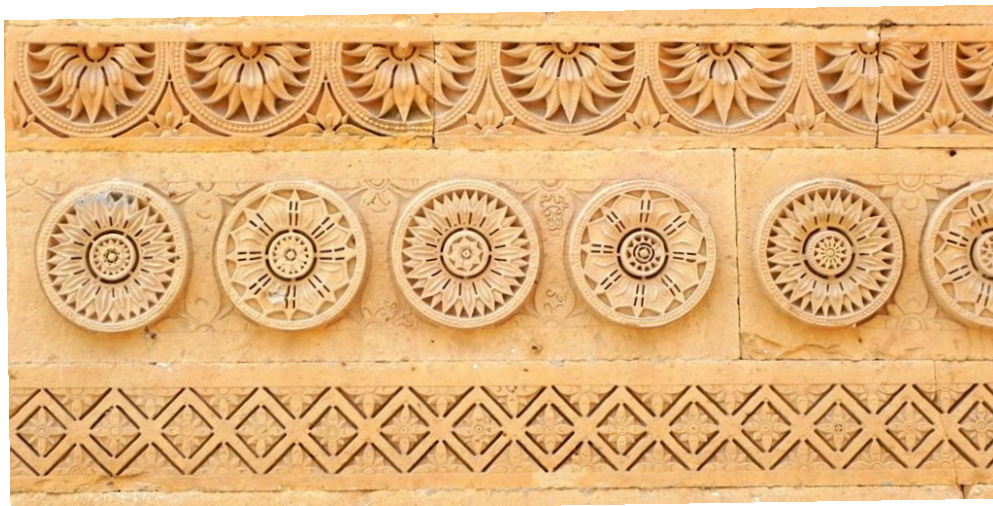


Figure 4.12: Second, third and fourth decorative bands, Tomb of Jam Nizam
(Taken by the author)

The use of the lotus imagery can be from the surroundings, the flora of the region inspiring the carvers for design. The lotus roots are a popular dish amongst the locals even today indicating the prevalence of the flower in the region. There are symbolic connotations attached to lotus flower, called *padma* in Hindi language. The use of lotus for its symbolic meaning will be discussed later in the chapter.

The fifth and sixth bands are single linear bands separated by course of dressed stone masonry; the fifth band has a checkered square like pattern having carved rosettes in the center, sixth decorative band has similar detail as the fifth but is meticulously carved.

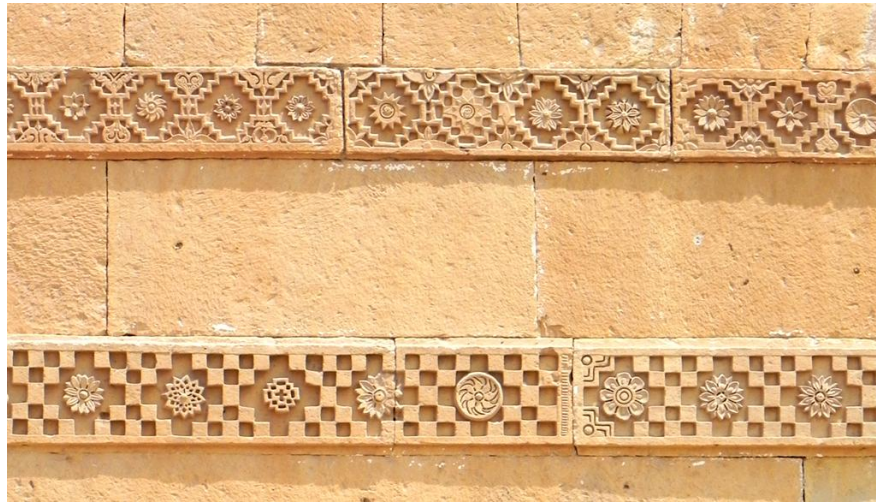


Figure 4.13: Fifth and sixth decorative band, Tomb of Jam Nizam.
(Taken by the author)

The seventh and eighth bands are together like the second third and fourth bands. The seventh band has calligraphy in *thulth* script having first 19 verses from Surah 76 (Time) of the holy book, Quran. According to Lari the tomb is the first structure in Sindh to have such fine calligraphy on such a large scale. The low relief calligraphy is the work of Ahmed bin Ibrahim whose name is found on the inscription on western entrance. Right above the calligraphic band is another flower-patterned band having high relief carvings inscribed in a circle forming a *paterae*⁶³ like detail.



Figure 4.14: Seventh and eighth decorative band, Tomb of Jam Nizam.
(Taken by the author)



Figure 4.15: Ninth decorative band, Tomb of Jam Nizam.
(Taken by the author)

The ninth decorative band has alternate flower vase like detail with water leaf floral motif having square subdivisions. The tenth decorative band has unique feature of carved geese/gander decoration. Yasmeen Lari writes, “This is the first instance of a representation of a living form in the Samma funerary monuments, it is by no means surprising. During the construction of early Muslim monuments, such indigenous motifs were often incorporated by local craftsmen”.⁶⁴ The geese/gander band does not occur throughout the four walls of the tomb it is only on the west and north wall and is replaced by a tree carving on the south and east walls.



Figure 4.16: Tenth decorative band of geese, Tomb of Jam Nizam.
(Taken by the author)



Figure 4.17: Tenth decorative band change from geese detail to the tree motif,
Tomb of Jam Nizam. (Taken by the author)



Figure 4.18: Tenth decorative band of tree motif, Tomb of Jam Nizam.
(Taken by the author)

The eleventh and twelfth decorative bands are together, where the eleventh band has a series of blind lancet arches with a rosette detail in the center of the arch and a floral circular motif at the tympanum area on both sides. The twelfth band has continuous interlacing leaf scroll as in a tracery. The thirteenth band consists of circles carrying a variety of floral and geometric motifs. The top most fourteenth band has similar detail as the fourth band, the half lotus flower in a semi circle.



Figure 4.19: Eleventh and twelfth decorative band of tree motif,
Tomb of Jam Nizam. (Taken by the author)



Figure 4.20: Thirteenth decorative band of tree motif,
Tomb of Jam Nizam. (Taken by the author)



Figure 4.21: Fourteenth decorative band of tree motif,
Tomb of Jam Nizam. (Taken by the author)

There is a scheme followed in the overall treatment of the external elevations the linear bands provide continuity and flow for the moving eye. The carvings soften the otherwise strong monolithic appearance a cube of this scale can generate. The series of patterns selected provide variety, but when considered as a whole the use of linear bands unite the overall varying decorative themes and bring them together in this ensemble of exquisite craftsmanship. The linear bands are not the only decorative feature in this ensemble, there are highly carved and designed openings for doors as discussed earlier. However the major design feature of this tomb is the balcony which makes every other detail secondary to it. It seems as the whole design is conceived to compliment the ornate balcony ensemble. The balcony (*jharoka*) like the linear bands has a range of decorative motifs but when seen from a distance appears like a unified whole.

4.1.3 – THE BALCONY / JHAROKA ENSEMBLE:

The ingenuity and mastery of the stone carvers and masons working on the tomb of Jam Nizam al-Din is reflected in the balcony ensemble on the west façade. Yameen Lari in her book “Jewel of Sindh” calls the balcony ensemble as the *tour de force* of the tomb. The balcony is 10 feet 6 inch wide and is accessed from inside the tomb through flight of steps that reach the top of the roof/dome less tomb. The balcony can be divided into roughly four stages.⁶⁵ The first stage is the base or podium

having a strong appearance with very less carving compared to the rest of the balcony. The carving is in linear bands similar to the rest of the tomb. The second stage consist of blind arch detail similar to eleventh band but without any rosette detail. This stage reaches to the lintels of the door opening adjacent to it. The third stage consists of the delicately carved niches (*mihrab*) and is the most ornamental part of the entire balcony. Quoting from Yameen Lari regarding the third stage of the balcony, “This ornamental sculpture is exquisitely executed, with such flourish and sensitivity, as to transmit an extraordinary ethereal quality to this architectural feat”.⁶⁶

The third stage, has a set of three lancet arched niches, the central arch is wider and higher than the adjacent arches. The set of arches is separated by columns/shafts which are carved in high relief with floral motifs. The tympanum of the arches have carved lotus in high relief like a medallion. The arches are blind therefore the back surface is also intricately carved. The most fascinating detail of the third stage is a miniature *sikhara*. *Sikhara*, a Sanskrit word meaning ‘mountain peak’⁶⁷, is a roofing device in Hindu temple sanctuary. The presence of the *sikhara* and other indigenous Hindu elements in the design probably compelled historians like Henry Cousens to comment “much of the sculptured elements had been removed from one or more Hindu temples”.⁶⁸ The 4th stage consists of the balcony and winding brackets supporting it. The balcony projects almost 3 feet outward from the niches below in stage three. There are in total 6 brackets carrying the balcony proper, and like the rest of the ensemble have intricately carved surface. The balcony has arched shape screen the arches are supported on shafts similar to stage three. There are unadorned plane panels of stones suggesting that a portion of balcony was likely left unfinished. Yameen Lari commenting on the carvings on the balcony says,

The projecting balcony ensemble is the high water mark of the Samma builder’s craft. The significant event of the erection of a monument for a celebrated king as Jam Nindo is likely to have excited much interest and attracted experts and master craftsmen from within the kingdom and beyond. It is not known how many years it took to assemble this superb piece of ornamental sculpture, but the devotion and care lavished on every inch of this magnificent architectural feat is demonstrative of profound feelings of devotion and piety interwoven into this edifice along with the smallest of the chiseled rosettes, perforated fretwork scroll and eaves edgings.⁶⁹

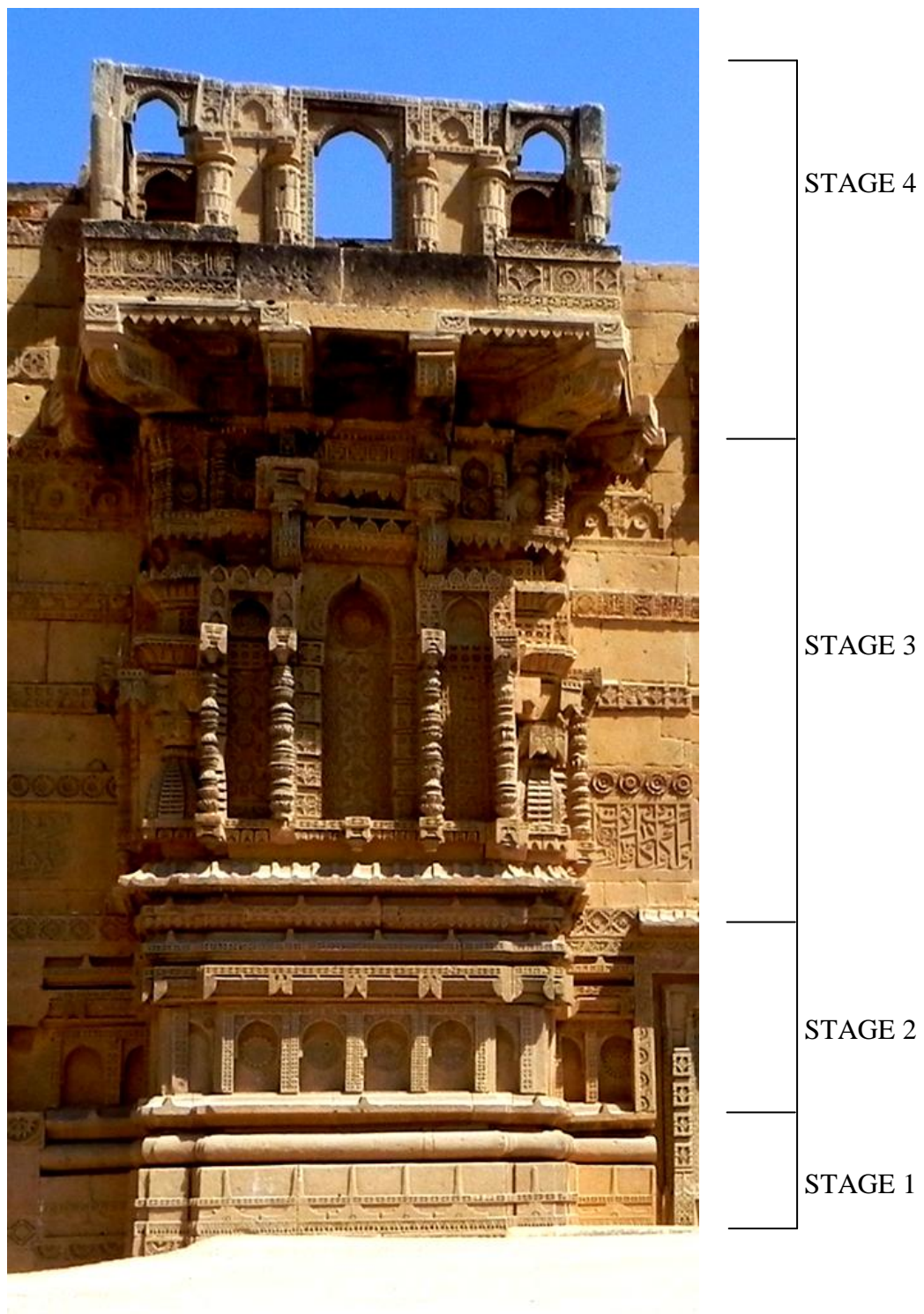


Figure 4.22: The balcony ensemble on the west façade, Tomb of Jam Nizam
(Taken by the author)

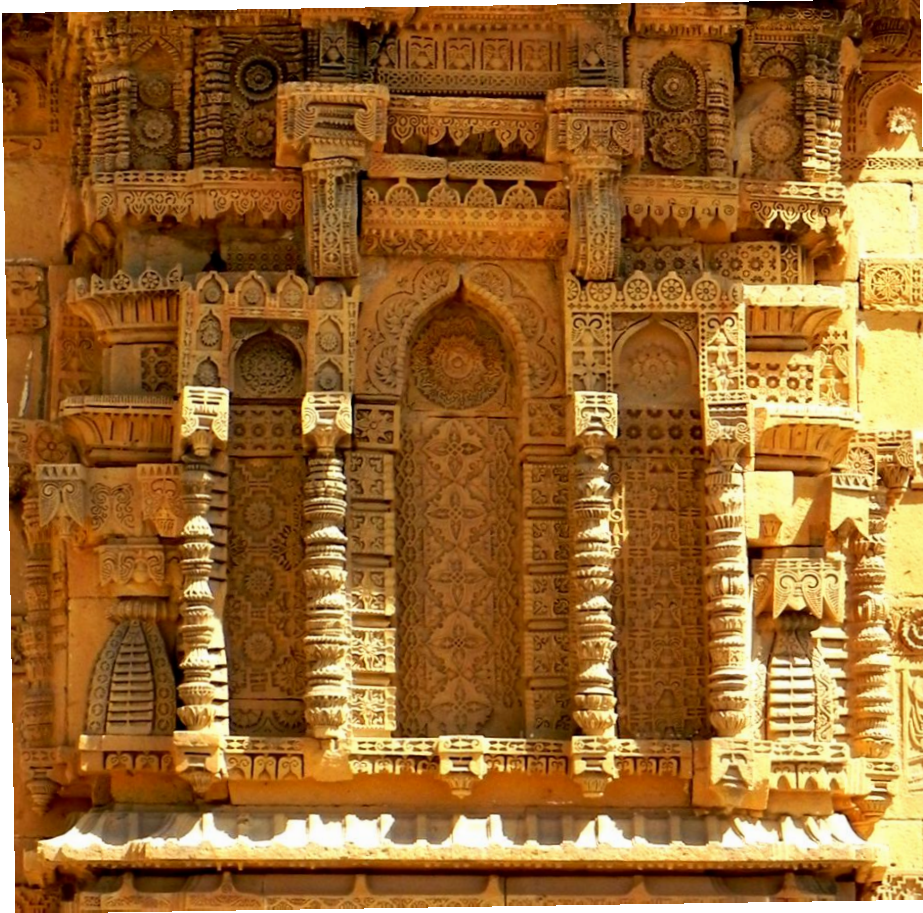


Figure 4.23: Third stage of the balcony ensemble on the west façade,
Tomb of Jam Nizam. (Taken by the author)



Figure 4.24: Miniature *Sikhara* detail on balcony ensemble on the west façade,
Tomb of Jam Nizam. (Taken by the author)

Scholar like Yasmeeen Lari and Sohail Zaheer Lari call the skillful ornamentation, specially on the balcony/*jharoka*, as ‘devotional carving’ giving the ensemble an almost subliminal status and rightly so. The ease with which all the different parts of the ensemble, having an assorted palette of patterns from indigenous and Islamic sources come together, transcending the ordinary, is incredible. The west façade not only have the most decorative feature of the balcony but also has two window openings decorated as miniature *jharoka*’ element also seen on the enclosure of Mubarak/Darya khan. The openings are arched shape projecting outward from the wall surface and carved in high relief. The openings are provided for the light to enter inside where the steps lead to the balcony.



Figure 4.25: Fourth stage, balcony ensemble on the west façade,
Tomb of Jam Nizam. (Taken by the author)



Figure 4.26: View of under surface of projecting balcony and supporting brackets, balcony ensemble on the west façade, Tomb of Jam Nizam. (Taken by the author)



Figure 4.27: Close-up of supporting brackets, balcony ensemble on the west façade, Tomb of Jam Nizam. (Taken by the author)



Figure 4.28: Side view of the balcony ensemble on the west façade,
Tomb of Jam Nizam. (Taken by the author)



Figure 4.29: Window openings on the west façade,
Tomb of Jam Nizam. (Taken by the author)

4.1.4 – THE INTERIOR OF THE TOMB:

The interior of the tomb has an austere yet majestic feeling with light pouring from the opening on top where the dome was supposed to be. The cube chamber is thirty feet high with dressed stone masonry walls having similar linear decorative bands as we see on the outside of the tomb. The zone of transition where the cube transforms, with the help of squinches, into an octagon and hexa-decagon have lancet arch detail with linear decorative bands separating and defining the zones. The corner squinches (fig 4.3, 4.4, 4.5) with the hanging bell shaped bracket detail add depth to the interior space and provide a dialogue between space and volume. It gives an impression as the interior has been carved out of a block of monolithic stone by creating voids. One can only imagine the mystic experience the chamber would have had if only it had a dome on top as conceived by the builders. The doorways are present on three sides of the chamber but the western entrance is frequently used as the western side opens to the site. The tomb is located near the area where the ridge has a steep drop.

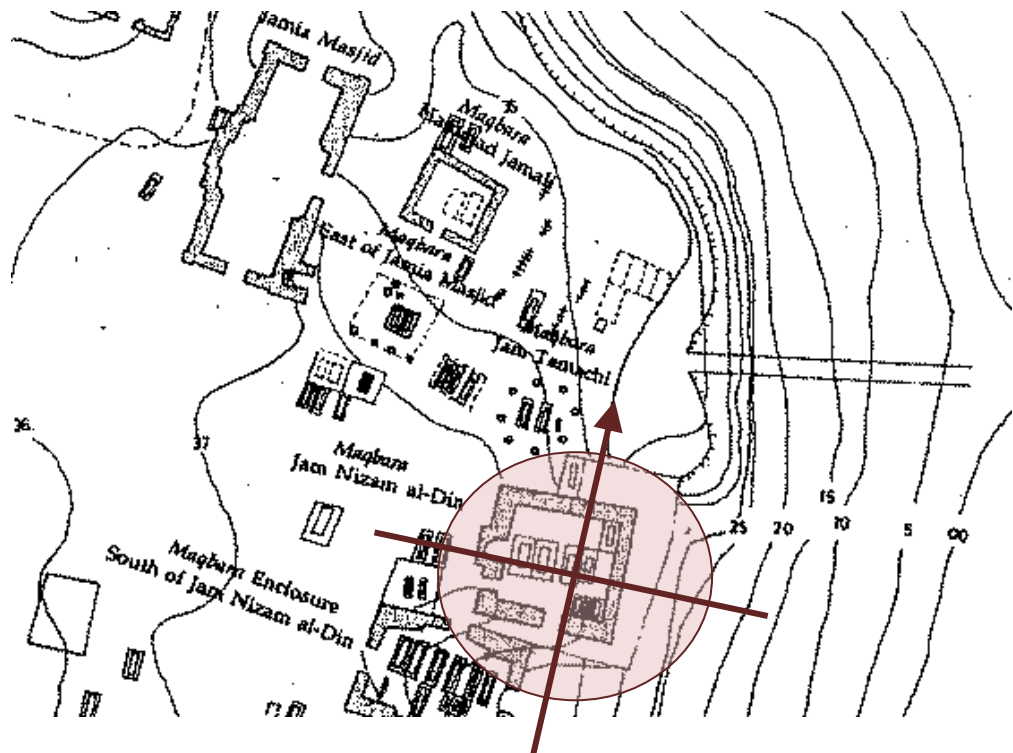


Figure 4.30: Site plan showing tomb of Jam Nizam al-Din near the steep ridge drop, the location of the tomb is highlighted and cardinal points marked.

(Taken from Lari 1997 and modified by the author)



Figure 4.31: View of the interior west and north walls, Tomb of Jam Nizam.

(Taken by the author)



Figure 4.32: View of the interior west and south walls, Tomb of Jam Nizam.
(Taken by the author)

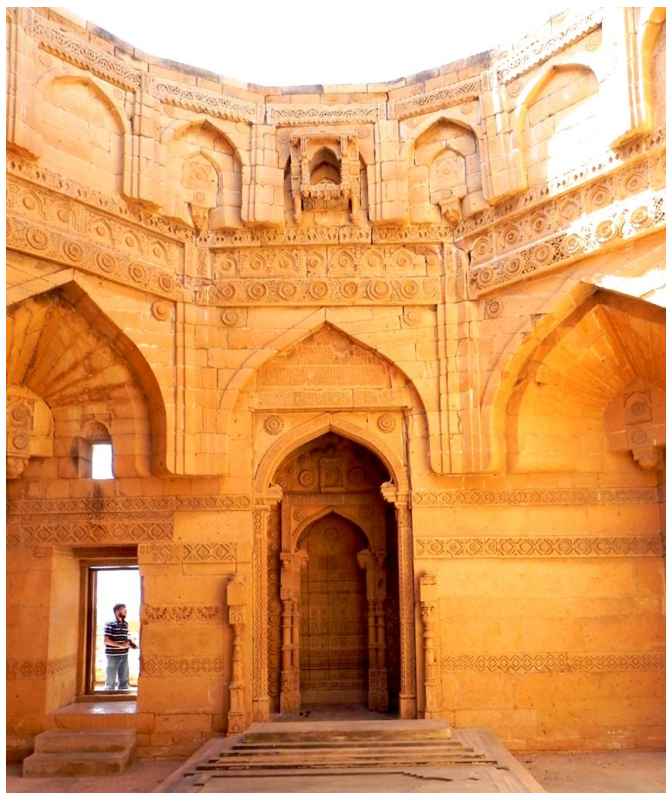


Figure 4.33: The west wall having triple *mihrab* niche, Tomb of Jam Nizam.
(Taken by the author)



Figure 4.34: The triple *mihrab* niche, Tomb of Jam Nizam.
(Taken by the author)

The west wall has a triple *mihrab* niche providing a central focal point to the overall interior spaces. The niche is highly ornate and is complimented by the more somber interior carvings.

The triple niche has progressive set of receding arches where they are aligned with the transition zone lancet arch on top which also forms the first niche. The tympanum has calligraphic inscription which crowns the second *mihrab* niche. The niche barely projects out from the wall surface it is apparently supported on the posts that are carved and the springing point has bracket like detail and the spandrel has medallion like floral motif. The third niche is a little deep into the chamber (refer section dwg. fig 4.2). It is framed by use of a horizontal lintel like element with medallions on the spandrel and the posts have cylindrical carved central portion with cuboid top and base. There is a cupola top (refer section dwg. fig 4.2) in the space between second and third niche, the dome is carved and has a hanging pendant detail in center, as seen in the canopy/*chattri* tombs discussed in chapter 3.



Figure 4.35: The intricately carved cupola with a hanging pendant detail,
Tomb of Jam Nizam. (Taken by the author)

The third niche is the deepest and the back surface is completely covered with motifs of floral and geometric nature. The surface is divided into parts by the use of overlapping arches crowning it. Each and every corner of this niche has been dealt with utmost care and is carved so beautifully that it attains a rightful status as the focal point of this profound and majestic interior space.

Yasmeen Lari states, “The guiding principles articulated in the archetype Indo-Islamic sepulchral monument of Sultan Iltutmish are followed for the interior: the phase of transition utilizing cusped-arched squinches, lavishly treated triple-*mihrab* and courtly inscriptional murals”.⁷⁰ The Indo-Islamic principles are not only followed in the interior space but are apparent in the entire design of the tomb. There is evidently Gujarat Sultanate elements seen in the stone carving and style, in the structure and in the balcony ensemble of this magnificently designed tomb. In the next chapter the focus is to bring together some of the features and elements that assimilated at Makli in/for the design of the Samma cluster.

4.2 – SYMBOLIC ELEMENTS IN JAM NIZAM’S TOMB:

4.2.1 – SYMBOLISM OF THE DOMED SQUARE FORM:

The site of Makli like many necropolises in the world is a venerated site and is considered sacred. The myths and legends associated with the site are discussed briefly in chapter 2. Like the acropolis in Greece the Makli site is on a higher ground where it sits as a back drop for the city of Thatta (fig 2.12, 2.13). The monuments of the Samma period were the earlier construction on the site where the *Khanqah* of Hammad Jamali (venerated saint) provided the central point around/ near which the tombs, graves and canopies were built. In the essence I feel the built structures were also sacred in their inherent nature as they carried the remains of the deceased in the final abode. The form of the structure also plays a role in dissemination of the symbolism attached to the structure. The tomb of Jam Nizam al Din is archetypical

domed square form. The domed square signifies an earthly square chamber transforming into an octagon representing the world of non physical or psychic into a circular dome representing the spiritual or heavenly realm. Hence the square signifies the physical world, the polygon signifies the intermediary world between the heavens and the physical world and the circular dome signifying the heavens or the spiritual world. Sayyed Hossein Nasr in the foreword for Nader Ardalan's and Laleh Bakhtiar's "Sense of Unity" writes,

The Square of the *Ka'bah* repeated in the classical courtyards and buildings, is not *just* a square. It is also the symbol of stability and completion and reflection of the quadrangular temple of paradise of which the *Ka'bah* itself is the earthly image. The octagonal form of so many mosques is not *just* an architectural device to enable the architect to place the dome upon a square base, but a reflection of the Divine Throne (*'arsh*), which according to Islamic traditions is supported by eight angels. The dome is *just* not a way to cover the walls. It is the image of the vault of heaven and beyond it of the infinite and illimitable world of the Spirit of which the sphere or circle is the most direct symbol.⁷¹

The shapes like circle square and octagon therefore have a symbolic meaning attached to them giving the shapes not just a quantitative but a qualitative and symbolic meaning. The forms therefore the three dimensional manifestations of the shape reflect this meaning in architecture. Ardalan writes,

The square or a cube is the most arrested and inactive shapes. The cube is therefore regarded as the symbol of the earth in the macro-scale the circle or sphere, which is the most perfect shape, symbolizing the lightness and total mobility of Spirit.⁷²

He further writes,

The terms "cosmic tent", "majestic parasol", "cosmic egg" and "heavenly bowl" convey the esoteric meanings associated with dome. Within Islamic culture, the dome (*gunbad*) maintains its ancient imagery while prong a vivid manifestation of fundamental Islamic cosmogony. By means of symbolic transfer, the Islamic attributes of center, circle and sphere are inherent in the dome are fully realized.⁷³

The dome is absent in the case of Jam Nizam al Din's tomb as it was never built, nevertheless the monument was conceived as having a dome therefore the symbolism applies. While explaining the symbolism in the *Chahar-Taq* form (*Chahar-Taq* it means four arch in Persian), which is again a square base having arches on all four sides topped with a dome, Ardalan writes,

In its forms, it embodies the most basic resolution of the square and the circle. The cubical volume of the base, viewed as man, earth. Or the earthly paradise is the supreme symbol of immobility and the most externalized manifestation of the Creator In short, it presents to the imagination those basic and apparently the most stable aspects of temporal life. Super imposed upon this space is the circular or spherical dome, representing the world of pure quality. Symbolizing the lightness and total mobility of the Spirit, it is a form that has no beginning and no end. Its sole point of reference is its center, through which develops the metaphysical axis that links it with the axis of the square resting below it. This Vertical Cause unites the two forms qualitatively and the transformation of the circle into the square represents a quantitative unification Here, then within the primordial forms of the circle and the square traditional man finds his spatial locus. The *chahar taq* shelters his place of spiritual birth life and death.⁷⁴

The figure 4.40 is taken from a lecture given by Architect Taimoor Khan Mumtaz for a workshop on “In Search for Timeless in Islamic Architecture” in Feb 2010 at NEDUET Karachi, the figure demonstrates the symbolic meaning explained above, regarding different forms/shapes and the inherent meaning associated when the forms are used in built structures. Looking at the picture below and the explanation given the illustration does make sense regarding the meaning into the use of shapes and forms.

The Square
 The Octagon
 &
 The Circle
 are
 Symbols
 of the
 three worlds
Spiritual
Psychic
Physical

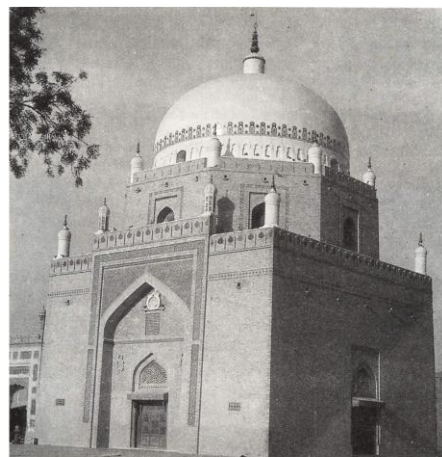


Figure 4.40: Slide showing archetypical domed square tomb and meaning associated to the forms (TKM Feb 2010 Lecture @NEDUET Karachi)

The domed square form (the dome never built) of the tomb of Jam Nizam al Din according to my understanding, can therefore be interpreted as the representation the physical world or the earth conceived as a square base the intermediary realm conceived as an octagon and hexadecagon and the dome on top which is missing but if was ever built representing the heavenly realm beyond the physical. The tomb itself becomes a marker for the journey of the soul of the deceased from the earthly bounds to the heavenly realm. The axis (explained above) hence generated by the use of these forms signify this travel. There is no documentation proof that the builders were aware of this underlying symbolism of form. The adaptation of the famous domed square form for tombs around the Islamic lands as explained in chapter 3 nevertheless drives one to look into the meaning of the forms as a reason for them being extensively used.

4.2.2 – SYMBOLISM OF THE DECORATIVE MOTIFS:

The Tomb of Jam Nizam al Din has other symbolic features used as the decorative and ornamental motifs on the façade and in the interior of the chamber. These were not inherently Islamic in nature as is the case with the form. The decoration borrowed from the indigenous regional Hindu/Buddhist traditions. The tomb hence itself is a product of fusion of ideas from the Islamic and prevalent local tradition.

There is a wide palette of carved motifs used for the decoration/ornamentation of the Tomb of Jam Nizam al-Din. Some of the motifs have underlying transcendental meaning associated with them. The use of those motifs in the design of the tomb may have a symbolic meaning. The lotus flower (called *padma* in Hindi) pattern used in the third and fourth decorative bands (fig 4.12) is a symbol of creation. Yameen Lari writes about the use of lotus flower imagery, “In Hindu mythology, the lotus is indicative of presence of goddess Lakshmi and considered a symbol of sun, representing the womb of universe which gave birth to all creations”.⁷⁵ Lotus is also the national flower of India.

There is a peculiar goose motif (fig 4.16 and 4.17) used in the tenth band of the tomb. This is first instance of use of animal imagery on a Samma Monument. The geese/gander is called *Hamsa* in Hindi/Sanskrit Yameen Lari writes,

In Hindu mythology the gander is equated with the sacred *hamsa* and is frequently found in Hindu temples where god Brahma is shown soaring on his charger – a magnificent gander. The gander is a migratory water bird, which flees from Central Asia to almost all parts of the Sub-Continent during winter months. Thus, Hindu *yogi* once free from the bondage of rebirth is said to attain the rank of the *hamsa*. It has been suggested that in the case of *Maqbara* of Jam Nizam al-Din, gander symbolizes the flight of the soul to heaven.⁷⁶

The mention of birds of paradise is prevalent in the Muslim theological discourses as well. The geese/gander band is not carved on the all the four walls of the tomb it is on the west and north wall. A tree motif is carved instead of the gander on the south and east walls. The question can be asked here that the tree, does it symbolize the tree of life or paradise which is discussed widely in the Muslim discourses on theology and perennial philosophy. It cannot be stated with certainty that the intent was replacement of a symbolic motif by another symbolic motif, were the artisans aware of the prevailing symbolism of the ‘tree’. There is no literary proof of that; the point nevertheless has potential for future research and discussion.

The miniature *sikhara* motif used in the balcony (fig 4.24) is used in Hindu and Buddhist temple sanctuaries must also hold some symbolic meaning. I did not come across any concrete material on symbolism of the *sikhara* element but it was used as a roofing device that projects vertical axis and covers the most holy sanctuary in the temples having a square base. Another element adopted from the Hindu and Buddhist temples is a moonstone (fig 4.6, fig 5.15). At the entrance threshold there is a ‘moonstone’ shaped like a circular step. The moonstone is found in the Hindu-Buddhist temples and signify the cycles of birth, death and *bardo* (*bardo* means the state of soul between death and rebirth).⁷⁷ The threshold signifies a point of departure from one state to another like an entrance to the mosque can signify entrance from profane to the sacred. Here according to my understanding the moonstone may signify one of the cycles of life, death and *bardo* the departure of the soul to the realm of death beyond the world of the living. There are other tombs in Samma cluster that use the moonstone at the entrance. The moonstone used at the Tomb of Jam Nizam al Din however is the most elaborately carved.

The tomb of Jam Nizam al Din and other monuments at site can be further studied under the light of symbolic meaning into architectural decoration and design. The attempt made here can be a humble start towards looking at the structures on Makli hill under a new perspective.

Notes:

49. 'Jam' is the title taken by Samma rulers
50. In his book "History of Sindh" Suhail Zaheer Lari maintains that Samma's were Rajputs. Scholars like Ahmed Hassan Dani and Sheikh Khushid Hassan also maintain the same status for the origin of Samma Rulers.
51. Soomra ruled Lower Sindh from 1010 CE to 1352 CE. For further reading refer "History of Sindh" by Suhail Zaheer Lari.
52. For further reading refer "History of Sindh" by Suhail Zaheer Lari (OUP 1994), "Islamic Architecture in South Asia" by Ahmad Nabi Khan (OUP 2003) and "Sindh: Past Glory, Present Nostalgia" edited by Pratapaditya Pal (Marg 2008).
53. Ibid
54. Ibid
55. Ibid
56. Dani in his book "Thatta" writes the name of Jam Nizam al-Din as "Nizamuddin".
57. Lari, Yasmeen, Suhail Zaheer Lari. 1997. *The Jewel of Sind Samma Monuments on Makli Hill*. Karachi. Oxford University Press.
58. Rashidi, Hussamuddin. *Maklinama*. Quoted in Dani, Ahmad Hasan. 1982. *Thatta Islamic Architecture*. Islamabad. Institute of Islamic History Culture and Civilization.
59. Dani, Ahmad Hasan. 1982. *Thatta Islamic Architecture*. Islamabad. Institute of Islamic History Culture and Civilization.
60. *Darshan Jharoka*, where, *Darshan* means sight, vision or glimpse and *Jharoka* means oriel balcony. Therefore collectively the word implies the balcony for sight of a person. In the case of the Tomb of Jam Nizam al Din the use of the element may signify the symbolic appearance of the deceased ruler for the people visiting the tomb.
61. Lari, Yasmeen, Suhail Zaheer Lari. 1997. *The Jewel of Sind Samma Monuments on Makli Hill*. Karachi. Oxford University Press.
62. Moonstone is a symbolic step stone used in Hindu and Buddhist temples.
63. *Paterae* means a circular shaped ornament.
64. Lari, Yasmeen, Suhail Zaheer Lari. 1997. *The Jewel of Sind Samma Monuments on Makli Hill*. Karachi. Oxford University Press.
65. 5 Stages are discussed by Lari 1997, all the four stages discussed here are taken from their but the fourth and the fifth are combined here under the balcony opening along with the brackets.
66. Lari, Yasmeen, Suhail Zaheer Lari. 1997. *The Jewel of Sind Samma Monuments on Makli Hill*. Karachi. Oxford University Press.
67. From www.wikipedia.org *Sikhara*, is a Sanskrit word translating literally to "mountain peak", refers to the rising tower in the Hindu temple architecture.
68. Lari, Yasmeen, Suhail Zaheer Lari. 1997. *The Jewel of Sind Samma Monuments on Makli Hill*. Karachi. Oxford University Press.
69. ibid
70. ibid
71. Ardalan, Nadir, Laleh Bakhtiar. 1973. *The Sense of Unity: The Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture*. Chicago. Univeristy of Chicago Press.
72. Ibid
73. Ibid
74. Ibid
75. Lari, Yasmeen, Suhail Zaheer Lari. 1997. *The Jewel of Sind Samma Monuments on Makli Hill*. Karachi. Oxford University Press.
76. ibid
77. www.wikipedia.org

CHAPTER 05

ARCHITECTURAL PERMEABILITY OF SAMMA MONUMENTS (14TH -16TH CENTURY)

The land of Sindh became province of the Umayyads after the conquest of Mohammad bin Qasim in 711/712 CE, previously ruled by Rai dynasty having a Hindu ruler Raja Dahir at the time of conquest. The accounts of the conquest are discussed in a story like manner in “Chachnama”⁷⁸ referred today as an important source on History of Sindh. Alka Patel in her article “Of Merchants, Courtiers, and Saints: The Islamic Architecture of Sindh”, discussing the context under which development of Islamic architecture in Sindh occurred explains,

Sindh called the attention of 8th through 10th century Arab geographers though it occupied the peripheries of the world known to them. In these geographers’ descriptions, “Sindh” referred to the western half of the land of al-Hind wa-l-Sindh, the mighty bloc radiating to the east and west from the banks of the Indus river, the stuff of legend since the days of Alexander the Great (356-323 BCE). Despite its distance from Damascus and Baghdad, the magnificent capitals of the Islamic dynasties of the Umayyads (661-750 CE) and the Abbasids (750-1258), Sindh fired the imaginations of laypeople and rulers alike in these empires. The early geographers and other travelers reported that Sindh was the land not only of strange customs and animals, but also of opulent, petty rulers worshipping in idol-temples and commanding fantastic wealth.⁷⁹

The time after the conquest established Sindh as an important sea route with Arabian Sea to the south and the Indus River providing inland access for communication and trade network. The strategic position of the province of Sindh can be one of the compulsions behind the conquest. The policy of leniency was exercised for the local people after the conquest, Alka Patel writes, “The Umayyads principal post conquest aim in Sindh was the preservation of institutions infrastructure to ensure continuity of commerce”.⁸⁰ During the centuries that followed Islamic building traditions were introduced to the region the architecture of Multan and Uchh (discussed in chapter

3) are testament to the assimilation of those traditions. These traditions merged with the local indigenous building practices.

In Sindh at Makli, Thatta we witness the encounter of the local and the Islamic building practices. The funerary structures at Makli are fine example of the prevalent indigenous building practices merging with the Islamic practices. There is a clear departure of style from Multan based architecture at Lower Sindh Thatta region, Alka Patel writes,

.... we can nonetheless discern a palpable divergence in style between the upper Sindh centered around Multan and lower Sindh dominated by Thatta. The building of upper Sindh had great affinities with the domical brick construction of Iran and Central Asia. The architecture of Lower Sindh, though not devoid of Iranian-Central Asian affinities was more noteworthy for its lasting connections with the trabeate stone construction originating in neighboring Gujarat.⁸¹



Figure 5.1: Map of Subcontinent (present day India and Pakistani), showing Sindh marked with a circle (Google Earth)

It is at Makli that we see the stone carving tradition of Gujarat (neighboring province to the west of Sindh) fusing with the arcuate Islamic forms. The summit of these stone building tradition for Samma period builders was the construction of Tomb of Jam Nizam al Din, explained earlier in detail, which was conceived as domed square form (dome was never built), an archetypical tomb form prevalent for centuries in Islamic architecture with stylistic variations, discussed in chapter 3. The form established the monument under prototype domed square category but the monument is true to its indigenous roots. A stone carved chamber with trabeate building construction technique, reflecting arcuate forms.

5.1 – ARCHITECTURAL PERMEABILITY:

Permeability means the flow from one condition to the other. A permeable object or membrane allows that flow with ease. Here the use of the term for the site of Makli in particular implies that the site had the quality of assimilation and dissemination of architectural ideas from Islamic culture and the indigenous Hindu/Buddhist traditions. Makli site for me act as a membrane that was permeable in nature. It was resilient to the new concepts and did not hesitate to borrow and merge them with local architectural practices in the region. The regional boundaries separating Sindh from Gujarat or Kutch, when it comes to architecture served as a porous filtering tool rather than a stringent confining device. The permeability of Makli site allowed it to be aware of what was happening in the vicinity, regarding the domain of architecture. It made possible the adaptation of the local ideas and adoption of the new trends. Even the separation of eras from Hindu, Buddhist and later Islamic has a resilient nature when it comes to architecture. There was an evolution in art and architecture the embracing of the new concepts and keeping the older. The flow of elements reflected was in the use of imagery, structural techniques and use of forms on the Samma tombs. Hence the buildings constructed confront the rules of confinement or to act as just an enclosure. The buildings now become an interactive device having a dialogue with architectural elements crossing the domain of both time and space. Though they are rooted on the site, fixed and immobile yet through

this stylistic and structural interface it crosses the bounds of boundary limits and even time. This phenomenon provides a ‘soul’ to the architecture on the site that transcends borders and free itself from the time bound earthly domain. Permeability then is a characteristic that makes the architecture on site of Makli timeless, according to my view.

5.1.1 – THE TRABEATED ARCH:

The use of corbelling to construct arches has been common in the Sub-continent (today’s India and Pakistan) region. The regional masons/craftsmen were conversant with the technique required to build a stone monument based on trabeated system showing arcuated form. It is a deception we see in monuments at Qutb complex like tomb of Iltutmish discussed earlier in chapter 3. Abha Narain in her article “The Architecture of the Sultanates: A Historical Prologue” writes,

The vast territories of Hindustan offered the builders of the 12th-16th centuries abundant resources of rich building material, as well as skilled craftsmen from hereditary caste guilds. The ritual and non-iconographic needs of Islam demanded a new form and ornamentation. Attempts to craft local trabeate construction to visibly arcuate forms are seen in the screens of Qutbi complex, Ajmer’s congregational mosque and other 13th century monuments. While many sultanates eventually developed the structural vocabulary of arches and vaults, Gujarat’s architecture largely continued with post and lintel construction.⁸²

The craftsmen of the region have been constructing on the post and lintel system since long. Satish Grover in his book, “Buddhist and Hindu Architecture in India” while discussing the inclination towards the trabeated system despite the availability of using arches states that,

One obvious example of Hindus’ self defined parameters is the universal adoption of the trabeate system of construction. It is strange that the structural economics of using the arch, vault, or other mechanical means which from the early Roman times were commonly employed all over the world, never became popular in India. The Indian builder, through centuries of development, was quite content to use the often wasteful system of vertical columns and horizontal lintels, of stone or timber, supported by brackets if necessary, to cover his roof or span openings. A fascile though poetic excuse of eschewing the use of the arch proffered by the Hindu builder was that “the arch never sleeps”. As a rational result, however, the

use of mortar was dispensed with, there being virtually no inclined pressures to distribute between the courses of masonry.⁸³

The spread of Islam in the region desired for different form of arches and squinches, as the rulers brought with them Central Asian formal elements. The local craftsmen then adopted the age old post and lintel structure to the demands and desire of the time and developed the system of “trabeated arch” as I prefer to call this technique which worked on corbelling system and brackets and generated arcuated forms. Corbelled arch can be defined as “A false arch constructed by corbelling courses from each side of an opening until they meet at a midpoint where a capstone is laid to complete the work. The stepped reveals may be smoothed, but no arch action is affected.”⁸⁴ The arch generated hence is not a true arch structurally as it does not transfer the load as an arch does but works structurally as post and lintel system.

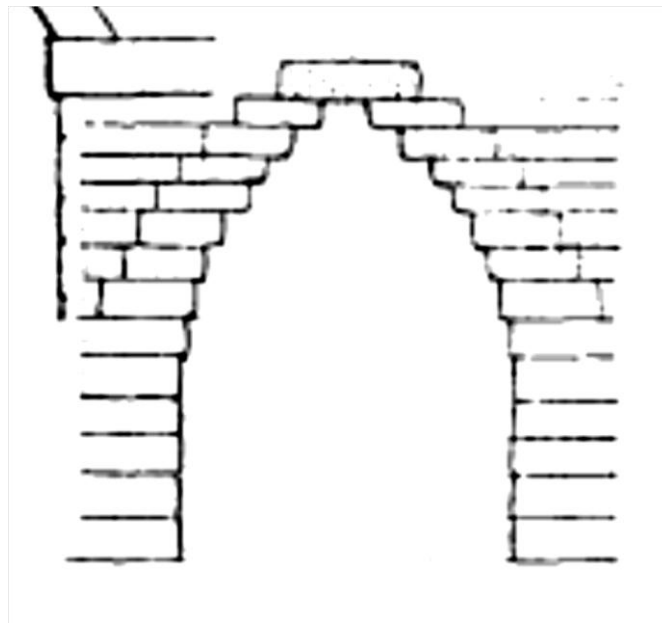


Figure 5.2: Corbelled Arch (Ching 1995)

Similar system was employed for the construction of Tomb of Jam Nizam al-Din. When building in bricks the Samma builders used true arch, squinches along with stalactite treatment called *muqarnas*, for structural purposes like they used in the *Jamia* mosque (fig: 5.2), near the Tomb of Nizam-al-Din, or other brick built tombs

(fig: 3.26-28) in the Samma Cluster. When it came to constructing the tomb for the most glorified ruler of the time the builders choose to build in stone and work with the “trabeated arch” as I call it. The arch produced through this technique is not a true arch and is more of an ornamental or symbolic device. The Indian builders mostly used slabs of stone shaped like an arch (one or 2 in number) where the load was on the lintel and transferred to the post below on which the stone slabs of arches were resting. This is generic technique explained by R. Nath in his book “Historiographical study of Indo Muslim Architecture”, for construction of trabeate arches used by local builders. He writes, “The indigenous builder used stone elements as pillars brackets and beams, to simplify ‘arch’ forms used in spanning the space”.⁸⁵



Figure 5.3: View of arches in the Jamia Mosque, Samma cluster.

(Taken by the author)

The technique of post lintel for constructing arch was therefore inherently a local phenomenon and reflects upon the adaptation of the local builders to construct for a group that demanded new elements in their design for symbolic or nostalgic reasons. In case of Jam Nizam's tomb I would suggest that the preference of form was more for its symbolic connotation which are explained in the previous chapter. The Sammas were local people and later converts to Islam hence there was preferential borrowing of form for assertion/reinforcement of religious inclination. The nostalgia did exist, manifesting itself in the use of building technique and amalgamation of stone carvings and motifs, indigenous to the region.

5.1.2 – THE GUJARAT ELEMENT IN DESIGN AND DECORATION:

The funerary monuments of Samma period (1352-1524) at Makli Thatta are one of the best surviving architectural remains of lower Sindh. The tombs hold the remains of the rulers and nobles from the Samma dynasty. The monuments are constructed both in bricks and stone where the brick monuments are not in a good condition but stone monuments have survived the test of time (the monuments are discussed in chapter 3). The stone monuments at Makli have highly ornamental carvings on the surface for decorative and symbolic purpose. Many scholars have dubbed this pre-Mughal style as Samma Style ⁸⁶ while acknowledging the influence of Gujarat Sultanate architecture. This is not something incomprehensible as the Sammas had relations with the ruling clans of Gujarat and Kutch. In times of political turmoil and rift due to external or internal forces, like pressure from the central Delhi Sultanate or familial power struggle amongst each other, they would ask for military help or/and refuge from their counterparts in the neighboring Gujarat and Kutch (for further information refer, Lari 1994). Sheikh Khurshid Hassan writes,

The architecture of Thatta was influenced greatly by the cultural traits it frequently received from the neighboring Gujarat and far off Central Asia. The influence from Gujarat is very much manifest in the buildings constructed chiefly during Samma period. The Sammas were originally Hindu Rajputs who had subsequently embraced Islam. The synthesis of the indigenous and foreign elements culminated in the emergence of a peculiar style of architecture at Thatta.⁸⁷

Alka Patel in her book “Building Communities in Gujarat: Architecture and society during the Twelfth through Fourteenth Centuries” writes, “Numerous tomb structures at the necropolises of Chaukhandi (fig 3.1) and Makli Hill are quite clearly related to the traditions of the Maru-Gurjara ambit of Gujarat-Rajasthan, both in their lithic trabeate construction as well as their iconography”.⁸⁸ The purpose here is not to categories the style under either Maru-Gurjara⁸⁹ or distinctively Samma Style, but to understand and illustrate the flow of ideas and flexibility with which they were adopted in the region and adapted according to the changing needs of time.

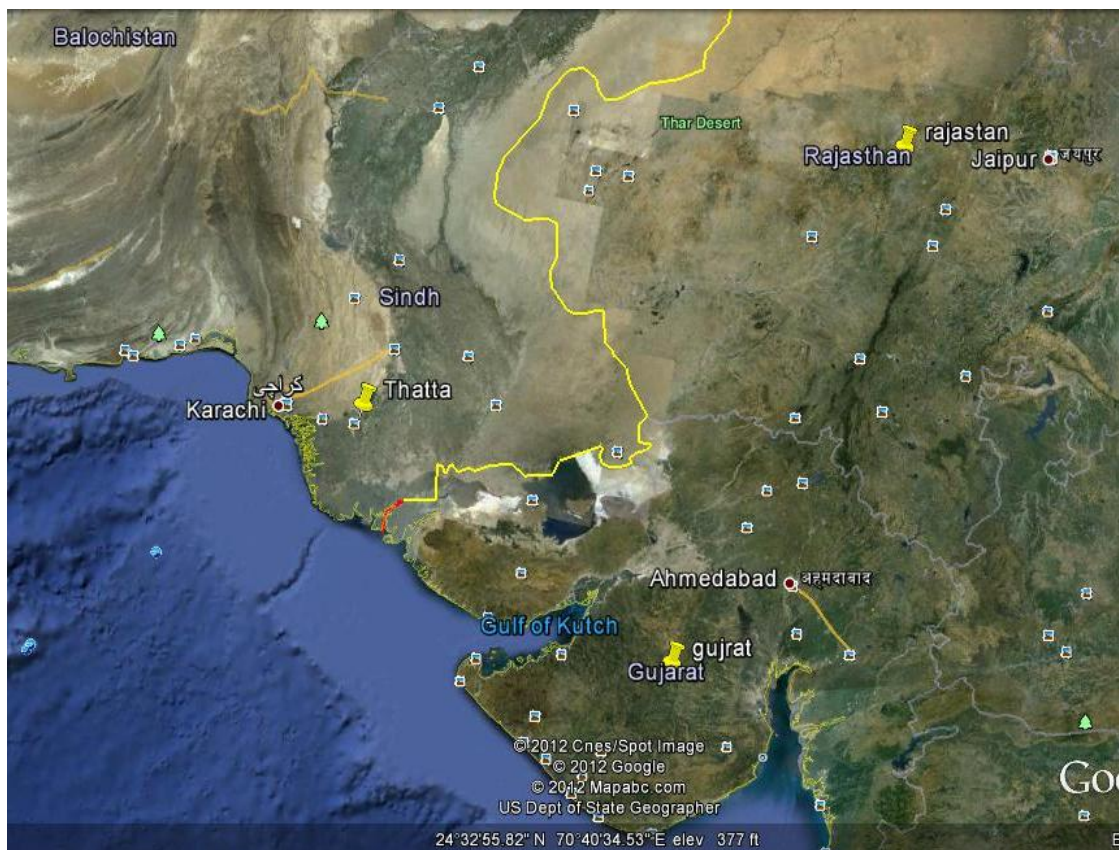


Figure 5.4: Map showing Sindh, Gujarat and Rajasthan, present day India and Pakistan (Google Earth)

Makli is not the only example of funerary architecture in Pakistan where carved grave cenotaphs and canopy tomb exists. Ahmed Ali Brohi in his book “History on

Tombstones: Sind and Baluchistan” lists a number of such graveyards where similar practice of building decorative graves like Makli are found. Therefore, I would stress that there was a prevalent building tradition in the region of Lower Sindh and the neighboring areas of Gujarat and Rajasthan to the west and Baluchistan to the east. The focal or origin point of this phenomenon can be based anywhere in the region but it definitely was a widespread practice with regional variations and preferences. We can trace the roots to the Hindu, Buddhist and Jain religious architectural practice pre-Islam prevalent in the region to the practices of building and carving in stone later. I would suggest here that despite the stylistic variants the phenomenon was more generally prevalent in the region Pre-Islam and there was a conscious flow of ideas within the neighboring regions. The style assimilated variables from other styles over time and kept continuing for centuries despite the political and religious changes. There was more artistic porosity and plurality within the region then we expect to be due to the conditions of the present. I will illustrate a few examples from Makli Sindh along with examples from Guajrat and vicinity to reinforce the phenomena of artistic permeability within the region. The pictorial resources for Gujarat are mostly taken from Alka Patel’s book, where she has done something similar to the pictorial comparison done here in the research.

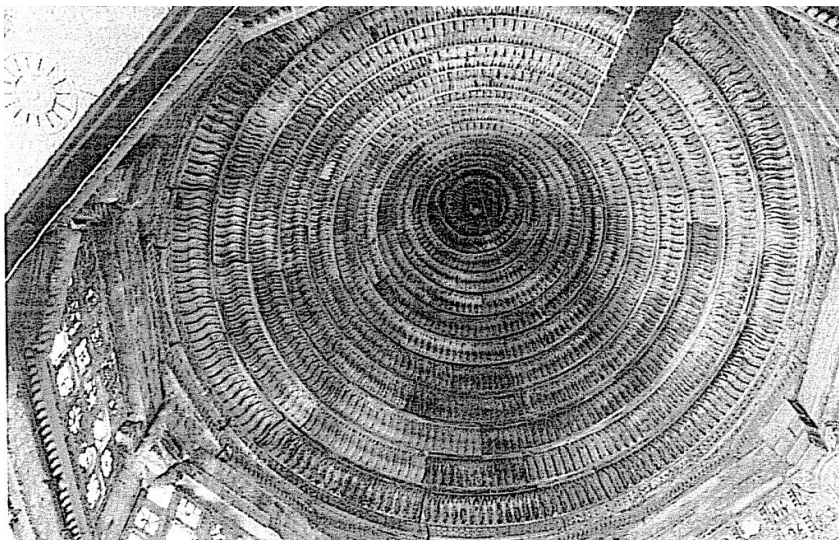


Figure 5.5: Hilal Khan Ghazi Mosque, Gujarat 1333 CE. (Patel 2004)

Figure 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 illustrate the ceilings of respective structures, the corbelled surface with pendant like detail in the center are almost similar in technique and aesthetics. Tomb of Jam Tamachi was not the only canopy tomb on Makli there are at least three more standing ⁹⁰ canopy tombs on the site with similar detailing.



Figure 5.6: Tomb of Jam Tamachi, 1389/92 CE, Makli, Thatta Sindh.
(Taken by the author)

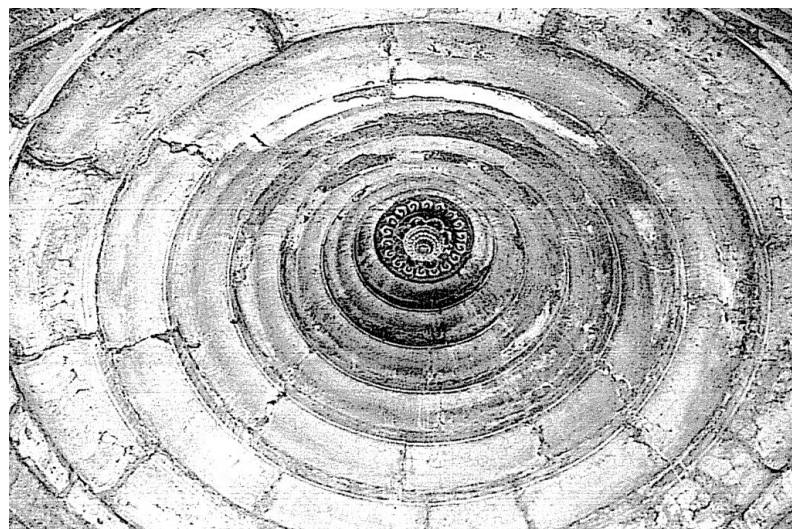


Figure 5.7: Hariscandra-ni Cori Samlaji, Gujarat Rangamandapa ceiling,
early tenth century. (Patel 2004)



Figure 5.8: Exterior view west wall of congregational Mosque
Bharuch, Gujarat 1321 CE.

(content.lib.washington.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/ic&CISOPTR=8492)



Figure 5.9: Exterior view west wall of Tomb of Jam Nizam al Din, Makli Sindh 1509 CE. (Taken by the author)

In figure 5.7 and 5.8 there is not a striking resemblance in the projection of the niche as the example from Gujarat is simpler and cylindrical where as the Makli example is more detailed and rectangular in shape, the function of the two building is also different. Nevertheless there are similarities in patterns/motifs and the use of decorative bands between the courses of dressed stone masonry. The motifs like diamond shape or water leaf floral motif have been used frequently at Makli site. These motifs are visible in the bands and niche decoration on congregational Mosque in Bharuch Gujarat.



Figure 5.10: Jamia Masjid Khambhat 1325 CE, Gujarat interior view I
(<http://populartemplesofindia.blogspot.com/2012/02/jami-masjid-khambhat-gujarat.html>)



Figure 5.11: Jamia Masjid Khambhat 1325 CE, Gujarat interior view II
(<http://www.trekearth.com/gallery/Asia/India/West/Gujarat/Khambhat/photo1288586.htm>)



Figure 5.12: Remains of *Khanqah* of Hammad Jmali 1389-92 CE,
Makli, Sindh. (Taken by the author)



Figure 5.13: Close-up of supporting column, Canopy tomb of Jam Tamachi
1389-92 CE, Makli, Sindh. (Taken by the author)



Figure 5.14: Carving detail of the lintel, Canopy tomb of Jam Tamachi
1389-92 CE, Makli, Sindh. (Taken by the author)



Figure 5.15: Close-up of bracketed capitals and zone of transition
canopy tomb of Jam Tamachi, 1389-92 CE, Makli, Sindh
(Taken by the author)

The resemblance in the structures from fig 5.9 to fig 5.14 does not require words for its attestation. The captions if removed from the figures will make the reader feel, as if the structures are from the same site/region. The only difference is the scale of the structures as the Mosque in Khambhat Gujarat is a congregational mosque having double set of columns to provide height to the structure where as the structures illustrated from Makli are, a *Khanqah* in depleted condition and tomb of Jam Tamachi both structures are of modest scale compared to the Gujarat example. The scale of the structures is not the focus here what should be observed in the figures above are the similarities in the use of structure, the resemblance in the zone of transition from lintels to the dome, the patterns carved in the stone for decorative purposes like the diamond shape half lotuses, the bracketed capitals and the treatment of the shafts of the columns. The shafts of the columns have rectangular base becoming cylindrical with segmented drums having variety of carved motifs. The treatment under the beams (fig 5.14) is also similar to the illustrated examples from Gujarat.

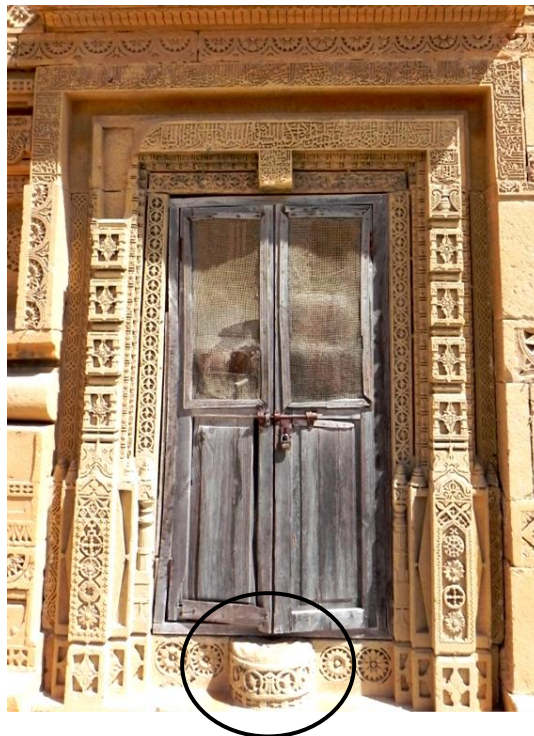


Figure 5.16: Southern entrance Tomb of Jam Nizam, 1509 CE,
Makli, Sindh. (Taken by the author)

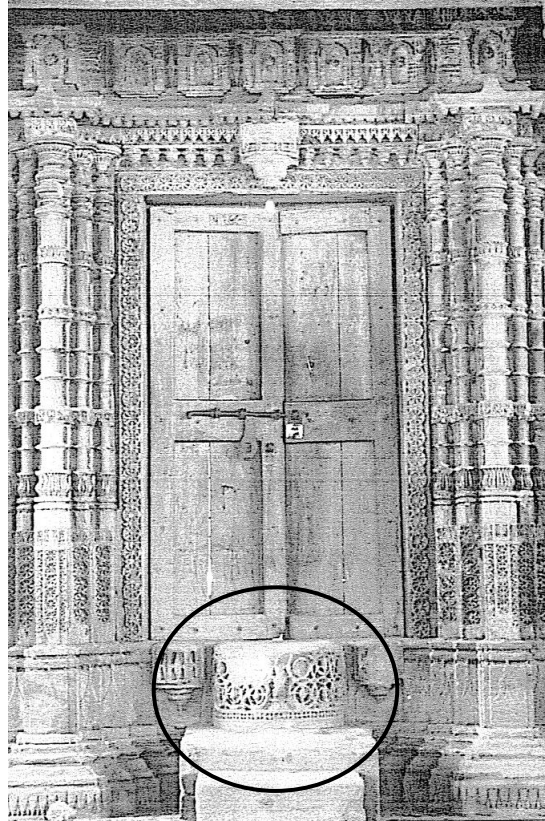


Figure 5.17: Hilal Khan Ghazi Mosque 1333 CE, Dholka Gujarat,
Entrance to the courtyard (Patel 2004)

The entrances of the Tomb of Jam Nizam al Din have a peculiar element at the threshold, a circular step called the moonstone (fig 4.6 and 5.15). Jam Nizam's tomb is not the only one having this feature, moonstone is used in other tombs built in brick. The one carved out at the threshold of Jam Nizam's tomb is the most elaborately decorated. The example illustrated from Dholka Gujarat clearly has the moonstone similar to Jam Nizam's tomb at the threshold. The symbolic use of this threshold element is explained in the previous chapter.

The study done through illustrated examples above proof that there was flow of artistic ideas between Sindh-Gujarat regions. The coming of Islam brought new ideas in the region that were duly incorporated in the design and decoration of the buildings. The regional design vocabulary remained true to its indigenous roots nevertheless. The tradition of stone carvings and the use of trabeate construction continued for centuries in lower Sindh despite the fact that upper Sindh areas like

Multan adopted a more visible Central-Asian/ Persian formal and decorative elements in design (see chapter 3). Where Multan architecture has similarities with the Delhi Sultanate, the architecture at Makli is example of regional variety. It clearly diverged from the over powering central Sultanate architecture (not in entirety) and took from the indigenous local practices of Hindu-Budhhist architecture of the region.

The Necropolis at Makli continued to be the burial ground for four hundred years with the nobles from Arghun, Tarkhan and Mughal period buried here. Makli site remained a revered site for the later post Samma rulers, where they continued to build eternal abodes for themselves and the tradition of stone carvings continued. In the later periods however the Central Asian/Iranian element became more pronounced as the Arghuns Tarkhan and Mughals were natives of those regions. The architecture nevertheless remained as profound and magnificent as we witness in the Samma monuments. At Makli, therefore the elements and ideas converged from various neighboring regions and assimilated over time forming a tradition of almost 400 years of building of impressive funerary structures.

Notes:

78. Fredunbeg, Mirza Kalichbeg. 1900. *Chachnama: An Ancient History of Sind*. Karachi. Commissioner's Press. (Translated from Persian).
79. Alka Patel. "Of Merchants, Courtiers, and Saints: The Islamic Architecture of Sindh". article in Pal, Pratapaditya (ed). *Sindh: Past Glory Present Nostalgia*. 2008. Mumbai. Marg Publications.
80. Ibid
81. Ibid
82. Lambha, Abha Narain. "The Architecture of Sultanates: A Historical Prologue". article in Lambha, Abha Narain, Alka Patel (ed). *The Architecture of The Indian Sultanates*. 2006. Mumbai. Marg Publications.
83. Grover, Satish. 2003. *Buddhist and Hindu Architecture in India*. New Delhi. CBS publishers and distributors.
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85. Nath, R. 1989. *Historiographical Study of Indo-Muslim Architecture*. Jaipur. The Historical Research Documentation Programme.
86. Scholars like Dani (1982), Lari (1997) Hassan (2001) all agree to the Gujarat influence but they also dub it as a separate style.
87. Hassan, Shaikh Khurshid. 2001. *The Islamic Architectural Heritage of Pakistan: Funerary Memorial Architectue*. Karachi. Royal Book Company.
88. Patel, Alka. 2004. *Building Communities in Gujarat: Architecture and Society During the Twelfth through Fourteenth Centuries*. Netherlands. Brill Leiden
89. For further reference read Patel 2004.
90. Other than Tomb of Jam Tamachi (1389/92 CE), Tomb of Darya Khan Rahu (1453 CE), Tomb of Qazi Abd Allah (1508 CE) and an Unknown Tomb (1397 CE) are examples of canopy type tombs.

CHAPTER 06

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

This research undertaking focused on the History of architecture of Sindh with the selected site at Makli, Thatta concentrating of 14th to 16th century Samma funerary monuments. Sindh as stated previously was invaded by Muslims in 711/12 CE. Prior to the Islamic rule in the region the major religions professed by the locals were Hinduism and Buddhism. The coming of Muslim rule introduced monotheistic Islamic religious practices in the region on a much larger scale as the concept of Islam was not new to the region. The main interest of the Muslim invaders was mercantile and trade based. The policy of leniency was adopted for the local populous as the intent was to keep the infrastructure as it was for the continuation of commerce. The region of Sindh hence became one of the provinces of the Islamic empire ruled by Umayyad and later Abbasid governors. Later the local dynasties converted to Islamic practices ruled the region either as a part of the central Delhi Sultanate hegemony or autonomously.

Samma dynasty that came into power in fourteenth century and ruled for the next 150 years was one such local dynasty that were converts. They were Rajputs and later converted to Islam ruling from their capital based at Thatta. Sammas had familial ties with neighboring communities in areas of Guajrat and Kutch region. The rulers were given the title of Jam. The rule of Jam Nizam al Din the second is considered most prosperous in the history of lower Sindh. Later the region was ruled by Turkic rulers coming from Central Asian region tracing their lineage to Timurids and Genghis Khan and finally lower Sindh came under the Mughal rule in 1592 CE. The site of Makli where the Samma rulers buried their dead was no humble graveyard. It is today counted as one of the largest necropolises in the world and has

protected heritage status under UNESCO. The change in the socio-religio-political status of the region had its impact on the prevalent architecture. Funerary architecture at Makli, Samma period in particular is an example illustrating that change. The architecture borrowed from indigenous local practices that flourished in the region many centuries ago and from the relatively new (in comparison) Islamic architecture. This hybridization is reflected in the use of form, structural technique and decorative modes and methods applied for building the funerary monuments.

The stone carving is heavily applied for the ornamentation of the façade and interior. The analysis of some motif in chapter five establishes that the practice was prevalent in the region. There was little to no use of figurative carvings but the imagery was derived and modified according to the demands of the new religion hence containing mostly geometric and floral motifs. The art of stone carving was nevertheless a local craft and was practiced throughout the region. The structural technique was also adapted to meet the demands of the new image of arches and domes. The trabeate system of post and lintel by the use of corbelling method created deceptive arcuated forms. The form of domed square chamber as funerary structure is a prototypical tomb type the examples illustrated in chapter 3 establishes that it was widely adopted as a tomb form. There were 2 forms the domed square and the tower that were well accepted forms when it comes to building tombs in Islamic architecture. The domed square chamber used in the Samanids (819-1005 CE) tomb spread with the spread of Islam and we see stylistic variants of the form all around the Islamic land for many centuries to come. Sites like Aswan (fig 3.4), Shah-i-Zinda (fig 3.6, 3.7), Mamluk necropolis in Cairo (fig: 3.8) and even Makli are testament to the wide spread use of the form, both geographically and on scale of time. At the site of Makli the tomb of the most glorified ruler Jam Nizam al Din was supposed to be a domed square chamber but the dome could not be built. The chamber was constructed in stone with trabeate technique. The Samma builders knew the construction of domed square chambers and it is reflected in the construction of tombs built in brick using true arches and squinches. The change of material and technique and the political situation probably were the reason for the unfinished tomb. Nevertheless it is the most magnificent structure in the Samma cluster. The

canopy type tombs are also reminiscent of the indigenous tradition and the design and decoration are similar to what we see in Gujarat. The construction method of dome the carvings in the under surface the detailing of the columns have striking resemblance with the Gujarat architecture predating the structures at Makli for a few centuries. The examples illustrated from both Makli and Gujarat in chapter five provides sufficient backing to what is mentioned above.

The symbolism associated with the form of domed square according to me is of an earthly abode with a celestial dome on top signifying the flight of soul from earth bound realm to the next world or heavens. The form of Jam Nizam's tomb was conceived as such containing also the transitional octagon and hexa-decagon converting chamber interior into polygon for reception of the dome. The use of the form can be associated with the symbolic meaning and the prevalence of it as a prototype for tombs. The form was not the only symbolic element of the tomb, underlying symbolic connotations of motif like lotus flower, geese motif and moonstone should also be considered. The lotus is symbol of creation geese signify flight of the soul and the moonstone at threshold establishes a demarcation between the sacred and profane. These are devices according to me applied due to the transcendental character of the building as it is a tomb the final abode for the body from which the soul transcends into the next realm. The form and the imagery according to me reflect on the meaning of death and passing of soul. The site of Makli hence witnessed the encounter of local artistic and symbolic tradition with that of Islamic traditions of building. It remained true to its indigenous roots all the while keeping the dictums of Islamic traditions intact. It was permeable to the new and retained the old.

Permeability means the flow from one condition to the other. A permeable object or membrane allows that flow with ease. Here the use of the term for the site of Makli in particular implies that the site had the quality of assimilation and dissemination of architectural ideas from Islamic culture and the indigenous tradition. Makli site for me act as a membrane that was permeable in its inherent nature. It was resilient to

the new concepts and did not hesitate to borrow and merge them with local architectural practices in the region. By doing that according to many scholars it generated a style of its own dubbed as “Samma Style” as stated in the previous chapter. What was unique in the style that made it the “Samma Style” has never been elaborated by the scholars. It made me hesitant to coin the architecture of the Samma period under the “Samma Style”. For the term to be used for Samma period architecture my understanding is that it should have a repository of building types. The non-availability of the data on the building practices of the Sammas does not allow that. It is/was more comprehensible to look at the resilient permeable nature of the site and the period, reflected through the built structures on the site. There was a flow of elements reflected in the use of imagery, structural techniques and use of forms on the Samma tombs. The phenomenon is explained by comparison of illustrations from Samma period and Gujarat in chapter 5 and in chapter 4 by explanation of the structural system and meaning of the motif used by the Sammas.

For future research the area can be expanded from Samma period to the rest of the ruling dynasties like the Arghuns Tarkhans and Mughals. The evolution of architecture over the period of 400 years can be studied. The prevalence of tradition of stone carved graves throughout Lower Sindh and Baluchistan region can be studied in detail charting out origins, continuation and spread of the tradition. The Gujarat element can also be expanded by broadening the geographic nexus and studying the architectural in a broader regional context. This can also include the social and political details of the region along with the study into stone carving (the art and the craft), its prevalence and growth in the region. There also can be a comparative research involving the dichotomy in the upper and lower Sindh funerary monuments. There is an obvious difference stylistically in the funerary monuments of both Upper and lower Sindh. Another factor in this aspect can be evaluation of architecture of Pir Patho (if any tombs and funerary monuments are constructed there). As Pir Patho was established by Multan based Sufi and spiritual leaders and Makli based Sufi leaders broke that hegemony. Was there any reflection of this in the architecture of the 2 sites is yet to seen. The city and architecture of thatta its evolution can be explored under the light of architecture at Makli. Looking

at the city of yore from the high ground necropolis trying to establish and reconstruct the glory reflected in the architecture of Makli. These are a few suggestions and recommendation for further research into the site and the architectural history of the region.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A:

ELEMENTS REFLECTING THE STYLISTIC ENCOUNTERS AT MAKLI, SAMMA MONUMENTS (14TH -16TH CENTURY)

Different elements discussed throughout the thesis that reflected the stylistic encounters at Makli Samma monuments are summarized below:

- The use of prototype domed square pavilion as a tomb type. The earlier use of the form was in Samanid tomb at Bukhara (fig 3.3) and later it was used throughout the lands dominated by Islam especially as funerary memorial architecture. The examples are illustrated in chapter 3. At Makli site during Samma time this prototypical tomb was used in brick masonry. The only one prototypical tomb in stone is of Jam Nizam al-Din minus the dome. The tomb type was famous in Upper Sindh regions examples of Multan and Dera Ismail Khan are illustrated in chapter 3.
- There was a simultaneous use of arches, vaults and domes along with pillars brackets and canopies as the craftsmen were conversant in both techniques.
- There was use of deceptive arcuate formal vocabulary in tomb of Jam Nizam al-Din, as we also see in Tomb of Iltutmish (fig 3.5). The phenomenon is explained under heading 5.1.1 “The Trabeated Arch”. The structural technique used was regional and was used in Gujarat and other areas of lower Sindh adjoining the Gujarat and Kutch areas. The marrying of the arcuated form and trabeated structural technique is witnessed at the site.

- There symbolic connotations of the form and the carvings are discussed in chapter 4. The symbolism of form permeated from the Central Asian/Iranian influence but the patterns and motifs used for stone carving were indigenous and their associated symbolism also came from indigenous prevalent belief systems. They both fused together and were reflected in the Samma Monuments. The Samma builders and rulers were aware of the underlying meaning cannot be established with accuracy due to lack of written sources but it can be speculated that they probably were.

APPENDIX B:

TEZ FOTOKOPİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü

Enformatik Enstitüsü

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

YAZARIN

Soyadı : JUNEJO

Adı : RABELA

Bölümü: ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY / MİMARLIK TARİHİ

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce):

ARCHITECTURAL PERMEABILITY: STYLISTIC ENCOUNTERS
IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE MAKLI NECROPOLIS
(14TH – 16TH CENTURIES)

TEZİN TÜRÜ: Yüksek Lisans

Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılsın ve kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla tezimin bir kısmı veya tamamının fotokopisi alınsın.
2. Tezimin tamamı yalnızca Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi kullanıcılarının erişimine açılsın. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.)
3. Tezim bir (1) yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olsun. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.)

Yazarın imzası Tarih