

New Research on pre-Mughal Islamic Material Culture in South Asia

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The presence of Islam in South Asia pre-dates the arrival of the Mughals by some eight centuries. Those eight centuries are represented by an impressive array of material remains scattered across India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The remains reflect an engagement with a broad array of material and architectural traditions in South Asia as well as those of the metropolitan centres of the wider Islamic world. Although the pre-Mughal material has never been ignored entirely, the Mughal period has tended to dominate scholarship on Islamic material culture in South Asia. The last three decades have, however, seen a real surge in research on this area from scholars worldwide.

In spite of this activity, the field retains a relatively low profile internationally, not least because it straddles the two subject areas of "Islamic" and "South Asian" archaeology and art. The proposed session aims to provide an inter-disciplinary forum specifically dedicated to pre-Mughal Islamic archaeology and material culture in South Asia. The session will offer a unique forum for scholars to present their research to a specialist audience and represents a key opportunity for intellectual exchange across current political and disciplinary divides. The breadth of the geographical and chronological frame involved makes it difficult to anticipate all the issues that will arise from the session however we anticipate that the session will address a number of important issues. It will consider the relationship between the material culture of pre-Mughal sultanates in South Asia and that of neighbouring Hindu and Jain polities. It will also seek to address the relationships between the Islamic cultures of South Asia and those of the wider Islamic world. Among the issues that speakers might consider are the chronology of Indo-Islamic cultures, urbanism, the relationships between form and function in South Asian Islamic architecture, the impact of diasporas from the central Islamic lands on the Islamic cultures of South Asia, and differences in the nature and impact of contacts by land and sea. The session will also seek to address the specific methodological and theoretical issues arising from archaeological excavations and architectural surveys of Islamic sites and monuments in South Asia. Among these are the ways in which conceptual, disciplinary and political boundaries have set the parameters for research in this field. Paradoxically, perhaps, the session will raise the question of whether it is meaningful or useful to isolate Islamic material culture in South Asia. In doing so, it will consider where the focus of future research in this expanding field might lie, and the directions that it might take.

*Mughal Contemporaries and Pre-Mughal Continuities in the Deccan:
The survival of pre-Islamic ritual topography in
Bijapur and Naurasapur*

Mark Brand, Cambridge University

Mughal culture in South Asia should be understood within the spatial limitations of the Mughal Empire and its influence. 'Pre-Mughal' cultures could continue in Indian sultanates until their Mughal domination or conquest. Continuity in the synthesis of Indo-Persian culture, Islam and Hinduism, was most marked in the Deccan region, where sultanate authority devolved from Delhi to the Bahmani and then sub-regional dynasties, contrasting with waves of invasion and upheaval in Hindustan. From 1318 to 1686, between its Delhi Sultanate and Mughal conquest, Bijapur was ritually anchored around a mosque raised from structures and spolia from pre-Islamic Vijayapura's central Hindu temple. The palatial seat of sultanate authority remained situated on this mosque's qibla-axis, throughout this period, while retaining essential characteristics associated with Sassanian traditions of universal kingship. This hall and others modelled upon it, including that at the centre of Naurasapur, Bijapur's late 16th century twin as capital of the 'Adil Shahi Sultanate, provided settings for key mystical royal rituals. These rituals stemmed, increasingly explicitly, from traditions of universal spiritual dominion in Hinduism and Islam. This unusually explicit Perso-Islamic appropriation of Hindu traditions may explain the unique sultanate continuity of pre-Islamic Indian concentric urban planning in *both* Bijapur and Naurasapur.

*Ceramics in Sind during the islamic period
material from Central and Low Sind, Pakistan*

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Ceramics from Sind during the Islamic period are not well known. Recent excavations at the site of Sehwan (Central Sind) by the French Archaeological Mission headed by M.Kervran allow us to identify and date the different kinds of ceramics existing in this country between the beginning of the 8th century AD and the Mughal period. Red-paste ceramics with painted, stamped or molded decoration, grey and black ceramics, and glazed productions and imports now can be dated more precisely. The stratigraphy and material from Sehwan, the ancient Siwistān, show the

history of the city during the Arab period, under the Ghaznavids and Ghurids, the Delhi Sultanate and, finally, the short Arghun and Tarkhan periods before the Mughal conquest. Other ceramic materials coming from sites in the Indus Delta enriches this corpus, especially for the middle and late sequences.

*Polychrome Enamelled Bricks of Pre-Mughal Sultanate Bengal:
A Preliminary Scientific Investigation*

Somnath Ghosh and Varada Khaladkar

This paper attempts to understand the technology employed in manufacturing glazed bricks and tiles used in the architecture of Sultanate Bengal. The study focuses on chemical composition of glaze, its colorants, chemical and physical properties of the brick-body as well as the firing technique employed.

Polychrome enamelled bricks and tiles were used in south Asia from fifteenth century AD onwards and those found in Bengal form a distinct sub-tradition. The technology of glazing bricks/tiles did not have any precedent in south Asia and historians trace its provenance to either China or Persia. These bricks have so far been only visually studied. However, archaeometric analyses will help us to have a better understanding of technologies involved. For this purpose, tests like XRD, XRF, Thermal Analysis, AAS were conducted on the archaeological samples from the sites of Gaur and Pandua – the medieval capital cities which formed the urban core of the sultanate Bengal.

Results indicate that it was a low flux tin-alkali-lead glaze with cobalt, copper, iron, lead and chromium as the major colorant materials. Bricks were compact and fired by bisque firing technique.

Notes on Sultanate aesthetics: Glazed Tiles in the Indus valley

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The extensive use of glazed tiles in the Indian subcontinent evolved only shortly after the Ghaznavid and Ghurid invasions, the earliest centre being the region in and around Multan. The following paper will discuss the origins and early development of this type of architectural decoration which seems to be particularly associated with funerary structures. It will consider the role of patronage and look into whether, and if so how, glazed tilework contributed to the formation of a specific Islamic architectural language.

Form and function in the Indo-Islamic architecture of Ahmedabad (Gujarat, India)

Sara Keller

This paper explores the issue of form and function in the Indo-Islamic architecture of Ahmedabad, focusing on an analysis of the religious architecture (mosques, tombs, mausolea) of the capital. It will describe and explain the particular conditions of the birth and the development of the Gujarati architecture, exploring how some characteristics of these monuments slowly lose their functions until they become decorative elements, or even totally disappear (for example, stairs and size of the minarets, stone carving on the surface of the walls). The process is a well known from the evolutive dynamics of the art: the artistic and architectural element lose their organic and functional properties and become decorative and figurative.

The Late Sultanate Architecture at Mandu, Madhya Pradesh

Thalia Kennedy

The architecture of Mandu, capital of the Malwa sultanate from the outset of the fifteenth century, stands out as one of the most complete groups of buildings that survive from the sultanate period. With Timur's sack of Delhi in 1398, and the subsequent political debasement of its territorial power, the newly-formed independent sultanate of Malwa became a major player in the political and territorial landscape of northern India. Its capital was established at Mandu in modern-day Madhya Pradesh as the seat of the Ghurid and subsequent Khalji dynasties. Members of both

ruling families undertook extensive building projects during their time in power. The former capital contains tombs, mosques, palaces, and utilitarian structures. Its buildings have been documented and discussed most notably by Ghulam Yazdani and Percy Brown in the earlier part of the last century. The architectural types that survive in the city, combined with extant architectural inscriptions and historical sources, including the work of the historian Ferishta, provide an exciting opportunity to set these buildings into their dynastic and political context. This paper will summarise the forms and functions of the architecture that survives and go on to explore the possible motivations that lay behind the construction of some of these buildings.

Urban Archaeology of the Mediaeval City of Gaur (West Bengal, India). Reconnaissance 1994-2001.

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The study of urbanization in India began since the later part of the 19th century, had not dwelt much on the mediaeval city formations in Bengal that saw its efflorescence during the Sultanate period (1205-1576A.D.). In the absence of contemporary historical literature the historians were not been able to formulate much on such formation and had to remain satisfied with the findings of inscriptions, coins and the accounts of foreign travellers, which, are often contradictory. Despite the fact that Gaur and Pandua had remained capitals of Bengal under the Sultans for more than three hundred years, no worthwhile attempt, except the *Memoirs of Gaur and Pandua* by Abid Ali Khan in 1912, had so far been made to describe the history and archaeology of these cities. Aside a lone air survey conducted by the Archaeological Survey of India in the late twenties of the last century no endeavour was made either to systematically explore the Gaur-Pandua complex and to tally the results with the recorded history, architectural remains, coins and inscriptions. The brilliant attempts of Creighton and Ravenshaw to map the old city of Gaur or the reconnaissance of its ruins (also of Pandua) by Orme, Francklin, Buchanan-Hamilton, Cunningham and few others remain unconnected with the urban history of the period. It was in this context that a research project was taken up by the Directorate of Archaeology, Government of West Bengal with the objective of tracing out the pattern of urbanization in Mediaeval Bengal through a case study of its principal

cities, Gaur and Pandua. The methodology adopted to achieve this objective was threefold. The first, to build up a comprehensive database of all the published and unpublished records (including coins, inscriptions, historical manuscripts), visual material, maps and other related documents on these cities. The second, to carry out sector-wise archaeological explorations in these cities to situate habitation patterns and to collect evidence of material culture. The third, to collate the available records with the archaeological findings and analyse the same in the historical perspective to locate, *inter alia*, the causes of growth and decline of these urban centres.

The present paper will dwell on the archaeological reconnaissance carried out in the mediaeval city of Gaur (24° 50'44" and 24° 55'50" N latitude, 88° 7' and 88° 10' E longitude) during the field seasons of 1994-2001 as a part of this research project. The paper will focus on the methodology of field work, the major discoveries, analysis of artifacts collected and will generally attempt to collate the archaeological data with historical, monumental and other records for a reconstruction of the principal functional zones of the city.

Sultanate Water Systems of Chāmpāner-Pāvāgadh - Tracing the Footprints

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Recent research at Champaner-Pavagadh, with its complex landscape that evolved over centuries, reveals a probable precursor to the Mughal gardens. Till now largely ignored, this spectacular and coherent cultural landscape is an important milestone in reconstructing the history of Islamic gardens in India.

Once, the capital city of the Greater Gujarat (1484 AD-1535 CE), Chāmpāner-Pāvāgadh had established an icon in the field of rain water harvesting, to support as many as 50,000 people, during the reign of Sultan Mahmud Begarhā. After Humayun's attack in 1535 CE and subsequent destruction, the city was completely deserted and, along side this, the hydraulic system also deteriorated and was forgotten.

The current paper aims at an understanding of the Sultanate hydraulic system with the intention of establishing the importance of regional Sultanate gardens as a significant phase in the evolution of later landscaping principles in India.

These technological innovations, during the course of their development, became such powerful elements for the society that they started assuming a more elaborate, aesthetic and robust form such that they almost became a religion by themselves for the community. Every water structure became a political and social urban space - the very icon of the beliefs of the society. They assumed a definite identifiable form which was almost ornamental in character. These water structures now lying forgotten form one of the most significant aspects of the architectural heritage of Sultanate period Chāmpāner-Pāvāgadh and are the biggest source of knowledge and expression of the glory of rain water harvesting system of Chāmpāner-Pāvāgadh.

The paper shall inquire into the technological methods of water harvesting, water retention, and water provision in the region. This paper intends to reconstruct the lost knowledge of traditional Sultanate scientific systems such that the isolated water structures start knitting together and regain their relevance in the context they belong.

From Province to Sultanate: The Architecture of Gujarat during the mid-12th through 16th Centuries

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As noted in the Call for Papers, scholarship on the Sultanate period of South Asia's architectural history has emerged from the Mughals' shadows only during the last three decades. It is at least in part due to this recent nascence that few of the regional architectural traditions have been examined in detail. Studies treating individual building traditions are now both materially as well as methodologically necessary. For, without such focused works, we would lose a nuanced historical perspective on the myriad and minute ways that craftspeople rose to the challenges of meeting the social and ritual needs of the numerous and widely varying communities of South Asia during the 12th through 16th centuries.

The present paper hopes to contribute to this nuanced (and ultimately cumulative) methodology by treating the architectural reinventions and redefinitions taking place in Gujarat, spanning from ca. 1150 until Akbar's annexation of the region to the larger Mughal empire in 1572-73. The overall premise will be that Gujarat's architectural language was undergoing adaptive changes even during its "apogee" in the sultanate.

Gujarat's changing status as an independent kingdom under the Chaulukyas during the 10th-13th centuries, and then as a province of the Khaljis and Tughluqs during the 14th century, coincided with the redefinition of the region's indigenous temple building tradition in the construction of buildings of Islamic worship. Moving further, this paper will analyze how the reinvented architectural language was in turn employed in the services of state-building, with the establishment of the independent sultanate of Gujarat in ca. 1410. While the local building practice had reached a certain level of comfort by the 15th century, changes continued to take place, fueled by political rivalries in the sultanate's administrative hierarchy, and by the gradual (though in the end unsuccessful) introduction of Iranian architectural traditions. Such an approach should demonstrate that, by the time of the Mughal ascendancy in the mid-16th century, vastly different, regionally based architectural traditions - like that of Gujarat - entered into individual dialogues with the Mughal juggernaut.

The Lost City Of Banbhore & The Ancient Trade Links

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The ruins of Banbhore are situated near the small town of Dhabeji on the northern bank of an inlet of the Arabian Sea, known as the Gharo Creek. It is at a distance of 65 kms east of Karachi. The extinct harbor town of Banbhore on the northern margin of the deltaic coast of South Asia-Pakistan, is popularly associated with the invasion of Sindh in 712 CE by Mohammed Bin Qasim and presently known as the Gateway of Islam.

Banbhore - A pre-Islamic or Islamic site, become a challenge for the Department of Archaeology. The re-examination of the whole problem was undertaken under the leadership of Dr. F. A. Khan during the four years of excavation of the site, started in 1958. The substantive excavations have revealed extremely interesting results i.e. a well-fortified harbour town through out its existence.

The deep digging revealed the remains of three distinct periods: the Scytho-Parthian, Hindu-Buddhist & Islamic periods datable from 1st century BC to the thirteenth century CE (Khan: 1960) . In finding out the cultural sequences of the site, deep diggings were done in the water logged lower levels at the depth of 25 to 30 ft from, surface. The long period of occupation from the eight to thirteenth century CE reveals no cultural break. Up till now the detailed report is still awaited, only few articles on various aspects of Banbhore have been published in different journals. More than Forty years have elapsed since its excavations and no comprehensive report has been published so far, on such a rich & extensive site.

Banbhore is especially interesting because it is the ancient city of 1st century BC, which continued to retain its position in one way or the other and succeeded in survival under different names such as Barbarikon, Barbaricum, Deb, Deval, Debal and Banbhore may be more until 13th century CE. This ancient city could possibly a lost link between Gulf region and China. The Pottery from Banbhore shows that it was drawn into a system of intense "international" interaction extending across the Gulf region, during the classic & post- classic periods. My research suggests that Banbhore survived the earthquake & the downfall due to its strong ties to the adjacent region. Ceramic style and stylistic change is used by archaeologists primarily for dating, however, there is also a broad consensus that style is a form of non-verbal communication. The presence of Red ware, Burnished pottery in Gulf region and Chinese Amphoras at various places including Banbhore shows a good deal of trade links though scarce in historical accounts. The pottery of the South-Asia embodies the highest artistic achievement of a race of quiet, peaceful, and tenacious people who have even to the fall of their city successfully kept their culture intact for over thousands years. The excellence of Banbhore craftsman ship, evidenced in the product & the production, form and the decoration of their pottery, rivals that of any Asian. It is hoped that this research paper will provide insights into the very long history of potting and a possible way to peep in to pages of the ancient history to find trade links and cultural relations between the south -Asia & the Gulf region. Focus is on the style of the ceramics of the Classic-Early Postclassical period, dating from approximately 1st century to 13th century CE. I found the Banbhore fairly sophisticated site in which new forms of trade and interregional interaction led to widespread social, political, and religious change.

Sources for the study of Sultanate Period Architecture in Pakistan: Zoroastrian architecture in Baluchistan and Arab and Persian influences along the Baluchi trade routes

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The Sultanate Period Architecture in Pakistan was developed as a result of interaction of several local and foreign cultures. On one hand it had Gujarati and Rajastani influence and on the other had it had local Indus Valley tradition but the province of Baluchistan had been playing a very crucial role in the formation and development of Sultanate period architecture. In this context, the Zoroastrian architecture in Baluchistan and Arab and Persian influence has not been playing a very crucial role and had not been studied adequately. There are several trade routes which used to pass through Baluchistan connecting Iran and Iraq on one hand and Afghanistan on the other. The pre-Islamic and later Islamic monuments along these routes show close relationship in the formation of a specific style. The paper will explain the possible sources and mode of influences on the Sultanate Period architecture in Pakistan in the light of recently identified monuments along these trade routes.

The Function of the "Word": "Qur'anic Inscriptions on early Sultanate Mosques

Michelle Rein, University of Pennsylvania

This paper considers the Arabic inscription programs of the Ghoriid and Mamluk mosques of the *Adhai-din-ka-Jhompra* in Ajmer and the *Caurasi Kambha* mosque in Kaman. Reading the epigraphic inscriptions offers a means of exploring the ideological agendas of north India's earliest patrons of Islamic monuments. Just as the Dome of the Rock was built of borrowed structural elements and decorative motifs visually relating to Christianity, yet refuting it as the insufficient predecessor to the righteous faith of Islam, a similar situation occurred in northern India. Epigraphic inscriptions supported the political and religious intention of the patrons by validating the colonizers, while invalidating the religion of those conquered. The Sultanate rulers accomplished this through the use of consciously selected Qur'anic verses.

These inscriptions evidence a site-specific use of non-historical text for the purposes of furthering a philosophical, theological and political agenda. The texts reflect an ideological program intended to be read by two distinct populations. Non-historical texts tied the non-indigenous, dominant minority to their own familiar cultural past, serving as a device with which to support and legitimize the Muslim sultan's new position of power. At the same time, these inscriptions functioned as a message of reassurance and inspiration for those newly converted members of a society in transition from a position of subjugated non-Muslim majority to one of privileged Muslim minority.

The Conundrum of 15th century Sultanate Painting

Emily Shovelton, SOAS, university of London

The term Sultanate Painting refers to the illustrations of manuscripts written in Persian, Avadhi and Arabic, commissioned by Muslim patrons in pre-Mughal India. In 1947 Goetz was the first to publish his suspicions that there existed a pre-Mughal school of painting. However, conclusive proof of the existence of Sultanate painting was not provided until twelve years later when Skelton published the *Nimatnama*. Since this pioneering work the number of manuscripts attributed Sultanate India has continued to grow. However, compared to the succeeding Mughal period, the field of Sultanate painting remains a relatively neglected area. Nothing survives from before the collapse Delhi Sultanate in 1398; the extant manuscripts date to the 15th and early 16th centuries.

The corpus of Sultanate painting is inchoate and perplexing: most of the manuscripts lack a precise date and provenance, and their styles often bear no relation to one another. Even Mandu, the only court to have four extant manuscripts, shows no evidence of a centrally controlled school. Similarly, Sultanate paintings in their entirety display no unifying style. Some of the paintings are by Indian artists in the mould of Jain illustrated books. Others are virtually indistinguishable from Persian paintings. This paper will analyse three previously understudied manuscripts from contrasting traditions, and explore what constitutes a Sultanate painting.

*Inland Trade Routes of Bengal and Neighbouring Areas during the Sultanate Period
(1205-1576 CE). The Evidence of Coin-Hoards.*

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With the arrival of the Turkish General in the beginning of 13th century, Bengal witnessed a new and stable currency system that continued up to the last quarter of 16th century. The regular currency was silver coins of average 10.6 gm weight, replaced occasionally by gold when large sums were required for business transactions. Small transactions were carried out through cowry shells. Insufficient information in the contemporary written chronicles -- Perso-Arabic or vernacular -- leads us to depend on the epigraphic and numismatic sources for an understanding of the socio-political and socio-economic scenario of the period.

Since the 19th century, quite a good number of coin-hoards of the period have been recovered from different parts of eastern India and Bangladesh. Study of these hoards throws fresh light on the monetary history, trade and trade routes of Bengal and its neighboring areas. In the present paper, an endeavour has been made to explain that systematic analysis of a series of coin-hoards could provide wealth of information on land and riverine trade routes and movement strategies in trade within a given region.

The relationship between places of origin of a coin with the places of its ultimate deposition (place of inhumation of a coin-ward) may very well indicate the direction of currency mobility within a defined space and such mobility of currency over a considerable span of time helps us to locate the established trade routes of the region. In the present paper such attempt will be made to define the inland trade routes of Bengal and the neighbouring areas through a critical analysis of thirty-seven coin hoards of the Sultanate period of Bengal supplemented by textual evidence, where available.