



Mughal Tomb Complexes their Spatial Layout and Grand Entrances

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Abstract: This study investigates the language of tomb building in Mughal architecture with an emphasis on their entrance gateways. The Mughal architecture and its influence by the prevailing Indian style is examined through developmental growth and the lineage of Mughal tombs. This paper basically presents research with emphasis on clarity of spatial characteristics on three Mughal tomb complexes in India. A strong context of a methodological approach is applied in unfolding the layout of the Mughal tombs and influences by their predecessors in regions of the larger Islamic world on the architectural elements has been examined. With methods of comparative understanding of ordering principles, proportional analysis and studies of composition and approach, this paper explains the various elements, use of material and the hierarchy in surface ornamentation to the entrance gateways of the Mughal tombs which are as significant as the gateway of paradise. Since the Mughal tomb gardens were earthly manifestations of the Quranic description of the paradise garden. This paper can be of reference to historians, architects and the general reader alike in understanding what makes the Mughal tomb complex a significant architectural style in the architectural history of India.

Keywords: Mughal tombs, Entrance gateway, surface ornamentation, Mughal architecture.

I. INTRODUCTION

The layout of Mughal tombs was based on principles of hierarchy, proportion and rhythm. Nearly all the tombs built in the Mughal period were based on the four fold Mughal garden concept with mausoleum building in the centre. The tomb of emperor Humayun was built along the bank of the river Yamuna in Delhi but with time the river has changed its course and drifted. In Agra, all Mughal monuments were sited on the left and right banks of the river be it pleasure gardens or be it the tomb gardens. Taking cues from this ideal sitting that facilitated many benefits like transport, views, microclimate and water resource; Emperor Shahjahan in his reign remodelled forts at Agra and Lahore by placing the royal pavilions at the edge of the fort overlooking the river. These private halls were also elevated by being placed on a platform and over looked the walled courtyard gardens as well.

The idea of river front location is suggestive of not only of an ideal setting for Mughal pavilions but also how the building structure in its siting and location drew benefits from the natural settings. For example the Taj Mahal tomb overlooks the river and Itimad-ad-Daula's tomb although placed in the centre of the garden has a river side pavilion. Built in different periods and by different patrons the tomb buildings in their layout, architectural elements, use of material and surface decoration draw inspiration from preceding styles of various regions where Islam evolved as the dominant religion. They also draw inspiration from the existing Indian elements of the period and have evolved a unique style of tomb architecture of the period.

II. ARCHITECTURAL PRINCIPLES AND HIERARCHY OF MUGHAL TOMBS

Mughal imperial tombs are marvelous buildings and some of them are rendered in stone intarsia and *pietra dura*. They are also characterised by elements like *pishtaqs* and *iwans*. An *iwana* is a rectangular hall or space, usually vaulted, walled on three sides, with one end entirely open. The formal gateway to the *iwana* is called *pishtaq*, a Persian term for a portal projecting from the facade of a building, usually decorated.

While studying the tomb complex the decoration and ornamentation could be linked to architecture based on following principles outlined by Koch.

1. Emphasis on bilateral symmetry (*qarina*) "Bilateral symmetry dominated by a central accent has generally been recognised as an ordering principle of the architecture of rulers aiming at absolute power as an expression of the ruling force which brings about balance and harmony" [5].
2. A hierarchical grading of the parts of the building and complex are done through material, colour and form.
3. Use of the type of column is a very strong determinant especially in Shahjahani architecture – for e.g. Taj Mahal complex uses only a single type of column i.e. the Shahjahani column. Within the uniformity the hierarchy is established through the varying use of proportion and details of columns according to their position in the complex.
4. There is also selective use of naturalism in use of vegetal motifs in ornamentation. That is the most naturalistic decoration appears in the chief building or the tomb building which establishes a symbolic hierarchy.



III. CASE STUDY OF MUGHAL TOMBS

In order to understand the spatial planning of tomb gardens and their monumental *pishtaq* we will look at three examples from the Mughal period. These three examples have been selected on the basis that each of the tomb gardens have a well defined entrance marked by a monumental gateway. The gateway is also ornate with floral motifs. They are located in the same region which was the capital of Mughal India for a long time. The tombs were built in different periods. The three examples identified from the Mughal period are Itimad-ad-Daula's tomb at Agra, the Taj Mahal and Akbar's tomb, Sikandra.

A. *Itimad-ad-Daula's tomb*

Empress Nur Jahan built the tomb in Agra between 1622 and 1628 for her father Mirza Ghiyas Beg. He was wazir to Emperor Jahangir and was given the title Itimad ad-Daula ("Pillar of the Empire"). Nurjahan was an ambitious lady she was bestowed the title Nur Mahal (Light of the Palace) but when Jahangir took to ill health she styled herself as Nur Jahan (Light of the World) and exercised her power with her father and her brother. She was of Persian origin and therefore the architecture and ornamentation of surfaces at Itimad-ad-Daula illustrate Persian traditions. It is also observed that several features of the tomb anticipate characteristic trends of the architecture during Shah Jahan's rule. The mausoleum adheres to the typical *hasht bihisht* plan. The tomb stands in the centre of the *chahar bagh*. On its central axis are two gates, which are pavilion like and built in red sandstone with decoration in inlay of white marble.

Itimad-ad-Daula's tomb was the first time when marble inlay was done on the entire surface of the building. The entrance is through a walkway lined by orchards, the presence of fruit trees in tomb complexes suggests the idea of marketable goods so that the revenue could be used for the upkeep of the mausoleum after the death of the patron. There were underground pipes sourcing water to the pools, channels and chutes. The decoration is intricate. The gardens were full of trees [3].

1) *Layout*: The tomb stands in the centre of a garden on a low plinth covered with inlay in geometrical patterns. The garden is crossed by marble channels with pools and fountains. The mausoleum is set in a *chahar bagh*. It is square in plan and has two storeys with engaged corner turrets crowned by *chattris*. Axial staircases lead up to the upper storey of the tomb. The tomb is relatively small compared to mausoleums of the Mughal emperors.

The gardens of Itimad-ad Daula are much lower in level to the pathways that lead up to the mausoleum similar to Casa de Contración, Alcazar, Seville built in twelfth century; it has sunken garden quadrants. The palynological analysis performed during the excavations of the 1970s showed remains of citrus and palm trees [14]. The elevated paths and channels facilitated irrigation. Plants being set on a lower level allowed the blooming flowers to barely reach the pavement surface and create the carpet effect [11].

The Mughal tomb gardens are reminders of the paradise gardens. The gardens promised to believers in the Quran are places of joy that prefigure eternal happiness. The chapter seventy six *Al-Insan* (The Man) of the Holy Quran draws the picture of the paradise garden, it says -

So Allah will protect them from the evil of that Day and give them radiance and happiness. And will reward them for what they patiently endured [with] a garden [in Paradise] and silk [garments]. [They will be] reclining therein on adorned couches. They will not see therein any [burning] sun or [freezing] cold. And near above them are its shades, and its [fruit] to be picked will be lowered in compliance. And there will be circulated among them vessels of silver and cups having been [created] clear [as glass], Clear glasses [made] from silver of which they have determined the measure. And they will be given to drink a cup [of wine] whose mixture is of ginger [From] a fountain within Paradise named Salsabeel. There will circulate among them young boys made eternal. When you see them, you would think them [as beautiful as] scattered pearls. And when you look there [in Paradise], you will see pleasure and great dominion (Quran 76: 11-20).

2) *Mausoleum building*: On the ground the mausoleum has nine chambers in the *hasht bihisht* plan. The central chamber is surrounded by two rooms on each side. The central funerary chamber contains the cenotaph of Itimad ad-Daula and his wife. While four corner rooms house the tombs of their relatives. Stairs in the towers lead to the upper level, where a square pavilion stands. The room has stone *Jaalis* of remarkable quality. The floor of the central chamber containing the real cenotaphs has a geometrical pattern. Where as, the floor of the upper pavilion has coloured marble inlay in patterns of flowers and vine trails creating inspiration from Persian carpets. Nurjahan is said to have patronized rug design, women in the imperial harem is said to have had keen interest in interior design and wall



Fig. 1- Itimad-ad Daula's tomb with sunken garden level



Fig. 2- Itimad-ad Daula's tomb, upper pavilion



Fig. 3- Akbar's tomb at Sikandra



Fig. 4- Top most level, Akbar's tomb at Sikandra



Fig. 5- Taj Mahal , mausoleum is at far end of the garden



Fig. 6- Northern gate in ruins, Akbar's tomb at Sikandra



Fig. 7- Flower motifs on arched portal of Taj Mahal



Fig. 8- Exquisite inlay in Taj Mahal at Agra



decoration. The interest of Nurjahan took a more formal shape through expression of the floor pattern and wall imagery in her father's tomb building [13].

3) *Surface ornamentation*: Empress Nurjahan's roots can be traced to the Saffavid dynasty. Therefore she drew upon imagery in her father's tomb of the Persian culture. That is reflected in the layout of the inlay as well as some of the motifs such as flasks, drinking cups, vases and cypress trees. Similar motifs can be seen in the garden pavilion of the early seventeenth century 'Ali Qapu' of Isfahan [1]. The entire mausoleum building is clad in white marble on the outside which is inlaid with different coloured stones, in the shape of vessels, especially wine vessels, fruit, flowers and cypress trees. The visual imagery motifs allude to Quranic passages and Persian poetry that describe paradise [3]. The technique is said to have a forerunner in Gujarat. It was a step further than stone Intarsia in the gates of Akbar's mausoleum.

The notion of a pleasure garden and nature permeates the iconography of the site through the white marble floors as well as the walls that were painted or inlaid with semi-precious stones representing scrolling vine, fruit and cypress trees. Among the popular motifs are also flowers in vases, drinking vessels, all things which might have been used by Nurjahan and her entourage while at picnic in the garden [9]. The floral images in stone are stylized and rigidly symmetrical. The wall paintings inside the tomb chamber are more naturalistic and seem to be inspired by the European botanical herbals in circulation in the Mughal court. Nurjahan is said to have liked earthy tones (ivory, gold and brown) in rugs and that is exactly the colours she commissioned in the floor of Itimad-ud-daula's tomb.

The decorative motifs in coloured marble resplendent over walls present motifs of the ever-blooming vases of flowers symbolic of immortality. The Amber fort built by Raja Jai Singh who was a Mirza in the court of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb has a Shish-Mahal or Jai Mandir which draws upon the Interior of the Itimad-ad-Daula's tomb in the style of the decorative motifs especially the colourful vessels[8].

Interior walls were decorated with paintings set in niches. On almost every surface except the domes, the inlay has been worked upon in a fashion similar to the technique developed in Florence in the sixteenth century. Itimad-ad-daula's tomb was the very first example of the *pietra dura* technique in India. Stones used in the inlay include jasper, cornelian, Jasper and onyx [3]. The lower portions are dominated by the presence of geometrical motifs and scrolls. The upper surfaces represent images of ewers, covered cups, vases, perfume sprinkler, covered scent boxes, Chinese vases, wine cups, double bodied planters, cypress trees encircled by twining creepers, creepers, grapes, pomegranates and flowers. Even the brackets supporting the *Chajja* are decorated with inlay. The colour scheme of the inlay expresses a mute eloquence.

M.C. Joshi draws the attention towards the Bade Batashe wala Mahal built in 1603 which is situated north of the Humayun's tomb (now restored as part of the Sundar nursery redevelopment project) represents Persian ornamentation similar to Itimad-ad Daula's tomb [3]. Similar to the Humayun's Tomb, it utilises red-white contrast as a principle architectural statement, however, here the effect is achieved with the use of coloured plaster rather than stone. The mausoleum is flat roofed an antecedent to Itimad-ad Daula's tomb. The panel just above the entrance to the main chamber represents the cypress, the sprinkler and the cup-saucer.

It is noteworthy that Itimad-ad Daula's tomb that preceded the Taj Mahal had many similar aspects such as being built in white marble, presence of stone intarsia showing floral representations; all of these were brought to new heights in the Taj Mahal. The riverside location present in both the tombs although the riverfront aspect was experienced in both of them differently.

B. Akbar's Tomb at Sikandra

Akbar himself selected his burial site three years before he died in 1605. Work on his mausoleum began at Sikandra, west of Agra, beside the road to Fatehpur Sikri. The building has a uniqueness about it and somewhat similar to the monuments of the abandoned capital of Fatehpur Sikri. The elements had fusion of indigenous and Timurid techniques. Jahangir got the tomb completed by 1614. Emperor Akbar not only consolidated the Mughal empire but also established a syncretic culture and this was reflected in the architecture during his reign. The foundations for a multicultural empire under Mughal rule were laid during his reign.

1) *Layout*: The tomb sits in a walled enclosure and is strictly oriented to the cardinal points. The mausoleum building stands in the centre of a chahar bagh garden. The entrance to the complex is from the southern side through a massive gate. The main entrance gate is spectacular, it is ornate with marble inlay on both facades that is outside as well as on the garden side. The entrance gate on the southern side welcomes the viewer to a wide sandstone pathway. The pathway is punctuated by wide and shallow water pools that now run dry. On either side of the pathway are the four fold sunken gardens. Amidst the gardens one can spot abandoned wells that may have sourced water for the complex. The second axis that cuts the main axis is equally wide and leads to the east and west gates that have exquisite motifs painted in their *iwans*. Midway of the long wide paths water tanks become a part of raised *chabutras* like points of pause and contemplation looking back at the mausoleum and towards the lofty pishtaq of the east-west axis. The gardens are at a level lower than the main causeway.

2) *Mausoleum building*: The tomb of Akbar stands on a raised platform it is an eclectic mix of architectural styles. The structure is characterised by elements like finials, *jharokas*, stone *jaalis*, stone brackets, the structural system is largely trabeated but interiors show presence of *muqarnas* at the entry level floor. The mausoleum has four lower storeys in red sandstone and top most storey in white marble [Fig.4]. The ground level with an arcaded façade is the greatest in height and resembles the base of Humayun's tomb in New Delhi. The upper levels recede in plan and every successive climb offers splendid views of the gateways, gardens and the causeways [Fig.6]. Every storey has a *chatri* at the corner which is inspired from the indigenous elements of the Indian architecture. Every gate in the cardinal direction mirrors into the centre of the façade in a lofty *ivan* which is ornate with marble inlay.

3) *Surface ornamentation*: The tomb displays gilded surfaces and stone inlays. Built by Jahangir, the tomb shows far less of the deep figurative stone-carving employed so prolifically at Akbar's Red Fort in Agra, but several of the domes and the arched ceiling of the tomb give a spectacular display of colorful patterns created with the exuberant fluidity. Motifs in all places predominantly comprise of motifs inspired from plants and flowers and are set in geometry. Drop leaves or lozenges are a common feature of all plinth and platform edges. Akbar's tomb set the tone for the Mughal tomb complexes bearing Indian elements either in structure or decoration.

The main entrance gate is spectacular. It is a tall pishtaq with minarets at the corners. It is elaborately decorated with geometrical motifs made in square, hexagon and octagon, with arabesques of vine scrolls and flower motifs [Fig.3]. Of the remaining other three gates east and west gates are blind gates. The northern gate is in ruins but motifs of vessels, vases and flowers can be seen in sandstone relief. The dado like the other gates has a geometrical pattern. The east and west gates on their exterior façade represent stone inlay. On the inside these gates have painted vaults in a style resembling the great mosque of Damascus.

C. Taj Mahal Complex

The Taj Mahal complex comprised almost an entire village, there were mosques, a forecourt, sarais and an entire garden across the river. The construction started in 1632 (Mumtaz Mahal died in 1629) and it got completed in 1643. It was a mausoleum built for Emperor Shahjahan's favourite wife Arjumand Banu Begam, known as Mumtaz Mahal. Emperor Shahjahan's reign was of supreme architectural construction. Members of the imperial family and nobles were encouraged to sponsor buildings. Emperor Shahjahan's daughter princess Jahanara fully shared her father's building and fondness for laying out gardens.

1) *Layout*: The grandiose mausoleum is the paradigm of the Mughal aesthetic. At the centre of the mausoleum exactly between the entrance gate and the tomb structure is the four fold garden. Divided by raised marble water channels. The two channels on the axis meet in the centre in a wide waterpool representing the four rivers of paradise. The mausoleum of the Taj Mahal complex is derived from Humayun's tomb. The dome flanked by *chhatris*, square plan with chamfered corners and vast substructure are features similar to the Humayun's tomb. The Taj Mahal has four corner minarets added to its plinth, a feature similar to Jahangir's tomb (in Itimad ad-daula's tomb the minarets are attached to the mausoleum). Stierlin in his study makes the observation that over all concept of the building is derived from Khan-I Khanan's tomb in Delhi.

The central water channel in the char bagh garden of the Taj Mahal is edged by pathway which is lined by a planting bed which has islands of flower beds in the shape of elongated cartouches with star shaped ends [Fig. 5]. The aesthetic of the Taj Mahal lies in an extraordinary sense of measure. A mystical quality alluding the heavenly setting of the next world [6,11]. The gardens of the Taj Mahal were not conceived as we see them today but were full of a variety of plants including fruit trees and they concealed the view of the Taj mausoleum only to reveal the exquisite beauty.

2) *Mausoleum building*: The uniqueness of Taj Mahal lies in some truly remarkable innovations carried out by the horticulture planners and architects of Emperor Shah Jahan. The mausoleum is placed at end of the garden and overlooks the river, it is a unique example of a river front tomb. The tomb is further raised on a square platform with the four sides of the octagonal base of the minarets extended beyond the square at the corners. The top of the platform is reached through a lateral flight of steps provided in the centre of the southern side. The ground plan of the Taj Mahal is in perfect balance of composition, the octagonal tomb chamber in the centre, encompassed by the portal halls and the four corner rooms. The plan is repeated on the upper floor. The exterior of the tomb is square in plan, with chamfered corners [Fig.8]. The large double storied domed chamber, which houses the cenotaphs of Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jahan, is a perfect octagon in plan. The upper cenotaphs are only illusory and the real graves are in the lower tomb chamber (crypt), a practice adopted in the imperial Mughal tombs.

3) *Surface ornamentation*: Walls inside and outside the mausoleum housing the main tomb chamber are rendered upto the dado level in naturalistic flower decoration. Presented in rows of individual flowering plants. The arrangement of flowers works on two contrasting principles of naturalism and formalism. The flower in themselves naturalistic and bearing realism are partly symmetrical in themselves. They are further arranged in order following the Shahjahan's system of triadic divisions [6].



Inside the main tomb chamber all arched openings reflect decoration similar to the pishtaq at the entrance – framing of inscription in bands and flowery scrolls in the spandrels. The iwans are greatly framed in the centre of each façade. To note that the border framing the dado which displays carved flowers is different outside and inside. Outside the band is inlaid with flowery scrolls set between narrow lines of black and ochre marble. Inside the band is set between black and ochre marble. Also the dados of the tomb chamber bear flowery vases. Distribution of relief work – all side walls of niches are dominant with tulips. Also vases are dominant with Iris. Acanthus leaves are a prominent feature of the colonnettes of the wall niches inside the tomb room. Another significant surface bearing the sophisticated pietra dura inlay is the enclosing marble screen bearing naturalistic flowers. The tomb surrounded with the screen is the minimum form of burial and was the original layout of Babur’s tomb in Kabul. In the dado each species appears in the same form, according to the principle of unity. Also used in reverse (mirror symmetry) if species has asymmetrical elements so as to define the position of the flower. Parapet of the Mausoleum is faced on the outside by an inlaid band featuring in-out pattern of voluted acanthus leaves. Colour is red and green and also present are dark yellow leaves.

The octagonal marble screen (*mahjar-i-mushabbak*) around Mumtaz Mahal’s cenotaph follows the Shahjahani triadic division on each of its side. The corner of the sides are fortified by posts ending in *kalasa* finials an adaptation of a feature of older Indian architecture. *Jaali* is composed of intricately wrought plant elements (only instance in the Taj Mahal where *jaalis* are formed of organic plant arabesques). Acanthus leaves and acanthus buds are largely used in the *jaali*. The cartouche in its oblong and square form or round ones border the decorative screen enclosing Mumtaz Mahal’s cenotaph. The oblong cartouches contain seven types of flowering plants [6].

The floor in the main tomb chamber bears the eight pointed star motif, which was symbolic too the eight levels of heaven. The pattern is surrounded by a border of lobed cartouches similar to the terrace of the platform outside, which bore a similar border only inlaid in red sandstone in white marble whereas inside it is black inlay in white marble with finer details. The border of lobed cartouches in the flooring also surrounds the cenotaph of Mumtaz Mahal and not of Shahjahan. “The concept of the hall as eschatological architecture is expressed in a geometrical way through its eight sidedness, which according to Islamic cosmology evoked the eight levels of paradise” [6].

Ebba Koch writes that neither any Mughal nor any other person in the Islamic world was commemorated with such exquisite decoration: the lower cenotaph of Jahangir is the only one that comes close. Created at the same time as that of Mumtaz probably by same artists. Red and yellow colours dominate the pietra dura decoration of the screen and cenotaphs. The tomb for its magnificence and monumentality bears great significance. It also marks the end of tradition of building large scale tombs for the imperial family.

IV. THE ENTRANCE GATEWAY TO THE TOMB COMPLEXES

The entrance gate for all three mausoleums built in the Mughal period are monumental and mark the significance of the threshold of entrance to the paradise garden within walled enclosures and to the final abode of the emperor. One gate lays the precedence for the other and placing them on the time scale we see how change in material and ornamentation helps reach the epitome of perfection. The various architectural and ornamental features have been listed and field observation for the various gates have been noted with respect to ornamentation. This has then been analysed with respect to a present hierarchy of ornamentation with popular motifs in the Mughal period. It may be noted that the scale of the gateways is different but is in proportion to its respective tomb complex

S.No.	Feature of the Entrance Gateway	Akbar’s Tomb	Itimad-ad-Daula’s Tomb	Taj Mahal
1	Plinth	Simple cladding in red sandstone with an edge of round motifs in drop form. Typical of Mughal style.	Sandstone plinth of extremely low height.	Low plinth with edge motif similar to that in gate of Akbar’s tomb. It further supports an extended plinth which is highly ornamented in sandstone relief.
2	Dado	Inlay of white marble and Abu black marble in geometrical patterns forms of stars, octagons and decagons.	White marble inlay in red sandstone with eight point and ten point stars. Within the star forms are inset white flower motifs with black centres [Fig.4].	Plain sandstone panels with chevron patterned borders in black and white marble stone.



Fig. 1 – Entrance gate to Akbar's Tomb on Southern side



Fig. 2 – Inlay on arched portal of entrance gate to Akbar's Tomb



Fig. 3 – Entrance gate to Itimad-ad-Daula's tomb



Fig. 4 – Dado of the entrance gate to Itimad-ad-Daula's tomb



Fig. 5 – Entrance gate to the Taj Mahal



Fig. 6 – Spandrels of the arched entrance gate to the Taj Mahal



Fig. 7 – Spandrels of the entrance gate to Itimad-ad-Daula's tomb



Fig. 8 – Spandrels of the entrance gate to Akbar's tomb at Sikandra



S.No.	Feature of the Entrance Gateway	Akbar's Tomb	Itimad-ad-Daula's Tomb	Taj Mahal
3	Portal frame	Bold stylised white marble flower motifs inlaid in red sandstone. Pattern is symmetrical and is crowned by a distinct flower in full bloom [Fig.1].	Leaf scrolls and flowers in white marble inlay. Style is inspired from the gate of Akbar's tomb but scale is different. Some flower motifs are also inspired by their Persian counterparts [Fig.3].	Portal frame is narrow and imitates the central Asian rope design. A panel of calligraphy forms the border. Arched opening is surmounted by a <i>paan</i> shaped leaf enclosing a lotus bud [Fig.5].
4	Parapet	Crenellations are stylised as semi open flower forms [Fig.8].	Parapet imitates the stylised crenellations as seen in Akbar's tomb entrance. Only flower forms are inlaid in white marble [Fig.7].	Parapet is highly ornamented in stone inlay of varied colours. Use of vegetal motifs with scrolls is observed. The parapet is further surmounted by a domed arcade.
5	Spandrels	They are ornate with a dense leaves and scroll motif in black and white marble inlay [Fig.2].	Motifs used are similar to that in the gate of Akbar's tomb but pattern is less dense because of the scale [Fig.7].	Flower, leaves and scroll stems in motifs are well defined and the pattern is exquisite in quality of workmanship, detail and is unique [Fig.6].
6	Colonette	Four marble turrets are visible roof onwards of the main gateway to Akbar's tomb. Similar turrets were later seen as an element on terrace of the Taj mausoleum on the four corners.	Slender colonettes frame the main arched entrance. The same element was repeated in the southern gateway of Taj Mahal	Very slender columns in a chevron pattern (of red, black and white) frame the main arched entrance. They are surmounted by a <i>guldasta</i> motif.
7	Domed canopy (<i>Chattri</i>)	Domed <i>chattris</i> are placed on top of the marble turrets	A domed chamber frames the gate on either side but it is not an open structure.	Domed <i>chattris</i> are placed on roof top of the entrance gateway on the four corners. The element represents an Indian feature
8	Vaults in opening	A simple arched vault is at the opening	The arched vault is similar to that in the gate of Akbar's tomb.	The vault forms a moulded pattern of <i>qalibkari</i> . It is created in plaster by pressing wooden moulds.

V. CONCLUSION

Observing all three tombs it is concluded that ornamentation with floral motifs was a distinct character which saw perfection in the Taj Mahal. They reflect not only the style of a period but also a region since Agra was Mughal capital for long until Shahjahan made the Mughal city of Shahjahanabad in Delhi. Itimad-ud-Daula's tomb is not an imperial tomb but only that of the *vizier* to the emperor but the detail of inlay and painted ornamentation is exquisite. The complex set precedence for the Taj Mahal. One single element like the main entrance gate in Mughal tomb complexes brings to light the many common features in architecture and ornamentation of the Mughal style of architecture. Hence the style left an indelible impression in Indian architecture of that period.

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