

A BRIEF SURVEY OF SOME LATE MUGHAL PERIOD MONUMENTS IN KULĀCHĪ TOWN, DERA ISMAIL KHAN, PAKISTAN

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The town of Kulāchī is located at a distance of 45 km west of Dera Ismail Khan city amidst the barren fields on the left bank of *Lūñī* hill torrent (Gomal river) between latitude 31° 55' 38'' north and longitude 70° 30' 19'' east in the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan. It is one of the oldest *Tehsil* headquarters of Dera Ismail Khan District, which was created in 1861 by the British. The Waziristan and Sulemān ranges are lying about 28 km to its west. It is presently occupied by the Gandāpūr Paṭhāns who settled here in the beginning of the 17th century after they were driven out from their original home to the east of Qandahār in Afghanistan by the Kākār Paṭhāns (*D.I. Khan District Gazetteer 1883-84:203*). It occupies a strategic point between the western hills and the eastern plains of the Gomal Valley.

Due to scarcity of water, the region is mainly barren and semi-arid except the areas occasionally watered by seasonal floods of *Lūñī nallah* produce wheat, barley, maize, etc. As a whole, the strip with alluvial fans of *Lūñī nallah* between Kulāchī and Ṭank is suitable for cultivation.

As compared to other parts of the Gomal Valley, Kulāchī Tehsil has great archaeological prospects—evident from excavation of a number of important sites like Jhāndī Bābar I and II (Rahman 1997; Khan *et al* 2000; Ali and Khan 2001), Māru I and II, Gandī Umar Khan, Gumlā and Hathālā (Dani 1970-71) — in establishing the long cultural history of the region in particular and Pakistan in general, but the aim of this paper is to bring to limelight the late Muslim period monuments inside the walled town of Kulāchī. These monuments range from early 19th to early 20th century.

The Gateways

Kulāchī town was once fortified with six monumental gateways at regular intervals. Constructed with mud, the traces can still be observed in part of the eastern fortification wall that has escaped the ravages of time. Unlike the wall, the gateways are, however, made of Waziri type small burnt bricks (measuring 19x13x4 cm), commonly used during the Mughal and late Muslim periods. The preserved gateways are Sakhi, Maddi, Usmān Khel, Jaṭṭāwālā, Miṭṭo and Madey Khan Darwāza, mostly called after the clans living in Kulāchī. Square in form, they on average measure 8.5x8.5m with an arched entrance in the centre measuring 3.5x5m. The arches are true like those of Lāl Māhrā Sharif tombs (Ali 1988) and flanked on either side by a square two-tier turret. Devoid of plaster, the gateways have been decorated with merlons and machicolations (Pl. 1).

Tomb of Faqir Madad Khan

To the west outside the city wall is the tomb of Faqir Madad Khan (according to the local traditions his real name was Pir Murād Khan), a Muslim saint of the late 19th century who died on March 23, 1891 (14th Sha'bān 1308 AH). A flat roofed mausoleum has been erected over his and his

relatives' graves. It is a rectangular tomb measuring 10.70x6.10m with 65 cm thick walls, (Pl. 2) with a flat roof, decorated lavishly with geometric designs in lacquer and glasswork (Pl. 3). The southern entrance to the tomb is the main, while a small one is on the east side, framed by a cusped arch. The southern wall carries, at its each corner, a small octagonal minaret and in the middle on the parapet a small ribbed cupola. Internally the tomb is also rectangular in plan measuring 9.40x4.80m and is plastered unlike the plain outer surface. Floral and geometrical motifs are provided in the alcoves, frames of the entrances and ventilators.

Mosque of Faqir Madad Khan

Adjacent to the south of the tomb, a rectangular mosque (10.50x3.50m) also constructed of Waziri bricks, is much damaged and is in bad state of preservation (Plate 4). It has three true-arch entrances in the facade of the prayer chamber in which the northern one is missing completely. The roof has fallen, while the western wall has traces of a *mihrab* in rectangular frame. Like the tomb, it is also devoid of any painted decoration or plaster.

Kūlāchī Mosque-I

Rectangular in plan, the sanctuary of Kūlāchī Mosque-I is faced by a 13.20x4m recently constructed verandah (Pl. 5). The verandah has three arched entrances in the middle, flanked on either side by two more on the east, and one each on its north and south taking the total number to nine. Across the verandah, facade of the sanctuary has three arched entrances and at the front corners octagonal buttresses, 7.60m high including cupolas, similar to the turrets of Gandi Umar Khan Mosque except the cupolas (Shakirullah 1998). Two small cupolas, one at each corner of the central entrance of the sanctuary, are also provided. The mosque has a rectangular courtyard paved with burnt bricks.

The oblong prayer chamber, measuring 13.20x3.60m, has a central nave flanked by a side bay, one on each side. In the western wall, a cusped-arch *mihrab* in the central nave and a blind arch in each side-bay are provided. The square nave and the bays are converted with the help of corner squinches into octagonal zones of transition, which are in turn superimposed by circular domes, the central one being larger than the two side ones. Small Waziri bricks are used for construction of the mosque, which is plastered both internally as well as externally and recently whitewashed.

Kūlāchī Bazar

The Kūlāchī Bazar has some ancient structures—including houses, balconies, shops and a sanctum of a Hindu shrine—in which small size Waziri bricks of the Mughal style have been used. Foundations of these structures are still intact, but most of them have lost their originality. They have now been encroached either as part of houses or shops. Cusped arches in walls have been blocked. Local tradition assigns construction of the temple to a Sikh leader, Saranath Singh.

Kūlāchī Mosque-II

The Kūlāchī Mosque-II is situated at the southern end of the main bazar. It is rectangular in plan having 11x4m sanctuary and 11x2.5m verandah, which is a later addition with flat roof supported by wooden pillars and beams. There are three arched entrances in the facade of the sanctuary, which

also has a flat roof (Pl. 6). Two octagonal copulas one on each front corner above the facade, and two smaller ones between them are provided. The mosque is white washed and devoid of ornamentation if any.

Tomb of Muhammad Barān

In the northwestern corner of the town, there is the tomb of Khwājā Mian Muhammad Barān, a Muslim saint of the 19th century, who was sent here from Afghanistan by Khwājā Shah Sulemān Taunswi, a saint of *Taunsa Sharif*, for preaching Islam. His successors erected a mausoleum on his grave.

It is a three-staged building constructed with small Waziri bricks (Pl. 7). The first stage is an octagon with 3.85m a side, 30.80m circumference, and 5.0m height. On the exterior, each face of the octagon has a blind arch flanked on either side by one and on the top by three recessed panels. Only the southern face has an entrance opening in front of a mosque. Above each corner is an octagonal minaret with a cupola. A staircase in the north of the lower part leads upwards to the second stage, which is also octagonal with each side measuring 2.22x2.22m and exactly has the same features as seen on the larger octagon of the lower stage. A low ribbed dome with 1.6m height and a finial in its centre above, cover the whole structure. Internally, the tomb is square with each side measuring 4.30m has an alcove. The western alcove marks the *mihrab* (45cm sunk in the wall) and the southern one provides the sole entrance to the tomb. The two in the remaining sides are just for the purpose of symmetry. All these alcoves are 3.50m deep. The square inner chamber is converted into an octagonal zone of transition with the help of arched squinches. Ceiling of the dome is decorated with floral and geometrical designs. The whole structure is plastered and white washed on the exterior as well as on the interior.

Mosque of Faqir Nizam ud Din

Adjacent to the tomb of Muhammad Barān on the southeast is a small rectangular mosque of Faqir Nizām ud Din, named after its builder.

The Mosque, measuring 19x10m, is divided in three parts namely, the courtyard (8.80x10m); the verandah (4.20x10m) and the sanctuary (4.50x10m). A 50cm thick wall separates these parts from each other. A mud wall surrounds the courtyard, which is paved with square burnt bricks 24x24x4cm in size. The facade of the mosque has five cusped-arch entrances, the central one being the main flanked on either side by two (Pl. 8). The upper part of the facade is treated in a way to give impression of a double storey from outside. The flanking entrances in the facade are framed in cusped arches. At each end of the facade an octagonal turret is added and two such but smaller ones flank the central entrance on either side. All the four turrets are terminated in a cupola. A fifth one is added in the middle of the parapet atop the central entrance.

The verandah, the central part of the mosque, can be approached from the three sides: five arched-entrances in the east and one each on the north and south sides. The sanctuary on the west has three arched entrances all opening into the verandah. Recessed panels in the walls of the verandah bear Quranic verses in the Naskh style. The sanctuary has also been decorated with recessed panels having Quranic verses. The western wall accommodates a *mihrab*, a niche with cusped arch flanked by turrets and covered by a ribbed dome. The *mihrab* a miniature imitation of the mosque design

is decorated with inscriptions, floral and geometrical motifs in different shades (Pl. 9). Internal surfaces of the Mosque are decorated with floral and geometrical paintings and its flat ceiling is lavishly ornamented with glasswork (*kashikari*) in geometrical and floral patterns (Pl. 10).

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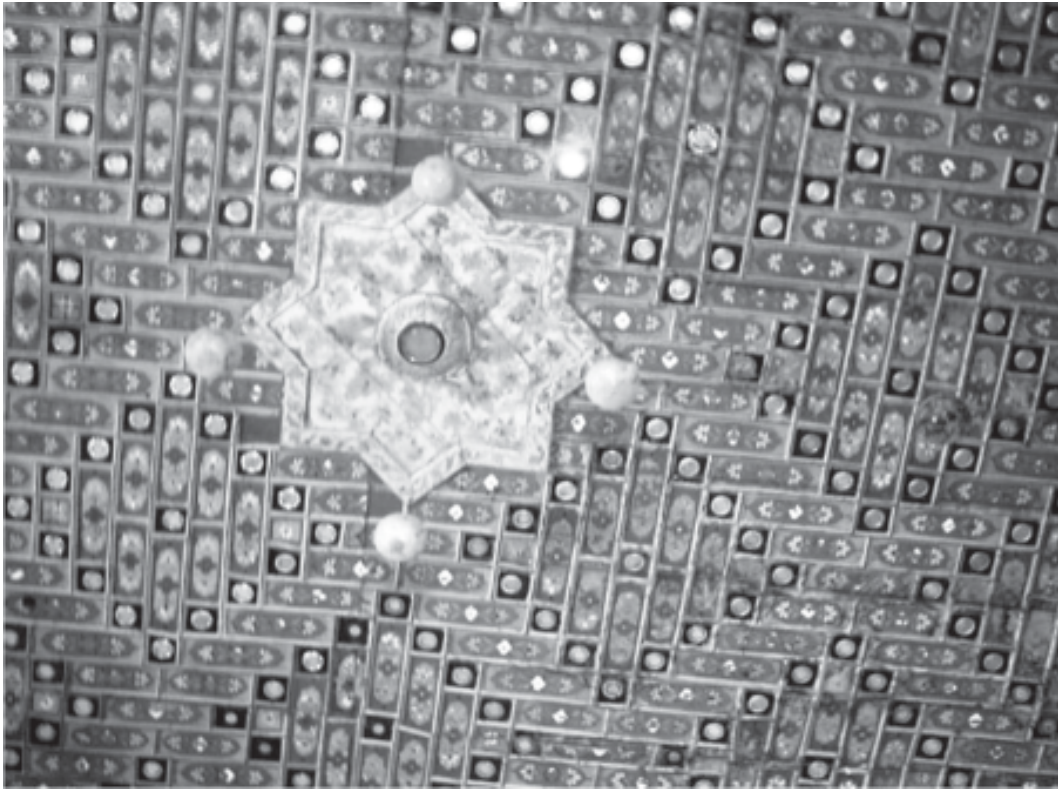
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Pl. 1: Kulāchī: General view of the gateway.



Pl. 2: Kulāchī: Tomb of Faqir Madad Khan, general view.



Pl. 3: Kulāchī: Tomb of Faqir Madad Khan, the decorated ceiling.



Pl. 4: Kulāchī: Mosque of Faqir Madad Khan, a general view.



Pl. 5: Kulāchī: Mosque I, general view.



Pl. 6: Kulāchī: Mosque II, general view.



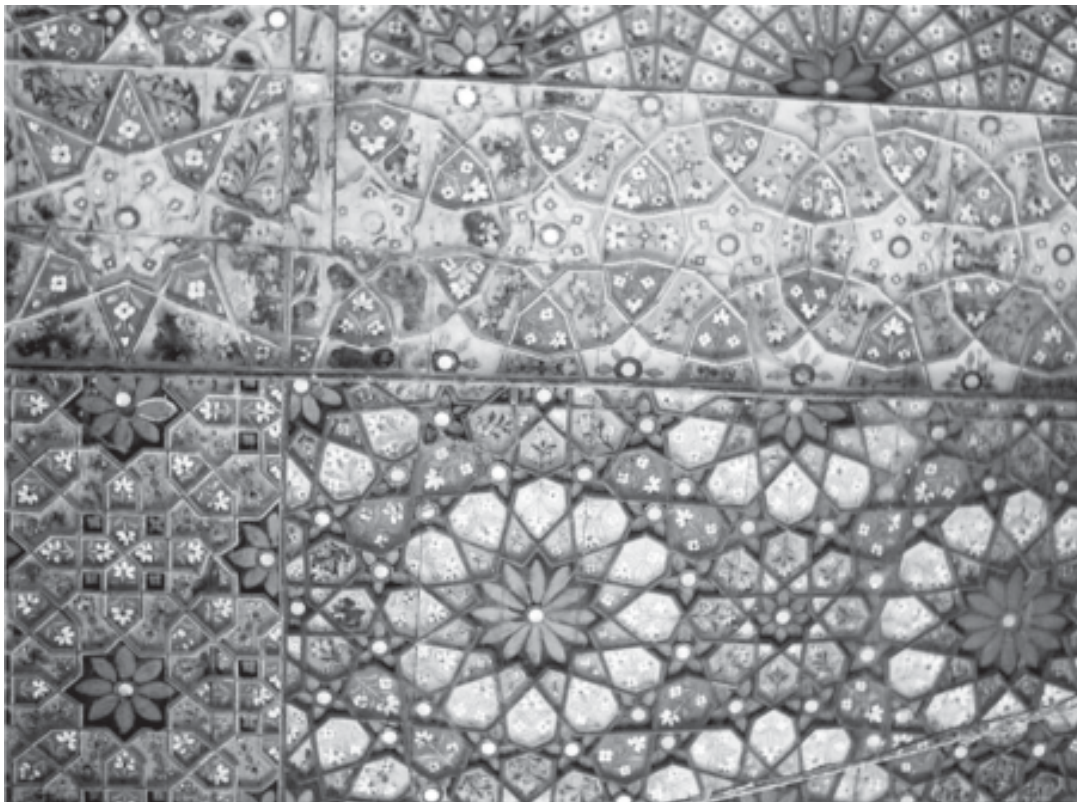
Pl. 7: Kulāchī: Tomb of Baran, general view.



Pl. 8: Kulāchī: Mosque of Faqir Nizam-ud-Din, the facade.



Pl. 9: Kulāchī: Mosque of Faqir Nizam-ud-Din, the Mihrab.



Pl. 10: Kulāchī: Mosque of Faqir Nizam-ud-Din, the decorations.