

The Nomenclature of Chaukhandi Tombs at Makli Hill, Thatta, (Sindh): An Analytical Study

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Aims of the Present Research Work

The aims and objectives of the present research are to investigate the term “Chaukhandi” in order to know the proper routes of its nomenclature. Moreover, an attempt shall be made to evaluate the previous research work in order to understand the core of the problem. Besides, the epigraphical evidences reported by the researchers, is one of the other significant sources through which we can solve the prevailing matter of concern.

Since its discovery, it is generally referred to as the most curious style of architecture, especially in terms of its layout and adornment in the entire contemporary Islamic world. The legendary sources documented by the historians, are stressing upon its association with the Baluchis traditions. In this process, some of the scholars have attributed them to the Shami tombs, while others assigned these tombs to the Rumi burials. The scholars are advocating that since the Shamis came with the Arab army and settled here in Baluchistan, were responsible for the introduction of this unique style. While others have suggested that perhaps, due to the up heave of the Seljuqs, the Rumis (from Central Asia) migrated to Baluchistan and subsequently inhabited the region. These interactions actually caused for the origin of the at issue funerary structures in the Sindh valley. Thus, this new phenomena assimilated with the local values, as a result the in question stance of architecture came in to being (Hasan, 1996, 63; Baluch, 2004, 163). Whereas, according to yet another

view, the Burfati and Kalmati tribes migrated from Baluchistan and settled along the Makran coastal area and eventually entered into the Sindh valley. They brought with themselves, their own mode of funerary architecture, which they constructed here in the memory of their heroes or chieftains. Thus, with the passage of time, this enigmatic stance of architecture, attained fame among the mass and eventually became the pertinent mode of burial in the whole of Sindh valley (Brohi, 1983, 27-29).

Keeping in view the enigmatic stance of the Chaukhandi tombs, Salome Zajadacz-Hastenrath claims that these fabulous structures are peculiar in style and has no parallel example in the contemporary Islamic world (Hastenrath, 2003, XXIII). In this connection, Sheikh Khurshid Hasan also proclaims similar view (Hasan, 1976, 29). While Hastenrath on the basis of rational justifications advocates that very little Chaukhandi tombs have been reported from Baluchistan area, therefore, to assign these funerary burials to the Baluchis, seems to be incorrect, because these have been reported in plentiful in the Sindh valley (Hastenrath, 2003, 8).

The other folkloristic concept of its inception is linked with Jhokiya tribe. In this regard, Bashir Ahmad Jhokio proclaims, that this funerary style of architecture was derived from Jhokhandi (Brohi, 1983, 123; Jhokio, 1991). Whereas, yet another opinion concerning with this kind of burials denotes, that it was evolved either in the lands of Ahmadabad, Gujarat, Kathiawar or Kutch regions (Cousens, 1929, 164-65; Brohi,

1983, 123; Lashari, 1992, 38) and then disseminated to the neighbouring regions. Similarly, since the area of our study is linked through Kutch with the above mentioned vicinities, therefore, as a matter of fact, this peculiar gesture revealed there and later on, conceived in more innovative stance in the area of our study. In this connection, it is utmost sterling to advocate, that since the Samma Rājputs migrated from Kutch towards Thatta, during the 14th century AD were actually responsible for the introduction of their vernacular style of architecture in the area of our study. While the geneses of this style of architecture can be observed in the form of Hindu temples, such as, pavilion shaped *mandapa* and *garbagriha*, which were frequently constructed since 6th, 7th centuries AD and very successfully continued till 13th-14th centuries AD. These features eventually styled into the Chaukhandi tombs. In this connection it is said, that when the Sammas embraced Islam thus, with in the portfolio of socio-religious interactions, this style was being introduced at Makli Hill, this can proved in the case of Jam Tamachi Chaukhandi constructed by the Samma ruler for himself, became fashion in succeeding centuries.

Now a question arises, who for the first time mentioned the word Chaukhandi for these burials? What does it define? Do we have sources to prove the proper etymology? In order to solve all the prevailing concerns, therefore, the different views of the scholars shall be analytically studied. In this process, before proceeding further, to know about the nomenclature of the Chaukhandi tombs at length, the present researchers shall be analysing the work of the previous researchers, in quest of reaching the conclusion of the prevailing matter.

To begin with the proven fact, Macleod was the first person, who in his letter to Bartle Frere in 1851 has mentioned for the first

time, the term Jokundee tombs of Jokeea tribe. Furthermore, Lashari in his contribution quotes James Dickie, who suggested its origin from Jokhandi, which was founded by the Jokhia tribe (James, 1978, 45; Lashari, 1992, 14). In this regard, it is worthwhile, to elaborate further that James Dickie in his work is absolutely salient or he never spoke about the at issue term, as mentioned by Lashari in his works. However, there are such mythical traditions, which are supposing, that these burials were initiated by the Jokhio tribe, since then these are known as Jokhandi tombs. Similarly, Ali Ahmad Brohi is referring that Frere writes it "Jaokhundi" and attributing it to Jokhias". He further mentions that adjacent to Chashma link canal a village with the name of Chaukhandi exists. It may be assumed that the Jokhias have inhabited such structures in this area, which eventually became known as Chaukhandi tombs (Brohi, 1983, 123-124). However, in the presence of epigraphical and literary record, it can undoubtedly be proved that for such tombs the name Chaukhandi can be clearly noticed. This issue needs serious debate, which will be discussed at length in the forth coming pages.

In 1917, Baskerville visited the Chaukhandi village and applied for the first time the name of the village, for the burials, such as Chaukhandi tombs. Thus, the story of such fabulous tomb architecture gained popularity among the galaxy of scholars, who with the passage of time gave valuable attention to solve the nomenclature of the term and the origin of the Chaukhandi tombs.

A question arises here, whether this term is being derived from the name of the village or from the style of architecture? Which eventually caused for the nomenclature of the word Chaukhandi. The other striking feature, which has also been quarried by the scholars to some extent, is the origin of the Chaukhandi tomb architecture. In this

concern, Henry Cousens in 1925, carried out an important documentation and devoted a chapter in his work entitled "The Antiquities of Sindh with Historical outline" in 1929. His work is confined to the history of Daybul Thathah, nevertheless, he discussed few Chaukhandi tombs at Makli Hill. However, later on, his work has been taken up as a road map by the succeeding scholars, in order to cope with the prevailing contention.

In this process, in 1952 Shams-ud Din Ahmad wrote a brochure entitled "A Guide to Thatta and Makli Hill" is yielding a brief account of the Chaukhandi tombs.

Another summarised version of information concerning with the Makli Hill monuments at Thatta, compiled in 1963 by Muhammad Idris Siddiqi entitled, "Thatta" is telling us about the surface information regarding the Chaukhandi tombs at Makli Hill.

Ghafur in 1968 contributed a monograph entitled "The Calligraphers of Thatta". From the title of the book it is quite clear that he concentrated on the calligraphic issues of Thatta and Makli Hill. However, a scanty attempt has been made by the said author (Ghafur, 1968, 55-73). He discussed few writing styles and calligraphers; however, more emphasis is given to the historical perspective of Thatta and figural representation in the Makli Hill monuments (Ghafur, 1968, 1-55).

In the year 1982, Ahmad Hasan Dani contributed a book, entitled "Thatta: Islamic Architecture", besides the mausoleums, grave enclosures, and graves with platforms, he also discussed the Chaukhandi tombs, which he termed "pavilion type tombs". He divided such structures into two periods that is Samma (Dani, 1982: 33-43) and Tarkhans tomb pavilions (Dani, 1982, 123-149), however, few of them have been constructed during the Mughal regime.

In 1983, Ali Ahmad Brohi made an important attempt to organize the concern issues in his work, entitled, "History on tomb stones Sindh and Baluchistan". Besides, other issues he also focused on the nomenclature of the at issue term, however, it is defined in limited manner. Furthermore, the above stated researcher is lacking in giving examples to compare the Makli Hill Chaukhandis with other similar tombs. In this connection, it is important to emphasize, that except the hypothetic version of knowledge and few late period examples, we are absolutely unable to find the exact routes of its origin in his works.

Sheikh Khurshid Hasan published several articles concerning to the various issues of the Chaukhandi tombs at Makli Hill. Such as, in 1975 he discussed the figural representations on the Chaukhandi tombs, in 1976, he contributed an article, focusing on the origin of the Chaukhandi tombs. Similarly in 1981 and 1984, he elaborated the stone carvings executed at Makli Hill, whereas, in 1996 he published a book entitled "Chaukhandi tombs in Pakistan". In the first chapter of this book he discussed the discovery of Chaukhandi tombs (Hasan, 1996, 1-3). The nomenclature of Chaukhandi tomb is summarised in chapter III (Hasan, 1996, 19-23), while he talked about the origin of the Chaukhandi tombs in chapter IV (Hasan, 1996, 24-36) and gave a brief account of the Chaukhandi tomb architecture in chapter VI (Hasan, 1996, 44-54). This book is yielding 21 chapters, however, keeping in view the title of his book, he emphasised more on the other issues, as compare to the scope of his work which is given in summarised form as mentioned above. In the light of above stated discussions, it may be advocated, that more emphasis should be given to the nomenclature of the term Chaukhandi and its

architectural glory, in order to know about the proper genesis of its origin.

It is pertinent to elaborate that Kaleem Lashari has contributed few articles concerning with the structural development of the stone-carved graves in Kohistan. However, in one of his comprehensive article “Evolution of stone graves in Kohistan and Coastal areas in Sindh, Baluchistan”, he was able to work out for the first time, the detailed analysis of the Chaukhandi nomenclature. Moreover, he also discussed at length, the origin of Chaukhandi tombs at Makli Hill (Lashari, 1992, 1-30). In 1995 Kaleem Lashari wrote another article “Structural development of stone curved graves in Kohistan” is based on the classification of the cenotaphs and their layout. He mentioned few Chaukhandis of late period at Pir Lakho graveyard, which is of significant importance, (Lashari, 1995, pl. AK). However, except scanty details and a photograph nothing else can be determined in the context of the Chaukhandi tombs beginning.

In 1997, Sohail Lari and Yasmeen Lari wrote a book on the Samma architecture of Makli Hill. Since it is confined to the Samma period, therefore only Samma period Chaukhandis have been discussed. The good feature of their work is the detailed photographs and the comprehensive drawings showing the plans, elevations and sectional elevations (Lari, 1997, 1-246).

In 1998, Ihsan H. Nadiem wrote a monograph entitled “Makli the Necropolis at Thatta”, based on information provided to tourists. He collected the basic informations, regarding the Makli Hill necropolis and discussed few Chaukhandi tombs, which he termed, pavilion tombs of the Samma and Tarkhan periods (Nadiem, 2000, 1-129).

The work conducted by Hastenrath entitled, “Chaukhandi Tombs Funerary Art in Sindh and Baluchistan (2003), though an extensive research work, yet the scope of work is confined, because more details are given about the single and double casket graves (Hastenrath, 2003, 1-113). However, in terms of the title of her work, “the Chaukhandi tombs” are given lesser importance (Hastenrath, 2003, 113-133). Besides, she also discussed the different components of the graves and their comparative analysis at length, however, very little can be found regarding the Chaukhandi tombs (Hastenrath, 2003, 149-165).

Keeping in view the above cited attempts of the different scholars, therefore, their views shall be carefully analyzed in order to investigate the various controversies.

Nomenclature of Chaukhandi

It is utmost important to advocate, that the local historians have mentioned different terminologies for various regions, regarding the under discussion funerary structure. These are varying, such as; in the Qalat area the term Rumi or Shami is being applied. Whereas, at Lasbela such structures are named with “Mais”, while, in the vicinity of Makran, these are called “Gombads”. Moreover, Aurel Stein during his survey in the Gwadar area in Baluchistan, region recorded the term “Gumbaz” for such funerary structures (Stein, 1991, 73). Whereas, Badayuni in his works, mentioned the term “Ghurfa” for the pillared pavilions (Badayuni, 1898; 1924, 503).

It interesting to make a mention of different names, employed in the Sidnh Valley, such as: “Gharaviyun”, defines the carved ones. Moreover, the Chattrior pavilion shaped structure is commonly called as “Chawkhandis” (Brohi, 1983, 123).

However, the natives of the Sindh valley have generally referred the term “Chaukhandi”, instead of ‘Chawkandhi’ or “Chaukundi”. Sometimes, the folkloristic versions are denoting its etymology from “Chhatyun” or “Jatan-Joon-Chhatyun” and sometime, “Pilijan-Joon-Chhatyun”. These soundings may be assumed, to have been derived from “Chhatri”, the umbrella like or pavilion shape or in canopy style. In this connection, we can proclaim, that these may be assumed to be the other names of the Chaukhandi tombs in the Sindh valley.

In this process, we must investigate to know that who and when for the first time talked about this specific term for these funerary structures? It is utmost pertinent to claim that, Macleod, was the first person who spoke about the term “Jokundee tombs” of Jokeas tribe. He later on communicated these informations to Bartle Frere in 1851. He published these tombs in 1857 (Frere, 1857, 355). However, H.D. Baskerville in 1917, visited the Chaukhandi village, and observed canopy tombs, which he discussed at length and published these for the first time. He used the term Chaukhandi tomb for these funerary pavilions (Baskerville, 1920, 79). Later on, Benerji has also been to the Chaukhandi village and proclaims that the pavilions located there, are also known with the same name of the village, such as, Chaukhandi tombs (Hasan, 1976, 98-107; 1996, 19). Whereas, in 1925, Henry Cousens advocated similar verdict, regarding the portfolio of its etymology, somehow, in a broader sense using the term “Chaukhandi”, for all the stone graves, located between Hyderabad and Karachi (Cousens, 1975, 165; Hastenrath, 1978, 1-30). Zafar Hasan in his works conducted in 1959, focuses on the same approach, as advocated by the above mentioned scholars. In this process, he is stressing, that the village by itself has owed its name from the Chaukhandi tombs lying there (Hasan, 1959, 36-62). Moreover,

Muhammad Abdul Ghafur in 1968 also attributed the same opinion; concerning the “Chaukhandi tombs” he suggested that it derives from the name of the site (Ghafur, 1968, 24). Furthermore, Sheikh Khurshid Hasan in 1976 and two decades later, in his contributions, proclaims that Chaukhandi is the name of the place (Hasan, 1976, 98-107; 1996, 18).

Likewise, Mirza Kazim Raza Beg denies its relation with the mode or pattern of the grave (Beg, 1990) and suggested that it owes from the name of the place. Keeping in view the above cited recommendations of the scholars who related it to the name of a place, somehow, bears difference of opinions because the other considered that this very term has been taken from the structural composition (Hasan, 1968, 26), therefore, these may be called as the Chaukhandi tombs.

Likewise, the application of the term Chaukhandi for the place such as, Chaukhandi village, the locals also used this name for the Mangho Pir’s canopies (Hasan, 1996, 19-23). Similarly, the graveyard at Khudabad Salis near Hala, the pillared pavilions are still called by the natives, as “Chaukhandis”. Yet another such graveyard with the name of Chaukhandi is situated between Amri and Sann (Lashari 1992, 18).

Ahmad Hassan Dani in his arguments advocates that a platform having four corners with graves, is called “Chaukhandi”. In this connection, he refers few examples at Makli Hill (Dani, 1982, 152). However, Dani seems to be incorrect in his interpretation regarding the proper etymology of the in question word. Because, the epigraphical record is alluding to the very fact, that the term ‘Chaukhandi’ has been applied for the pavilion shaped tombs rather than the graves on the square platform.

It is sterling to add further that N.A. Baluch, in the light of above stated justification, has a different approach of opinion. He announces "Chaukhandi" is a square or rectangular open complex (Baluch, 1991, 244-5). In his recent works, he mentions that the term "Chaukhandi", literally means a four walled enclosure open from above. He further mentions that in the cultural tradition of Sindh, a 'four-walled enclosure' is called "Chaukhandi", which is constructed around the graves of a venerated person. He further explains, "Chaukhandi" as such, is not a grave or tomb in itself, but the four-walled enclosure having no roof is called, "Chaukhandi" (Baluch, 2004, 193-4).

In the historical records, we have plenty of references for the word Chaukhandi. In this process, Kaleem Lashari quotes Nizam-ud-Din Mirza's "Tabqat-i-Akbari" taking an account of a fortress at Surat. He mentions that "Chaukhandi" is a canopy built above the towers of the fortresses (Lashari, 1992, 16).

Abdul Hameed Lahori speaks about the red sandstone octagonal "Chaukhandi" over the towers of Shalamar Garden at Lahore (Lahori, 1866-68). However, we find that this word has been also applied for a burial complex. In this connection, it is worthwhile, to make a mention, that in "Waqiat-e-Darul Hakumat Delhi", the writer refers to the Chaukhandi of Wali Hassai, which is located to the east of Chausath Khambay (Ahmad, 1919 & 1990, 577-8, 673-5).

It is interesting to note here that Kaleem Lashari has conducted a serious research, concerning the prevailing issue. He concluded that the local people inhabiting in the Sindh valley, have never shown any doubt regarding these sorts of structures. They call the four-walled enclosure having no roof as, "Raṅk", which is constructed around the graves (Lashari, 1992, 15; Hasan,

1996, 20). In this connection, he finds few examples in a graveyard, close to the Mal Muhari. Here some graves are encircled by compound wall, about five feet high. The gateway on the southern side bears the inscription, which comprehend "Raṅk of Kalo Radin and Hamal Radho Kalo". There is another example in the graveyard of Raj Malik, where inscription on the screen interprets; Raṅk of Radha bin Malir. Here an elevated podium consists of stone carved graves, provided with a low screen on all four sides (Lashari, 1992, 15, 28). Thus, it appears in the light of Kaleem Lashari and Sheikh Khurshid Hasan's evidences, the definition of N.A. Baluch seem far from the fact. Thus, "Raṅk" means a grave platform with enclosure wall, whereas, the Chaukhandi means a Chattri like or pavilion shaped structure. It can be proved in the view of Ernest Binfield Havel, who proclaims that Chakhandi is a funerary structure in pavilion shape (Havel, 1927, 64). Whereas, James Fergusson advocates that Chaukhandi is an Indo-Islamic burial. Moreover, he suggests that its style is taken from the Hindu Temples (Fergusson, 1910, 164-169).

However, Lashari and Sheikh Khurshid claim that the mode of construction actually caused for the origin of its name. In this regard, Lashari recorded for the first time the word "Chaukhandi" for the burial structures, which is inscribed on the tomb of Jam Murid bin Haji and that of Malik Murid Khan at Got Raj Malik. In this regard, Lashari interprets as:

"The word "Chaukhandi" is inscribed on the grave of Jam Murid is a compound word, which is connected with Sahib. So it is to be read as such and not alone, i.e., Sahib-e-Chaukhandi (Lashari, 1992, 17; Hasan, 1996: 20). The inscription leaves no doubt to this fact, that there is sufficient space in between Haji and Sahib, placing them apart and the word "Chaukhandi" is nearer to Sahib. Thus,

Sahib is to be read with Chaukhandi and not with Haji. It makes the meaning clear, that Jam Murid is the owner of the Chaukhandi or the Chaukhandi is erected over his grave” (Lashari, 1992, 17-18; Hasan, 1996, 20).

In this process, Lashari further refers, to the graveyard of “Thado”, where the grave of Malik Tuta, though in ruined state yet, it is known as the Chaukhandi of Tuta (Lashari, 1992, 18). Moreover, in the remains of Khudabad Salis near Hala, the locals named such kind of canopies above the graves of martyrs, as Chaukhandis. Lashari has far enough evidences concerning the term Chaukhandi tombs. In this regard, he mentions the ruins of Chaukhandi graveyard. It is located between Amri and Sann, which is visibly denoting that these Chaukhandis eventually caused for the origin of the name. The inscription reported in the above stated graveyard reads as, “the Chaukhandi over the grave of Jam Chhatta dated to 1110 AH” (Lashari, 1992, 18-19). Another inscription with similar meaning, can be seen on a grave, in the graveyard of Raj Malik, here it reads: “this Chaukhandi is erected over Malik Murid Khan Kalmati by his son Malik Baber” (Lashari, 1992, 30-45). The above stated evidences are clearly alluding to the very fact, that the term Chaukhandi without any doubt may be applied for the Chattri or pavilion shaped structure. These epigraphical evidences, concerning the at issue term, leaves no doubt in the proper identification of these buildings on one hand, while on the other hand the application of the word signifies to the structural composition.

In order to solve the prevailing matter of concerns, Bashir Ahmad Jokhio suggests, that this has been derived from a Sindhi word, which means a four cornered ‘grave’. He further defines “Khand”, means empty place (Jokhio, 1991). Thus, it appears that a four cornered place, which is empty inside, is called “Chaukhandi”. This interpretation also

seems far from the fact, because, the proper etymology of the word under discussion may be found in the Sanskrit version. In this regard, Nath is quoting from H. Raj’s works, which refers its nomenclature from a Sanskrit word, “Caturkhanda”, which means, four corners or sides or pillars. Whereas, in Hindi it defines, “Chowkhandi”, which modifies into “Chaukhandi”, meaning a four sided pavilion or a Chattri like structure (Nath, 1986, 29). In this process, Anand Raj in his Hindi dictionary explains, that “Chau” stands for “four” and “Khand” as “Part” or sides (Lashari, 1992, 16). Mumtaz Hasan defines the term Chaukhandi in the context of textual sources. He suggests that it is a compound word of two Sindhian terms “Chau” denotes four, whereas, “Khund” stands for corners or pillars (Hasan, 1968, 20). Thus, literally it would explain a structure in umbrella or Chattri shape or a dome supported by the pillars. Thus, in generalised version of definition, it would indicate the umbrella like structure. Moreover, Nath in search of its proper etymology considers the word Chaukhandi is a compound of two Sanskrit terms, “Chau” means four and “Khanda” defines a storey or a structure, a side or corner. Thus, Chaukhanda literally means, a four sided or four corner structure. Furthermore, Nath differentiated Chaukhandi from a Chattri, he says, “a Chaukhandi has a pyramidal capping, whereas, a Chattri is bearing a domical stance” (Nath, 1993, 339-59). However, the later definition of Nath differentiating the Chaukhandi from Chattri seems to be incorrect because those pavilions inscribed with the title “Chaukhandi” actually means a Chattri like structure, which apparently denotes, to the similar form of structure, such as, pavilion or canopy shaped tombs.

Moreover, H. Raj considers that Chattri is taken from a Sanskrit word, “Chattra”, which defines umbrella or a pillared pavilion.

Whereas, Williams in his Sanskrit dictionary, suggests that Chattri signifies “Chattri Śala” “a Chattri like structure”, (Nath, 1986, 29; Williams, 1963, 404, col. I-II). Thus, literally it denotes that “Chattri Śala” or “Chaukhandi” defining the same meaning, that a domical structure being supported by means of pillars, might be four or could be many in number, may also be called “Chaukhandi”.

Besides, some of the scholars are also using the word “canopy” for the Chaukhandi tombs. In this regard, Nath considers that in Sanskrit, it stands for “Vitana” or Sayban, whereas, in Latin it reads as “canopeum”. While in Greek, it signifies Konops that developed into Konopion (Nath, 1986, 18), which eventually evolved into canopy. It is indeed pertinent to discuss further, that some of the linguists have recorded it, a pavilion shape structure. In this process, in Sanskrit version it means, “Mandwa”, a pillared structure. In this connection, Nath claims its derivation from a Latin word “Papilo”, suggesting a Chattri like or a structure in Chaukhandi shape (Nath, 1986, 90). In the above cited etymological portfolio, it can be safely suggested that the different names recorded by the scholars represent the exact routes of nomenclature, which undoubtedly referring to the under concern style.

According to Persian dictionaries, in context of Chaukhandi style, it is a structure with open doorways all around (Dehkhuda, 1340, 387). Now if we compare the Persian definitions in the case of “Chatta” or “Chattri”, we shall be able to find a comparable stance in its architectural composition, holding similarity with the terms of our concern. In more authentic manner, Badayuni in his contribution suggests that the Persian word “Ghurfa” stands for a pillared pavilion (Badayuni, 1924, 503). It is important to add further that yet another valuable opinion has been

forwarded, in order to workout the proper etymology of the word under discussion. Similarly, Jairazbhoy refers that the term “Kiosk”, is taken from a Persio-Turkic word “Kushik” which defines, a pavilion shaped structure. He further suggests it may be observed in round shape or in octagonal plan or even square in gesture (Jairazbhoy, 1972, 296).

It is interesting to proclaim further that Qani in “Makli Nama” mentions, the Chattri of Budi-uz-Zaman, which is octagonal in plan and resting on eight pillars, whereas, the square one of Qazi Ahmad rests on twelve pillars is called Chaukhandi. It appears that the four cornered one is called Chaukhandi (Qani, 1994, 488). Thus, in the light of above stated definitions, it becomes quite clear that the Chattri or canopy even pavilion shaped structures are called as “Chaukhandi”, whether in square or in octagonal plan.

In this regard, Sheikh Khurshid Hasan advocates that Chaukhandi tombs are not confined to the square shape, because these are generally resting on more than four pillars (Hasan, 1996, 9). In this connection, the present researcher is of the view, that in the case of Makli Hill, besides, the square shape Chaukhandi, these were also erected in hexagonal and octagonal plans.

Furthermore, Ferishta in his monumental work “Tarikh-e-Ferishta”, Afif in “Tarikh-e-Feroz Shahi” and Ali Sher Qani Thattavi in “Makli Namu”, have defined “Chaukhandi”, as a canopy erected with the support of pillars (Ferishta, 1966, 147; Qani, 1994, 193-194; Lashari, 1992, 16).

Ali Ahmad Brohi interprets that it does not mean simply ‘four’ but ‘from four’, it signifies ‘open on all four sides’ (Brohi, 1983, 7-13). In this sequence, Hastenrath in her works explains that the term Chaukhandi is used for a domed roof, or a kind of

‘chhatri’, which is supported by four to eight pillars, while the sides are left open (Hastenrath, 2003, 113).

It is worthwhile to advocate that Muhammad Idris Siddiqi claims its etymology from the canopy or pavilion tombs, owing its derivation from the Chattri shaped Hindu temples (Siddiqi, 1963, 14). In this connection the under discussion funerary structure has been also mentioned by A.H. Dani and describes that such type of pavilion tombs are generally resting on pillars and crowned by a dome (Dani, 1982, 34-43, 123-149). While Ihsan-ul Haq Nadiem named such funerary structures with tomb pavilions or canopy tombs (Nadiem, 1998, 34-36; 2002, 91, col. II). Whereas, Sohail Z. Lari and Yasmeen Lari termed such tomb structures with Chattri tombs or canopy tombs, which are crowned by a dome supported with pillars (Lari, 1997, 92, col. I-II).

Similarly, Lashari is quoting Syed Hakim Ali Shah Bukhari, who suggests that Chaukhandi is a grave having four corners. These graves are being sheltered by the canopy, which is supported by pillars (Lashari, 1992, 17-45). Sheikh Khurshid notifies the combination of “Kund” and rejects the word “Khund”. Thus relating the term with the architecture stands for “umbrella shaped canopy”. However, the locals spell it “Chaukhandi” instead of “Chaukundi” (Hasan, 1996, 19-23), which seems to be exact spelling and pronunciation of the word under discussion and should be undoubtedly followed for the in question funerary structures.

It is utmost significant to advocate further that the etymological value of the at issue term is clearly in picturing, that the various names recorded in different languages such as, in Sanskrit, Hindi and in Persian Persio-Turkic traditions or even in the Sindhian sources, one way or the other signifying to a

building, which represents a domical structure and resting on pillars. It is significant to add further that with passage of time the pavilion shaped *mandapa*, *antharalas* and *garbagrihas* of the Hindu temples were styled into the Islamic tomb pavilions initiated at Hansi in AD 1278-80 and Gulberga in AD 1280-81. These were later on very successfully erected in Ahmadabad, Gujarat, which eventually influenced Delhi, in this case the Hauz-e-Khas complex AD 1360. However, it’s more developed and mature phase may be undoubtedly observed at Makli Hill. In this process, the “Chaukhandi” tomb of Jam Tamachi AD 1388-92 at Makli Hill is the beginning of this style, which becomes more mature during the Tarkhan domain. This fashion later on, continued during the Mughal rule over Thatta. During this phase of time the Chaukhandi tombs of Murad Nizam ud Din AD 1639 and that of Mirza Tughral Beg AD 1657 are the good examples of Makli Hill.

Thus, in the light of above stated literary and epigraphical sources, this enigmatic form of funeral architecture may be undoubtedly termed as “Chaukhundi tombs”, rather than any other term, however, the local spells it ‘Chaukhandi’, is showing Chaukhandi tombs and seems to be very common among the locals as well as research scholars therefore, this common word “Chaukhundi tombs” would means to say, a canopy or pavilion or Chattri like tombs. Keeping in view, all the above stated possibilities, therefore, the present researchers will also use the same term “Chaukhundi tombs” not only for the Makli Hill necropolis, but also for the other regions, which have been constructed in the above stated style.

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