

The Mausoleum of Khusrau Khan Charkas at Makli Hill, Thatta: History and Architecture

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Location

Thatta is located 98 km east of Karachi. The necropolis of Makli Hill lies about three km southwest of Thatta. The mausoleum under study is situated to the north eastern flank of the Makli Hill and lies to the southwest of Sheikh Jia's tomb in the same necropolis.

Introduction

The "Makli Hill", school of art and architecture yields a galaxy of classical buildings. These monuments possess significant features of art and architecture, mostly in vernacular style. Besides, there are many examples, which show, that these have been derived through the Persian and Central Asian interactions. In this process, it may be proclaimed here that the local values were amalgamated with the foreign traditions due to the cultural interactions. Thus as a blend of cultures, a new form of art and architecture, evolved in the area of our study. In this sequence, it is worthwhile to elaborate that since the area of our interest was ruled by the Samma dynasty from AD 1337 till AD 1520, who were from the local Rajput clan, therefore, they emphasized on the indigenous values. In this regard, Gujarat, Ahmadabad and Kathiawar traditions have greatly encouraged the vernacular art of the Makli Hill on one hand, whereas, on the other, the Central Asian in particular, under the Arghuns AD 1520-55, Tarkhans AD 1555-1613 and later the Mughals AD 1613 (Qazi, 2011: 83) have brought with them their own traditions. Likewise, with the passage of time their interactions caused for the glory of the Makli Hill style of tomb architecture. Thus it appears that the indigenous style was also influenced by the Persian and Central Asian trends which were uniform in the area of our concern and reached perfection during the Tarkhan and later Tarkhan period.

It may be further added that among the various unique and imposing structures at Makli Hill, Satcharni is one of the foremost pertinent buildings, which is undoubtedly invites the scholars' interest in order to solve the prevailing concerns regarding the origin of this enigmatic and folkloristic structure. There is controversy among the different groups of researchers concerning the origin of the term "Satcharni" and the date of its construction. In this regard, question arises here, that when this edifice was constructed and to whom it may be assigned? In this regard, the present researchers would be aiming to find out, the possible solution, for the proper nomenclature of the term "Satcharni" and the date of its construction.

It is to pinpoint here that as per local traditions, the under debate building was built for the family of Khusrau Khan Charkas. However, about the grave of the above mentioned person, except "Makli Namo" other sources of pertinent values are absolutely silent. Therefore, as per traditions this enigmatic building has owed its name, which gained tremendous fame, during the succeeding centuries. Besides, Khusrau Khan Charkas also constructed a grand mosque known as Masjid-e-Dabgaran or Dabgir Mosque at Thatta in AD 1588 (Khan, 1978: 23, Dani, 1982: 175, Khan, 1991: 57), which is an exquisite precedent, showing the aesthetic sense and engineering skills of the in question person.

Historical Background

Khusrau Khan Charkas remained an eminent figure of Thatta, during the Tarkhan period (AD. 1555-1613). However, there is controversy among the scholars, regarding the early history of the under discussion person. In

this connection, Siddiqui in his works has mentioned, that Khusrau Khan Charkas was the slave of Mullah Jan Bandri. Whereas, Qani in his contributions has recorded that Mullah Jani was having a lot of Indian and circassian (Charkas), Chinese (Khatai) slaves (Dani, 1982: 175, Khan 1978: 18, Qani, 2002: 285-6, Siddiqui, 1972: 195-6). Due to his significant qualities, he was purchased by Isa Khan Tarkhan-I (AD 1555-66) the founder of Tarkhan dynasty at Thatta (Siddiqui, 1972: 248, Javadi, 1992: 314, Nisyani, 1964: 13). Khusrau Khan Charkas very intelligently supported Mirza Baqi Beg Tarkhan (AD 1566-1584) in the administrative affairs. He remained as an instructor of Mirza Jani Beg Tarkhan, who later on, appointed him his lawyer (Qani, 2002: 285-6, Siddiqui, 1972: 195-6).

It is indeed interesting to pinpoint here, that there is controversy among the scholars regarding the last ruler of the Tarkhan dynasty. In this sequence, it is generally claimed, that when Ghazi Beg Tarkhan died on 11th Safar 1021/13th April 1612 (Nisyani, 1964: 270, Elliot & Dowson, 1979: vol. I: 500, Akhtar, 1990: 86) thus, with his death the Tarkhan government over Thatta was ended. In this connection, the eminent historians have also recorded that after his demise, the Mughal king appointed governors of Thatta. However, as a matter of fact, after the death of Ghazi Beg Tarkhan, he was succeeded by Mirza Abdul Ali Tarkhan-II a little known ruler of Thatta. He was actually supported by Khusrau Khan Charkas in his succession, during the last days of April 1612. However, since the later Tarkhans were ruling over Thatta as vassal kings, therefore, when King Jehangir received the news of their disobedience thus both were summoned to the court of Delhi on 16th May 1613 where they were imprisoned (Akhtar, 1990: 86-7). Thus, the later Tarkhan government was properly merged into the Mughal Empire. Therefore, to run the administrative issues of the Sindh province, Isa Khan Tarkhan-II was nominated as the first governor of the Mughals over Sindh.

It is important to advocate here that the burial place of Khusrau Khan Charkas is one of the other debatable issues, which created doubts

among the scholars. However, Dani quoting Qani who in Makli Namo on the basis of valid justifications, has very correctly assigned "Satcharni" place of Khusrau Khan Charkas. However, it is sterling to note here that according to "Tarkhan Nama" he died during the imprisonment at Delhi. Whereas, Qani in "Tohfath ul Kiram" mentions, that he died as a free man in 1028 AH/ AD 1618 and was buried at Ajmer (Qani, 1994: 214, Akhtar, 1990: 87, Khan, 1978: 24). While, in the Urdu translation of "Tohfath-ul-Kiram", composed by Akhtar Rizvi, it is recorded, that later on, he went to Iran, where he died and was buried there (Qani, 2002: 286). However, as a matter of fact, this magnificent edifice was constructed by Khusrau Khan Charkas (Khan, 1978: 19; Dani, 1982: 164). Whereas, Qani in "Makli Namu", has recorded it as Raṅk of Khusrau Khan Charkas" (Qani, 1994: 195; Dani, 1982: 164). In this sequence, it is indeed important to add here, that in Sindhi language "Raṅk", means, an enclosure wall or more precisely, it defines, graves located inside an enclosure wall (Lashari, 1992: 15; Hassan, 1996: 20). Thus, in the light of above stated valid references mentioned by Qani and Dani in their contributions, therefore, it may be undoubtedly proclaimed, that the in question building was the last resting place of Khusrau Khan Charkas. It is noteworthy to argue here that the word "Raṅk", which has been specifically used for a certain group of graves, encircled by the enclosure wall, entirely a different mode of workmanship, which can be seen for the first time at Makli Hill, during the Samma period (Dani, 1982: 43, Lari, 1997: 134). Whereas, the under discussion category of tombs, may be placed in the mausoleum style of architecture. However, at Makli Hill one can very easily differentiate between the Raṅk forms of burial enclosures from the typical mausoleum style. In this process, the former mode of work can be visibly observed at the Makli Hill necropolis such as, the Raṅk of Darya Khan (AD. 1490-1513) (Dani, 1982: 43, Lari, 1997: 134, Nadiem, 2000: 59), Issa Khan Tarkhan-I (AD. 1565-72) (Dani, 1982: 114, Nadiem, 2000: 78), Baqi Beg Tarkhan (AD 1585) (Dani, 1982: 120, Nadiem, 2000: 85) and

Abdul Ali Tarkhan-II (9 Rajab 1040/ 11th Feb.1631) (Javadi, 1992: 273, pl. 117) etc.

Besides, the proper identification of that issue tomb and the exact nomenclature of the term "Rank", the other foremost pertinent concern is the dating of this tomb. Regarding the above stated issue, we have no evidence, in the form of epigraphical and literary sources, to date this illustrious structure. However, it is significant to argue here that Dani in his book "Thatta: Islamic Architecture" has proposed the probable date of its construction, which he assigns to the 16th century AD (Dani, 1982: 165). However, keeping in view the architectural style adopted in the under study tomb, is showing resemblance with the Dabgir mosque AD 1588, which is clearly indicating that the shape of the pointed arches, stucco stalactite work glazed plastering technique and the tile work adomment wrought in the above mentioned two buildings, is also showing its continuation from the tomb of Sultan Ibrahim Khan Tarkhan (AD 1558-65). Thus it appears that the above cited issues were later on very successfully adopted by the builders in the Dabgir mosque and in the tomb of Khusrau Khan Charkas. Since the builder of these two edifices was the same person, therefore, their similarity in the stylistical approach is undoubtedly advocating that both these structures were constructed in the same time or perhaps the under study tomb was erected slightly later (between A.D 1590 and 1600). Initially in this tomb his family members were buried. However, when he died in 1028 A.H/A.D 1618 (Akhtar, 1990: 87, n. 643; Khan, 1978: 24) thus, he was also laid to rest, in this fabulous tomb. It is add here that the graves located inside the tomb chamber are absolutely defaced; therefore, it is difficult to determine the exact identification of these graves.

1. Plan

This tomb chamber is externally chamfered in plan (Fig. 1), which is measuring 19.58 x 19.65m and is octagonal internally measuring 7.62 x 7.66m.

2. Platform

The platform is chamfered in plan. The core of the plinth is entirely constructed from the Makli Hill stones, which are cemented with lime mortar. The outer facing is wrought with rectangular shape dressed yellow marble tiles (pl. 1). These are varying in size, such as 61 x 22cm, 38 x 22cm, 58 x 11cm and 59 x 10cm. It is indeed interesting to suggest that the height of this podium from the present ground level is varying such as 1.57m, 1.70m and 1.79m. It may be further elaborated that the outer facing of this platform is slightly impacted by the salinity, because of the wet breeze blowing across, flowing from the Indus and Arabian Sea.

3. Outer walls

The four outer walls are erected above the platform, which have been constructed from two different size bricks, i.e. the square (measuring 25 x 25 x 4cm) and rectangular (measuring 23 x 12 x 5cm). These rectangular bricks are actually terracotta tiles. The outer surfaces of the terracotta tiles are mostly defaced. However, one can observe the intact terracotta tiles on the eastern side. The outer facing of the wall is visibly illustrating the naked brick architectural masonry. This style was initiated by the Sammas at Makli Hill. In this connection, the first ever brick structure in the area of our study is the Makli mosque (A.D 1392). Since then this kind of masonry gained popularity at Makli Hill. However, it reached its perfection during the Tarkhan period. This building may be termed as one of the unique examples in terms of its layout, design and naked brick masonry.

4. Entrances

The main entrance is located on the west side. The existing height of the entrance is 2.73m. It is in the shape of arcaded vestibule, the main arch entrance has fallen below the shoulder level.

5. Western side arcaded vestibule

The western entrance is in the form of an arcaded vestibule. It can be divided into three

parts. The outer part of this vestibule is measuring (3.78x2.25m), and can be approached through the archway, which has fallen; however, its existing height is 2.73 m. The inner end of the outer vestibule is provided with an arch entrance. It is 5.66m in height from the ground level. From here a flight of steps is leading to the inner chamber. The soffit of this arch is slightly projected outwards; its width is 1.89m. At the inner end similar arch is added, its height is 4.92m. It is placed on the third step of the above stated flight of steps. The middle vestibule is measuring 2.27 x 1.89m. Whereas, the third or the inner most vestibule is measuring 2.40 x 1.50m. The inner end of this vestibule is showing an arch entrance to the tomb chamber, its height is 4.36m. It may be pointed out that this arch is intact and its inner soffit is showing the rectangular shape bricks laid in profile.

It may be added here that five steps are provided to approach the inner chamber. This portion was once completely plastered, however, few traces of this plaster can be still observed. In this connection, it is worth while, to advocate here that the above stated plaster is showing few signs of glazed plaster work (Pacca Qalai work). This kind of work is appearing for the first time at Makli Hill.

It is important to note that the remaining three sides i.e. the (north, south and east) are identical to the western side. However, the southern side is comparatively intact. In this regard, it is significant to elaborate here that the first (outer) and the second (central) vestibules of the eastern, southern and northern sides are filled up to the platform level with the stones from the Makli Hill and then plastered with the modern cement, an unfair work done in the past by the archaeological curators or concern authorities to whom the conservation task was assigned.

6. Tomb Chamber

The tomb chamber is octagonal in plan (Fig. 1). It is measuring 7.80 x 7.80 m. The cordinal arch alcoves are slightly larger as

compared to those on the four angles. These arched alcoves are linking the octagonal chambers of the corners with the tomb chamber. These arch alcoves are measuring 4.67 x 2.60 x 1.60m. The arched alcoves above the cornice moulding show a triple series of smaller arch niches (pl. 3). These are piling up one above the other. The alternate one is concave, while the rest are flat. They support the half domical ceiling. The remaining part of the domical ceiling is executed by means of stucco stalactite work.

7. Octagonal chambers at the angles

The octagonal chambers at the four chamfered corners are identical to each other (Pl. 2). These are measuring 3.57x3.57m. These four octagonal chambers to their outer ends are provided with arched alcove openings, which are facing the outer side. These are measuring 2.50x1.57m. These octagonal chambers on their either sides are provided with arched alcoves.

The north western side octagonal chamber is mostly fallen above the dado level; however, from the intact remains one can easily determine its features. Such as the arched alcove to the northwestern side has opening. Whereas the southeastern side arched alcove is yielding an entrance to the tomb chamber. While the inner side flanks are possessing stairs leading to the upper storey. The remaining three octagonal chambers are show similar treatment (fig. 1). It is important to mention here that the southwestern and northeastern octagonal chambers are fallen above the cornice level while the southeastern octagonal chamber is slightly intact. The preserved parts show that these were provided with half domical ceilings, which are showing stucco stalactite work. Furthermore, the plastered patches at few places inside the octagonal chambers are clearly indicating the use of glazed plaster work. It is sterling to make a mention here that the spandrels of the south eastern chamber at few places, is exhibiting the traces of floral scrolls, executed with enamelled ceramic tiles, these have been wrought on the dado level. The above stated four octagonal chambers at their

ends have been provided with narrow arched openings measuring 2x1m. These are linking the main tomb chamber.

The above stated narrow arch entrances at their inner ends are flanked on either side by the staircases. These are yielding similar arched openings. The arch opening of staircase is measuring 2mx37cm, while each step is measuring 74x26x24cm. These steps are mostly damaged, however, one of the staircase on the northeastern side is yielding 11 intact steps while, the staircase on the southeastern side is showing 14 steps. It is significant to elaborate here that the exact number of these steps in the light of existing evidences may be determined as 14. It is interesting to highlight that after entering the octagonal chamber, one can ascend the roof through these stair cases.

The dado level of the southeastern octagonal chamber possesses few traces of the painted glazing work. It is clearly indicating that once the entire surface was elegantly embellished with glazing work. Moreover, the dado level is showing the traces of floral scrolls.

The cornice moulding is provided with eight smaller size squinches. They support the low domical ceiling. The existing height of the southeastern octagonal chamber is 4.56m and the existing height of the northeastern octagonal chamber is 4.40m. The alcove ceiling of this octagonal chamber is veneered in fish scale pattern. This type of arrangement is providing stability to the structural composition. Furthermore, the above stated treatment in the half domical ceilings can be observed for the first time during the Tarkhan period. Later on, this kind of treatment became one of the striking features of the Makli Hill monuments. This may be clearly noticed in the tombs of Jani Beg Tarkhan, Diwan Shurafa Khan, in the unknown Chaukhandi tomb to the south of Jani Beg Tarkhan and in the tomb enclosure of Baqi Beg Uzbek.

8. Dome

The above stated four octagonal chambers at their four corners are crowned by the smaller sized domes. They have completely fallen only the traces of their drums survive. The central dome was placed above the octagonal drum, which is mostly fallen however, its existing height above the floor of the roof is 35cm. It is therefore, indeed difficult to tell something about the height and shape of the central dome.

9. Comparison and Conclusion

The famous vernacular historians are proclaiming their own suggestions concerning the word "Satcharni" for example, "Sat", defines seven and "Charṇi", means ascending. In this connection, A.H. Dani explains it as 'seven steps' (Dani, 1982: 164). However, the present researchers are of the view, that each corner is yielding two stair cases, which obviously means that the present structure is possessing eight stairs cases instead of seven steps. Furthermore, each stair case is accommodating more than eight steps. Therefore, in the light of above stated discussion, it appears that perhaps initially this building was known as "Hasht Charṇi" (eight staircases). However, the locals with the passage of time, instead of pronouncing "Sha" properly, they replaced it with "Sa" thus, it became as "Hast", thus slowly and gradually evolved into "Sat", which apparently came to be known as "satcharni", while seems to be the correct interpretation of the in question term.

It is worthwhile to elaborate further that besides the proper nomenclature of this term the other foremost pertinent issue of this fabulous structure is the origin of its stylistical approach, adopted in this building. It is worthwhile to advocate here that in the Indo-Pak subcontinent, the concept of chamfered plan can be noticed for the first time in the mausoleum of Humayun (AD. 1564). The idea of this fabulous mausoleum has been derived from the Persian traditions. However, the indigenous values have also played a vital role in the assimilation of different issues (Bunce, 2004: 114), which

blended with the neighbouring traditions, thus as a result new trends were set up, such interactions were eventually caused for the transformation of ideas, which immensely influenced that at these buildings. However, as far as, the stylistical approach of the "Satcharni" is concerned, it was perhaps derived from the plan of a certain Baradari, which is assigned to the Raja Todar Mal (remained as a revenue minister during Sher Shah Suri's rule), is located at Fateh Pur Sikri (Nath, 1994: 413; fig. 81). The ground plan of the above stated Baradari is possessing similarly to the tomb of Khusrau Khan Charkas, however, except the octagonal chambers provided to the each flank of Khusrau Khan Charkas tomb, rest of the ground storey plan of these two buildings is showing similarity. Thus it proves that the cultural interactions were caused for the origin on the under study style of architecture at Makli Hill.

It is significant to elaborate here that the main tomb chamber of Humayun's mausoleum was erected on a chamfered platform. Moreover, the central plinth added to the garden of this mausoleum is also indicating the chamfered corners (Nath, 1982: 257-9, Bunce, 2004: 114-21). However, the present researchers suggest that the in question style can be seen for the first time in the mausoleum of Koh-i-Banan in Iran. The plan of this Iranian tomb has been mentioned by Anthony Hutt and Leonard Harrow and proclaimed, that this tomb has no comparison with the other contemporary Islamic monuments. In this connection, this mausoleum may be attributed either to the end of Ilkhanid domain or might be to the 14th- 15th centuries AD (Hutt & Harrow, 1977: 192, pl. 136). This unique tomb is consisting of four storey, in this process, the first storey is chamfered in plan, while, the second is octagonal in shape, it is followed by the round high neck; and finally surmounted by a magnificent dome.

From the above discussion, it is clear that the under debate plan was borrowed to the sub continent through the Persian traditions. However, at Makli Hill, this plan has been

introduced for the first time in the mausoleum of Khusrau Khan Charkas alias Satcharni, which may be dated to the last decade of the 16th century AD (Dani, 1982: 165). This unique tomb complex is undoubtedly marking the beginning of a new mode of workmanship in Pakistan. It is interesting to make a mention here that later on this unique style of architecture was disseminated to the other parts of Pakistan. It is important to elaborate further that the chamfered style was later on very successfully adopted by the Mughal builders in their buildings. In this sequence, an important example of the under discussion plan can be noticed in the Sarai Nur Mahal, about 20km west of Phillaur in the Jalandar district (AD 1618-20), in this case the western gateway was constructed in the chamfered plan (Nath, 1994: 200-1; fig. 37). Moreover, the layout plan of the Akbari sarai is also showing the in question plan (Brand, 2001: fig. 4). Thus from the above discussions it appears that this shape was conceived from the Persian traditions, which was adopted by the engineers in the subcontinent, during the Akbar period, however, it gained tremendous appreciation during the Jehangir reign.

The other striking feature of architecture, which made its first entry at the Makli Hill necropolis, is the cluster of domes. This style can be noticed in this tomb. Infact, the domical structure at Makli Hill was introduced much earlier in the Chaukandi tomb of Jam Tamachi (AD 1388-92), a Samma ruler of Thatta (Lari, 1997: 112, Durrani, 2010: 169, Durrani, 2010: 59). However, the concept of many domes to a tomb in Pakistan can be observed for the first time in the funerary structure. In this case, the central dome has fallen however, originally it was flanked at the four corners by smaller domes. It is interesting to argue that in the Indian sub-continent, the idea of cluster of domes was brought by the Tughlaqs from Central Asia, who under Feroze Shah Tughlaq in the different buildings such as Kali Masjid (AD 1387), Kalan Masjid (AD 1370-71), Khirki Masjid etc. (Nath, 1978: fig. 34, 35 & 36). Later on, this stylistical approach was exquisitely manipulated by the Mughals in

their buildings, likewise, this form of architecture was duly acknowledged by the Tarkhan builders at Makli Hill, and later on, the other parts of Pakistan.

The other foremost significant work of art, which has been exquisitely wrought in this monument, is the depiction of tile work. It is equally important to advocate that three types of tile work can be seen in the tomb of Khusrau Khan Charkas at Makli Hill, such as, (a) terra cotta glazed tiles (b) terra cotta unglazed tiles and (c) enameled ceramic tiles. The first two categories at Makli Hill necropolis can be noticed for the first time in this mausoleum. Whereas, some of the art historians claim that the last category of the this type of decorative work can be seen in the Dabgir mosque (AD 1588) at Thatta, (Khan, 1978: 23), while others say that the beginning of this type is incorrectly assigned to the tomb of Sultan Ibrahim Khan Tarkhan (Lashari, 1996: 40). However, the present researchers conducted an extensive survey and documentation in the year 2008, and were able to record the first ever precedent of this work at Makli Hill, which may be observed in the Rank of Sher Bano AH 950/ AD 1540-41. In this connection, it is worth mentioning that it was later employed in the mausoleum of Sultan Ibrahim Khan Tarkhan.

Thus, it appears that "Satcharni" is the example of the tile work adornment, however, this mode of work is undoubtedly denoting that its derivation is generally caused by the Persians and Punjab tile work traditions. These substantially influenced the Sindhian style of tile work, which was very successfully initiated at Makli Hill necropolis. Thus later on, the tile work tradition at Makli Hill, reached its perfection. In this process, some of the exquisite specimen of this work can be seen in the tomb of Sultan Ibrahim Khan Tarkhan (Dani, 1982: 172, Cousens, 1929: 116-17), Jani Beg Tarkhan (AD 1595-1600) and Diwan Shurfa Khan (AD 1638) (Dani, 1982: 174).

This splendid edifice is elegantly veneered through "*Pacca Qalai*" or glazed plaster work. Besides, the ornamental aspect of

this mode of work, it is also provides stability to the masonrical composition. In this connection, it is added that this kind of work was actually initiated by the Persian masons in their buildings, especially during the Taimurid's period. In this process, the significant evidences of glazed plaster work can be observed in the Taimurid and Safavid buildings at Herat, Tybad, Tabrez, Shiraz and Samarqand. However, since the Tarkhans of Thatta in the Sindh valley and the Mughals of India migrated from Central Asia, were also responsible for the introduction of this device. Likewise, this mode of work at Makli Hill was for the first time introduced by the Tarkhans in the tomb of Sultan Ibrahim Kahn Tarkhan, whereas, Satcharni is denoting the continuation of this illustrious work. Thus it appears that this fine quality plaster work later was derived through the Persian and Central Asian interactions, which became an important type of artistic work and was executed quite often during the Mughal period.

Besides, the above stated mode of works executed in this tomb, stucco stalactite is one of the other important architectural devices, generally functioning as ornamental and supporting techniques of the architecture. It is produced, through the multiplication of smaller size niches, in pendantive shape. Therefore, it is also called as stalactite pendantive. The stucco stalactite has been developed from the stone stalactite technique. However, when it is done in stucco, then it is called "*Ghalib Kari*" or "*Qalib Kari*" (Qazi, 1995: 115). This mode of work is generally wrought in the arched alcoves, soffits, squinches, domical ceilings and underneath the balconies, aiming to support the concern architectural components. Similarly, its entire treatment is executed in such a stylistical manner, which creates grace in the structural components.

Art historians generally agree that "*Ghalib Kari*" was developed in the Persian lands. It was used frequently during the Saljuq domain. Later on, the Il-Khanids provided this mode of work to the domical ceilings and arch alcoves (Donal, 1955: 72, Qazi, 1995: 119). It is

equally pertinent to elaborate that this mode of technique, as a source of decorative work, was adopted in the subcontinent through the Persians and Central Asian traditions. In this connection, it is important to note that it was provided for the first time in the Qutb Minar at Delhi as a supporting element to its balconies (Brown, 1941: 12, Nath, 1982: pl. XXV, Ali, 1993: 2, Sahai, 2004: 18).

It is indeed significant to elaborate here, that the earliest instance of the Makli Hill stucco stalactite work may be noticed in the old mosque of Makli, dated to 14th century AD (Lari & Lari, 1997: 56, fig. 37). Furthermore, the tomb of Qus-as-Sultani (AD 1513), at Makli Hill is also shows the stucco stalactite work. Similarly it is seen in first evidence can be the Tarkhan period, especially in the mausoleum of Sulatn Ibrahim Khan Tarkhan. Whereas its good example can also be observed in the unknown tomb located to the south east of Sultan Ibrahim Khan Tarkhan which has been wrought in its eastern Iwan. In this example, the domical ceilings are profusely adorned with this technique. It is important to advocate here that the arched alcoves in the Satcharni are exquisitely enriched with stucco stalactite work. It is worth mentioning to proclaim here that one of the finest instances in the entire Makli Hill cluster can be noticed in the tomb of Khusrau Khan Charkas. However, later on, this ornamental form of masonry composition became an important issue in the building art, especially under the Mughals. Similarly, during

this phase of time its best specimens can be noticed in the Amir Khan grave enclosure (AD 1627), Isa Khan Tarkhan II (AD 1628-44) and in the monuments at Lahore such as in the Maryam Zamani mosque etc.

In order to conclude the prevailing matter of discussion it is utmost significant to proclaim here that the tomb of Khusrau Khan Charkas generally known as "Satcharni" is clearly in picturing us that the artistic and architectural style adopted in this building has been conceived through the Persians and Central Asians cultural interactions, which were assimilated with the indigenous values of the Makli Hill traditions. Thus it appears, that the amalgamation of various cultural traditions have generally caused for the glorification of the in question monument. Moreover, the stylistical approach adopted by the masons in its architectural composition has altogether made it a very unique and exquisite specimen of art and architecture in the whole of Makli Hill necropolis.

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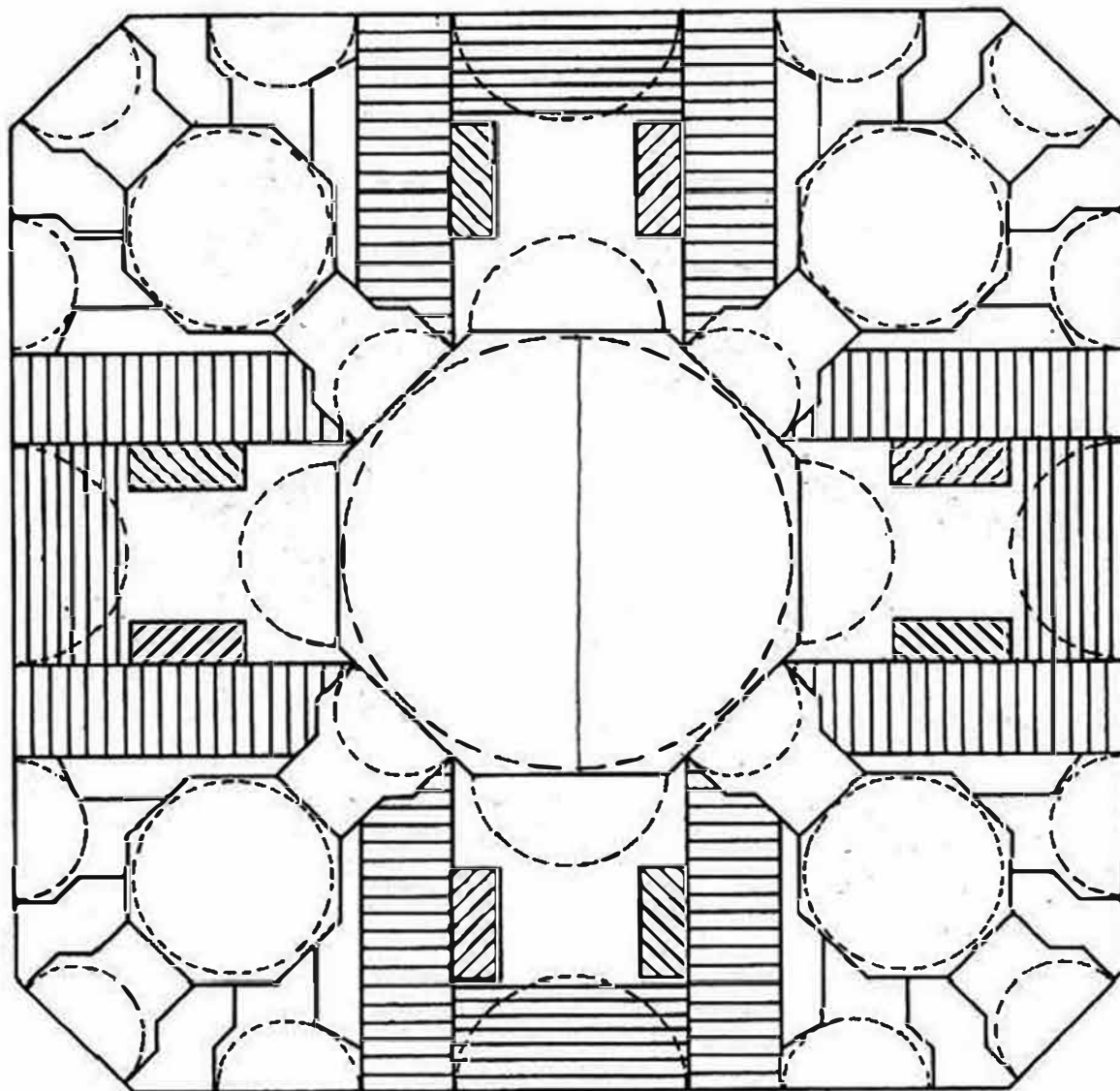


Figure 1. Ground plan of Satcharni at Makhi Hill (Dani; 1982; pl. 6)



Plate 1. Makli Hill, Satcharni, western Side View.



Plate 2. Makli Hill, Satcharni, View of the southwestern octagonal chamber.



Plate 3. Makli Hill, Satcharni, view of the squinch.