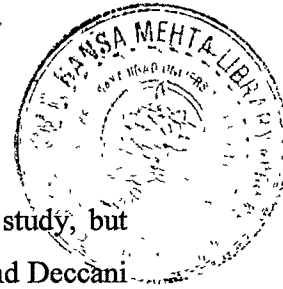


INTRODUCTION



Islamic Art and Architecture is not an unexplored area of study, but the scholarship on Islamic art in India mostly revolves around Deccani Sultanates, Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire. The provincial kingdoms like Malwa, Bengal, Punjab, Kashmir and Jaunpur were almost ignored by the scholars of Islamic Art and Architecture. Gujarat in comparison with these Sultanates, was fortunate enough to seek the attention of scholars like James Burgess, Henry Cousens, James Fergusson, Percy Brown, Z.A.Desai and M.S. Commissariat. The scholarship of these stalwarts inspired this research, as the present investigator felt that she has something to supplement to the corpus that exists in this realm. These scholars mentioned the uniqueness of the Islamic architecture of Gujarat, but had never attempted to analyze it. This study is oriented towards highlighting this uniqueness, which has been achieved through the elaborate discussion on the decorative motifs, its programming and evolution. The uniqueness in Islamic Monuments of Gujarat has also been achieved by the usage of architectural mouldings of co-existing structural temples of Gujarat on its mosques and tombs. It is this heavy borrowing of Architectural mouldings and decorative motifs from the structural temple of Gujarat onto the Islamic Architecture, that has made it unique among the provincial styles. This amalgamation had been made possible even without losing the identity of either of the Architectural traditions and without the discontinuation of the structural temple tradition.

For an understanding of the uniqueness in the Islamic Monuments of Gujarat, a detailed study was required and this was possible only by selecting individual Architectural moulding that was borrowed from the co-existing structural temples, and were used for the construction of tombs and mosques in Gujarat. The methodology employed here is of tracing

these mouldings along with their respective motifs, in the elevation and in the longitudinal section. By doing so, the decorative logic and the Architectural style of the Islamic Monuments in Gujarat can be understood, thoroughly. The salient feature of Islamic Architecture needed to be recognized and discussed. This is possible only if the monuments are studied with this methodology and the same has been attempted in this research.

Most of the scholars have studied these monuments in isolation, thereby failing to read the evolution of the “Idiom”, its significance and its place in Indian Architecture, in general. Scholars like James Burgess, Henry Cousens, James Fergusson, Percy Brown and M.S. Commissariat have provided information and elaborate details about the individual monument and have pointed out the influence of structural temple tradition on these monuments, but they have missed out reading an “Idiom”, whose roots are traced in the Islamic Monuments of the Thughlaq period, flourishing from the establishment of Ahmedabad Sultanate period, in Gujarat. The three stages of development of style in the Islamic Monuments of Gujarat as discussed by Percy Brown in his book ‘Indian Architecture- Islamic Period’, was still unable to throw substantial light on the style and the uniqueness of Islamic Monuments in Gujarat. However his methodology of classifying the monuments, which according to him show different traits were placed in one group and those similar to each other were placed in another group, proved to be very useful in studying the styles of different Architectural centres such as Mangrol, Junagadh, Dholka, Khambhat, Bharuch and later on Ahmedabad, Champaner and Mahmudabad. His methodology can identify a few ‘types’ in the Architecture in Gujarat but fails to trace the emergence and the development of the “Idiom”, as he does not attempt to inter relate those ‘types’ to envisage the further picture of the activity.

Percy Brown and the other scholars do not recognize, the amalgamation of the two different lineages viz. the Islamic tradition and the structural temple tradition, was so smooth, that at one stage it almost became like an extension to the already existing temple tradition in Gujarat. The impact of Islamic Architectural tradition was so strong, that even during the rule of Mughals, the mosques and tombs were built in the same style. Thus it calls for an equal status and importance as that of Deccani Architecture, Mughal Architecture and Architecture of Delhi Sultanate.

Unfortunately it is seldom granted to the Gujarat “Idiom”. The scholars of Islamic Art in Gujarat have failed to recognize the social circumstances and the status in which the patrons found themselves. They also missed out considering, the ability, the interest and the creativity of the artist. They never pondered over the issue of selection of some of the specific Architectural mouldings that were being borrowed from the temple tradition, in the making of mosques and tombs structures in Gujarat and his skills to employ the system to his interest . The attitude of the artists towards the choices made by the patrons and his own application of the knowledge acquired by working on the temple tradition, shows his creativity. The Monuments built by him became the work of art, which is an individual parole of an artist, and this is exactly what has happened for Islamic monument of Gujarat.

As it is obvious from the Islamic Architecture of Gujarat, that it is these mouldings and decorative motifs , which were fancied by both the patrons and the *sthapati* and were employed in the mosques and tombs. The source of these borrowings were the structural temples tradition of Gujarat and the language of this tradition was already at a crystallized stage, when Islam as a religion and its edifices had just begun to take deep roots in the different social strata. The amalgamation that took place, not only gave a fresh breath to the structural temple tradition, but also gave birth to a new

Architectural tradition, which can be considered as its extension. It can also be considered as an offshoot to the already existing Architectural tradition in Gujarat. The contribution of these architects was the application of that language in a new context, which has been highly recognized in this thesis. Simultaneously, the social status of the patrons has been duly considered as an important factor, as they too, though indirectly, have contributed towards the application of the knowledge of the *sthapatis* and the artists, by applying it on their monuments.

These are few of the issues that the present thesis revolves around and tries to achieve a comprehensive knowledge of Islamic art and architecture and the way it got influenced by the temple architecture of Gujarat. Though this is where the present thesis wraps up, it is not the termination point of the research, as both the guiding teacher and the investigator feels that the vast nature of this topic leaves a lot of opportunity for the further investigation.

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