



Analysis of Akbar Agra Fort

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ABSTRACT

In given article we will try to analyze architecture of Agra Fort and it's evolution process. Moreover, we will try to clear up the role of Akbar in formation of Baburid architecture. Lastly, we describe how Agra Fort buildings has been created and its development over the years, also, we have given evidence supporting our points

Keywords:

Akbar`s architecture, Baburid architecture, Central Asian architecture, Indian local traditions, Agra Fort and its buildings

Abul Fazl in 972 AH (1565 AD), he wrote valuable information about the construction of a fort by Akbar at Agra: "He gave an order during this period, indicating the place for the construction of a fort in Agra, and emphasized that this fort should be as majestic and dignified as the center of India. The fort is supposed to be built on the site of the old fort, that is, on the site of a building that is falling into disrepair after the passage of time. The strength of this building testified to the strength and power of the country and the royal family. Thus, the project began with the precise calculation of mathematicians and the precise analytical design of architects, the construction of this great fort. Seven layers of soil were excavated for the construction of the foundation of the building. The width of the walls was three "Badshahi" yards, and its height was sixty yards. The fort had four majestic gates facing the cardinal directions. 3,000 to 4,000 builders and heavy lifting equipment were working non-stop

every day. From the foundation of the building to the top of the wall, it was made of cut stone, and each piece of stone was polished, shining like a mirror of the world. This magnificent fort was built under the guidance of architect Qasim Khan Mir Barru Bahr for eight years on the basis of precise geometric drawings" [1]. Badaoni also confirms the year of the construction of this fort and gives additional information and corrects the mistakes of Abul Fazl: "In this year (972 AH /1565 AD) the project of the fort in Agra was made, and he built the arch, which was previously built of bricks, from cut stone. The construction was completed in five years. The dimensions of the building: width 10 "gaz", height 40 "gaz"; The two sides of the deep ditch are made of stone and gravel, its width is 20 gaz, and its depth is 10 gaz to the surface of the water. The gate was built by Sheikh Faydi and was installed in 1567. About 3 crores were spent on the construction of the fort. After the completion of the fort, it was used as a storage

room for Indian gold" [2]. Akbar's son Jahangir Mirza also writes about this Fort in his writings: "Agra is one of the oldest and holy cities of India. An old fort complex was built on the banks of the Jumna, built by my father before I was born. The complex is built of cut red stones. The fort was completed around fifteen or sixteen years ago. It has four gates and two trading ports and cost 35 lakh rupees for the building" [3].

Combining the above information, it is very interesting that we can see that all the historians have given different information about the fort despite living in almost the same era.

Ram Nath writes: "Analyzing the data, it is clear that an old brick fort existed near the river bank of Agra. The fort was in ruins when Akbar came in 1558 to make Agra his capital. By 1565, Akbar started the reconstruction of this building. The construction was carried out under the leadership of Qasim Khan Mir Barru Bahr. The fort was completed in fourteen years at a cost of three crores of rupees" [4].

The fort has an irregular semi-circular shape [5] and is built parallel to the Jumna River. The majestic walls of the fort are made of red sandstone and are 21 m high. The length of the walls is 2.5 km. [6]. According to Percy Brown: "From the top to the bottom of the walls, the red sandstone slabs are fastened together with iron rings (chains) so tightly that not even a single strand of hair penetrates between them. Towers were built in certain parts of the walls. The construction of such walled fortresses may have been inherited by the Baburids from the architecture of their ancestors, the Timurids" [7]. There is a deep moat running along the walls of the fort, with water flowing from north to south, and two bridges were built in front of the Delhi Darwaza (Delhi Gate) and Akbar Gates for people to enter the fort. Because Agra Fort was built in an open area, the architectural structure of digging deep trenches around it. It is no exaggeration to say that the "Arthashastra", written in the 4th century, was taken from a written source. Because in this work, one can find valuable information about the need to use such trenches in order to protect open cities from enemy attacks. The construction of the lower part of the wall in an inclined position in order to warn against the enemy's danger, and

the construction of arched windows intended for archers to shoot at the enemy, gave the architecture of the fort not only the military function, but also the artistic aesthetic appearance of the fort [4].

According to Abul Fazl, "Agra Fort contains more than 500 buildings, the architectural style of which is typical of Bengal and Gujarat" [8]. Delhi Darwaza and Akbar Darwaza (now known as Amar Sinh Darwaza), and Akbari Mahal and Jahangir Mahal are Akbar's main buildings in the Fort and are still preserved. From the information of Abdul Hamid Lahori, it is clear that many of the buildings built by Akbar were destroyed by Shah Jahan and their materials were used for the buildings in his marble pavilion [9]. Some of the buildings in the northern part of Jahangiri Mahal and around Anguri Bagh were actually built by Akbar and renovated by Shah Jahan. Pavilions such as Jahanara and Roshanara around Khas Mahal are Akbar's red sandstone buildings, as evidenced by the use of Bengali-style cornices and flat roofs. Shah Jahan decorated these buildings with white plaster [4].

The tragic destruction of Akbar's architecture took place between 1803 and 1947, when it was occupied by British soldiers. During this period, many buildings considered as rare examples of medieval architecture were destroyed, and their construction materials were used to build houses for soldiers and warehouses for storing weapons and ammunition. It was during this period that most of the buildings in Agra Fort were completely demolished and cleared away. Only a tenth of the buildings built in the Agra Fort during the Babur period have survived to us [4].

The main entrance gate of Agra Fort is known as Delhi Gate, for this purpose this gate was made magnificent. From Badaoni's information, we can see that this gate was built in 976 AH (1568-69 AD) [2]. The original design of the Delhi Darwaza itself represents the beginning of a new architectural era [7]. After passing through the Delhi Gate, an elephant statue is installed on both sides of the inner gate of the fort, and as a symbol of this, the inner gate is named Hathi Pur (Elephant Gate) [6]. However, only the trunk of these elephants has been preserved. Above the

hexagonal entrance gate, which is flanked by majestic fortress walls, is a hall called Naubat Khana, where musicians played solemn music when the King entered. The eastern part of the gate has four floors and includes a terrace, a guest house and pavilions. The base of the watchtowers is octagonal and two-story, each of which is connected by a "chhatri". As a result of the judicious use of white marble and red marble, the decorative finish on the facade of this building is the most effective of the buildings of this style (Qala-i-Kuhna Masjid and Old Fort). In general, the whole building is skillfully decorated, and Akbar tried to give this building a royal touch. All the decorative styles known at that time were used in the magnificent construction of the gate. Bricks with mosaics, stones carved with geometric patterns, plant and calligraphy inscriptions, "muqarnas" (stalactite), examples of painting and finally tiles were widely used in the building. All the decoration styles used in their special places gave the building a unique softness [4]

The Persian inscription in front of the guard room of the gate reads Akbar's Khandesh in 1008 AH (1599 AD) he went on a campaign of conquest and his pilgrimage to Agra. He refers to his return in 1010 AH (1601 AD): "King Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar Padshah set out in 1008... and returned to Agra in 1010" [10]. This inscription shows that after Akbar's return from Punjab in 1595, Agra Fort was his permanent residence. It should also be noted that this inscription is the only example left in the entire Agra Fort from Akbar's reign [4].

The southern gate of Agra Fort, now known as Amar Singh Darwaza, was originally called Akbar Darwaza. The new name was changed by the British in the middle of the 19th century. The arch of Akbar Darwaza was built in the style of Delhi Darwaza, with a bridge over the moat. Hathi Pur at Delhi Darwaza had an open form, but here it was built in the form of a royal pillared portico. Although this gate is sturdier than the main gate, the towers are small and the murals are unfinished. The lower part of the gate has an oblong shape and is divided into a complex of arches, decorated with exquisite patterns of yellow, green, blue and white tiles. The top of the guard towers is covered with a

"chhajja" and a hemispherical dome. The domes are also covered with colored tiles. The minarets are also decorated with colored tiles and stone carvings to match the style of the entrance gate. The room on the top floor of Akbar Darwaza was originally the Naubat Khana, which has now been renovated and given a completely new look [4].

The south-eastern part of the fort was considered the best place for building palaces. It is no exaggeration to say that the reason is the clear waters of the Jumna River, the beautiful natural scenery, and the fresh air. Therefore, for several centuries, the rulers chose this corner to build their palaces. Peter Mandy wrote: "Although the inner ramparts of the fort were built in the same system as the hill, we can see that they are located on the outside, that is, very high above the level of the river" [11]. Abul Fazl writes in his information about the palace inside the fort: "He (Akbar) returned to Agra on Wednesday, 24th of Zil-qada (May 11, 1569) and hastened to the Bengali Mahal palace in the center of the recently built arch" [1]. While the construction of Agra Fort started in 1565, the main palace in the fort was completed four years later, i.e. in 1569. It is no exaggeration to say that this palace is called Bengali Mahal because of its architectural style. Because the curved parts used in this building and the curved eaves and its sloping roofs are reminiscent of the popular Bengali architectural style of the time. Abul Fazl, while describing the palaces in Agra Fort, wrote about this style: "Almost five hundred examples of creativity were embodied here, and their styles reflect the architectural examples of the master craftsmen of Bengal and Gujarat" [8]. The current Akbari Mahal and Jahangiri Mahal palaces were part of the earlier Bengali Mahal. The tower in the south-eastern part is still called the Bengali Burj. Both palaces are built of red sandstone, composed of columns and finished with flat roofs and "chhatris". If we look at the western style of the palaces, the length is 131 meters. The building was built with two gates and three towers, and only one gate with two corners connected by towers has survived to us. The remaining gate of Akbari Mahal was destroyed and not preserved to us at all. Thus, Bengali Mahal, which was formerly a single

palace, was divided into two palaces in 1803 after the occupation by British troops. First, the southern part was separated and used as a place for the troops, and then as a prison in general. From 1902 to 1911, the palace was again renovated by Marshal with its northern parts. It was also named Akbari Mahal and Jahangiri Mahal. It is no exaggeration to say that this palace was the main palace of Akbar, and Jahangir's pool was found in front of the palace [4].

Undoubtedly, this bifurcated single building served as Akbar's harem and palace. The eastern part of both palaces, i.e. the one facing the river Jumna, is decorated in two different styles. The outer walls of Akbari Mahal are simpler in shape, with only three double-storied windows, and the use of mullioned windows gives a unique flavor to the uniform composition of these walls. In contrast, the eastern walls of the Jahangiri Mahal, with their rich inlaid ornaments, are reminiscent of the architectural style of the Kirtthi Mandir in Gwalior. So, it is evidence that Akbar was a genius of architecture, and the use of Baburid's skillful painting and carpentry samples on these walls encouraged the further revival of this style [4].

As a result of the architecture created by Jahangir and Shah Jahan in place of the buildings built by Akbar at Agra Fort, which buildings belong to which ruler is still debated? In this article, we will try to analyze which Babur prince built which buildings by analyzing the buildings in Agra Fort.

By the time of Shah Jahan in Agra Fort: 1) Akbari Mahal; 2) Jahangiri Mahal; 3) Khos Mahal \ Anguri Bagh, and 4) Devani Khas \ Machchi Bhavan complexes existed. Complexes are connected with each other by narrow corridors. Also, when analyzing each complex, it is necessary to analyze it based on its architectural tradition, function, and volume-spatial concept. Akbar's original constructions at Agra Fort were three-sided, the main part in the north, and some rebuilt by his descendants. To analyze the part reconstructed by Jahangir and Shah Jahan, it is appropriate to refer to the works of "Tuzuk-i Jahangiri" and "Padshahnama" of Lahauri. Of these works, the next building after Devani

Amm is the Musamman Burj, possibly rebuilt by Jahangir and renamed the Shah Burj. This is because Agra Fort was built when Jahangir ascended the throne in 1605, and only Shah Burj could have been rebuilt by him. From the "Padshahnama" we can know that Shah Jahan rebuilt the buildings of Devani Amm and Devani Khas. Because, by his time, these buildings were in ruins, it is shown in the works. It can be determined from the size and spatial arrangement of the buildings built after the second one. For example, the Khas Mahal was built incorrectly on the axis of the fort, unlike the southern palaces, and these buildings were built later in line with Shah Jahan's architecture.

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