

THE MOSQUES OF KALINJAR (BANDA DISTRICT, UTTAR PRADESH): RETRACING ITS HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE

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Mosque architecture, especially in medieval India is a strong indicator of culture as well a record of power struggles. In history, Kalinjar, the site chosen for this study, is known as the site of the battle where, despite winning, Sher Shah died of wounds sustained due to the explosion of gun powder. This paper surveys the architectural features of mosques located at Kalinjar from the era of the Delhi Sultans to the Mughul Emperors. We can see how, in the same premises, mosque architecture undergoes change, enabling the reader to better trace the evolution of mosque architecture within one particular site.

Key Words: Tombstone Inscriptions, *Qanats*, masonry, Bundelas

Introduction

The mosque was not only a place for prayer, but it also acted as a place for religious gatherings under the guidance of the *imām* in its early phase. The hypostyle hall, which was usually a rectangle with the short axis toward the *mehrab*, was entered from an open courtyard surrounded by arcades. This courtyard would also be used for prayer when the congregation was large. This type of mosque is called “four-*īwān*”, from which different varieties were to evolve in the sundry lands where Islam spread.¹ Little is known of the history and architecture of the mosques in and around the celebrated hill fort of Kalinjar², the impressive remains of which dominate the environs. All historical sources concur that the mosques were built at the very beginning of the Muslim

occupation. In Kalinjar also, the political hold of the Mughuls is reflected in its architectural monuments, and a particular type of mosque was constructed throughout the region. Of the total number of dated mosques constructed in Kalinjar during the entire Muslim period (1203-1800), almost three-quarters were built between the mid-sixteenth century and mid-seventeenth century. Writing this short paper is inspired, first, by the disturbing scenes where the mosques are being demolished at the hands of communalists of present-day India. Secondly, the general absence of printed material on the Islamic religious architecture of Kalinjar as one of the *sarkārs* of *sūba* Allahabad under the Mughuls.

Mosques constitute one of the most highly developed forms of religious architecture. With the rapid expansion of the Muslim community through conquests as well as missionary activities, it became necessary to set aside an enclosed area in cities or large towns for congregational worship. The architecture of a mosque is shaped most strongly by the regional traditions of the time and place where it was built. As a result, style, layout, and decoration can vary greatly. Nevertheless, because of the common function of the mosque as a place of congregational prayer, certain architectural features appear in mosques all over the world. The mosque is not merely a place of prostration, facing Mecca. The Friday *Khutba* is of great importance as the regular acknowledgement of the authority of the Caliph and Governors and was so from very early times. Hence the mosque must contain a pulpit (*mimbar*). The *mimbar* is usually a permanent stone structure, with an odd number of steps, only occasionally made an object of decoration (splendid examples in the older Bengal mosques and in the Malwa Sultanate). Since the condition, also, require ablution before prayer, the mosque must contain a tank or fountain (*ḥauḍ*), and since Friday prayers are communal and attendance is obligatory, the mosque must be spacious enough to contain the faithful, arranged line by line facing the *qibla*. In many mosques, this is adjoined to an open courtyard, called a *ṣahn*, containing *ḥauḍ* for the *wuḍū*; this is usually placed centrally, except that in some mosques the *ḥauḍ* may be placed on one side of the central axis. One of the most visible aspects of mosque architecture is the minaret or *mīnār*, a tower adjacent or attached to a mosque, from which the call to prayer is made. A *mīnār* is by no means an invariable appendage to the Indian mosque; apart from a few occasional early instances, only in the Gujarat Sultanate, and in Burhanpur in Khandesh, was a functional *mīnār* provided for the *adhān* before the Mughal period; after the 16th century, the *mīnār* becomes common, but not invariable. The *mīhrāb* only indicates the *qibla* and

does not represent or symbolise any godhead. It has generally been recognized that domes-either as single domical buildings - or as cupolas in larger complexes of buildings, have played a considerable part in Islamic architecture. Most mosques also feature one or more domes, called *qubba* in Arabic. While not a ritual requirement like the *mihrab*, a dome does possess significance within the mosque - as a symbolic representation of the vault of heaven. Some mosque types incorporate multiple domes into their architecture such as the mosques constructed under the Tughluq Sultans of Delhi, while others only feature three where the central one is larger than the flanking ones, such as the mosques constructed under the Sayyids, Lodis and the Mughuls. Besides that, there are certain elements which are typically Islamic; some structural, such as true arch, vault, squinch, minaret, and stalactite which are found in every country and some ornamental features, i.e., calligraphy, geometrical designs, floral motifs or arabesque.

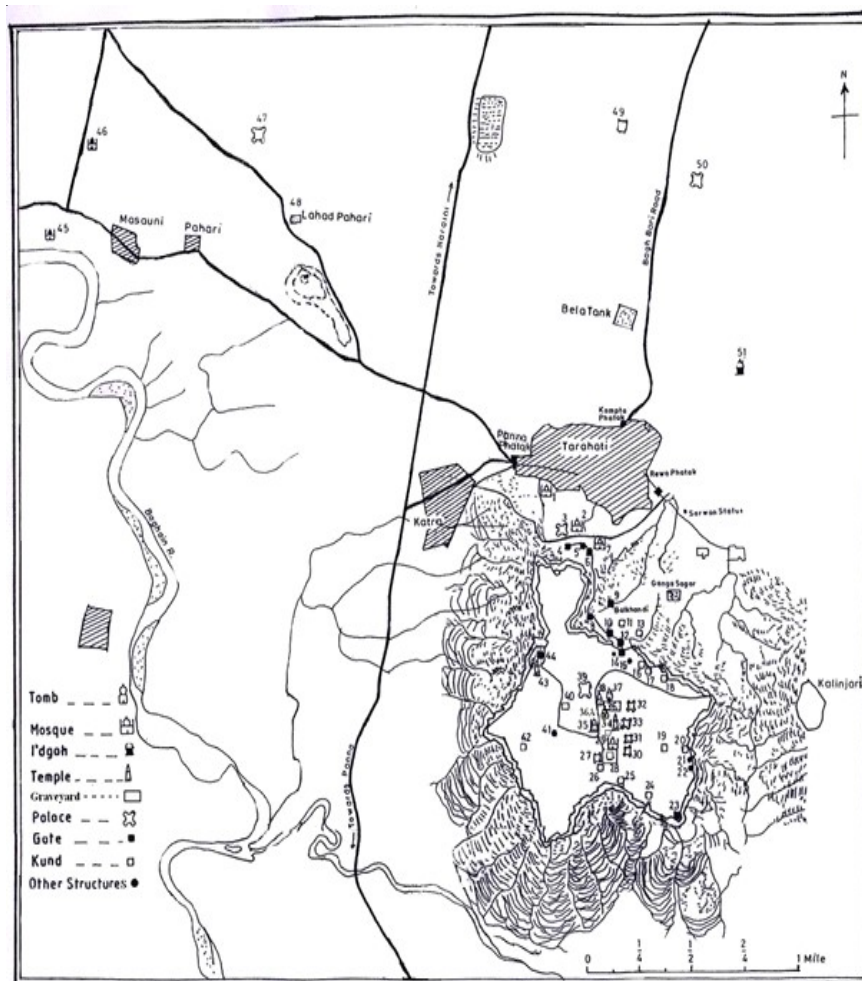
The establishment of Turkish rule is significant in this respect. On the one hand, it gave rise to a new socio-political system in India, on the other hand it also marked the beginning of a new expression of art. It was a synthesis of two different kinds of art. One is the Islamic style and the other hand indigenous architectural style, termed by scholars as Indo-Islamic architecture. As far as Indo-Islamic architecture, is considered, generally, we have four types of mosques from the Delhi Sultans to the Mughul Emperors. The continuous history of the mosque begins with the Masjid Quwwat-ul- Islām in Delhi, founded immediately after the Muslim conquest in 587/1191. It is an open courtyard surrounded by cloister on the fourth side facing Mecca. On the western side, there is a prayer hall. There was *liwān* (in Arabic *iwān*- long narrow fronted hall) with three sides having entrances or gateways. An arched screen or *maqsūra* was added in 1199. This is on the fashion of Ghurid mosques borrowed from the Iranian architecture of that time. The three sides' *iwān* in their middle have vaulted roofs. In this way, it is a four-*iwān* mosque. Under the Tughluqs the traditional four *iwān* mosques having a single courtyard surrounded by cloisters on three sides and the western side have prayer chamber further developed into a cruciform plan, means that divided into by two additional covered cloisters running east-west and north-south and intersecting each other at the centre. But this cruciform plan did not gain much favour in the subsequent reign.

The description of medieval monuments in general and mosques in particular at Kalinjar is not easily found in the works published so far; however, there have been sporadic attempts by certain individual scholars

to address them. Since the monumental research paper on Kalinjar by Lt. Maisey published in the *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*³, not much has been written about the medieval monuments. When in 1882, Alexander Cunningham and his team attempted a fresh study of the Bundelkhand region; they also consciously shaped their work in the form of a survey report.⁴ An important contribution to the study of Kalinjar was made by Syed Ali Nadeem Rezavi⁵ and Isirat Alam⁶ in 2002. Based on contemporary source material - Persian chronicles, histories, accounts, letters, and the records of foreign travellers - Rezavi and Alam gathered useful information regarding the medieval history of the fort and its architectural style and economic importance during the Mughul period. The research paper of Rezavi also contains a list of 87 inscriptions referred by earlier historians⁷ or reported in the *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal* and *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy*⁸. Although impressive, the list is not comprehensive; more so, since a large number of Persian inscriptions over mosques in and outside the fort of Kalinjar are not included. The subsequent works of Peter C. Bisschop⁹ and Vinod Kumar¹⁰ as research papers are mostly confined to the pre-Chandella inscriptions and waterworks of the hill fort. Despite a host of published works on it, textual sources shed little light on the mosque architecture in and around the Kalinjar fort along with their Persian inscriptions. Close scrutiny of the mosques and their Persian inscriptions (not published earlier) is necessary to understand how much of the construction achieved under Sūrs and Mughuls. Secondly, as we have seen in the brief survey of the modern works, there have been very few attempts to deal with the Kalinjar city as a whole. Most of the above mentioned research papers and books deal primarily with the antiquities of the Kalinjar fort only and have very little to add to our knowledge of the surrounding areas of the town. The present paper collates information collected through surveys with the available textual information and seeks to answer some of the questions raised earlier. I have also tried to extend the study beyond the Kalinjar fort.

The town and fort of Kalinjar [Kâlanjara] (**Map I & Fig. 1**) are currently located in the village of Tarahti under the Naraini *tâhsil* of Banda¹¹ district, Uttar Pradesh. It is known more for its impregnable hill fort than the town around 33 miles southeast of Banda in the Bundelkhand region.¹² Situated below the Kalinjar hill, the township, known as Tarahti was encircled by ramparts which were punctured with four gateways of which just one survives. Stays of the northern entryway, known as *Kampta Phatak* on the Badausa-Kalinjar road, and the western gate, the

Panna Phatak, which divided the *Tarahiti* and *Katra* as two settlements also survive in fragments. The *Rewa Phatak* situated in the northwestern part of *Tarahiti*, is the only surviving gate (**Fig. 2**).



Map I: Layout of the Monuments in and around the Kalinjar fort

Index to the Map I

1. Daflon ki Masjid
2. Mosque in front of Rathod Mahal
3. Rathod Mahal
4. Ālamgir Darwāza
5. Ganesh Darwāza
6. Chandi/Chauburji Darwāza
7. Mosque near the dargāh of Mahdi Shahid

8. Budhabhadra Darwāza
9. Gate leading to Balkhandi Mahadeo
10. Hanuman Darwāza
11. Hanuman Kūnd
12. Lal Darwāza
13. Bhairon Kūnd
14. Bada Darwāza
15. Sita Sej
16. Sita Kūnd
17. Patal Ganga
18. Pandu Kūnd
19. Budhbhadra Talao (“Budhi Budha/burhiya”)
20. Pani ki Aman Kūnd
21. Bhagwan Sej
22. Sidh ki Gupha
23. Panna Gate
24. Bhairon ka Jhirka
25. Mrigdhara
26. Bijli Talao
27. Raja Aman Singh Palace
28. Koth Tirth
29. Islam Shah Mosque
30. Moti Mahal
31. Zakira Mahal
32. Rang Mahal
33. Rani Mahal & Venkat Bihari Temple
34. Sanichari Talao
35. Qanāti Mosque
36. Graveyard
36. A. Mosque
37. Tomb II
38. Tomb I
39. Chaube Mahal
40. Taliyya Talāo (“Ramna”)
41. Dak Bungalow
42. Ram Kotora Talāo
43. Nilkantha Temple
44. Parmarddi Gate of Nilkantha Temple
45. Mosque
46. Mosque
47. Lahad ki Kothi
48. Lahad Pahadi
49. Water tank with a square room
50. Haveli
51. I’dgah



Fig. 1:
Painting of Kalinjar fort of 1814 (Source: British Library Online Gallery; Water-colour view of the fort at Kalinjar in Uttar Pradesh by Colin MacKenzie (1754-1821) in May 1814. Inscribed on the front in ink is: 'East View of Kalangar in Bundelkand. May 1814')



Fig. 2:
Rewa Phatak

In medieval times, Kalinjar fort had assumed great political and economic significance as is evident from the historical references. While giving a record of Kalinjar's invasion by Qutubuddīn Aibak (r. 1206-1210)¹³, Hasan Nizāmī in his *Tājul Ma'athir*¹⁴, states that 'the fort of Kalinjar was as strong as the wall of Alexander was taken'. Similar accounts were also given by the Nizāmuddīn Ahmad¹⁵, Ārif Qandharī¹⁶, and Abū'l Fazl (1551-1602)¹⁷. The foundation of the fort has been allegedly referred to Chandra Bhim, the presumed progenitor of the Chandel group of Rajputs in the ninth century. Before the end of the thirteenth-century, the citadel went under the control of the Bundelās. How long the stronghold stayed under their ownership is quite difficult to state.

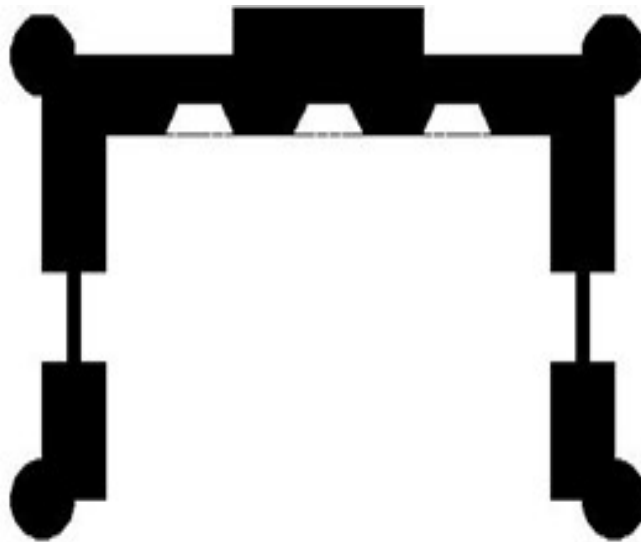
Investigation in and around the citadel of Kalinjar uncovers thirty-three medieval buildings of which sixteen are sacred and eighteen civil [**Appendix I**]. Eight mosques, one *kund* (water tank), two tombs, two graveyards, an *Idgāh* and a temple are among the sacred buildings. Nine gateways, seven palaces and two *havelīs* make up the civil structures.¹⁸

Of the eight mosques surrounding the stronghold of Kalinjar, the one placed in the center of the fort and constructed close to the *Sanīchari Talāo* seems, by all accounts, to be the earliest. Compositionally it tends to be dated to the Tughluq period. The cyclopean walls, tapering bastions and a weighty facade of lime mortar are altogether suggestive of design under the Tughluqs (1320-1413). On top of the central *mīhrāb* is fitted a marble-stone recorded with the *kalima* and *nād-i 'Alī* (**Plan 1 & Fig. 3**). The high plinth over which the main structure is raised gives it a fortress-like attribute.¹⁹ The domical end of the turrets is beautifully decorated with inverted lotus carvings.

A list of the regions from where Babur earned his income includes the name of Kalinjar, shows that by 1528, Kalinjar fortress had moved on into Mughul occupancy.²⁰ In 1538, when Sher Shah (r. 1540-1545) was able to expel Humayun from the throne and, during this interregnum, and proclaimed himself the ruler over the whole of northern India, Bengal, Punjab, Sindh and Rajputana, the fort was ruled by the Baghela chiefs of Gwalior. In 1545 when Sher Shah (1540-1545) assaulted the fortress of Kalinjar, the stronghold was held by Raja Kīrat Singh, the Baghela.²¹ Subsequently, the fort was captured by the Sūrs in a famous battle fought in 1545, in which Sher Shāh lost his life, on 13 May 1545.²² After his unfortunate death through a blast, his elder son Jalal Khan took charge of the fort and crowned himself taking the the title of Islam Shah.²³



Fig. 3:
Qanāti Mosque



Plan 1:
Qanāti mosque near the Sanīchari Talao

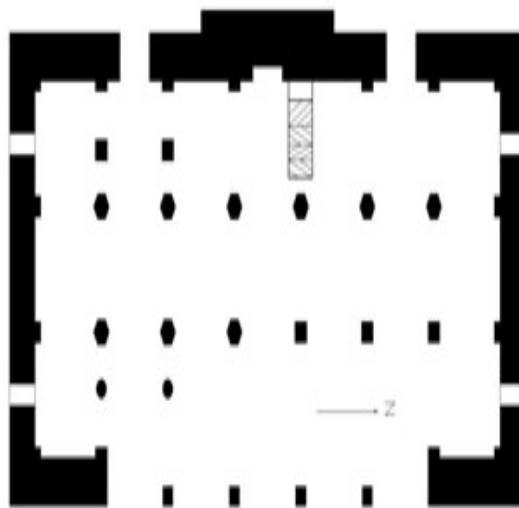


Fig. 4:
Lahad Pahar



Fig. 5:
Lahad Kothi

Towards the west of Kalinjar fort is a little hillock famously known as *Lahad*²⁴ *Pahadi* [No.48, Map I], where Sher Shah was supposedly buried at first. The only remaining surface is a rectangular platform measuring 8.22×7.31 meters consisting of dressed stones joined to a lime mortar (Fig. 4). Perhaps this elevation or platform was the first resting place of Sher Shah who was eventually laid to rest at Sahsaram. But historians differ regarding whether his coffin was later removed to his native town since his body was severely burned and mutilated.²⁵ Just a handful of the buildings designed during the reign of Sher Shah and Islam Shah (r. 1545-54) have survived the current century. The *Lahad Kothi* a way off of the two kilometers of Kalinjar fortification to the west was the location of Sher Shah's original campsite when he came to lay siege to this fort. It is square in plan and has a trabeated entrance to the east. Several square chambers are also constructed around the main structure (Fig. 5). The rectangular room measuring 10.25 × 5.70 meters at the center having entrances towards the east and west is capped by a *bangaldar* roof. The structure is constructed with the help of *lakhauri* bricks and lime mortar covered by a thick layer of the pilaster.



Plan 2:
Islam Shah Mosque



Fig. 6:
Islam Shah Mosque

As indicated by the sources following the crowning ceremony, the first structure built by Islam Shah was a mosque called the Masjid Islam Shah [Plan 2 & Fig. 6]. It is located on the north bank of *Kot Tirth* (a water reservoir) opposite to the Aman Singh Palace. It is a rectangular single-storied building measuring 13.50 meters long and 8.50 meters wide from outside. Constructed over a high plinth, the mosque is entered through 1.50 meter five-trabeated entrances, the whole being enclosed by a wall which is one meter thick and is covered with a thick plaster of lime mortar. There are no domes or vaults. The prayer chamber is covered by a flat ceiling resting on intently positioned columns. Structurally, it is like any other mosque in the region. It is seven aisles and three-bay deep. The western wall has two open ogee arched entrances while the central arch in front of a rear-projected wall which probably could have been the central *mihirāb*, formed of an elegant pointed arch whose spandrels were beautifully adorned through carvings of ‘Allah’. The *mimbar* estimating 1×2×1.5 meters (L×B×H) is located right in the center in front of the central *mihirāb*. There are currently two small gates to the north and south of the western wall, which once closed and formed blind arches. It is fascinating to take note that no column shafts of this mosque are similar. It can be inferred from this, that it was built with the assistance

of re-utilized materials. A pre-existing structure has possibly been turned into a 'mosque'. The front open courtyard is protected by plain stone-masonry walls. From the remains of the present, it is clear that along the sides of this courtyard there are no *riwāq* or cloisters.

According to an inscription, engraved over a column-shaft of the western *liwān* (prayer chamber) that this place of worship was raised soon after Islam Shahs coronation at the fort in 1545 A.D where the first *khutba* (sermon) in the name of Islam Shah was read. The full text but it is not clear but it is described here.²⁶ It additionally creates the impression that a noble named Khan-i Alam was put in-charge and the hill fort was re-named as *Sherkoh*. After the sudden demise of Sher Shah in the battle of 1545 A.D, Jalal Khan as the heir apparent assumed responsibility for it. His coronation took place there and he assumed the title of Islam Shah. The inscription of the Islam Shah mosque has already been known for a long time, ever since the Cunningham's report on Kalinjar in his *Reports of a Tour in Bundelkhand and Rewa* in 1883-84. Still earlier is the very brief reference in the 'Description of the Antiquities at Kalinjar' by Lieutenant F. C. Maisey, published in 1848.



Fig. 7:
Mosque in Masoni Village

It has a chronogram showering praise on Islam Shah for his achievements. If oral tradition is reliable, during his blockade of the

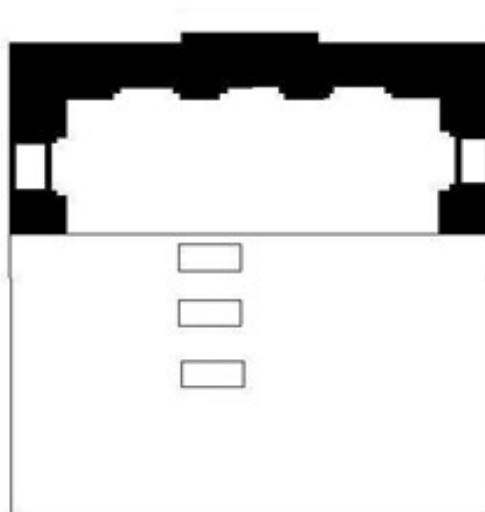
stronghold, Sher Shah also built another two mosques [Nos. 45 & 46, Map I] situated on the north and south side of the Masoni village. Be that as it may, without engravings or solid historical explanations, it is hard to decide to which specific date the works have a place with. Notwithstanding, the existing western wall of one of these mosques and the remnants of the subsequent one shows that they were, like most others *qanāti* mosques of the late seventeenth-century (Fig. 7). This conclusion is upheld by the way that these mosques materially and compositionally take after mosque No. 2 on the Map which is dated to the reign of Aurangzeb (r. 1659-1707).²⁷

The second phase of mosque construction started with the Mughul re-occupation of Kalinjar under Humayun's son and successor, the great Akbar (r. 1556-1605). It took place in A.D. 1569, and Majnun Khān Qaqsāl²⁸ was appointed as the first Mughul *qil'adār* of the fort.²⁹ Between 1674-1700, the citadel went into the hands of Bundelas under the leadership of Chhatrasal (r. 1675-1731). The Mughuls did not permanently reoccupy it until the last decade of the reign of Aurangzeb.³⁰ It was only through propitiatory arrangement towards the Bundelas that the imperial powers were able to recover the Kalinjar *sarkār* in 1701 once again. From 1704 until the beginning of the reign of Bahadur Shah (r. 1707-12), the *qil'adāri* of Kalinjar stronghold was in the possession of Mīr Qulī (1704), Muhammad Sharīf (1704-1705), Shaikh Hāmid (1705) and Bahramand Khan respectively.³¹



Fig. 8:
Mosque with graves

A mosque (no. 36 A, Map I) ascribed to the Mughuls in the center of the fort, is situated inside a graveyard. Constructed on an one-meter high stereobate, it is measuring 3.50 meters from east to west and 8 meters from north to south covering an area of 6.20×2.50 meters [Plan 3]. There are three identical pointed arches on the *mihirāb*, encircled by small niches or *ṭāqs* on each side (Fig. 8). Several masonry graves are situated in front of this mosque over a raised platform. The lack of inscription makes it hard to assign this structure an exact date, yet the architectural characteristics proposed that this anonymous mosque was raised during the later Mughal era.



Plan 3:

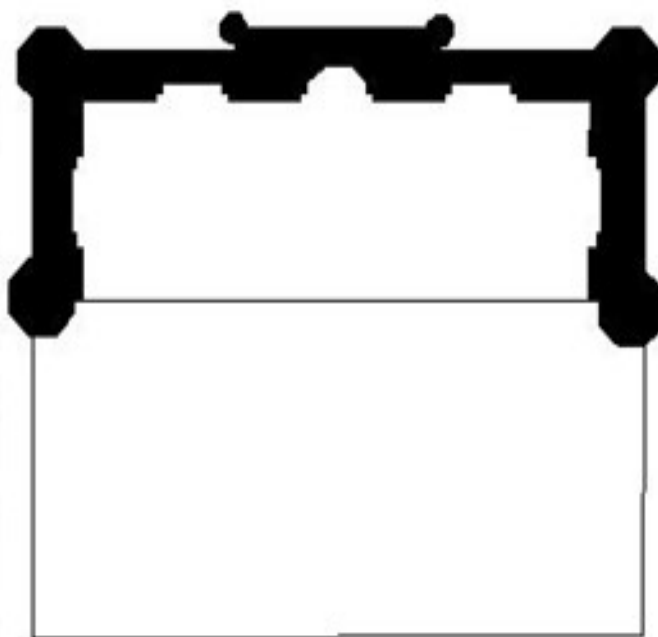
Qanāti mosque within the graveyard

During the seventeenth and eighteenth century, a number of other mosques large and small were constructed within the town as well as around the fort. Presently most of them are in a deserted condition. All these mosques are of *qanāti* (screen) type, that is structures comprising of a *qibla* (western) wall with arched recesses (*mihirābs*) fronting an open quadrangle or platform, dating from the reign of Aurangzeb (r. 1659-1707) to that of Farrukh Siyar (r. 1713-19). Also known as *namāzgāh*³², ‘place of prayer’, the *qanāti* mosque is in general the open structure built usually to the west of a town, consisting solely of what in

a mosque would be the western wall, with *mihṛāb* (*s*) and *mimbar* and, essentially, within a spacious enclosure which should be capable of accommodating the entire adult male Muslim population of Kalinjar. The wall-structure may stand at the western end of a large paved area (*ṣaḥn*), but there is usually no *ḥauḍ* for ablutions. It is a kind common during the Lodi period in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Technically, it is an arcade and such arcade-walls were built in *'Idgāhs* and graveyards for facilitating 'Fatiha' prayer, during the whole medieval period (1192-1803 A.D.). At their inception, *qanāti* masjids might have been perambulatory tent-mosques; the term *qanāt* might have been meaning canvas or tent because it had no roof and was covered by a *shāmiāna*. In their sedentary, stone and mortar incarnations, these mosques were constructed on a small *qibla* wall. The west screen wall has exquisite designs of the *mihṛāb* with the three/five lobed recessed arches in different decorative forms are a striking feature of these mosques. The central *mihṛāb* is emphasized by raising the wall and flanking minarets. There is also a back wall on the north and south. The entire walls are beautifully decorated with battlemented friezes. Sometimes, as in the mosques in Saket, Delhi, the remnants of the open courtyard are enclosed by low walls and are still visible. These mosques were generally built of rubble masonry covered by a thick layer of lime mortar and courtyard approached by a flight of steps. The most probable reason for the construction of this type of mosque was the easy construction with minimum cost and time.



Fig. 9:
Mosque near Rathod Mahal

**Plan 4:**

Qanāti mosque in front of Rathod Mahal

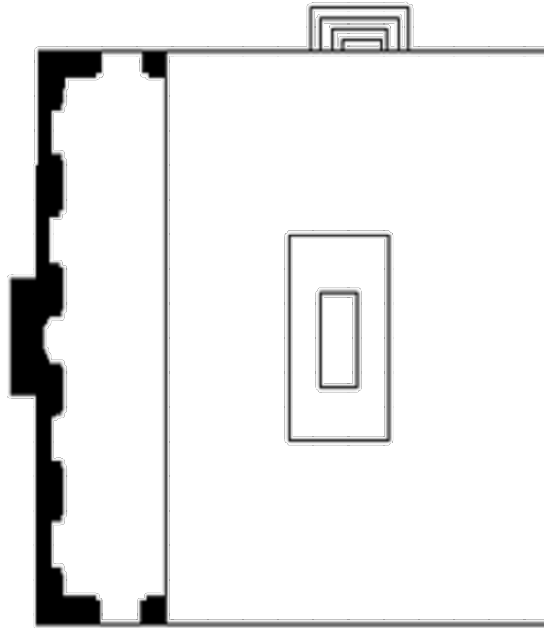
The mosque [no. 2, Map I & Plan 4] located near the Rathod Mahal is the earliest example datable to the reign of Aurangzeb (r. 1659-1707). The open prayer hall containing *mihrāb* formed an elegant pointed arch with subsidiary arches on either side, the whole interspersed with carved niches (Fig. 9). A slab of gray sandstone with a Persian inscription of two lines etched in *Nasta'liq* characters over the central arch of this mosque, dating the building to A. H. 1114/ 1702-03 AD.³³

Below is the original text of the Persian inscription:

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
 بدور جهانیان روز بنا مسجد عز و شرف
 گر بجوید کسی ز تار بخش به غمزی شود آگاه

Translation as continuous text

In the name of God the Most Merciful and Compassionate
 During the (reign) of mortal day (Emperor)
 A magnificent and glorious mosque (was) constructed!
 If (you) searching its history
 Than (you) understood through the visible sign!



Plan 5:
Qanâti mosque near Chauburji Darwâza

During the rule of Bahadur Shah (r. 1707-12) in 1709-10 A.D, another mosque [No. 7, Map I] was built in the middle of the *Ganesh Darwâza* and the *Chauburji Darwâza* close to the *Dargâh* of Mahdi Shahid.³⁴ Built on a 2.60-meter high plinth, measuring 10×6 meters from east to west and north to south respectively, this *qanâti* type is fronted with an elevated platform in the type of a patio [Plan 5]. There are five arches of similar size on the *mihrâb* of this mosque, flanked by a small niche on each side. The inscription in *Nasta'liq* characters engraved over the central arch of the *mihrâb* testifies the erection of the mosque under Bahadur Shah's reign (Fig. 10).



Fig. 10:
Mosque near Dargah of Mahdi Shahid

Below is the original text of the Persian inscription:

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
بنائی خانہ خدا شد ز بخشش داور
چمن جنت عالی نثر او زور آور
کسی کہ شانی بہ پُرسید بگو بخت راضی
بدور شاه بھادر تعمیر شد یاور

Translation as continuous text

The house of God (mosque) is built by the Munificence of God,
The garden of eminent paradise draws out his (King's) strength!
If any one wished to know the occasion (majesty), Say God is
pleased
In was built in the reign of Shah Bahadur (Bahadur Shah),



Fig. 11:
Dafalion ki Masjid

Subsequently, under Farrukh Siyar (r. 1713-19), locally known as *Dafalion ki Masjid* [no.1, Map I] was built in *Katra* and is dated December 16, 1715 AD.³⁵ Presently, in its original shape, only the western wall remains. Like the others, it is also a *qanāti* mosque (Fig. 11). First reported in the *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy*, the damaged Persian engraving in *Nasta'liq* characters makes this much clear that the mosque was built by a Mughul noble known as Khizr Khan.³⁶

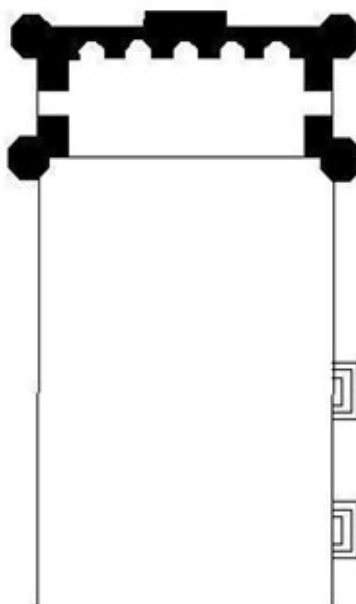
The next stage of development concerning mosque construction comes under Shah Alam II (r. 1760-1806). The *Idgāh* [no. 51, Map I], located at the four-kilometers northeast of the fort towards the Baghel Bari Road, is the finest example of the *qanāti* type mosque. The *Idgāh* in Muslim settlements in India is often a substantial building of some artistic merit, e.g. the Bahmani *idgāh* at Bijapur. There are many more fine '*idgāhs*' all over the country, but unfortunately few have been preserved. The structure is used only for the celebration of the two '*Eid*' festivals (*Eid al-adha* and *Eid al-fitr*), and no special sanctity attaches to it.

It was constructed on February 13, 1766. Built on a 1.30-meter high plinth, the mosque was raised nearly to the level of the terrace. The prayer chamber along with the frontal open-courtyard is 20 meters long and 11.40 meter wide [Plan 6]. Five multi-foliated arch *mihṛāb* adorned the western wall (Fig. 12). Carved floral designs over the spandrels and

lotus at the apex are the other mode of decoration. In addition, octagonal towers capped with small domes are constructed in each corner for further strength. Constructed with random rubble held together with lime is covered with a thick plaster of lime mortar.



Fig. 12:
'Īd'gāh



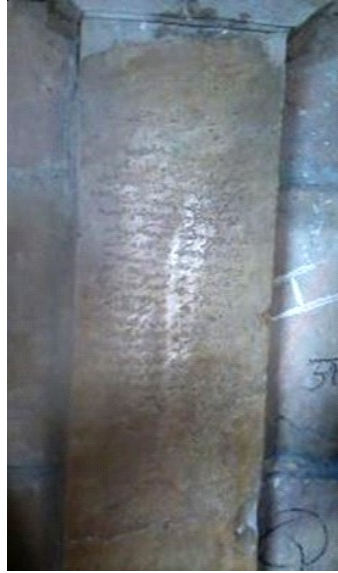
Plan 6:
'Īd'gāh

To sum up, the survey and the study of the mosques and their Persian inscriptions in and outside the Kalinjar fort, I would like to emphasize that these monuments built over a period and reflect the evolution of *qanāti* style in Central India. Moreover, it is deduced from the study that geography, played an important role in the development of one particular type of mosque. The reason behind the development of the above-mentioned type is Kalinjar's strategic importance for the medieval Indian rulers. Their study further highlight that the mosques constructed under the Mughuls in various places of North India has hardly any cultural and architectural influence over this region. To conclude, I would like to introduce hitherto unpublished Persian inscriptions from Kalinjar. These inscriptions are likewise pre-Mughul and Mughul. All mentioned inscriptions are in a bad condition and some are incomplete. A prominent feature of the scripts is in *Nasta'liq* characters, particularly under the Mughuls. All in all, the inscriptions attest to the presence of wealthy Mughul nobles at Kalinjar and are unique in providing us a historical narrative of vibrant Islamic culture. Kalinjar arguably has not yet received its due place in the historical writings of medieval India. It is also a splendid site for studying the history of Central India on the ground. It is a distinct possibility that the majority of the above-mentioned mosques in Kalinjar will disappear soon, and their names and marks will not remain; to be replaced by more modern buildings, as the older buildings were unfortunately not protected. During the three days of violence in North East Delhi starting on February 24, 2020, for example, at least 14 mosques and a Sufi *dargāh* were burnt and destroyed systematically by the rioters.³⁷ These buildings offer an insight into the nature of the architecture of the first mosques constructed in Kalinjar. If this information is lost, our understanding of the nature of early Islam in the Bundelkhand region of Central India will surely be less complete.

APPENDIX-I

Place of find or Deposit	Dynasty	King	Date	Language & Alphabets	Remarks	First Reported
1. Mosque near the Tank <i>Sanichari Kund</i> . Slab on the central <i>mihrab</i>	Tughluq		A.H. 1183 = 1769-1770 A.D.	Persian verse, <i>Nasta'aliq</i>	Damaged, contains religious text (First two creeds and Nād 'Ali	<i>ARIE</i> , 1973-74, D. 270
2. Mosque of Islam Shah, north bank of <i>Koth Tirth</i> . Slab on the central <i>mihrab</i>	Afghan	Islam Shah Sūr (1540-45)	952 AH/1545 A.D. (chronogram)	Persian verse, <i>Nasta'aliq</i>	Records the capture of Kalinjar by Sher Shah. Mentions the death of the Sur ruler. Records that the fort was renamed ' <i>Sherkoh</i> '.	S. A. N. Rezavi, 'The Medieval Fort of Kalinjar and its History', <i>PIHC</i> , 2002, P. 1237
3. Mosque near the Palace called <i>Rathod Mahal</i> . Slab on the central <i>mihrab</i>	Mughal	Aurangzeb (1569-1707)	A.H. 1114 (chronogram) = 1702-1702 A.D.	Persian verse, <i>Nasta'aliq</i>	Records the construction of a mosque	<i>ARIE</i> , 1973-74, D. 272
4. Mosque on the way of the fort, near the <i>Dargāh</i> of Mahdi Shahid. Slab on the central <i>mihrab</i>	Mughal	[Shah Alam I] Bahadur Shah (1707-1712)	A.H. 1121 (chronogram) = 1709-1710 A.D.	Persian verse, <i>Nasta'aliq</i>	Records the construction of a mosque through the efforts of Zorawar (?)	<i>ARIE</i> , 1973-74, D. 271
5. Mosque called <i>Dajalton ki Masjid</i> . Slab on the central <i>mihrab</i>	Mughal	Farrukh Siyar (1713-1719)	A.H. 1128, Muharram 1 = 1715 A.D., December 16	Persian verse, <i>Nasta'aliq</i>	Records the construction of a mosque by Khizr Khan	<i>ARIE</i> , 1973-74, D. 273
6. <i>Idgāh</i> . Slab above the central <i>mihrab</i> .	Mughal	Shah Alam II (1760-1806)	A.H. 1179 (chronogram) Thursday = 1766 A.D.	Persian verse, <i>Nasta'aliq</i>	Badly damaged seems to record the construction of a mosque	<i>ARIE</i> , 1973-74, D. 275

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APPENDIX-II (Illustration of the Inscriptions)

1. Inscription on Islam Shah Mosque



2. Inscription on the mosque in front of Rathod Mahal



3. Inscription on the Mosque near the *Dargāh* of Mahdi Shahid



4. Inscription on '*Idgāh*

Notes and References

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24. Literally means 'a hollow cavity in which the dead body is kept in grave tomb'.
25. For a controversy regarding this alleged burial see, Hermann Goetz, "Sher Shah's Mausoleum at Sasaram", *Arts Islamica*, Vol. IV, No. 1 (1938), pp. 96-99; Atkinson, op. cit., p. 454.
26. I am thankful to Professor Emeritus Irfan Habib and Professor Jabir Raza of the Centre of Advanced Study, Department of History, AMU for their help in reading and translating the Persian text and also other texts in this article.
27. See *infra*.
28. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Ma'thirul Umara* (c.1742-80), ed., Maulvi Abdur Rahim and Maulvi Mirza Ashraf Ali, Vol. III, Calcutta, Bib. Ind., 1888-91, pp. 207-208; *Akbar Nama*, II, pp. 340-41; Surendra Nath Sinha, *Suba of Allahabad under the Great Mughals (1580-1707)- A political, Administrative and Economic Study*, New Delhi, Gitanjali Publishing House, 1983 (Second Impression), p. 20.
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30. *Suba of Allahabad*, pp. 81-82.
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32. The word *namâzgâh* is also used for those small areas seen in sparsely populated regions in Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier region of Pakistan, sometimes simply a square or rectangle demarcated by whitewashed stones, with a larger

stone at the western end to designate the *qibla*, and where there is no pretence of an enclosure.

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34. *Ibid.*, p. 187.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 187.
36. *Ibid.*
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