

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURES OF MUGHAL NOBLE'S PALATIAL GARDEN'S AT AGRA

Abstract

The construction is one of the biggest projects especially in the Agra city. Apparently, with the establishment of Agra as a capital city in 1506 A.D., a lot of construction started. Twenty to twenty-five years later Babur found no shortage of expertise or labour when he undertook to construct some buildings of his own. Writing with a sense of pride Babur stated that:

“Mulla Sharaf writing in the Zafar-nama about the building of Timur Beg's stone Mosque, lays stress on the fact that on it 200 stone-cutters worked, from Azarbajjan, Fars, Hindustan and other countries. But 680 men worked daily on my buildings in Agra and of Agra stone-cutters only; while 1491 stone-cutters worked daily on my buildings in Agra, Sikri, Biana, Dulpur (Dholpur), Gualiar and Kuil (Kol).”¹

Keywords: Complex building industry, phase of transition, Mughal gardens, charming houses, pleasant mansions, water canals, reservoirs and fountains etc.

Author

Dr. Salim Javed Akhtar
Associate Professor (History)
Galgotias University
Uttar Pradesh, India.

¹ See Babur-Nama, Persian text ed. by A. S. Beveridge, London, (1971), fol. 291b.

I. INTRODUCTION

The same variables also determined the location, pattern, spatial distribution, and organization of the dwellings in Mughal India. Due to the early Mughals' extreme heat sensitivity to the point of being allergic and the fact that India is a hot region, river banks had great appeal for them. Babūr was irritated by the country's heat, dust, and hot winds. Many of his top soldiers and army commanders opposed to the notion of staying in India due to the oppressive heat, and some even started making preparations to leave for home.² Babūr mentioned that: “the heat of the country was uncommonly oppressive. Many men dropped down as if they had been affected by the simum wind, and died on the spot. On these accounts not a few of my Begs and best men began to lose heart, objected to remaining in Hindustan and even began to make preparation for their return.”³

However, Babūr managed to convince them against their intended course of leaving India.⁴ When Babūr's nobles made the decision to settle down in India, they preferred river banks since the water always cooled the region and alleviated the heat. They could create lovely gardens here,⁵ flower spangled meadows and fountains and cascades with shimmering waters symbolizing earthly reflection of paradise. Persian wheels and nearness to the river ensured the necessary supply of water. Contemporary Mughal paintings depicting houses with gardens tanks and Persian wheels are not rare.⁶

Shaykh Zayn mentioned that ‘Agra's altered terrain is contrasted with the Nile River bank by a Babūr contemporaneous, who also notes how unique the new cluster was from other Indian cities.’⁷

II. CONTENTS

The fascination of the nobility for the Yamuna bank resulted in the length of Agra city becoming out of proportion to its width (6 kos X ½ kos).⁸ In other Mughal towns like Delhi, Lahore, Patna and Ahmadabad the nobles preferred the same kind of situation. As soon as the embankment of ‘Ālamgīr was completed at Lahore, the nobles started building their residences along the bank and the area was known as Band-i ‘Ālamgīr.⁹ Khulāsah says that

² Zahīr al-Dīn Bābur, *Tuzūk-i-Bāburī*, tr. by E. G. Talbat, Delhi, (1974), p. 191; Also see for Babur-Nama, Persian text ed. by A. S. Beveridge, op.cit., fol. 294b.

³ Zahīr al-Dīn Bābur, *Tuzūk-i-Bāburī*, tr. by E. G. Talbat, op.cit., p. 193. Also see for Babur-Nama, Persian text ed. by A. S. Beveridge, op.cit., ff. 295b-296a.

⁴ Zahīr al-Dīn Bābur, *Tuzūk-i-Bāburī*, tr. by E. G. Talbat, op.cit., p. 191; Also see for Babur-Nama, Persian text ed. by A. S. Beveridge, op.cit., fol. 294b; Abul Fazl, *Akbar-Nama*, ed. by Maulavi Abdur Rahim, Vol. I, Calcutta, (1877), p. 100.

⁵ See for example Babur-Nama, Persian text ed. by A. S. Beveridge, op.cit., ff. 30-31.

⁶ See for example S. C. Walch, *Art of Mughal India*, New York, (1963).

⁷ Zahīr al-Dīn Bābur, *Wāqī‘āt-i Bāburī*, *Chaghatay Turkish text translation into Persian ed. by Abdul-Rahīm Khānkhānān*, ff. 85b-86a-b.

⁸ ‘*Tuzūk-i-Jahāngīrī*’, ed. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Ghazipur and Aligarh, (1863-64), p. 2; ‘*Jahāngīr’s India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert*’, tr. by W. H. Moreland and P. Geyl, Delhi, (1972), pp.1-2.

⁹ M. Baqar, ‘*Lahore, Past and Present*’, Lahore, 1952, p. 308.

“The town's high nobility further enhanced its beauty by erecting quaint houses and attractive mansions with river views.”¹⁰

Observations about the city layout of Agra made by De Laet,¹¹ Bernier¹² and Pelsaert¹³ are also worth recalling Pelsaert records, “Hindus and Muslims coexist in close quarters in the densely populated city of Agra, as do the rich and the impoverished”¹⁴ Mughals were took extraordinary care in the selection of the site and setting of the rooms, for they believed that a wrong selection would bring bad luck and misery to the owner of the house.¹⁵ Mu‘taqid Khān, a noble of Jahāngīr, suffered misfortunes and people around him attributed them to a wrong selection of the house. Jahāngīr records in his Memoirs followed as: “that good fortune and bad luck are determined by four factors: your woman, your slave, your house, and your horse. These factors are listed in order of importance.”¹⁶ The simple test for knowing the suitability of the place was clearing a small piece of earth from the proposed site, and throwing it back upon the same ground. If it does not cover the hole, it denotes ill luck, if it covers more than what is cleared, it assures prosperity, and if it covers just the cleared land it implies a satisfactory state that is neither good luck nor bad luck.¹⁷

The houses of aristocracy were surrounded by a boundary wall provided with a well guarded door.¹⁸ Some houses had a second wall enclosing a garden in front of the house. Manrique recorded in his account followed as: ‘That the house of Āsaf Khān at Lahore had two walls and the second wall enclosed within it a lovely garden.’¹⁹ Outer gates were made of very hard and strong wood covered with metal sheets. The gateways created an atmosphere of importance for what was inside, announcing by their high presence that they should take a special attitude when approaching an important place. So, the first stage in house building was the erection of a perimeter wall and the establishment of an entrance way. The size and height of the door might have been an indication of a man’s status.

On the other hand, Iranian houses had two knockers, the solid long one for men and the rounded one for women signifying the male and female principles.²⁰ The absence of this arrangement in the houses of the Mughal nobility is difficult to explain. Inside this gate often there were pleasant gardens, geometrically divided by water canals which communicated with various reservoirs and fountains. The garden was judiciously planted with fruit bearing and flowering plants, so that all the senses are satisfied and one feels completely at ease in these surroundings.²¹ These gardens had fishponds approached with walkways paved with

¹⁰ Khulāsāt al-Tawārīkh, tr. J. N. Sarkar (India of Aurangzeb), (1901), p. 197; In Iran also the houses of aristocracy were near river banks, while in Syria proximity to the centre of the town or some important monument was the favourable location. Cf. B. Lewis, *The World of Islam*, London, (1976), p. 93.

¹¹ ‘The Empire of the Great Mogol’, by De Laet’s, tr. by J. S. Hoyland, Delhi, (1975), pp.37-41.

¹² ‘Travels in the Mogul Empire (A.D. 1656-68)’, by Francois Bernier, Revised Edition by V. A. Smith, LPP, Delhi, (1934), p. 246.

¹³ ‘Jahāngīr’s India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert’, op.cit., p. 1.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁵ ‘Tuzūk-i- Jahāngīri’, ed. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, op.cit., p. 115.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 115.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 115.

¹⁸ ‘Travels of Sebastien Manrique 1629-1643’, by Manrique, Vol. II, Hakluyt Society, Oxford, (1927), p. 207.

¹⁹ ‘Travels of Sebastien Manrique 1629-1643’, by Manrique, Vol. II, op.cit., p. 214.

²⁰ See for J. Dhamija, *Living Traditions of Iran’s Crafts*, New Delhi, (1977), p. 69.

²¹ ‘Travels of Sebastien Manrique 1629-1643’, by Manrique, Vol. II, op.cit., p. 207.

tiles of various colours.²² The excavation conducted by Prof. Mehta has exposed such a garden and a tank at Champaner.²³

Similar statements about the number of workers employed in the construction of fort of Agra, Fatehpur Sikri complex and Tāj Mahāl and other edifices are available in the later sources.²⁴ However, such massive building activity was not confined to the family of the Mughal rulers. The pace at which new buildings were coming up all the time, and old ancestral havelis abandoned and left to ruin, was so visible that it could not escape the comment, "If all of these structures were maintained and renovated for a century, every city's and even every village's territory would be ornamented with monuments."²⁵ This perception of a European observer is corroborated by the authors of biographical notes prepared under the rules of Shāh Jahān and others, which refer to the construction of numerous havelis (mansions), sarāis and similar other structures in the city of Agra and elsewhere. The nobles spared no effort to make them comfortable; Asaf Khan, the central diwān, is credited with an expenditure of about rupees forty lacs on his buildings at Lahore and Agra.²⁶

The general observation is that, Pelsaert who was success in preparing a long list of buildings, which were survived in the city of Agra during Mughal period.²⁷ Many of these belonged to nobles who were posted outside the Agra subā. While associates of the governing class preferred to live near, or even alongside, the Yamuna River in order to shield themselves from the heat, others had moved into outlying areas. Many buildings were only occasionally occupied as personal residences. Many were rented as out to those on a temporary visit to the city, or to those who had not undertaken construction for some reason.

"Around the year 1626 A.D., the city of Agra is said to have increased in size by more than three times as a result of intense construction activity. The city had a footprint of roughly 60 square kilometers."²⁸ "Its population increased from five lakhs in 1609 A.D. to 8 lakhs in 1666 A.D.,"²⁹ achieving a 60% increase.

The geographical location of the Agra subā was such that the major routes passed through it for Central Asia and Western Asia. High-ranking nobility favored everlasting constructions in Capital cities, producing mandate for items from other regions and outside India, as Agra subā traffic increased. The Dutch traveller Pelsaert aptly states about the

²² 'Commentaries by Father Monserrate, by Farther Monserrate, tr. by Hoyland and Banerjee, Cuttack, (1922), p. 219.

²³ 'India Archaeology 1972-73-A Review', ed. M. N. Deshpande, ASI, New Delhi, (1978), pp. 11-12.

²⁴ 'Tarīkh-i-Qandāhari', by Arif Qandāhari, ed. I. A. Arshi, Rampur, (1962), p. 145; 'Amāl-i-Salīh', by Mohammad Salih Kanbu, Vol. III, ed. Ghulam Yazdani, Bib. Ind., Calcutta, (1939), p. 52.

²⁵ 'Jahāngīr's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert', op.cit., p. 56; 'Āīn-i-Akbarī', by Abul Fāzl, Edited by Nawal Kishore, Vol. I, Lucknow, (1881), p. 107.

²⁶ Zakhirat-ul-Khawānīn, by Shaikh Farid Bhakkari, ed. by Z. A. Desai, Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, Delhi, (1993), Vol. II, p. 34.

²⁷ 'Jahāngīr's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert', op.cit., pp. 1-5. Also see details in "Imperial Mughal Capital City at Agra" Ed. Dr. Salim Javed Akhtar, 1st Edition, INSC International Publishers (IIP), Chikkamagaluru, Karnataka, (India), 2021 (ISBN: 978-1-68576-042-7).
Link:https://books.google.co.in/books/about/Imperial_Mughal_Capital_City_at_Agra.html?id=jEKwzgeEACAAJ&redir_esc=y

²⁸ 'Jahāngīr's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert', op.cit., p. 2.

²⁹ 'Xavier, JASB, NS, XXIII, p. 121; I. Habib, 'Population', 'Cambridge Economic History', Vol. I, p. 171.

centrality of the city of Agra as: "All goods must travel through this route, including those from Bengal and the entire East of the country, Gujarat, Tatta (or Sind), Kabul, Kandahar, or Multan to the Deccan, the Deccan or Burhanpur to those locations or to Lahore, as well as goods from the Deccan or Burhanpur and the entire Deccan region. There are no feasible alternative routes, and the roads carry enormous amounts of goods, particularly cotton goods."³⁰

Mughal India's common people faced miserable conditions during empire. Various contemporary writings clear about the construction of houses or palaces through out the towns and cities in India, for common peoples as well as Nobles. De Laet's mention in his record that: "India's common people are in extremely poor healthiness.... Their huts are small and typically made of thatches, mud, or turf. Their bedding is scant and thin, adequate in the intense heat but of little use when the weather is bitterly cold. Nevertheless, they attempt to combat the cold by building a fire in front of the house, made of dried cowdung, which results in a terrible smell and intolerable smoke in their towns and villages. They never light a fire inside their homes. They have very little furniture, only a few earthen vessels. There are two beds, one for the man and the other for the women."³¹

But on the other hand, the Nobles who were live in indescribable luxury and extravagance in the building activities, who were built their palaces or houses out side the fort. For this reason, the writing of De Laet's observed that: "The nobles' homes are quite vast, with numerous halls and chambers. They only have one story and typically have flat roofs so that you may enjoy the evening air. A tank and trees in the courtyard help to reduce the heat. The walls aren't created with lime, so they quickly lose their uprightness and don't survive very long. Occasionally, they are lime-washed before being covered in several coatings of a plaster consisting of quick-lime, milk, gum, and sugar, which is then polished until the walls shine like mirrors. Except in the women's apartments, where there are numerous gold and silver utensils on display, there isn't much furniture. Persian rugs are strewn in the men's bathrooms, notably in the sitting areas known as Diwan-Gana [Diwan-Khana], where they greet visitors while seated....."³²

Indian cities had two types of houses: palatial enclosures for aristocracy and rich merchants, and ordinary houses made of mud, wood, and bamboo. The previous were roomy, airy, sturdy and wells provided with water encompassing gardens and reservoirs, and adjoining with the main roads. The latter were small, filthy, asymmetrical, and opened onto short, narrow alleyways without sufficient preparations for water.

Thevenot and Careri wrote about the palaces of the great men at Agra, which is followed as: "These palaces, which are all in a line and all belong to princes and other important Lords of Court, are joined by five more very large palaces and twenty or thirty additional very large palaces. Together, they provide those on the other side of the river a particularly beautiful view. The view would be considerably nicer if it weren't for the lengthy

³⁰ 'Jahāngīr's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert', op.cit., p. 6.

³¹ 'The Empire of the Great Mogol', by De Laet's, tr. by J. S. Hoyland, Delhi, (1975), pp. 88-89.

³² Ibid., p. 91.

Garden-walls, which significantly contribute to the Town's length.”³³ “Along the same stretch, there are fewer palaces and other structures. The town is rather long but narrow, and aside from a few good streets that are there, all the others are very narrow and lack symmetry because everyone rushed to buy land on that side in order to enjoy the attractive prospect and convenience of the Water of the Gemna.”³⁴

About Houses in cities and Towns, De Laet's also wrote that: “The majority of the residents' homes are modest and flat-roofed, with numerous unglazed windows that let in plenty of fresh air. The more significant structures are made of brick or hewn stone; in both towns and in the country, homes are surrounded by a lot of trees, giving the impression that a city is more like a collection of groves from a distance.....”³⁵

When the Agra became the capital city, in 1506 A.D., changed the direction of the flow of revenue towards it. This change was finest demonstrated as following statement of Pelsaert (c. 1625 A.D.), followed as: “There are no practical alternate routes, and the roads carry indescribable quantities of goods, especially cotton. Examples of the goods that must pass this way include those from Gujarat, Tatta (or Sind), Kabul, Kandahar, or Multan, to Deccan, the Deccan or Burhanpur, and the entire East country.”³⁶

Along with the previously mentioned elements, the function, nature, and character of the Mughal polity were in no way less crucial in the process of developing Agra into the largest metropolis city in north India. Although, Babur and later Humayun were founder of Mughal Empire, had their origin outside the Indian subcontinent. Immigration and absorption of similar elements into the state apparatus continued under Akbar and his successors. The large proportion of the ruling elite organized permanent establishments in the capital to fruitfully utilize every occasion to present themselves before the ruler, though some might have been assigned work in other parts of the empire.

In the beginning of the Mughal period in India, the groups of Muhallāhs in the city of Agra was cosmopolitan in character. In them lived Iranis, Turanis, Indian Muslims and Rajputs. The list of the names of nobles, drawn by Pelsaert, who had their houses on right bank of the Yamuna during the time of Jahāngīr, amply proves this observation.

The Bahadur Khan³⁷ palace is located in the north, who formerly reigned over the Asir citadel (5 kōs from Burhānpūr). The house of Rāja Bhōj [?], governor at Burhānpūr and father of the current Rai Ratan [?] is next (rank: 5,000 horses). After that come to Ibrahim Khan³⁸ (3,000 horses); Rustam Kandahari³⁹ (5,000 horses); Rāja Kīshan Dās (3,000 horses);

³³ “Which contribute much to the length of the town.” Cf. ‘Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri’, ed. by S. N. Sen, National Archives of India, New Delhi, (1949), p. 47, foot note- 12.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 47-48.

³⁵ ‘The Empire of the Great Mogol’, by De Laet’s, op.cit., p. 81.

³⁶ ‘Jahāngīr’s India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert’, op.cit., p. 6.

³⁷ See for ‘The Empire of the Great Mogol’, by De Laet’s, op.cit., p. 196; ‘Morāqqā-i-Akbarābād’, by Syed Ahmad Marharvi, Agra, (1931), p. 215.

³⁸ ‘The Empire of the Great Mogol’, by De Laet’s, op.cit., p. 193, foot note- 109. De Laet’s mention that he was promoted later on with the commander of 5,000 horse. (See Ibid., pp. 193, 201-202)

³⁹ Ibid., p. 157.

Itiqād Khān⁴⁰, who was youngest brother of Asāf Khān (5,000 horses); Shazādā Khānam, current ruler's sister, had married with Mūzaffār Khān, the former ruler at Gujarat; Goulzier Begūm, was the mother ruler; Khwājā Muhammed Thakāar [?] (2,000 horses); Khwāja Bansī, previously ruler Khūrrām's (1,000 horses) steward; Wazīr Khān⁴¹ (5,000 horses); Tzoaeghpoeera⁴², a large enclosed area with windows belonging to Emperor Akbār; 'the houses of Ehtībār Khān (eunuch), governor in Agra city during his life time'⁴³; Baqār Khān (3,000 horses); Mīrzā Aboūssagīet [?] (1,500 horses)⁴⁴; astonishingly lavish castle of Asāf Khān (8,000 horses); Itīmād-ūd-Daulā (5,000 horses)⁴⁵; Khwāja Abdul Hasan⁴⁶ (5,000 horse); Rochia Sultan Begam,⁴⁷ the present king's sister, who is single. After crossing the Red Fort of Agra, one arrives at Nakhās (big market), where many different items are sold during morning time, including horses, camels, oxen, tents, and cotton products. Beyond here are several significant noble's houses, Mīrzā Abdūllā, who was son of Khān Azām (3,000 horse); Agā-Nūr, army-commander of ruler's (3,000 horse); Jahān Khān⁴⁸ (2,000 horse); Mīrzā Khūrrām, son of Khān Azām (2,000 horse); Mahābat Khān (8,000 horse); Khān Alām (5,000 horse); Rāja Bet [?] Singh (3,000 horse); the late Rāja Mān Singh (5,000 horse); Rāja Mādhō Singh (2,000 horse).⁴⁹

A substantial part of the affluence amassed by adherents of the governing class, some of whose jagirs and offices were located outside the Agra subā, thus found its way to the city and was spent there. This is reflected in flamboyant and ostentatious life styles. Pelsaert, again, describing the graciousness palaces, says, that: "They have three out of four women, and their mahāls (palaces) are decorated inside with carnal sensuality, wild revelry, and unnecessary splendor. The number of slaves a woman has might range maybe 10, or 20, or 100, and each wife has a separate residence for herself and each slave."⁵⁰

About the Noblemen's houses (Palaces), at city of Agra, mentioned in the narration of William Finch (1608-11) in his Travels. He wrote that: "The majority of the noblemen's

⁴⁰ 'Tuzūk-ī- Jahāngīri', ed. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, op.cit., pp. 121-122; Shah Nawaz Khan, 'Maāsir-ul-Umara', ed. by Maulavi Abdur Rahim, Text-I, Part-I, A.S.B., Calcutta, (1888), pp. 180-182; Also see for 'The Empire of the Great Mogol', by De Laet's, op.cit., pp. 201-202, foot note- 120.

⁴¹ See for 'The Empire of the Great Mogol', by De Laet's, op.cit., p. 203, foot note- 123.

⁴² "Possibly Shaikhpora, or some such name as Sokhpura." Cf. 'Jahāngīr's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert', op.cit., p. 3, foot note-1.

⁴³ See for 'The Empire of the Great Mogol', by De Laet's, op.cit., pp. 201, 203.

⁴⁴ 'Probably Mirza Abu Said, the 'g' being a copying error for 'y'.' Cf. 'Jahāngīr's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert', op.cit., p. 3, foot note-3.

⁴⁵ 'Tuzūk-ī- Jahāngīri', ed. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, op.cit., pp. 121-122, 328.

⁴⁶ 'Probably Abul Hasan.' Cf. 'Jahāngīr's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert', op.cit., p. 3, foot note-4. Also see for 'The Empire of the Great Mogol', by De Laet's, op.cit., pp. 181, 201-202.

⁴⁷ 'Jahāngīr's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert', op.cit., p. 3; also see for 'The Empire of the Great Mogol', by De Laet's, op.cit., p. 180.

⁴⁸ 'Probably Khan Jahan Lodi.' See for 'The Empire of the Great Mogol', by De Laet's, op.cit., pp. 23, 185.

⁴⁹ 'Jahāngīr's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert', op.cit., pp. 2-3. Also see details in "Imperial Mughal Capital City at Agra" Ed. Dr. Salim Javed Akhtar, 1st Edition, INSC International Publishers (IIP), Chikkamagaluru, Karnataka, (India), 2021 (ISBN: 978-1-68576-042-7).

Link: https://books.google.co.in/books/about/Imperial_Mughal_Capital_City_at_Agra.html?id=jEKwzgEACAAJ&redir_esc=y

⁵⁰ 'Jahāngīr's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert', op.cit., pp. 2-3.

homes are located beside waterways....”⁵¹ Jahangir also mentioned in his Memories that: “Many people have constructed three- to four-story structures there.....”⁵²

Major David Price, observation regarding the dwellings of common inhabitants in the Agra city mentioned in his translation of Jahangir's Memories followed as: ‘The majority of the occupants' standard homes are built three or four floors high. The multitude is so enormous that from the time of evening prayer till the end of the first quarter of the night, the crowd is so tightly packed that it is extremely impossible for individuals to go through the streets and pass one another.’⁵³

About the palaces of Noble's and houses of common men were discuss by the Francois Bernier in his Travels as: “in the numerous Omrah and Raja mansions, as well as the fine stone or brick homes occupied by private persons....”⁵⁴

In Akbarnāma, Abul Fazl mentioned that, Nobles built lovely households along the both bank of the Jamūna in the vicinity of Agra city. He wrote that: ‘The greatest structure in the city, the fort, is where he set up residence. The construction of beautiful homes began. Munim Khan Khan-i-Khanan received the Bairām Khan family home. On both sides of the Jamna, all the other courtiers and servants started to construct lovely homes, which embellished the city.....’⁵⁵

Thevenot and Careri also mentioned about the palaces of Nobles and the houses of common peoples in the city of Agra. He wrote that: ‘The majority of it is made up of palaces and gardens, therefore its size is not a reliable indicator of how many people live there. The fact is that one may wander the streets without being harassed since the common houses are small, made of straw, and only hold a handful of people each. According to what I've been informed, there is a lot of confusion and an endless amount of people about; this makes sense given how congested the streets are.....’⁵⁶ Through this statement, we come to a conclusion that in the Agra city the streets are not so wider for easy passing through it. The homes of the ordinary people were straw-built, low-rise structures.

Abul Fazl also mentioned in his record about the noble's palaces and gardens along the both side of river bank of Jamuna. He wrote that: “It is traversed by the river Jumna, which is unique in terms of the lightness and digestion of its water. The fortune's agents built lovely residences and created lovely gardens on either side of the threshold.....”⁵⁷

Abul Fazl mentioned in his record about the making of house-buildings and material used in it. He wrote that: “Regulations for home construction in general are essential for both the government's splendor and the comfort of the troops. Towns are where the world's connected people congregate because without them, development would not be possible. Because of this, the ruler built magnificent structures and clothes the fruits of his intellect and

⁵¹ William Finch, ‘Early Travels in India, 1583-1619’, ed. by W. Foster, New Delhi, (1968), pp. 182, 185.

⁵² ‘Tuzūk-ī- Jahāngīri’, ed. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, op.cit., p. 2.

⁵³ ‘Memoirs of the Emperor Jahanguir’, Pr.M.S., tr. ed. by Major David Price, Rare Books INC., Delhi, p. 19.

⁵⁴ ‘Travels in the Mogul Empire (A.D. 1656-68)’, by Francois Bernier, op.cit., p. 284.

⁵⁵ ‘Akbar-Nama’, by Abul Fazl, ed. by Maulavi Abdur Rahim, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1879, pp. 122-123.

⁵⁶ ‘Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri’, ed. by S. N. Sen, op.cit., p. 49.

⁵⁷ ‘Akbar-Nama’, by Abul Fazl, ed. by Maulavi Abdur Rahim, Vol. II, op.cit., p. 76.

heart in clothing made of stone and clay.... They provide good protection from the rain and the cold...”⁵⁸

Abul Fazl also described about the binding material used in the Nobles houses or palaces buildings. He writes that: “Many people are desirous of building houses; but honesty and conscientiousness are rare, especially among traders. His Majesty has carefully inquired into their profit and losses, and has fixed the prices of articles in such a manner, that both parties are satisfied. Red sandstone cost 3d. per man. It is obtainable in the hills of Fathpūr Sīkrī, His Majesty’s residence, and may be broken from the rocks at any length or breadth.... Bricks are of three kinds; burnt, half burnt, unburnt...Wood, eight kinds of wood are in general use. 1. Sīsaū, 2. Nāzhū, called in Hindī Jīdh, 3. Dasang (?), called in Hindī Karī, 4. Ber, 5. Mughlān (Babūl), 6. Sirs, 7. Dayāl, 8. Bakāyin.....Gaj-i shīrīn, or sweet limestone. There is a quarry near Bahīrah...Chūna, or quicklime, it is mostly boiled put of kangur, a kind of solid earth resembling stone in hardness. Iron cramps, Gul-mekh (large nails with broad heads), Serews and nuts, chiefly used for doors and boxes...Khaprel, or tiles. They are one hand long and ten fingers broad, are burnt, and are used for the roofs of houses, as a protection against heat and cold.... Qulba, or spouts, to lead off water.... Bās, or bamboo. It is used for spears. The price of some kinds of bamboo is much higher. The ceilings and walls of houses are adorned with it. Khas is the sweet-smelling root of a kind of grass which grows along the banks of rivers. During summer, they make screens of it, which are placed before the door and sprinkled with water. This renders the air cool and perfumed. Kāh-i chappar (reeds for thatching) is sold in bundles, which are called in Hindī pūla.... Bhus, or wheat straw, used for mixing with mortar.... Kāh-i dābh, straw, etc., which is put on roofs.... San is a plant. Peasants mix it with quicklime...Gum, of an inferior quantity, is mixed with quicklime.... Sirīsh-i kāhī, or reed glue, is mixed with sweet limestone.... Luk is the flower-bunch of the reed which is used for matting. People burn it and use it as a candle. It is also mixed with quicklime and qalī...Sīmgil (silver clay) is a white and greasy clay. It is used for white-washing houses. It keeps a house cool and looks well. Gil-i surkh, or red clay, called in Hindī, gerū.... Glass is used for windows.....”⁵⁹

The detail pictures of the houses of both Nobles as well as common men’s were discussed in the Commentary of Father Monserrate. He recorded that: “Furthermore, due to the squalor of the streets, the dwellings were purposefully constructed without windows. However, the wealthy decorate their homes' arched ceilings and roofs with carvings and paintings: Plant decorative gardens in their courtyards, create fishponds and tanks lined with colorful tiles, build artificial springs and fountains that shoot water jets far into the air, and install promenades made of brick or marble. Such homes, however, won't have any features on their exteriors or front doorways that would catch the attention of onlookers or indicate that there is anything unusual within. The Brachmanae have a different architectural style, but they also adorn their home with deftly made statues and sculptures of fantastical heroes and monsters made of stone or wood. They never fail to paint or carve the crested snake somewhere on their structures, usually on the capitals of the columns. which I think is the Egyptian asp and which the Portuguese refer to as the "Cuckoo-Serpent." For this reason,

⁵⁸ See for ‘Aīn-ī-Akbarī’, by Abul Fazl, Edited by Nawal Kishore, Vol. I, op.cit., p. 115.

⁵⁹ ‘Aīn-ī-Akbarī’, by Abul Fazl, Edited by Nawal Kishore, Vol. I, op.cit., pp. 115-117.

once a traveler has seen one of these cities, he has seen them all, as the common people reside there in squalid huts and little cottages...⁶⁰

William Finch recorded about the Nobles houses upon the banks of the river Jamuna. He wrote that: "The citie lyeth in manner of a halfe-moone, bellying to the land-ward some 5c. in length, and as much by the Rivers side, upon the bankes whereof are many goodly houses of the Nobility, pleasantly over-looking Gemini....."⁶¹

About the Nobles palaces at Agra city, Manucci mentioned in his record followed as: "The city is a large one, with a circumference of twelve leagues, and is surrounded by many gardens..... On both sides the fortress is adorned with beautiful palaces for the princes of the blood-royal and the grandees. Opposite these palaces, on the other side of the river, is a large garden and a villiage, and many tombs....."⁶²

Gardens and houses built by many great men or nobles for the purpose of their enjoyment. Richard Steel and John Crowther both mentioned during their visit to Mughal India followed that: "At this time many great men have their Gardens, and houses of pleasure there, and there are buried, whereby it is beautified with goodly buildings...."⁶³

The Nobles Houses in Mughal India divided into two parts like: (a) *dīwānkhānah* (b) *mardānkhānah*. The *dīwānkhānah* was the most important part of an aristocratic house in Mughal Empire. With brocade drapes, floral carpets, and lovely hangings, it was beautifully ornamented.⁶⁴ There was also Chinese ceramics used as decorative pieces in the niches of the Mughal houses.⁶⁵ The room was further bedecked with perfume-holders and silver braziers for keeping 'itr (perfumes) and burning odoriferous substance.⁶⁶ Bernier wrote that: 'the rooms were covered with four-inch cotton mattresses wherein a silk carpet was placed in the winter and a white linen in the summer. At one corner there was some mattresses ornamented with frills and golden and silver embroidery. Not satisfied with it they further beautified the structure by adorning the ceiling by carvings, paintings, stucco and plaster cut work.'⁶⁷ Dado decorations have been discovered from two houses excavated at Fatehpur Sikri and Champaner.⁶⁸

⁶⁰ 'Commentaries by Father Monserrate, by Farther Monserrate, tr. by Hoyland and Banerjee, op.cit., p. 219.

⁶¹ 'Purchas His Pilgrimes', ed. by Samuel Purchas, Vol. IV, Glasgow, pp. 72, 75.

⁶² 'Storia Do Mogor or Mogul India, 1653-1708', by Niccolao Manucci, tr. by William Irvine, Vol. I, LPP, Delhi, (1990), p. 130. Also see in "Imperial Mughal Capital City at Agra" Ed. Dr. Salim Javed Akhtar, 1st Edition, INSC International Publishers (IIP), Chikkamagaluru, Karnataka, (India), 2021 (ISBN: 978-1-68576-042-7).

Link: https://books.google.co.in/books/about/Imperial_Mughal_Capital_City_at_Agra.html?id=jEKWzgeACAAJ&redir_esc=y

⁶³ See for 'Purchas His Pilgrimes', ed. by Samuel Purchas, Vol. IV, op.cit., p. 267. Also see "Mahtab Bagh: An Imperial Mughal Garden at Agra" by Salim Javed Akhtar, Proceedings of Indian History Congress, 69th Session, Kannur, Dec. 2008, pp. 1083-1090.

Link: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44147270>

⁶⁴ 'Jahāngīr's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert', op.cit., p. 67.

⁶⁵ 'Travels in the Mogul Empire (A.D. 1656-68)', by Francois Bernier, op.cit., pp. 247-248.

⁶⁶ 'Travels of F. S. Manrique, 1629-1643', by Manrique, op.cit., p. 214.

⁶⁷ 'Travels in the Mogul Empire (A.D. 1656-68)', by Francois Bernier, op.cit., p. 248.

⁶⁸ 'India Archaeology 1972-73-A Review', ed. M. N. Deshpande, ASI, New Delhi, (1978), p. 12.

The second important building in the mardānkhānah was the personal library of the noble. Bābur has given an excellent account of the library in the house of Ghāzī Khān, an Afghan noble.⁶⁹ The library of Abdul Rahim Khan-i Khanan was managed by higher official staff consisting of different grades of employees.⁷⁰

Subterranean apartments in aristocratic houses were fitted with big fans to give respite from the tyrannical hot wind during day time.⁷¹ The present writer has explored such an underground chamber at Fatehpur Sikri. The excavation at Champaner has also reported a similar underground cellar.⁷² Some houses had Khaskhānahs, small rooms made of straw and Khas.⁷³

Khulāsah speaks of secret passages at their houses for escape at times of emergency.⁷⁴ This appears to be true for Manrique tells us of a subterranean way through which he was taken to Āsaf Khān's house to see the dinner hosted by the Prime Minister in honour of the king.⁷⁵ Every noble's house had a terrace on which the family slept during the summer. The terrace also had a room to accommodate the terrace occupants in case of rain.⁷⁶

In a fortified town the vertical growth of the city is dictated by the availability of space within the walls. An increase in population could be countered only by the erection of multi-storied buildings. In Agra, the nobles lived in three- or four-story homes.⁷⁷ The upper-class homes in Gwalior that were perched on hillsides featured several terraces and apertures made of numerous types of stone.⁷⁸ The presences of windows for fresh air and light in the upper storeys and the courtyard side have been attested by many travellers. A portion of the house facing the street was not provided with windows, and if there was any it was above the line of vision. Broad drooping eaves, often found in many buildings, cast their shadow and helped to keep the house cool.

At places where land was not available on the river banks the nobles-built houses wherever it was available with high forbidding walls. This wall accommodated within it all people associated with the noble. These houses were bigger than the houses which have already dealt with and enclosed many chawks within it. There were fifty-two chawks in the Āsaf Khān mansion at Agra.⁷⁹ The idea was to erect a miniature town within the town proper.

⁶⁹ See for Babur-Nama, Persian text ed. by A. S. Beveridge, op.cit., fol. 176.

⁷⁰ 'Māāthir-i Rahīmī', by 'Abd al-Bāqī, Vol. III, Calcutta, (1924), p. 1687.

⁷¹ 'Travels in the Mogul Empire (A.D. 1656-68)', by Francois Bernier, op.cit., p. 247; 'The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667', op.cit., p. 191.

⁷² 'India Archaeology 1972-73-A Review', op.cit., p. 12.

⁷³ 'The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667', ed. by Sir R. C. Temple, op.cit., p. 191; 'Travels in the Mogul Empire (A.D. 1656-68)', by Francois Bernier, op.cit., p. 247.

⁷⁴ 'Khulasat al-Tawarikh', Sujān Rai, tr. J. N. Sarkar, Calcutta, (1901), p. 61.

⁷⁵ 'Travels of F. S. Manrique, 1629-1643', by Manrique, op.cit., p. 220.

⁷⁶ 'Travels in the Mogul Empire (A.D. 1656-68)', by Francois Bernier, op.cit., pp. 247-248.

⁷⁷ 'Tuzūk-ī Jahāngīrī', ed. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, op.cit., p. 2; 'Khulasat al-Tawarikh', Sujān Rai, op.cit., p. 112.

⁷⁸ 'Storia Do Mogor or Mogul India, 1653-1708', by Niccolao Manucci, tr. by William Irvine, Vol. I, Delhi, 1990, p. 68.

⁷⁹ 'Ahwāl-i Shahr-i-Akbarābād', by Manik Chand, British Museum Or. 2030, p. 41, Cf. H. K. Naqvi, 'Urban Centres and Industries in Upper India', Bombay, 1968, p. 78.

Its massive walls essentially served the purpose of an inner fortification. In course of time such houses became the need of the hour at Agra as it was an unwallled capital.....⁸⁰

From the description of Āsāf Khān's house it can be gathered that the inmates of these walled houses were divided into many groups, and there were many bazar's and chawks within it.⁸¹ The attestation of Bernier that "intermixed with these different houses [aristocrats'] is an immense number of small ones, built of mud and thatched with straw in which lodge the common troopers, and all that vast multitude of servants and camp followers who follow the court and the army"⁸² further strengthens this line of argument. This changed pattern of the construction of Mughal nobility houses can be gleaned from the writing of Jordain followed as: 'the greate man must have his house by himself, because round about his house lyeth all his servants, everyone in his own house, with their horses....'⁸³

The materials used for house construction were those easily available in the area: brick in Agra, stone at Fatehpur Sikri and bamboo in Bengal. This, apart from providing strength and stability to the structure, due to its capillary effect absorb water which can evaporate from the surface and thus hinder the interior air from being warmed by convection. Binding material was lime mixed with sand or mud. Sometimes simple mud without any other ingredient was also used and this resulted in the short life of the buildings.⁸⁴ Each structure had a thick layer of lime plaster that had been thoroughly mixed with gum, milk, and sugar.⁸⁵ This thin paste was applied with trowels over the plaster and smoothed and polished with agate till it shone like glass.⁸⁶ The mixture of lime and milk apart from shining brilliantly prevented any kind of cracks developing in the building.⁸⁷

Mughal houses were commodious, comfortable and beautiful. Monserrate⁸⁸ and Manucci admired the well-built houses of noblemen in Delhi. However, one of their defects was the introverted form. It was conceived from the inside outwards, with emphasis on the decoration of interior elements while the external side was plain and simple. The absence of a well-conceived plan is evident from the houses projecting into the street. Pelsaert complains that the houses were without any regular plan or forethought, with the result that many of the houses were hidden in alleys and corners.⁸⁹ The building architects in early Mughal India had lack of a well-thought-out plan; the haphazard distribution and the varied direction of the

⁸⁰ Agra has been described as an unwallled city by many the foreign travellers like, 'Purchas His Pilgrimes', by William Finch, op.cit., p. 74; 'Jahangir's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert', op.cit., p. 1; 'Travels in the Mogul Empire (A.D. 1656-68)', by Francois Bernier, op.cit., p. 284; 'Storia do Mogor', by Manucci, Vol. I, op.cit., pp. 129-130.

⁸¹ 'Ahwāl-i Shahr-i Akbarābād', op.cit., p. 41, Cf. H. K. Naqvi, 'Urban Centres and Industries in Upper India', op.cit., p. 78.

⁸² 'Travels in the Mogul Empire (A.D. 1656-68)', by Francois Bernier, op.cit., p. 246.

⁸³ 'Journal of John Jordain, 1608-17', by John Jordain, ed. W. Foster, Cambridge, (1905), p. 161.

⁸⁴ 'Jahangir's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert', op.cit., p. 66.

⁸⁵ 'Jahangir's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert', op.cit., p. 66; 'Storia Do Mogor or Mogul India, 1653-1708', by Manucci, Vol. III, op.cit., p. 41.

⁸⁶ 'Jahangir's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert', op.cit., pp. 66-67.

⁸⁷ 'Commentaries by Father Monserrate', by Farther Monserrate, op.cit., p. 96.

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 97-98.

⁸⁹ 'Jahangir's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert', op.cit., p. 1.

noble's houses have provoked critical comments from Bernier, Peter Mundy and Monserrate.⁹⁰

Imperial garden-palaces were widely constructed during the Mughal era. The first five Mughal emperors, who ruled from 1526 A.D. to 1658 A.D. and represent the pinnacle of Mughal culture, prosperity, and stability, were responsible for the majority of their construction. Aside from the significance of the location, where were the main Mughal palaces built within these general sites? Palaces may be found outside of the cities, in keeping with Timurid tradition. However, the majority of Mughal palaces are located in the middle of the city or along a river. Sub-imperial palace designs are also influenced by the positioning of imperial buildings facing water, typically a river.

Mughal palaces fortresses are generally built as a collection of quadrangular blocks that are walled off and frequently have gardens. This is consistent with Timurid traditions, in which palaces were built inside orchard compounds.⁹¹

At Agra there must have been, virtually a scramble for the possession of a plot near the river. Every noble of rank desired to have a residence (house) on the bank, therefore the city grew more along the river.⁹² All of the residences (houses) had gardens, tanks, and an enclosure wall around them.⁹³ Francois Bernier observes that: "they consider that a house to be greatly admired ought to be situated in the middle of a large flower garden and should have four large Diwan apartments raised to the height of a man from the ground and exposed to the four winds, so that the coolness may be felt from any quarter."⁹⁴ Planning houses in the midst of gardens completely revolutionized the whole art of building.⁹⁵

K. K. Muhammed argued that: 'This is a first time in India's history of urban planning, there were a close coordination of soft tone (lawn) and volatile tone (water) around a rough tone (structure). Pools, fountains and cascades, apart from importing a sense of repose and openness, increased visual beauty and emphasized the axes of the buildings, linking various spaces in a directional sequence. The refreshingly novel concept of the judicious blending of the landscape with the architectonic beauty of the edifice gave a new direction and dimension to the cityscape and urban texture. The Mughal houses henceforth did not stand in stern

⁹⁰ 'Travels in the Mogul Empire (A.D. 1656-68)', by Francois Bernier, op.cit., pp. 246-248; 'The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667', ed. by Sir R. C. Temple, Vol. II, op.cit., p. 207; 'Commentaries by Father Monserrate', by Farther Monserrate, op.cit., p. 58; also see for 'Journal of John Jordain, 1608-17', by John Jordain, op.cit., pp. 161-162.

⁹¹ See Golombek and Wilber, 'Timurid Architecture', I: 174-180, and O'Kane, 'Timurid Architecture in Khurasan', pp. 11-13. Also see details in "Imperial Mughal Capital City at Agra" Ed. Dr. Salim Javed Akhtar, 1st Edition, INSC International Publishers (IIP), Chikkamagaluru, Karnataka, (India), 2021 (**ISBN: 978-1-68576-042-7**).

Link:https://books.google.co.in/books/about/Imperial_Mughal_Capital_City_at_Agra.html?id=jEKwzgEACAAJ&redir_esc=y

⁹² 'Jahangir's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert', op.cit., p. 1; 'Purchas His Pilgrimes', by Ralph Finch, op.cit., pp. 74-75; 'Travels in Mughal Empire', by F. Bernier, ed. A. Constable, op.cit., p. 247; 'Storia do Mogor', by Manucci, tr. W. Irwine, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1965, p. 130.

⁹³ 'Travels in Mughal Empire', by F. Bernier, ed. A. Constable, op.cit., p. 247; 'Jahangir's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert', op.cit., p. 66.

⁹⁴ 'Travels in Mughal Empire', by F. Bernier, op.cit., p. 247.

⁹⁵ R. Nath, 'Some Aspects of Mughal Architecture', Delhi, (1976), p. 5.

isolation, but were part of a sweet composition in which the garden, the running water and the structure had a perfect role to make it an enchanting musical note.⁹⁶

The account of De Laet's mentioned about the Palace of Asaf Khan at Agra. He wrote that: "He then returned to his master, who had mean-while reached Agra, where he stayed in his own palace (which he had built in a most beautiful position on the bank of the river Gemena)"⁹⁷

A. C. L. Cunningham mentioned in his Report about the old Palaces in the neighbourhood of the Taj. He mentions that: 'The ruins of three distinct Nawabs, or Nobles, palaces from the Mughal era, one from the period of Shah Jahan, one from what is thought to be the period of Jahangir, and one from during Akbar period can be found immediately to the east of the Tāj. On the extreme edge of the river bank, of one of these palaces, specifically the one closest to the east side of the Taj enclosure, a vast range of crumbling walls are still visible.'⁹⁸

Jahangir mentioned in his Memoirs about the House of I'timād-ud-Daulah and I'tiqād Khān's along the bank of Jamuna River. He wrote that: "I went bank to the city in a boat. As the house of I'timād-ud-Daulah was on the bank of the river Jumna, I alighted there until the end of the next day. Having accepted what pleased me of his offerings, I went towards the palace; I'tiqād Khān's house was also on the bank of the river Jumna; at his request I disembarked there with the ladies, and walked round the houses he had lately built there. This delightful place pleased me greatly....."⁹⁹ On the other occasion he also mentioned that: 'The feast of the nikāh (marriage) was held in the House of I'timād-ud-Daulah.'¹⁰⁰

Pavilions still make up sub-imperial palaces that are enclosed in chahār-bāgh walls. The grounds that have survived and the descriptions and plans created by Europeans who visited them during the Mughal era demonstrate the diversity of ceremonial events conducted there.

Both gardens Bāgh-i-Nūr-Afshān and Zahāra Bāgh (Bāgh-i Jahānara) adhere to a design that eventually came to be regarded as characteristic of Agra's riverbank gardens and which, and this is crucial in our context, would have a significant impact on how the Mughal royal garden would later evolve. In contrast to the traditional Mughal chār bāgh, the principal structures in this garden layout were located on terraces along the riverbank rather than center (middle) of the garden. The corner towers of the bāgh's (garden's) perimeter wall framed the riverside structures. A chār bāgh was located on the terrace's landward side. The main garden pavilions were visible to visitors, who were on a boat or across the river shows this move towards the riverside gave them the climatic benefits of flowing water and a well-arranged façade. From within, the structures formed a similarly pleasing background for the garden.

The systematized form of water-front garden employed at Shāhjahānabād palaces as a modular component for arranging the entire riverbank, is clearly seen in the arrangement of

⁹⁶ K. K. Muhammed, 'The Houses of the Nobility in Mughal India', Islamic Culture, Vol. LX, No-3, Hyderabad, (July 1986), p. 83.

⁹⁷ 'The Empire of the Great Mogol', by De Laet's, op.cit., p. 240.

⁹⁸ 'Archaeological Survey of India, Report (1871-72)', by A. Cunningham, Vol. IV, pp. 193-194.

⁹⁹ 'Tuzūk-i- Jahāngīri', ed. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, op.cit., pp. 121-122.

¹⁰⁰ 'Tuzūk-i- Jahāngīri', ed. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, op.cit., p. 328.

each separate complex. Additionally, the palace here claimed the garden, a fundamental design element for the Mughal riverside metropolis. Thus, the palace's shoreline gives the impression of being a unique piece of a riverbank in Agra.¹⁰¹

K. K. Muhammed mentioned about the houses of nobles under Mughal India, followed as: 'Court-yards at Agra, Delhi and Lahore were open to receive the cool prevailing breeze of the evening from the river caused by the low and high-pressure cycle. The Mughal architects took much advantage out of the solar track. The fact that the sun rises in the east, travels through south and sets in the west was a guiding factor in the allocation of seasonal quarters. So, summer houses and palaces were in the north or in the west where the blazing sun will least trouble them. Thick southern walls were provided in houses where there was no seasonal migration within the house in summer and winter. These thick walls effectively prevented the summer sunrays from heating the room and provided a cool interior. In houses where seasonal migration was practised, the southern walls were comparatively thin, so that the winter sun can be utilised to warm up the room and provide a comfortable interior.'¹⁰²

Khalīl Khān, (mansabdār of 5,000) during Shāhjahān's reign, who had constructed a beautiful palace along the river bank of Jamūna in Agra city. The remnants of which may still be observed.¹⁰³

Nawāb Shujāt Khān was an aristocrat, who works for Alamgir (Aurangzeb) the emperor during Mughal era. He belonged to the (mansabdār of 4,000) of Shāhjahān's. He owned a house in Agra, but little is left of it today.¹⁰⁴

Mukīm Khān, who held the rank (mansāb) of 700 under Emperor Akbar, was promoted to a high level by emperor Jahāngīr. He lived at a place Mukīm Khān ka Ghāt, which is still there in Agra on the banks of the Jamna.¹⁰⁵

Lashkār Khān was a nobleman who was appointed the rank (mansāb) of 5,000 in the court of Jahāngīr and Shāhjahān reigns. On a plot of land of 20 bīgas and including a sizable gate, he had erected his palace close to Naī- kī- Mandī.¹⁰⁶

One of the nobles in the emperor Shāhjahān court was Baqi Khān. When he served as governor of the fort at Agra, he was promoted to the rank (mansāb) of 2000. He had

¹⁰¹ See for example Ebba Koch, "Mughal Palace Gardens from Babur to Shah Jahan (1526-1648)", Muqarnas, Vol. 14 (1997), Published by: BRILL, Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1523242>, Accessed: 08/02/2009 22:29, p. 153. Also see details in "Mahtab Bagh: An Imperial Mughal Garden at Agra" by Salim Javed Akhtar, Proceedings of Indian History Congress, 69th Session, Kannur, Dec. 2008, pp. 1083-1090.

Link: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44147270>

¹⁰² K. K. Muhammed, 'The Houses of the Nobility in Mughal India', op.cit., p. 86.

¹⁰³ 'An Oriental Biographical Dictionary', by T. W. Beale, rev. ed. by H. G. Keene, Calcutta, (1894), p. 212.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 382; also see 'Morāqqā-i-Akbarābād', by Saeed Ahmad Marharvi, Agra, (1931), p. 215.

¹⁰⁵ 'An Oriental Biographical Dictionary', by T. W. Beale, op.cit., p. 278.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 226.

constructed the exquisite Hathiapol bungalow, which is located in front of the gate and faces the chaūk near Jama Masjid at Agra. His palace stood till 1830 A.D.¹⁰⁷

In Agra, Tirandāz Khān constructed his home on a plot of land that was six bīgas south of the home of Islām Khān Rūmī. The emperor Shāhjahān promoted him to the rank (mansāb) of 2000 and named him governor of Ahmadābād.¹⁰⁸

The full name of Amīr Khān was Mīr Khān, who was served as a governor in the fort of Shāhjahānabād during first regnal year of emperor Alamgir (Aurāngzeb). He had constructed his palace on a plan of land of seven bīghās, which also included the mahalla of Chhipitola, near to the location known as Gūzūr Tijārā.¹⁰⁹

Tarbiat Khān, a aristocrat (noblemen) of 4000 rank (mansāb), served as Mīr 'Atīsh (commander of Artillery), under the emperor 'Alamgir (Aurangzeb). In Agra, he had constructed a palace on a plot of land known as Tajāra or Majāra, which was outside the Agra fort and just across from the Amar Singh gate.¹¹⁰

Raja Gopal Das of Sheopur's son was Bithal Das Gaur. He had constructed his house and garden on a area of land 10 bhīgās away from Tajganj along the river banks of Jamuna at Agra. He was promoted to rank (mansāb) 3000 in Shalighan and given the position of Kiladār of the fort of Agra. He was thereafter promoted to rank (mansāb) 5000 in A.H. 1062.¹¹¹

Raḥī-ud-din Shaikh Muhammad, also known by the nickname Muhāddīs or Traditionist, passed away in 1547 A.D. (A.H. 954), who was buried in the palace of Asāf-Jāh at Agra.¹¹²

Havaili of Dara Shikoh first reported by A. Cunningham in his Report followed as: 'The garden palace of Darā Shikoh, who was supposed to succeed Shāhjahān, was located within this perimeter. The location of this enclosure is currently known as the "Jamūna Bāgh"; however, it has been nearly completely washed away and covered in dwellings. On the right side of the river, directly north of the fort, is where the palace of Darā Shikoh, also known as "Jamūna Bāgh."¹¹³

Sulāimān Shikōh was the firstborn son of the prince Dārā Shikōh. He was built a house close to his father's palace at Agra.¹¹⁴

About the Havaili of Islam Khan Rumi, Cunningham wrote that: 'Approximately halfway between the fort and the Taj, on the right or south side of the Taj route, lies this

¹⁰⁷ 'An Oriental Biographical Dictionary', by T. W. Beale, op.cit., p. 103; also see 'Morāqqā-i-Akbarābād', op.cit., p. 215.

¹⁰⁸ 'An Oriental Biographical Dictionary', by T. W. Beale, op.cit., p. 403.

¹⁰⁹ 'An Oriental Biographical Dictionary', op.cit., p. 71; also see 'Morāqqā-i-Akbarābād', op.cit., p. 215.

¹¹⁰ 'An Oriental Biographical Dictionary', op.cit., p. 401.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 110.

¹¹² 'An Oriental Biographical Dictionary', op.cit., p. 324.

¹¹³ 'Archaeological Survey of India, Report (1871-72)', op.cit., p. 200; see 'Morāqqā-i-Akbarābād', op.cit., p. 216.

¹¹⁴ 'An Oriental Biographical Dictionary', op.cit., p. 390; also see 'Morāqqā-i-Akbarābād', op.cit., p. 216.

massively destroyed red sandstone palace. According to Seal Chand's *Tafrih-ul-Imarat*, some people claim that Islam Khan Rumi lived during the reign of Shāhjahān; however, through his efforts and investigations he is able to find that Husain Pasha of Bussorah under the dominion of Rūm [Turkey] came to Hindustan, and as a result, he incurred the wrath of the Emperor of Rūm" [i.e., the Sultan of Turkey]. "Following this, Husain Pasha joined Jahangir's service. He offered him many gifts and awarded him the title of Wazir Islam Khan, by which his Havaili is known. Only a few of the towers and a piece of the crumbling walls are left intact in this completely destroyed and ruined structure."¹¹⁵

T. W. Beale also wrote about the Havaili of Islam Khan Rūmi followed as: 'He had constructed his home at Agra on a plot of land that measured four bīgas by seven cottas and his garden on a plot measuring three bīgas by nine cottas, all of which were located along the banks of the Jamna River not far from the Tajārā Ghāt, which is adjacent to the Agra Fort.'¹¹⁶

When Chandar Bhan passed away in the year 1662 A.D. (A.H. 1073), he had erected a home in Agra, of which there are no longer any signs, and was working as a Munshi for the prince Darā Shīkoh, the emperor Shāhjahān's eldest son.¹¹⁷

Khān Jahān Shāyasta Khān's son, Himmat Khān, was the grandson of Wazīr Asāf Khān. In one year, he constructed his palace on the Jamūna river's banks, along with a number of additional structures, including gardens, reservoirs and other structures, some of which may still be seen today. Sayyad Muzaffar was his given name at first. He was given the name Himmat Khān by Shāhjahān.¹¹⁸

The Kālā Mahāl, formerly known as Rāja Ganj Singh's haveli (house), is located in Pipāl Mandī. Rāja Ganj Singh was the son of Rāja Suraj Singh of Jodhpur and lived during the reign of Jahangir.¹¹⁹

Lashkar Khan's house, which had a big gate, was erected on a 20 bīgas plot of land next to Naī-kī-Mandī. In the court of Jahāngīr and Shāhjahān, who controlled the rank (mansāb) of 5,000, he was a nobleman.¹²⁰

Nawab Qasim Khan Jawini, who had the rank (mansāb) of 5,000, was a nobleman in the courts of the emperors Jahāngīr and Shāhjahān. He was jokingly referred to as "Qāsim Khān Manija" by the court officials since he was married to Manija Begam, Nūr Jahān's sister. His poetical name was Qāsim, and he was the creator of a Dīwān. In the first year of Shāhjahān, 1628 A.D. (A.H. 1037), he succeeded Fidāi Khān as ruler of Bengal. However, he passed away in 1631 A.D. (A.H. 1041). At Agra, he had constructed a very opulent mansion on 10 bīghās of land and a garden on 20 bīghās of land, none of which are visible now.¹²¹

¹¹⁵ 'Archaeological Survey of India, Report (1871-72)', op.cit., p. 200; also see 'Morāqqā-i-Akbarābād', op.cit., p. 215.

¹¹⁶ 'An Oriental Biographical Dictionary', op.cit., p. 182; also see Esha Basanti Joshi, 'U. P. District Gazetteers', Agra, (1965), p. 361; also see 'Morāqqā-i-Akbarābād', op.cit., p. 215.

¹¹⁷ 'An Oriental Biographical Dictionary', op.cit., p. 114.

¹¹⁸ 'An Oriental Biographical Dictionary', op.cit., p. 160; also see 'Morāqqā-i-Akbarābād', op.cit., p. 215.

¹¹⁹ 'U. P. District Gazetteers', op.cit., p. 360; also see 'Morāqqā-i-Akbarābād', op.cit., p. 215.

¹²⁰ 'An Oriental Biographical Dictionary', op.cit., p. 226; also see 'Morāqqā-i-Akbarābād', op.cit., p. 215.

¹²¹ 'An Oriental Biographical Dictionary', op.cit., p. 317; also see 'Morāqqā-i-Akbarābād', op.cit., p. 215.

Khan 'Alam, also known as Mirzā Barkhurdār, was a nobleman who served under the emperor Shāhjahān and rose to the rank (mansāb) of 5000. He was also well-liked by 'Alamgir (Aurangzeb). Khan 'Alam was the son of Mirzā 'Abdul Rahmān Dauldī. Later in life, he was promoted to the rank (mansāb) of 6000 and made governor of Bihar. He erected a red stone residence and garden in the city of Agra, close to the northern Būrj of the Raūzā of Tājganj, on a plot of land that was 50 bīghās in size.¹²²

Mahābat Khān was the son of Ghōr Beg, a Kābul native, and went by the name Zamāna Beg. Under Akbar, he had acquired the rank (mansāb) of 500, and under Jahāngīr, the emperor, he was promoted to the greatest dignities and positions. On a block of land of 50 bīghās in Agra, he (Mahābat Khān) had his house erected. While not much of it is left now, we can still see only some of the ruins.¹²³

T. W. Beale also pointed about the house of Man Singh. He wrote that: “Son or nephew of Rāja Bhagwān Dās Kachhwāhā, king of Amer in Ajmer, also known as Jaipur and Jainagar, is Man Singh. In 1587 A.D. (A.H. 995), the emperor Akbar named him governor of Kabul. The next year, he was named governor of Behār, Hājīpūr, and Patna. In 1589 A.D. (A.H. 998), upon the passing of his father, he was given the titles of Rāja and rank (mansāb) of 7000, and he was appointed governor of Bengal. He passed away in the Deccan in the ninth year of Jahāngīr's reign 1614 A.D. (A.H. 1023). On the bank of the Jamūna river, he had constructed a palace, of which only two crumbling bastions can still be seen facing towards the river. At Agra in muhallā Mānpanah, which is next to the Jamī Masjid, is still well-known.”¹²⁴

The renowned Raja of Jodhpur (Mārwar), Maharaja Jaswant Singh, is a member of the Rāthor Rajput clan. He was a Rao Maldeo ancestor and the son of Rāja Gāj Singh. He later rose to become one of the greatest generals during Alamgir's reign and held the rank (mansāb) of 7,000 for a while. Around December 11th, 1678 A.D. (6th Zīl-qada, A.H. 1089), he passed away close to Kabul. On the banks of the Jamūna in Agra, he had constructed a beautiful house, the walls of which are still in place.¹²⁵

Havaili of Aezad Bakhsh was notice by Seal Chand, but where it was situated not clear from his quotation. He observed that: “Near the river bank is where you'll find the Havaili Aezad Bakhsh. It was in a disastrous state till Mr. Reid, a trader, rebuilt it. After that, a school for the instruction of Arabic and Persian was founded there. The extremely intelligent guy Aezad Bakhsh constructed this Havaili. He was alive throughout the reigns of Jahāngīr and Akbar.....”¹²⁶

¹²² ‘An Oriental Biographical Dictionary’, op.cit., pp. 212-213; Also see ‘Jahangir’s India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert’, op.cit., p. 4.

¹²³ ‘An Oriental Biographical Dictionary’, op.cit., pp. 229; also see ‘Morāqqā-i-Akbarābād’, op.cit., p. 215; Also see ‘Jahangir’s India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert’, op.cit., p. 4.

¹²⁴ ‘An Oriental Biographical Dictionary’, op.cit., pp. 242; Also see ‘Jahangir’s India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert’, op.cit., p. 4.

¹²⁵ ‘An Oriental Biographical Dictionary’, op.cit., pp. 200.

¹²⁶ ‘Archaeological Survey of India, Report (1871-72)’, op.cit., pp. 201-202.

III. CONCLUSION

The plan of the Mubarīk Manzīl, which is one of the noble's palaces situated at Agra on the right bank of river Yamūna. The Custom House in Agra is presently located at the Mubarīk Manzīl. It is located near the Ghāt Road, which follows the river's edge, at the end of the Baīlānganj road. The Mubarīk Manzīl is a huge oblong-shaped building that measures 171 feet long by 84 feet wide, not including the corner extensions of the towers. At each of its four corners, it features a beautiful octagonal tower that is topped with a pillared cupola that rises over the building's roof. The structure is referred to as a "Manzīl" since it has three stories. There is a magnificent colonnade or pillared verandah composed of fluted pillars with engrailed arches rising from and between them on the east side of the building's ground floor. There are fifteen holes in the west wall. Currently, there are three doors in the south end. It is likely that this was not the case at first, but rather that each of the upper stories was less than, or retreated inwards from, the lower one, leaving only the platform of the roof, thus left bare at the sides by the recession of each upper story surrounding it, but having then no covered-in upper verandah. A covered corridor or verandah now runs along the level of the second story's exterior, with plain arches opening outwards. The third or topmost floor is modest and shaped differently from the other two.

A portion of the structure, in the center of its inner western side, is reported to have once served as a mosque. The structure has undergone significant renovations in order to become a customs house.

The Mughal Empire served as a link between the West and the East, facilitating the transfer of knowledge and technology between China and Europe. The Mongols adopted Persian culture, including its religion, art, architecture, writing, and language, after conquering Persia. The fact that not much of the previous garden culture remains in this huge area just makes the issue more difficult. What follows is a theory that tries to place the palace gardens of the Mughal Nobles in a wider West Asian framework, while not being written with all of the numerous caveats appropriate to the circumstances.

