

**CHARACTERISTICS AND INFLUENCES OF MUGHAL  
ISLAMIC ORNAMENTATION OF THE 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY:  
A CASE STUDY OF WAZIR KHAN AND BADSHAHI  
MOSQUE**

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**UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA**

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MOSQUE**

by

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**KAREKTERISTIK DAN PENGARUH ORNAMENTASI ISLAMIK  
MUGHAL PADA ABAD KE 17: KAJIAN KES TERHADAP MASJID WAZIR  
KHAN DAN MASJID BADSHAHI**

**ABSTRAK**

Perhiasan Islam era Mughal (abad ke-17) menghadapi jurang pengiktirafan yang ketara dalam kesusasteraan visual akademik Asia Selatan, terutamanya Pakistan. Telah mantap bahawa perlambangan seni bina dan barang perhiasan Islam Mughal adalah lebih efektif berbanding dengan struktur seni bina era Mughal seperti mahkamah, taman, tera, makam, dan lain-lain. Kajian ini bertujuan mengenal pasti ciri-ciri Perhiasan Islam Mughal yang jelas. Secara khusus, kajian ini meneroka pengaruh bentuk seni Barat dan Timur abad ke-17 mengenai perhiasan Masjid Wazir Khan dan Badshahi yang dibina oleh maharaja Mughal. Kedua-dua masjid ini bukan sahaja penting untuk kajian kerana dibina semasa zaman Mughal di bawah maharaja Shahjahan dan Aurangzeb, yang terkenal dengan tarikan seni bina mereka, malah kerana masjid-masjid ini berada dalam Senarai tentatif warisan dunia UNESCO dari tahun 1993. Keertian ini seterusnya meluaskan konteks Hiasan Islam Mughal. Formalisme (strategi OPTIC analisis visual) dan pendekatan hermeneutik akan digabungkan dalam penyelidikan kualitatif ini untuk menganalisis dan mentafsir Perhiasan Islam Mughal bagi kedua-dua masjid. Kajian ini mengenal pasti ciri-ciri, meneroka pengaruh, dan menganalisis perhiasan ke dua-dua masjid. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa Perhiasan Islam Mughal merupakan estetik dan konsep sejarah berakar visual yang tidak Islam kecuali kaligrafi. Walau bagaimanapun, apabila dicat dan dibuat pada bangunan agama atau dalam persekitaran agama iaitu masjid, perhiasan-perhiasan ini melambangkan/mewakili falsafah ilahi yang merangsang

Kebesaran Tuhan dan ajaran agama. Akhir sekali, penyelidikan ini menawarkan cadangan untuk penyelidikan dan kajian lanjut yang berkaitan dengan bidang kajian.

**CHARACTERISTICS AND INFLUENCES OF MUGHAL ISLAMIC  
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KHAN AND BADSHAHI MOSQUE**

**ABSTRACT**

Islamic ornaments of the Mughal era (17th century) face a significant recognition gap in the academic visual literature of South Asia, especially Pakistan. It is well established that the representation of Mughal Islamic architecture and ornaments are more effective than the architectural structures of the Mughal era, like courts, gardens, seals, tombs, etc. This study aims to identify the distinguishing characteristics of Mughal Islamic Ornaments. It specifically explored the influences of the 17th-century Western and Eastern art forms on the ornamentation of the Wazir Khan and Badshahi Mosques built by Mughal emperors. The two mosques are not only significant for the study just because they were constructed during the Mughal period under Shahjahan and Aurangzeb emperors, who are famous for their architectural interests, but also because they are on the UNESCO world heritage tentative List from 1993. This significance subsequently broadens the context of Mughal Islamic Ornamentation. Formalism (OPTIC strategy of visual analysis) and hermeneutic approach will be fused in this qualitative research to analyse and interpret the Mughal Islamic Ornaments of the two mosques. The study identified the characteristics, explored the influences, and analysed the ornaments of two mosques. Findings have shown that Mughal Islamic Ornaments are aesthetic and conceptual historically rooted visuals that are not Islamic except calligraphy. However, when painted and crafted on religious buildings or in religious environment i.e., mosques, they symbolize/represent a divine philosophy that stimulates the Greatness of God and religious teachings. Last but not least, this research offers a proposal for further research and studies pertinent to the study's area.

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Overview

The Mughal era, 17<sup>th</sup> century, is well-known for its distinctive grandeur, dignity, splendour, style, form, and beauty<sup>1</sup>. Mughal architecture represents the Mughals' values, tastes, interests, standards, style, customs, and tradition. Mughal architecture, however, has been viewed as an expression of grandeur and exquisiteness due to its distinctive and magnificent ornaments<sup>2</sup>. The Indo-Islamic-Persian style thrived in the Indian Subcontinent during the Mughal Empire in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and Mughal architecture and art have been regarded as expressions of it<sup>3</sup>. This Indo-Islamic-Persian style (the Safavid dynasty, 17<sup>th</sup> century) incorporates many elements of Islamic art and architecture and is known for its distinctive Islamic ornamentation<sup>4</sup>.

Moreover, the Arabesque and Moresque, a Western ornamental decorative style of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, known as Italian Renaissance Decorative Art, are another significant determinant of Mughal Islamic Ornamentation<sup>5</sup>. Italian Renaissance Decorative Art

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<sup>1</sup> Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, "The Mughal Empire," in *Modern South Asia*, 2018, 31–41, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315106076-4>.

<sup>2</sup> Farah Jamil and Saima Gulzar, "Historical Development of Dado Ornamentation in Mughal Architecture," in *WIT Transactions on the Built Environment*, vol. 171, 2017, 97–109, <https://doi.org/10.2495/STR170091>.

<sup>3</sup> Priscilla P. Soucek, "Persian Artists in Mughal India: Influences and Transformations," *Muqarnas*, 1987, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22118993-90000214>.

<sup>4</sup> Cammann, "Religious Symbolism in Persian Art," *History of Religions* 15, no. 3 (February 1976): 193–208, <https://doi.org/10.1086/462743>.

<sup>5</sup> M. Arif Kamal, Murat Cetin, "The Emergence and Evolution of Arabesque as a Multicultural Stylistic Fusion in Islamic Art: The Case Of Turkish Architecture," *Journal of Islamic Architecture* 1, no. 4 (2012): 159, <https://doi.org/10.18860/jia.v1i4.1726>.

primarily consists of floral and geometrical elements<sup>6</sup> more suitable for Islamic architecture. Therefore, there is a need to uncover and analyse the Mughal Islamic Ornamentation of the two mosques to identify and explore their distinctive characteristics and influences that bridge the gap in the existing academic visual literature.

## 1.2 Background of the Research

The glorious period in the Indian Subcontinent, South Asia, known as the Mughal Empire (1526-1849), is, without a doubt, where numerous art styles thrived<sup>7</sup>. Mughal refined several innovations throughout the period, which began with Babur's kingdom in 1526 and lasted through his successors<sup>8</sup>. Due to these developments, the Mughal era became the birthplace of many inventions that have become well-known throughout history. The Mughal Empire's architecture, among many other architectures, is remarkable and is recognised throughout the globe for its imaginative concepts, i.e., architectural structures, ornamentation, and miniatures. The architecture was built using a variety of geometrical patterns and techniques. During Emperor Akbar's reign (1556-1605), new construction concepts reached their pinnacle of perfection throughout his empire<sup>9</sup>. Emperor Shah Jahan (1628-58) is credited for perfecting building skills and creating the world's marvels<sup>10</sup>. Despite this character,

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<sup>6</sup> Soni Azmat, Abid Hadi, and Correspondence Soni Azmat, "Geometrical Pattern Designs Used in Mughal Architecture in India during the Period of 1526-1737," ~ 21 ~ *International Journal of Home Science* 4, no. 2 (2018): 21–26.

<sup>7</sup>E Koch, "Mughal Architecture," *Academia.Edu*, 1991.

<sup>8</sup> Munis D. Faruqui, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire, 1504-1719, The Princes of the Mughal Empire, 1504-1719*, 2012, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139135474>.

<sup>9</sup> Faruqui, Munis D. *The princes of the Mughal empire, 1504–1719*. Cambridge University Press, 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Ebba Koch, "Mughal Palace Gardens from Babur to Shah Jahan (1526-1648)," *Muqarnas*, 1997, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1523242>.

architecture throughout the Mughal era was also a means of engaging with divine nature. Today, with the legacy of a cultural epoch dedicated to the construction of magnificent structures that not only served man's necessities but delighted the sight and rejuvenated the spirit. The Mughal Emperors, notably Shah Jahan, were primarily responsible for developing the concepts for Mughal Imperial Architecture, which the architects later implemented<sup>11</sup>.

Additionally, the grand and exquisite Islamic architecture of the Mughal era is well-known. Furthermore, Mughal architecture never defined or restricted its concerns to a religious denomination or traditions, instead combining and amalgamating many cultures, civilisations, and historical contexts represented by Islamic ideology<sup>12</sup>. The most significant impact has come from Arabia and Central Asia since Arabs created their art following Islam and its spiritual qualities<sup>13</sup>. Arabs were pioneers of geometry and mathematics, and they applied their knowledge and techniques to develop Islamic ornament.

Moreover, Mughal emperors have significantly contributed to Islamic art genres such as religious and public buildings, landscape paintings, interior decorative art, and miniature art<sup>14</sup>. It is argued that man is inspired by the empathetic and aesthetic

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<sup>11</sup> J Masselos, "Santhi Kavuri-Bauer. Monumental Matters: The Power, Subjectivity, and Space of India's Mughal Architecture.," *The American Historical Review* 117, no. 5 (2012): 1575–76, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/117.5.1575a>.

<sup>12</sup> Gulru Necipoglu, "Challenging the Past: Sinan and the Competitive Discourse of Early Modern Islamic Architecture," *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 169, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1523183>.

<sup>13</sup> Annu Kumari, "Elucidation of Relationship between Clothing Silhouette and Motifs with Indian Mughal Architecture," *Fashion and Textiles* 6, no. 1 (December 1, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40691-019-0174-4>.

<sup>14</sup> Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, "The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwieldy Field," *Art Bulletin* 85, no. 1 (2003): 152–84, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00043079.2003.10787065>.

responses of art, which encourage him to ponder the depths of his own life and the appearance of the cosmos<sup>15</sup>. Similarly, many historians and philosophers have previously agreed that there is only one universal explanation for art<sup>16</sup>. It implies that art expresses a specific condition or attitude of mind, emotions, or inner self that necessitates a creative response<sup>17</sup>.

Mughal architecture, as the name implies, its grandeur, dignity, splendour, style, shape, and beauty, all of which are unique. The tradition of the Mughals is reflected in Mughal architectural ornamentation. Mughal monuments are known for their remarkable and exceptional skills and have been regarded as manifestations of beauty and exquisiteness<sup>18</sup>. Moreover, the Mughal architectural ornament is also considered to manifest the Indo-Islamic-Persian style. This style thrived on the Indian Subcontinent under the Mughal Empire<sup>19</sup>. This style combines many aspects of Islamic art, i.e., floral and non-figurative architectural ornaments, and is renowned for its unique ornamental shapes, which evolved throughout the Mughal emperors' reigns.

Moreover, it is argued that Mughal architecture's most significant factor contributing to Islamic art is Mughal Islamic Ornamentation. Islamic ornamentation would be like

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<sup>15</sup> Zainab Abdul Latiff and Maheran Mohd Yaman, "A Review into the Islamic Tradition in the Mughal Garden: (Re) Shaping Our Stand on Islamic Art and Design," *Planning Malaysia*, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.21837/pmjournal.v15.i6.232>.

<sup>16</sup> John Hospers, "The Concept of Artistic Expression," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 55, no. 1 (1955): 313–44, <https://doi.org/10.1093/aristotelian/55.1.313>.

<sup>17</sup> Jenefer Robinson, "Expression and Expressiveness in Art," *Postgraduate Journal of Aesthetics* 4, no. 2 (2007): 19–41, <https://philpapers.org/rec/ROBEAE-7>.

<sup>18</sup> ATM Shamsuzzoha and Hamidul Islam, "Structure, Decoration and Materials: Mughal Mosques of Medieval Dhaka," *Journal of the Bangladesh Association of Young Researchers* 1, no. 1 (1970): 93–107, <https://doi.org/10.3329/jbayr.v1i1.6841>.

<sup>19</sup> E Koch, "Brief Reviews of Books--Architecture of Mughal India (The New Cambridge History of India, Volume 1.4) by Catherine B. Asher," *Search.Proquest.Com*, 1994.

other arts, based on a total imitation of nature<sup>20</sup>. The Mughal architectural ornament has distinctive features that separate it from the art of different cultures and religions. An interpretation of Islamic ornamentation, history, and ornamental aesthetic principles is essential to better understand Mughal Islamic ornamentation and its associated beliefs<sup>21</sup>. A brief description of the philosophy of Islamic art and how it differs from other arts is essential for Mughal Islamic ornamentation to be better understood.

In contrast, Islamic art does not present figurative identical to the depictions found in European art of human beings, i.e., grotesque. Figural representation plays a supporting role in Islam and is generally missing from the liturgical sphere. In contrast, the figural representation maintains an absolute position in all visual art in Western culture, influenced by Greek art and Christian iconography<sup>22</sup>. The depiction of human and animal images is usually frowned upon in Muslim culture due to reverence for the divine nature found within each creature<sup>23</sup>. Islamic art has created unique abstract patterns using geometric, arabesque, vegetal, and calligraphic elements to prevent idol worship. This happens due to the strict prohibition against images of human and animal forms in the Islamic religion<sup>24</sup>. Since Muslim artists wanted to avoid imitating

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<sup>20</sup> Saima Gulzar et al., “Characterization of 17th Century Mughal Tile Glazes from Shahdara Complex, Lahore-Pakistan,” *Journal of Cultural Heritage* 14, no. 2 (2013): 174–79, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.culher.2012.03.007>.

<sup>21</sup> Jan Hogendijk, “Mathematics and Geometric Ornamentation in the Medieval Islamic World,” in *European Congress of Mathematics Kraków, 2 – 7 July, 2012*, 2013, 727–41, <https://doi.org/10.4171/120-1/44>.

<sup>22</sup> Mia Corbett, “Finding the Islam in Islamic Art: The Relationship between Islamic Law and Artistic Practice,” in *Research Handbook on Islamic Law and Society*, 2018, 331–49, <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781781003060.00025>.

<sup>23</sup> Taluğ, “Islamic Art: Restrictions and Figural Representations,” *Archives.Un-Pub.Eu*, 2015.

<sup>24</sup> Craig S. Kaplan, “Islamic Patterns,” 2008, 45, <https://doi.org/10.1145/1400385.1400409>.



the existence of God in their art, they tried to develop new artistic concepts and create unique motifs in art and ornamentation.

This research looked into and emphasised the characteristics of Mughal Islamic ornaments and their influences to understand their creative existence and development better, focusing on two Mughal mosques. Calligraphy, geometry, and floral themes are the most prominent and widely used ornaments in Mughal Islamic architecture<sup>25</sup>. Mughal architecture also never defined or limited its concerns to a single religion or tradition, instead integrating and amalgamating various cultures, civilisations, and historical circumstances as represented by Islamic doctrine<sup>26</sup>. For example, Roman ornamental art and Central Asia had the most significant influence, while Arabs produced art related to Islam and its spiritual characteristics<sup>27</sup>. Islamic art disciplines such as religious and public constructions, landscape paintings, interior decorative art, and miniature art have all benefited from the contributions of Mughal rulers<sup>28</sup>.

The Mughal Emperors built the most prominent Islamic structures in the Indian Subcontinent<sup>29</sup>. Persian and Indian architecture served as inspiration for Mughal architects. One of the most notable aspects of Mughal architecture is the use of mosaic

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<sup>25</sup> Glenn D. Lowry, "Humayun's Tomb: Form, Function, and Meaning in Early Mughal Architecture," *Muqarnas*, 1987, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22118993-90000212>.

<sup>26</sup> Amir Akbari et al., "Emanations and Islamic Architectural Interactions between Iran and Indian Subcontinent," *International Journal of Social and Economic Research* 4, no. 4 (2014): 39, <https://doi.org/10.5958/2249-6270.2014.01116.7>.

<sup>27</sup> Rima Ajlouni, "Islamic Geometric Patterns: Their Historical Development and Traditional Methods of Construction," *Journal of Mathematics and the Arts* 14, no. 4 (October 1, 2020): 370–75, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17513472.2019.1696118>.

<sup>28</sup> Kseniya Reznikova, "Indian Mausoleums as the Representatives of the Islamic Religion in the Era of the Great Mughals," in *4th SGEM International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conferences on SOCIAL SCIENCES and ARTS Proceedings 4th, Science and Arts*, vol. 4, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.5593/sgemsocial2017/62/s22.003>.

<sup>29</sup> Mughal era often referred as "Golden age of Architecture".

patterns created from glazed tiles or stones of various colours. The Mughal architectural style, which impacted the rest of the world, was distinguished by its liberal utilisation of overlapping arches, towering minarets, Persian-style domes, and enormous vaulted ceilings. Prominent mosques constructed during this period include Wazir Khan Mosque, Maryam Zamani Mosque, Moti Mosque, Badshahi Mosque, and Golden Mosque<sup>30</sup>.

Mughals, enthusiastic about art and architecture, pioneered new methods and styles for ornamenting and building their magnificent structures. The distinctive architectural ornaments of Mughal structures show the Mughals' sophisticated architectural taste and creative skill<sup>31</sup>. The architectural ornamentation of the Mughals combines Islamic, Iranian, Persian, European and Indian architectural features. Persian influences mixed with local traditional architecture originated Mughal architecture on the Indian Subcontinent. Still, as Soucek has demonstrated, it eventually developed into a distinctly Mughal style that has endured<sup>32</sup>.

### **1.2.1 Importance of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century: Development of Art and Architecture**

The Mughals were the third-largest empire in Islamic history after the Umayyad (661-750 CE) and the Ottoman (1481-1566) empires. Along with the rise of Islam as a religion, these empires have seen several other developments, particularly in art and

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<sup>30</sup> Dr. Samina Nasim, "Significance of Inlay Work in the Modern Mosque at Islamabad," *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 2, no. 6 (2012): 8–14, <https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-0260814>.

<sup>31</sup> Yahya Abdullahi and Mohamed Rashid Embi, "Evolution of Abstract Vegetal Ornaments in Islamic Architecture," *Archnet-IJAR* 9, no. 1 (2015): 31–49, <https://doi.org/10.26687/archnet-ijar.v9i1.558>.

<sup>32</sup> Soucek, Priscilla P. "Persian artists in Mughal India: influences and transformations." *Muqarnas* (1987): 166-181.

architecture. Due to the Mughal emperors' fascination with architecture, the Mughals' era is called the "Golden Age of Architecture". Islamic ideology affected art in several historical periods and locations, from Umayyad to the Mughals. Moreover, Islam's ideology comprises constant principles and varying consequences depending on the era. By prohibiting sculpture and drawings, fixed norms impact art and architecture. They also give Islamic art originality and unity by restricting figurative and naturalistic ornamentation.

The 17th century saw tremendous advancements in Islamic art. During this time, the prominent Islamic empires that ruled the era made great efforts to advance Islamic architecture and art. Examples include the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires. In South Asia, the 17th century is known as the Mughal era; in the West, it is known as the Italian Renaissance Decorative Art era; and in the East, it is known as the Safavid dynasty era. Due to the aesthetic and artistic trade, the art and craft of the 17th century are quite comparable in these areas. The 17th century contributed significantly to the development of many different art styles, i.e., calligraphy, arabesque, architectural structures, and ornamentation. The aesthetic and artistic trade emerges as a significant determinant in the flourishing of one region's art and craft compared to other areas, contributing to the evolution and development of the art and craft. The Safavid dynasty ruled Persia in the 17th century, comparable to the Indian Subcontinent, and the Mughals ruled nearby South Asia. Persian art, usually Iranian art, has a rich and storied history in various mediums, including architecture, ornamentation, weaving, painting, calligraphy, ceramics, sculpture, and metallurgy. There have been considerable impacts from other cultures' art in various periods (Fig. 1.1).



**Figure 1.1** Maps of Three Largest Islamic Empires: Umayyad, Ottoman, Mughals  
**Source:** Alamy, A British Photography Agency

More recently, Persian art has contributed to and received significant influences as part of the larger forms of Islamic art<sup>33</sup>. From 1501 through 1722, Safavid art was the art of the Persian Safavid monarchy (Fig. 1.2). It was a pinnacle moment for book and architectural art, as well as pottery, glass, metal, and gardens. The craft of the Safavid period demonstrates a significantly more uniform development than any previous time in Persian art, with the same style emerging in carpets, architectural tiles, pottery, and manuscript illumination, all dispersed from the palace<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> Yuka Kadoi and Iván. Szántó, *The Shaping of Persian Art : Collections and Interpretations of the Art of Islamic Iran and Central Asia*, 2014..

<sup>34</sup> Cammann, Schuyler VR. "Religious Symbolism in Persian art." *History of Religions* 15, no. 3 (1976): 193-208.



**Figure 1.2** The 17th Century Safavid Dynasty of Persia  
**Source:** Alamy, A British Photography Agency

In Islamic art and architecture, ornamentation is essential<sup>35</sup>. Muslim artists used various decorative techniques, including geometry, calligraphy, epigraphy, arabesque, and animal motifs, on several artworks and artefacts, including religious illuminations, pottery, and architecture. For example, the arabesque is the most ubiquitous pattern in decoration that was widely utilised, especially in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in Italy (Fig. 1.3). The arabesque is an abstract and rhythmic plant embellishment pattern in Islamic art. It found many other media, such as stucco, masonry, ceramics, tiles, metalwork, textiles, and carpets. The term 'Arabesque' is a defunct European version of rebesk (or rebesco), not an Arabic word, that dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> centuries when Renaissance painters adopted Islamic designs for architecture and

<sup>35</sup> R Othman and Z. J. Zainal-Abidin, “The Importance of Islamic Art in Mosque Interior,” in *Procedia Engineering*, vol. 20, 2011, 105–9, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.proeng.2011.11.144>.

decorative bookbinding<sup>36</sup>. In addition, the description states that the arabesque is a "vegetal design made up of whole and half palmettes, as an unending continuous pattern, in which each leaf comes out of the tip of another"<sup>37</sup>. In German, the term refers to the foliage decoration of Muslim art; in a broader meaning, it refers to the ornament of that art in general and has been used since the Baroque period. The ideas for decorating Mughal structures are similar to arabesque, a continuous pattern of motifs. For example, in the 17th century, Shah Jahan built the Wazir Khan Mosque, the mosque's vegetal arabesque style invented a particular kind of vegetative embellishment<sup>38</sup>.



**Figure 1.3** The 17th-Century Italian Renaissance Map

**Source:** Alamy, A British Photography Agency

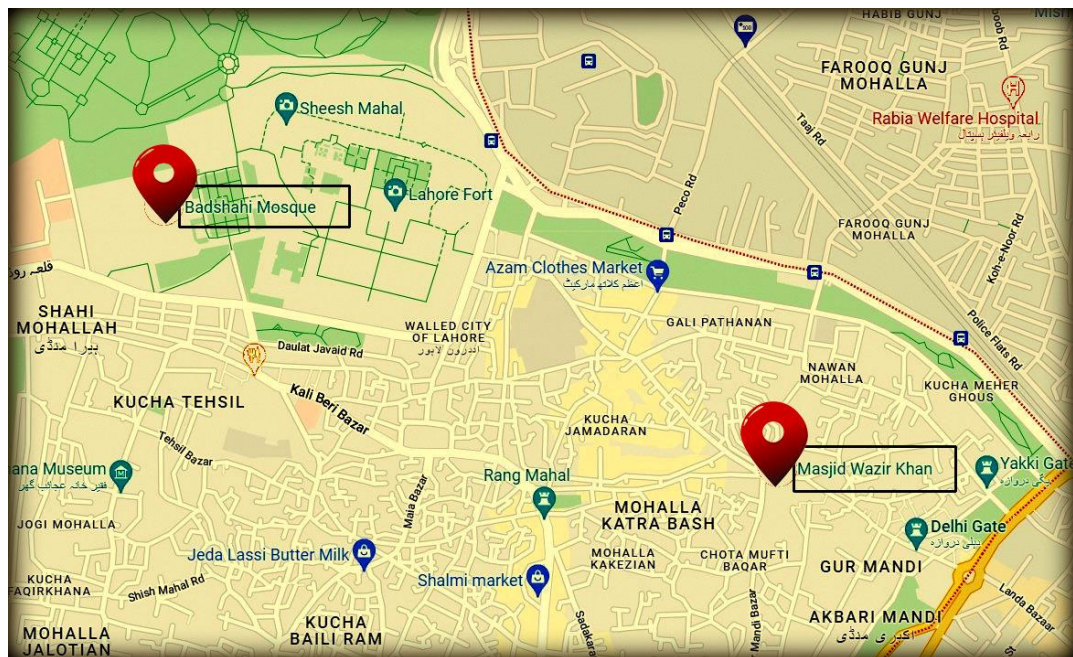
<sup>36</sup> Roger Benjamin, "The Decorative Landscape, Fauvism, and the Arabesque of Observation," *The Art Bulletin* 75, no. 2 (1993): 295–316, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00043079.1993.10786540>.

<sup>37</sup> Art, "Art & Architecture," *Taylorfrancis.Com*, 2013,

<sup>38</sup> M Bansas, "Impact of Persian Language and Literature in India during Mughal Period," *Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and ...*, 2014.

## 1.2.2 Wazir Khan and Badshahi Mosque: Introduction

For this specific research, the researcher chooses two mosques, i.e., Wazir Khan and Badshahi Mosque, currently located in Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan (Fig. 1.4). Due to its historical significance as a hub of creative production since the Mughal era Lahore has evolved into a city with historical value. Religious buildings and secular architecture were prioritised, with the Wazir Khan Mosque as a notable example (built in the 17th century). With its architectural splendour, this mosque mesmerises tourists and pulls them in with a glance into the narrow alleyways of Lahore's inner city. Its unique construction style in the centre of the bazaar made it accessible to the general people, and its architectural ornamentation with references to heavenly nuances and the ambience of its enclosure encouraged believers<sup>39</sup>.



**Figure 1.4** Location Map of Walled City Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

<sup>39</sup> Muhammad Yusuf Awan et al., “History of Mosque Architecture in Lahore,” *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 04, no. 02 (2014): 22–37, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.42.03>.

The Badshahi mosque was built in 1084 A.D./1673 under the orders of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir. Mr Fidai Khan Koka, the Emperor's stepbrother, oversaw its construction in the northwest corner of the Lahore Fort, in front of the Akbari gate<sup>40</sup>. It was built for significant money at the time, totalling six lakh rupees. For over three centuries, this mosque, constructed as a one-of-a-kind architectural model, has been recognised as the world's largest mosque regarding the non-controversial number of prayers<sup>41</sup>. The mosque has a 528-8 X 528-4-meter square footprint<sup>42</sup>. On each of its four corners, two-hundred-foot-high minarets reflect the majesty and splendour of Islam and Islamic architecture in the viewers' hearts.

Even though Islam does not define a particular architectural style for the mosque, regional and cultural influences have had a significant effect on its architecture all over the globe<sup>43</sup>. Especially after declaring independent control in the area during and after the reign of Akbar, the Mughals constructed the most recognised or iconic kind of mosque on the Subcontinent (1556-1605)<sup>44</sup>. The Shahjahan era (1628-1658) is known for creating and building significant mosques in crucial towns throughout the Subcontinent<sup>45</sup>. Notable Mughal architectural structures in Lahore include the

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid

<sup>41</sup> Syed Bacha Agha, Muhammad Khubaib, and Syed Bacha Agha Muhammad Khubaib, "The Three Mosques of Pakistan as an Islamic Heritage Architecture," *Al-Azhār* 6, no. 1 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.46896/arj.v6i01.102>.

<sup>42</sup> Agha, Syed Bacha, and Muhammad Khubaib. "The three Mosques of Pakistan as an Islamic Heritage Architecture." *Al-Azhār* 6, no. 1 (2020).

<sup>43</sup> Hasan-uddin Khan, "Contemporary Mosque Architecture. Space & Architecture," *ISIM Review* 21, no. 1 (2008): 52–53, <https://scholarlypublications.universiteitleiden.nl/handle/1887/17213>.

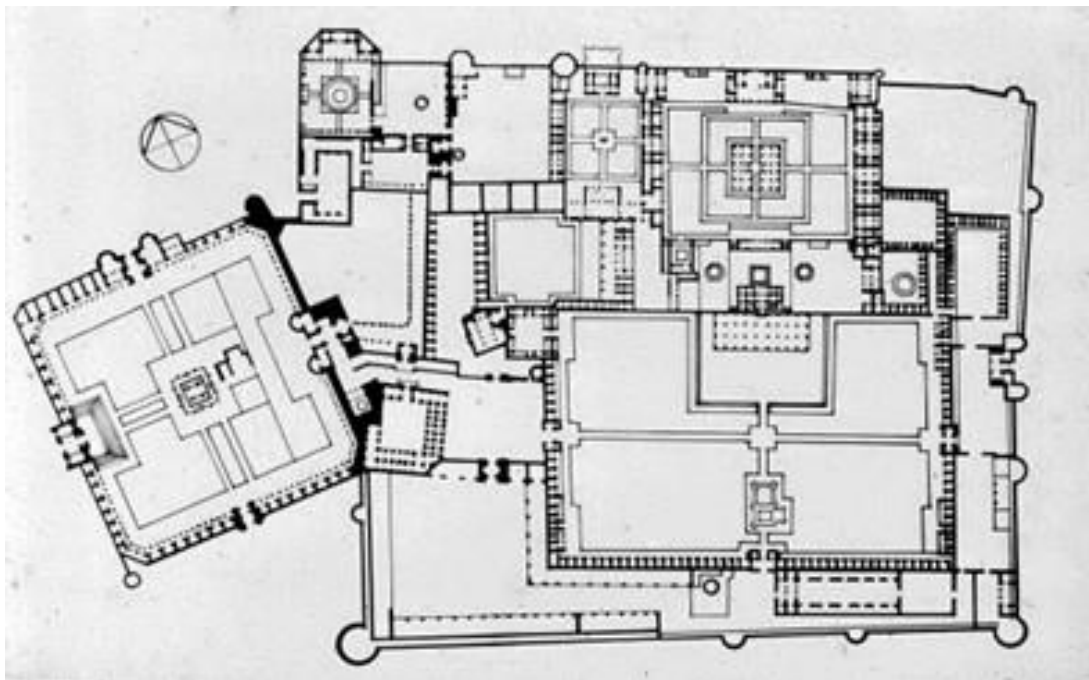
<sup>44</sup> Shabbirullah Qureshi and M. Ashraf Khan, "Mahabat Khan Mosque - An Islamic Symbol of Peace," *Journal of Research in Architecture and Planning* 28, no. 1 (2020): 20–30, [https://doi.org/10.53700/jrap2812020\\_2](https://doi.org/10.53700/jrap2812020_2).

<sup>45</sup> Jamil and Gulzar, "Historical Development of Dado Ornamentation in Mughal Architecture."

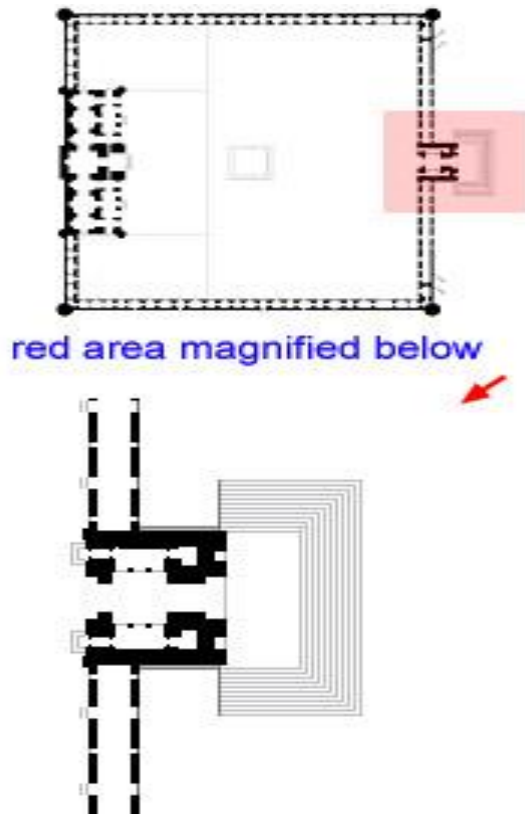


Badshahi Mosque near the Lahore Fort and Wazir Khan Mosque within the Delhi Gate. The measurements of Badshahi Mosque are:

- Courtyard: 528'-8" x 528'-4" (Area: 278,784 ft<sup>2</sup>), divided into upper and lower levels
- Prayer Chamber: 275'-8" x 83'-7" x 50'-6" high, with its main vault 37'-3" x 59'-4" high and a total area of 22,825 sq ft
- Corner Minarets: 67' in circumference, 176'-4" high, are in four stages and have a contained staircase with 204 steps.
- Central Dome: Diameter 65' at the bottom (at bulging 70'-6"); height 49'; pinnacle 24 ft and neck 15 ft high.
- Side Domes: Diameter 51'-6" (at bulging 54'-2"); height 32 ft; pinnacle 19 ft; neck 9'-6" high.
- Gateway: 66'-7" x 62'-10" x 65 high, including domelets; vault 21'-6" x 32'-6" high. Its three-sided approach steps are 22 in number.
- Side aisles (Dalans): 80 in number. Height above floor 23'-9"; plinth 2'-7".
- Central Tank: 50' x 50' x 3' deep (Area: 2,500 sq. ft).



**Figure 1.5** Plan view of Lahore fort and Badshahi Mosque, Punjab, Pakistan

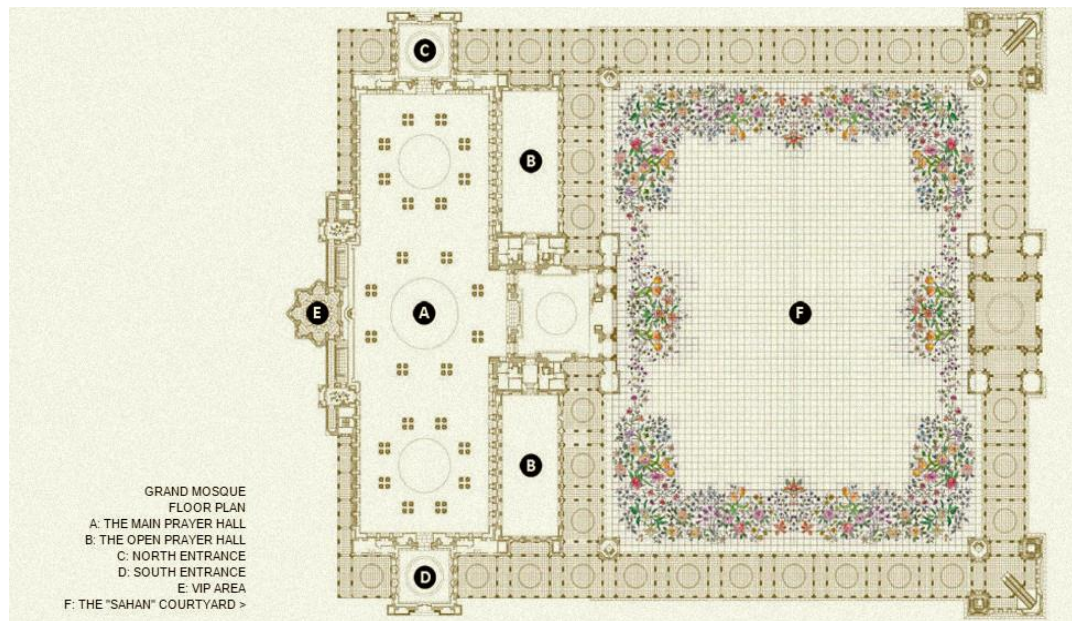


**Figure 1.6** Architectural Plan of Badshahi Mosque, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

The Mosque's design showcases the elegance of Islamic Muhgal architecture, which endures even now after centuries. The history of mosque architecture development over the thousand years prior to its construction in 1673 is summed up in many of its construction features, including the large square courtyard, the side aisles (dalans), the four corner minarets, the projecting central transept of the prayer chamber, and the grand entrance gate.

Small kiln-burnt bricks and lime mortar (a type of hydraulic lime) were used to construct the building's walls, which are veneered with red sandstone. Spotted marble is used for the steps going up to the prayer area. The prayer space is divided into seven sections by an etched curve that is supported by a massive dock. The remaining seven pieces have curvilinear domes with a central beam in their interior and a flat roof

above, together with three double domes with marble curvature.



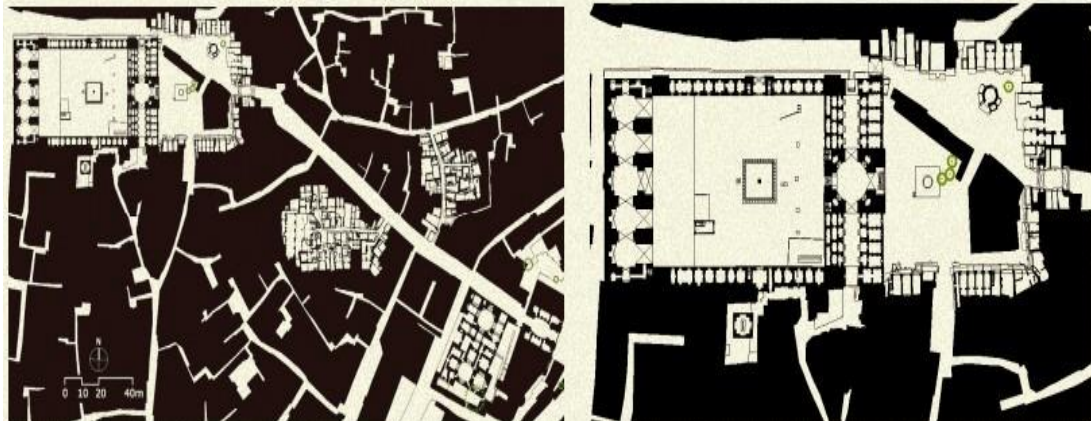
**Figure 1.7** Basic Plan of Badshahi Mosque, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

On the other hand, Wazir Khan Mosque is one of the most well-known because of its central position inside the walled city. It stands out not just from other mosques in the region but from all other Mughal buildings because of its high quality and extensive use of faience tile work, Kashikari (mosaic), and calligraphy. It examines how the mosque's design creates a feeling of heavenly joy and natural justice using Kashi-Kari (mosaic), a decorative feature<sup>46</sup>.

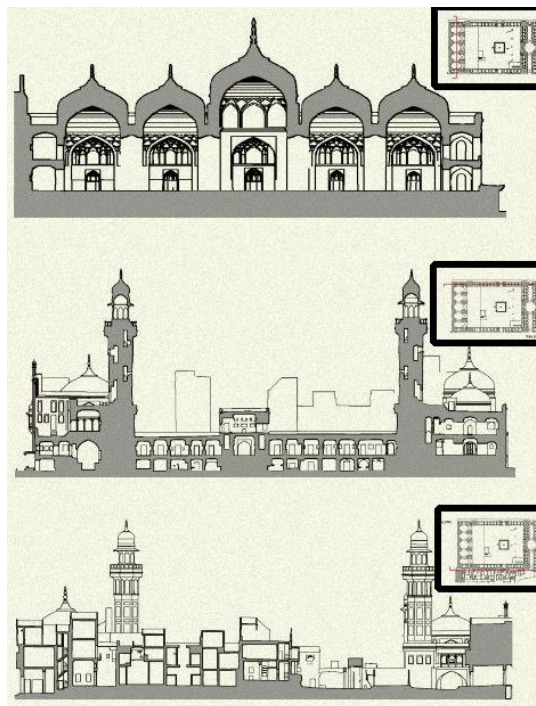
Three horizontal planes may be distinguished in the mosque's construction. The shops on the eastern and northern sides correspond to Level 0. With all of the mosque's primary sections included, Level I occupies the most space overall. The areas that are accessible from level I through stairs are designated as level II. The mosque's layout

<sup>46</sup> S Jabeen, "Beloved Mosque: The Wazir Khan Masjid of Lahore," *Utaj.Library.Utoronto.Ca*, 2021.

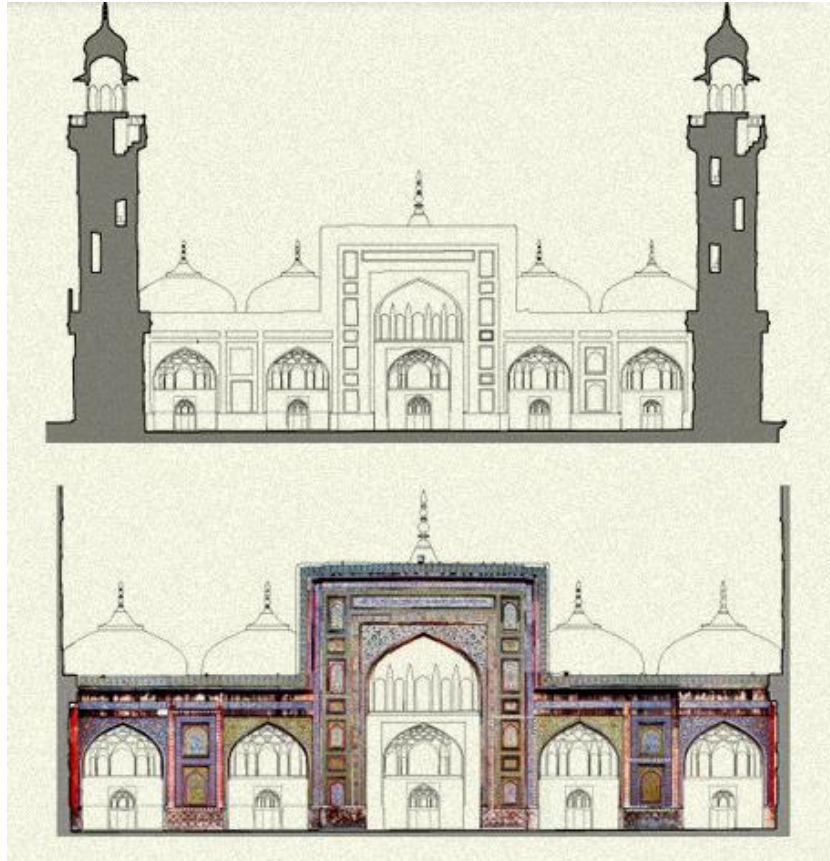
is rectangular in shape and measures 86.17 x 50.44 m at its widest point. The four majestic minarets mark the corners of the main courtyard. The principal components of the building include the prayer chamber, courtyard, hujras, vestibule, and bazaar. The Wazir Khan Mosque's architectural features and decorations display pre-Mughal influences and those from nearby areas, including Persia, Central Asia, and Europe.



**Figure 1.8** Building plan of Wazir Khan Mosque, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan



**Figure 1.9** Wazir Khan Architecture Plan from Front, Back and Side view



**Figure 1.10** Wazir Khan Architectural Ornaments Placement Dimensions



**Figure 1.11** Wazir Khan Mosque, Courtyard View, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

The Mosque surpasses others in its delicateness and extensive artistic scheme, exhibiting some of the best examples of Mughal architectural ornamentation and decorative techniques. The majority of the other Shahjahani era monuments, such as

the Dai Anga Mosque, Asif Khan Tomb, and Gulabi Bagh entrance in Lahore, also have glazed tile work, frescos, and faux brickwork as architectural décor, but the Wazir Khan Mosque stands out in its artistic quality due to the enormous scale of these decorations.

These two historical monuments are in danger of deterioration because of improper measurement practices and climate change. Therefore, each aspect of the mosques must be documented in scholarly literature to preserve historic architecture. Most available academic writings on Mughal architecture focus on the architectural plans, pillars, arches, and structures explored with historical approaches. The ornamental aspects of Mughal architecture need more academic documentation as it needs an academically documented historical record. Therefore, this research tries to uncover and document the characteristics and influences of the ornaments crafted and painted in these mosques.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

One may wonder why lesser comprehensive studies have been published on ornamentation's history, function, and importance of the Mughal art and architecture. The problem, according to Rosniza, begins with the notion of ornamentation<sup>47</sup>. What are the ornamentation limitations, and what does it contain and exclude? Is there a way to classify non-figural art as an ornament? To what degree does Islamic ornamentation serve as decoration or a means of expressing beauty in its purest form or religious

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<sup>47</sup> Rosniza Othman, "Important of Motif and Ornamentation in Mosque Architecture," *Journal Design And Built*, no. Mosque Edittion (2011): 63–68.

meaning? Finally, can ornamentation be regarded as a language that can be studied, analysed, and deciphered to communicate with people in a meaningful way?

The interpretation of Islamic ornamentation and how academics have viewed Mughal Islamic ornaments are worth investigating. Chism asserts that the architecture or usefulness of an object or a building is unaffected by Islamic ornaments<sup>48</sup>. On the other hand, Obaid believes decorating is one of the fundamental categories of art, alongside architecture, sculpture, and painting<sup>49</sup>. Shafiq describes ornament as a historical art form that includes all the shapes and patterns humans have applied to their homes, furniture, weapons, movable objects, fabrics, clothing, and bodies from prehistoric times<sup>50</sup>.

As mentioned earlier, Mughal architecture is renowned for its enormous and elaborate construction, which has left a legacy of unique tastes, beliefs, values, ambitions, and interests from the glorious Mughal era<sup>51</sup>. Mughal architectural ornaments are a distinguishing element of their architecture. In this perspective, the external and internal wall decorations employed in different religious structures, forts, and mausoleums have a particular place<sup>52</sup>. Mughals utilised dynamic, natural, geometric, and abstract themes for exterior and interior wall decorating<sup>53</sup>. The Mughals used various artistic techniques to decorate dadoes, including painting, tile decoration,

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<sup>48</sup> Jonathan Langston Chism, "The Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion," *Religious Studies Review*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1111/rsr.13405>.

<sup>49</sup> Hanan Al-Obaid, "The Philosophy of Islamic Ornament in Islamic Art" (2005).

<sup>50</sup> Jeanan Shafiq, "Architectural Elements in Islamic Ornamentation: New Vision in Contemporary Islamic Art," *Art and Design Studies* 21 (2014): 11–21.

<sup>51</sup> George Michell and Amit Pasricha, "Mughal Architecture & Gardens" 15 (2008): 10011.

<sup>52</sup> A Mohiuddin, "A Note on Symbols and Symbolism of Selected Motifs of Mughal Art and Architecture," *JSTOR*, 2020.

<sup>53</sup> Rohita Sharma, "Modern Architectural Decoration in References Of," *Conference.Bonfring.Org* 2, no. June (2012): 925–29.

mosaic painting, stucco, stone carving, incised, and inlay<sup>54</sup>. Iranian painters' works influence the miniature paintings in various areas across the Indian Subcontinent<sup>55</sup>.

It is critical to examine what characteristics the Mughals utilised as architectural ornaments and how these ornaments linked with Islam's teachings. Additionally, the Mughal Islamic Ornamentation is Islamic or only aesthetically decorative elements used to adorn the buildings. Many academics explore the historical aspects of Mughal architecture, such as building plans, monuments, gardens, tombs, and courts. However, this study addresses a dearth of documentation about the influence of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Eastern and Western art forms on Mughal Islamic ornaments painted and carved in Wazir Khan and Badshahi Mosque.

There is various aspect to explore and analyse these ornaments. Various scholars examine these aspects of Islamic ornamentation through different approaches<sup>56</sup> i.e., Rhetoric, and Semiotics. What is lacking is the connectivity of the retrospect towards Mughals Islamic ornamentation, which needs to be improved in all these approaches. The influence of Europe and Persia on Mughal Islamic ornaments has yet to be extensively researched by academics in recent years. At the same time, the few existing investigations need more thorough coverage and detailed academic and philosophical historical context about Mughal Islamic Ornamentation. Consequently, there needs to be more academic literature in this area.

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<sup>54</sup> Sunil Sharma, "Representation of Social Groups in Mughal Art and Literature: Ethnography or Trope?," *Brill's Indological Library*, 2012, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004218871\\_003](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004218871_003).

<sup>55</sup> Milo Cleveland Beach and Pramod Chandra, "The Tuti-Nama of the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Origins of Mughal Painting," *Artibus Asiae* 40, no. 1 (1978): 81, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3249816>.

<sup>56</sup> Asher, Catherine Blanshard, Catherine Ella Blanshard Asher, and Catherine B. Asher. *Architecture of Mughal India*. Vol. 4. Cambridge University Press, 1992.



## 1.4 Research Objectives and Questions

Ornament is not a motif<sup>57</sup>, according to Bier, nor is it a pattern or a way of showing motifs, but maybe both. Ornament may include or may not involve the representation of pictures. It could be the spectator's attitude or the artist's decision<sup>58</sup>. In the sense that decoration is something, including whole mosaics or sculpted programs, added to an item or a building, the ornament is also very different from decoration. In contrast, the ornament is that aspect of decoration that seems to have no other function than to reinforce the underlying shape<sup>59</sup>. Mughal Islamic Ornamentation is surprisingly consistent for such a large domain. As far as can be described in words, its characteristics promote stylisation over naturalism, petite forms over enormous, elegance over power, symmetry over asymmetry, predictability over spontaneity, and distinct patterns over all other forms<sup>60</sup>.

This research addressed three research objectives that led to 3 research questions for in-depth understanding:

### **1: To identify the characteristics and prominent features of Mughal Islamic Ornaments of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.**

The first objective is to identify the distinctive qualities and features of Mughal Islamic ornamentation of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This objective aims to comprehend better the

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<sup>57</sup> Carol Bier, "Geometry in Islamic Art," in *Encyclopaedia of the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine in Non-Western Cultures*, 2015, 1–21, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-3934-5\\_10111-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-3934-5_10111-1).

<sup>58</sup> Mary Eliza Joy Haweis, *The Art of Decoration*, 1881.

<sup>59</sup> Othman and Zainal-Abidin, "The Importance of Islamic Art in Mosque Interior."

<sup>60</sup> Madiha Ahmad, Khuram Rashid, and Neelum Naz, "Study of the Ornamentation of Bhong Mosque for the Survival of Decorative Patterns in Islamic Architecture," *Frontiers of Architectural Research* 7, no. 2 (2018): 122–34, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foar.2018.03.004>.

ornaments of two mosques from the Mughal era. Additionally, it will pinpoint the factors that contribute to the intrinsic and widespread nature of Mughal architecture.

Thus, it raises the question:

**What are the characteristics and prominent features of Mughal Islamic Ornaments of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century?**

Using the most recent qualitative data analysis software, Atlas ti 9, visual analysis is utilised to answer this question. Through defined categories and themes, it supports accumulating the collected data (both textual and visual), which is further analysed in the second phase. The thematic analysis also highlights the visuals' aesthetic and conceptual characteristics considered when creating the Mughal mosque's ornamentation.

**2: To explore the influences on Mughal Islamic Ornaments of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.**

In addition to being aesthetically appealing, ornamentation also communicates with the audience. The second objective explored the aesthetical and conceptual influences of Mughal ornamentation. This study developed a way to achieve this goal by combining the hermeneutics approach and the optic strategy of visual analysis. This led to a query:

**How art forms of the 17<sup>th</sup> century influenced the Mughal Islamic ornaments of the 17<sup>th</sup> century?**

For profound understanding, ornaments are analysed following their conceptual, historical, and aesthetic aspects to explore the influences of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century art forms

on Mughal mosques. The 17<sup>th</sup> century is a significant era that covers the Mughals Empire in South Asia, Safavid Dynasty in the East, and Italian Renaissance in the West. The hermeneutics approach brought attention to the conceptual and aesthetic connections, one of the leading causes of these influences on Mughal art.

### **3: To analyse the Mughal Islamic Ornaments of Wazir Khan and Badshahi Mosque.**

The ornamental visual study aims to determine whether the Mughal ornamentation of mosques represents Islam or whether it provides secular or aesthetically attractive meanings. This objective seeks to comprehend better the ornaments of two mosques from the Mughal era. Additionally, it will pinpoint the elements that contribute to the intrinsic and widespread nature of Mughal architecture. Thus, it raises the question:

#### **How do Mughal Islamic ornaments symbolise the Islamic religion?**

Atlas ti 9, the most recent qualitative analysis software, is used to analyse the 200 visuals; 42 codes are developed and further categorised into four themes: Calligraphy ornament, Acanthus ornament, Palmette ornament, and Iznik ornament. The research framework then investigated and interpreted the four themes in respond to this research question presented in Chapter 6.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Research**

In the northern Indian Subcontinent, the Mughal period has seen a remarkable resurgence of Islamic architecture. Under the patronage of the Mughal rulers, Mughal