

**IN SEARCH OF THE**

**GRAVE OF**

**USTAD AHMAD MIMAR LAHORI**

**IN THE CEMETERY OF KHULDABAD**

**AURANGABAD**

**ARIF RAHMAN CHUGHTAI LAHORI**

## IN SEARCH OF THE GRAVE OF USTAD AHMAD MIMAR LAHORI

Fathers and sons! A strange combination, which differs from culture to culture. The way the same is projected in western media, takes away all the basic values of same. In our Islamic tradition, no doubt, the figure of a father is like a divine in miniature. And the greater iconic status of the father, the greater the pressure on the son for his identity. When my father died on 17th January, 1975, it made me look at these values all the more. And when the study of the ancestry started, I immediately noted a relation of prime significance between Ustad Ahmad Mimar Lahori, and his son, Lutufullah Ahmad Muhandis. The passion for research became more vivid in that direction.

## A TRAIL OF DOCUMENTATION

It started in 1977 on a newer footing. A visit to all relatives, friends and scholars. A collection of information, and documents. A collection of published as well as unknown documents. It was bound to be crazy at many moments, and depleting of limited resources. I was told that the first bit of information came from an old lady of the family, who had a life span of so called 120 years. She used to speak of Lutufullah in very clear terms, and used the word "Huroo Chaghata" for him. In 1977 her grandson, 80 years old, sheepishly asked me, if it was actually an abuse. It made me smile, as names were forgotten. A time had come when people knew not the name of their grandfather, and we were exploring history of generations back. But luck was with me, and the timing right. A collection of documents emerged into reality.

## A FANTASTIC REFERENCE IN ARCHAEOLOGICAL LITERATURE

In the bayaz of Imamuddin Riazi, there is mention of family members being buried in the graveyard of the city of Delhi. There is even a reference of a burial outside the cemetery of a famous Mazar in Delhi, namely "Shah Mardan", of a certain Sheikh Ahmad. Probably the grave of Nurullah Ahmad. But in 1946, it was the Nizam's government, and a publication by the name of "Ancient India" was started and the Archaeological Survey of India, Superintendent Archaeology, wrote an article on "Repairs to the Taj Mahal" and added the foot note to same:



"Again, Lutufullah, in the epigraph engraved him on his father's tombstone at Aurangabad, confirms that Usta Ahmad was the builder of the Taj, Delhi Fort, and the Jami Madjid."

The word used was tombstone, not a grave stone, and it pointed to Aurangabad as the vicinity of the burial of Ustad Ahmad Mimar Lahori.

#### WHAT WAS USTAD AHMAD MIMAR LAHORI DOING IN AURANGABAD IN 1649 AD?

It is confirmed by his son that Ustad Ahmad Mimar Lahori died in 1649 A.D. If he died elsewhere, can there be a reason for his body to be transported to this place in such difficult times. It could have been done even in those times, but certainly there could be no attachment to this place, of very high significance. Now Aurangabad is not a small place, but it is famous as the Valley of Saints, where perhaps 1500 famous saints are buried. But that concentration is not on Aurangabad itself, but the area actually known as Khultabad, and made famous as Khuldabad. It is where Emperor Aurangzeb is himself buried in a simple grave. And the specific area of a cemetery is in the boundary of famous Chisti Saint, Zar Zar Baksh. Many tombs in the area, as well as hundreds of unknown graves at same place. The most famous is the mausoleum of a literal ruler of that area, the negro statesman of Ethiopia, namely Malik Ambar. The question remains unanswered as to what was Ustad Ahmad Mimar Lahori doing there, and did he die at that place.

The historian Firistah writes about Malik Ambar:

"He founded Khadki, five kos from Daulatabad (now called Aurangabad, and ornamented it with magnificent palaces, gardens, and noble supplies of water, lined with stones, which yet remain."

But Ustad Ahmad Mimar Lahori was an architect associated with the Mughals, particularly Emperor Shah Jahan, and Malik Ambar was a declared enemy of the Mughals.

However there is another aspect. The eldest son of Ustad Ahmad Mimar Lahori was Attaullah Rushdi, and he was associated with Prince Aurangzeb right from the start, as proven by Deccan archives. And later builder of the Rauza Rabia Durrani, wife of Emperor Aurangzeb as attested by the inscription on the mausoleum itself. Aurangzeb became the Governor of Deccan the second time in 1653 A.D.



The death of the architect had taken place in 1649 A.D. What could be the link of the architect with the burial in Aurangabad? Did he die there in 1649 A.D., and when was his tomb actually built. Open questions indeed!

#### A STUDY OF THE TRAIL OF FATHER AND SON

It is interesting that there is a manuscript entitled 'Five Qasidas', and it has the notation of Emperor Muhammed Adil Shah of Bijapur, that it was written by calligrapher Ismael for him, in Badaun. It has a seal and a tughra of Muhammed Adil Shah on it. It also has a written reference that after the death of Nawab Mustafa Khan, it was deposited in the Kitab Khana Amra, by "Asama" Ahmad. The notation is dated 1059 A.H, or exactly near the time of death of Ustad Ahmad Mimar. The year was 1649 A.D. It is clearly suggesting that the architect was in Bijapur at that time. There is more evidence too. In a miniature of Muhammed Adil Shah, at the back is a calligraphy by Lutufullah, and the contents of it show the discontent of the Muhandis in that period. He calls of the frustration in those times, and says simply it is for the reason that they as professionals chose the profession of mirror polishers in the land of blind people. An amazing statement of those times. The presence of father and son in Bijapur in the Court of Muhammed Adil Shah, and in the presence of Ikhlas Khan, the African general of those times, point out the clear possibility of their presence in Aurangabad itself. Acting as advisers maybe!

#### THE LINK ITSELF IS A BIZARRE REVELATION

The amazing manuscript speaks of the "Five Qasidas" being in the library of Nawab Mustafa Khan, and being transferred by Ahmad to the Amrao library. But who actually was Nawab Mustafa Khan. An extremely capable, brave and diplomatic old man, well loved by people, and with the name of Mirza Muhammed Amin Laree, Nawab Mustafa Khan, Mansab-i-kar-Mulki, alias Khanbaba, was literally the Main Minister of Sultan Muhammed Adil Shah, his daughter Uroos Begum was married to the Sultan himself, while he was the honoured son-in-law of the renowned late Malik Ambar (who died in 1626 A.D).



We do know that Malik Ambar had two daughters. Name of one was Shahir Bano, and the other was Azijja Bano. It seems the youngest was Azijja Bano and was married to Siddi Abdullah. The other was married to the young Sultan that is Sultan Nizam Shah II. But there is confusion in published accounts, as it is said that the last daughter was married to a General, who became a great warrior for the Mughals too. But our account is based on published resources, and often the writers do not check the authenticity of their conclusions. The most reliable source is that Malik Ambar's daughter was married to Nawab Mustafa Khan. There is yet another link.

The interesting part is that Nawab Mustafa Khan was from Herat in Khorasan country, and that is exactly from where the father of Ustad Ahmad Mimar had come. It means that both knew each other well, being both old men, and the link with Malik Ambar, points out the possibility of the grave being in the complex of Malik Ambar itself. Nawab Mustafa Khan got sick all of a sudden and the disease spread day to day, till there was no hope, and he died on 9th November, 1648. Ustad Ahmad Mimar died in 1649 A.D, and the date of 16 Rajab, 1059 A.H, suggests that he was alive by that date.

That Lutufullah Ahmad Muhandis was with father is proven by the fact that a miniature of the Sultan with Ikhlās Khan, has a calligraphy at the back of the miniature, written by Lutufullah himself. The presence of both father and son there remains proven as a fact.

#### A STUDY OF THE TOMB OF MALIK AMBAR IN KHULDABAD

Khuldabad is actually the 'Valley of Saints', and a place of religious nature. Actually neglected by scholarship. The personality of Malik Ambar is discussed everywhere and the politics associated with it. But hardly anybody has paid attention to the area. We find the classical architectural writing of Klaus Rotzer the best documentation of the area. Another present day scholar Pushkar Sohoni adds to the charm of the area of Siddi culture. In a personal letter to me, the scholar writes about the monuments, and clarified a monument of the area as:



"I know this tomb quite well, but there is no inscription on it. Locally, it is often called the tomb of Malik Ambar's grandson or of one of his wives, but it is impossible to ascertain any such claim."

This monument was a source of my attention. I had seen a photograph of it made perhaps after 1860 A.D. All four corner minarets are there in the photograph, and the surprising thing is that two saddled horses are standing in front of it. Visitors to the desecrated tomb at that time. Surprising indeed. What was attractive in it was its proportions. Exact proportions made according to Euclidian principles, compared to the other monuments there. All the other monuments, even the tomb of Malik Ambar, may have everything, but it is void due to aesthetics of any proportions. Why? Klaus Rotzer has the answer:

*"Malik Ambar's contributions to architecture were those of a master who gives orders, makes choices, supervises, and pays. He was not an architect. In the Deccan of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, however, any man in a position to give orders played an important part every time a decision had to be taken. The men overseeing Malik Ambar's construction projects had to consult him frequently, as his builders did not make use of plans and elevations drawn on paper".*

He further says:

*"The tomb is worthy of detailed study; Ambar took a great interest in it, and it forms a sort of testament through which he expressed his social policy one last time".*

The social policy was his commitment to common people, so that they can access his monuments in free manner.

Malik Ambar was responsible for construction of many things in his region of control. But all of them were not made with architectural proportions and principles, but the rule of thumb. He did what appealed to him, and was in his past experience. That is why even the Siddi architecture of other areas such as Jangira seems strange to us with their odd proportions. The domes are based on African (or Egyptian) heritage, not Mughal in any way.

Klaus Rotzer makes an analysis of the monuments in this way:

*"These last monuments, which include all of the elements of a Muslim tomb, even the sepulchre, are in a way reminiscent of Yadava temples in their avoidance of plain surfaces. The tomb attributed to Malik Ambar's wife Bibi Karima, which is remarkable for the simplicity of its lines, is a simplified version of Ahmad Bahri's tomb, except that the sole surviving jali resembles those of the tomb of Malik Ambar. To the north-east, a ladies' tomb was built in an unusual form, an octagon within a square. It combines*



plain wall surfaces with thick mouldings which top the base of the tomb and, as in Malik Ambar's tomb , enliven the bottom of the inner surface . "

Locally the reference to the monument which is our reference is called as the tomb of the grandson, and according to Klaus Rotzer, succumbing to folk lore, the tomb is a ladies monument. As narrated to us by gentleman Dr Pushkar Sohoni, it is neither of both, and there are no inscriptions on it. Okay, but It us go back to the statement of archaeologist superintendent at that time, there is an inscription put by Lutufullah Ahmad, on his father's tomb at Aurangabad. Why has no one so far actually found it? It was not that difficult.

#### IN SEARCH OF THE SARCOPHAGUS OF THE UNKNOWN TOMB IN KHULDABAD

Obviously it is not easy for us to traverse an archeological site in another country. We were very interested in researching on this so called unknown MUGHAL TOMB in Khuldabad, and intrigued by our desire to study the sarcophagus. We were searching for signs of removal of any inscriptions on it, because in a photograph taken by 'Concrete Paparazzi' we could see a broken side of same. The same was volunteered to us and sought to record the sarcophagus. And the most bizarre thing happened. Somebody of authority broke the sarcophagus completely and even took the broken pieces elsewhere. A nearly 400 years old surviving sarcophagus got the brunt of perceived hatred for someone. Again no normal person would want to do it, or was in a position to do same. We smell authority here, and from signs in the monument, we could see that the same was very recently done. WHY?

#### A CLEAR RECORD SHOWS ITS EXISTENCE OVR THE YEARS

In 2015, "Concrete Paparazzi" wrote about it and gave a photograph too. Enlarging it shows us the sarcophagus very clearly. But even in 2022 "African heritage" gives us a photograph in which part of the sarcophagus can be seen. A friend of ours inform us that it was there just weeks back. A reference on our Chughtai Museum blog and asking people if they have knowledge of same, instigated certain quarters into foul play, In photographs we see that attempts were made to remove it completely but the stone was below the surface floor



and it was not possible to remove the base of the sarcophagus. So the upper portion was removed and broken into pieces. We have a saying in our language, "Straw in the beard of the thief", and it aptly fits the situation. If there was no inscription itself, what could an empty sarcophagus tell us. Certainly the design of the same, as well as certain portion suggesting a place from where an inscription could be there. The incident makes us spotlight the monument on newer grounds.

#### KLAUS ROTZER CALLS IT AN UNUSUAL MONUMENT

To us if we compare this monument to the surrounding monuments, it certainly can be called unusual one. But if we look at it from our own eyes, we find it an engineering marvel of a Mughal Muhandis. An engineering feat in converting a four sided monument into an octagonal one, and putting brand new different proportionate minarets on it, supported by Mughal pillars of red stone, looking more like Akbari monuments. Monuments of Malik Ambar open on one side only, but here we have four gates with open access to the grave in it. And it seems we have missing railings (perhaps of white marble, with designs, or writings from the Quran itself) of the arches on the four gates. Clearly the colour is different from the rest of the monument. A photograph made in 1860 shows the railings of the arches very much there. Certainly removed by choice at later stages. The pinnacles of the domes of the larger monuments are more like African nipples on a breast. The smaller tomb has none of that. The writing of the inscription is obvious. After all Lutufullah Ahmad Muhandis was also a calligrapher of great merit, and has left us some written Qurans too, in his legacy of things. There is even a Qita (calligraphy) written by him in Deccan itself. On one side is a miniature of a monarch, standing in court with an African habshi, the Abyssinian. On other side is a calligraphy by Lutufullah. The saying of the writing is worthy of note, as it says the regret is ours for having a profession of mirror polishing in a city of blind people. Indeed a remarkable admission of those times. A strange link with an important African minister and the calligrapher. Perhaps the man being presented to unknown monarch was known to Lutufullah himself, for the Prince looks like an African too. A lot of presumptions perhaps but the instincts are there and proper to the scene. In 1977 I wrote a small pamphlet on the Taj Mahal and



spoke of a conspiracy to hide the grave as well as the inscriptions, because it undo other narratives built by certain segments. Malice indeed!

#### REPAIRS TO THE TOMB OF MALIK AMBAR

Masses pay homage to saints and the maqbaras of many saints are repaired with donations from well wishers. But repair to the tomb of Malik Ambar was still going on. In fact in the newspaper of 10th December, 1939, Payam of Aurangabad, carried the news about the repair to the same. It should be kept in mind that the descendents of Malik Ambar are still there, and Dr Sheikh Ramazan, the great researcher of the city, met the descendents in recent times, particularly Shri Jagirdar of Purdev family, in Amarpur. Proceeds of a village were still going on to maintain the tomb of the great ruler of the city, first as Khadki, then as Fatehpur and then as Aurangabad.

#### THE RELUCTANCE TO HONOUR THE CREATOR OF A WONDER OF THE WORLD

The monument that is Rauza-i-Mumtaz Mahall, better known as Taj Mahal, has excited the world in many ways. It is a story of love and devotion, but it is also an engineering feat unparalleled anywhere. From day one controversies have been raised about it. But even more controversies were related to the architect of the Taj Mahal. When it was known that Ustad Ahmad Mimar Lahori was the Chief Architect of Shah Jahan, and his name associated with major creations at that time. It was his son Lutufullah Ahmad who clearly wrote about it in his Diwan (poetry collection) that Ustad Ahmad Mimar was the architect of the Taj Mahal. In all ways the reluctance to honour the architect is actually the reluctance to accept the Taj Mahal as the wonder of the world. It therefore is natural that the discovery of M.S. Vats in 1946 should be disregarded as a mere table talk, and mention by a number of writers, would go in vain. Was it difficult to follow the trail of the archeologist in discovering the grave of Ustad Ahmad Mimar Lahori. In our research we find a lead, which can lead to other things We will obviously go on trying even from a far away location like ours. Our love and passion demands same.



## POST SCRIPT

The most ridiculous claims are always made by a segment of Indians, and they are keen to rewrite history, and desire to obliterate it. Many such claims are indeed recorded with time. The present one being earnestly preached is that the monument of Taj Mahal is in fact an actual temple. I think any intelligent person would die of shame in making a total Islamic monument as being representative of an imagined Mandir of the past. But when such claims are made, facts also come up to ridicule same. One such fact is the emergence of an aerial map of the area, made by map maker, Alain Manneson, in Paris in 1683. It says:

*"Agra without the Taj.*

*An attractive bird eyes view of the city. From Mallet's monumental Description de l'Univers, first published Paris in 1683, perhaps the greatest work of its kind in the 17th Century.*

*This picture disproves the new narrative that Taj existed as a Hindu structure much earlier."*

But shame is an unknown thing to people who have to build up a story. The Quran tells us of people "who make claims for what they have not done", and it applies well to this point of view.

When we are talking of Ustad Ahmad Mimar Lahori, it goes well to register an act on its creation too, when Royal Documents show the empty land acquired by Emperor Shah Jahan, after giving adequate compensation of four villages in exchange for this land.

So when same cannot be proven, the obvious remedy for such people is to destroy the place itself. Conspiracy to destroy the Taj Mahal is ever there, and if zealots continue in India at this rate, that can be done too. Already the grave of Emperor Aurangzeb is in danger too, as zealots plan to take his remains out, to degrade the Emperor, who is on record as having donated to Hindu temples, and having many Hindus working in his court. That is the irony of life!



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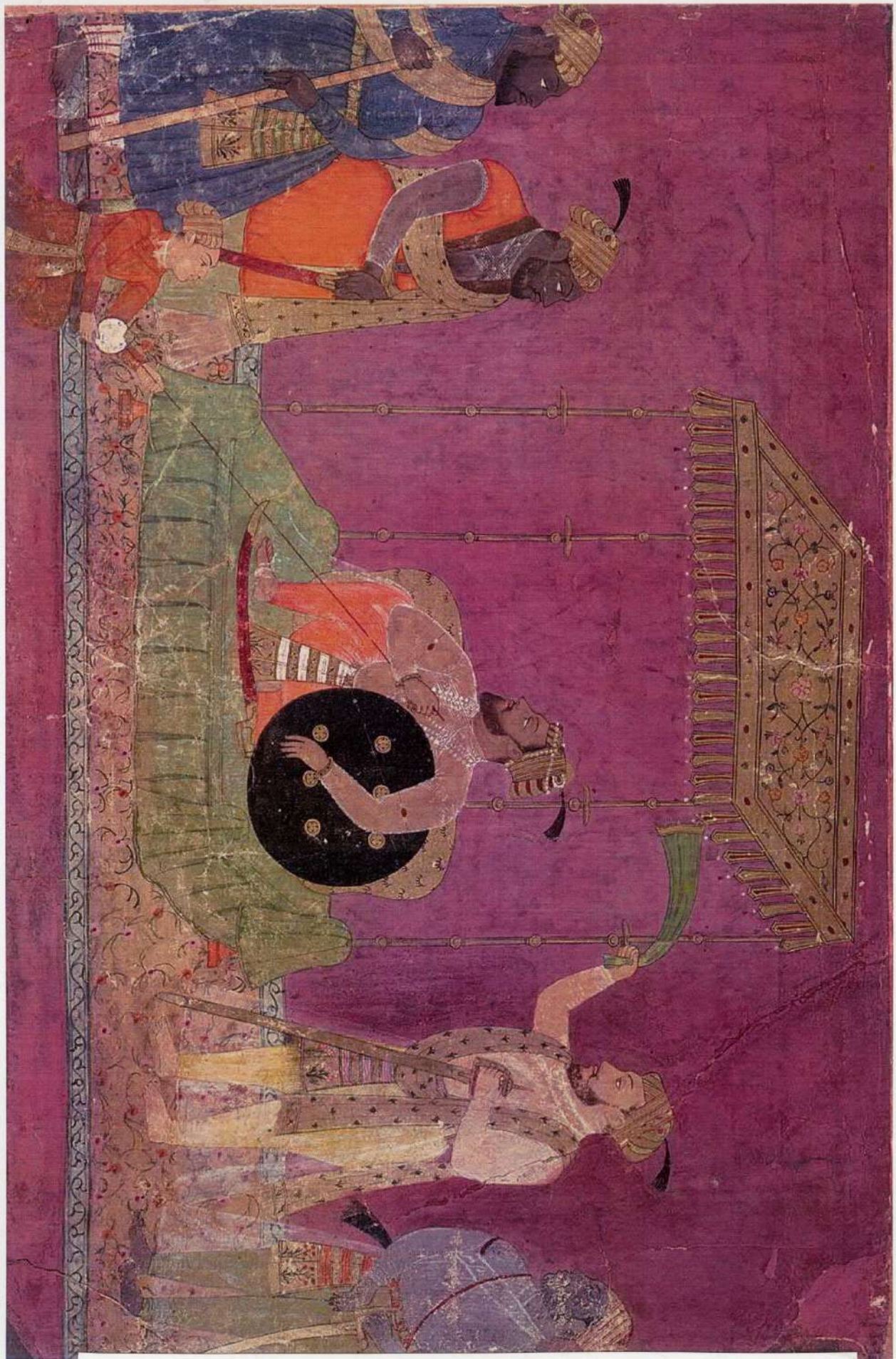
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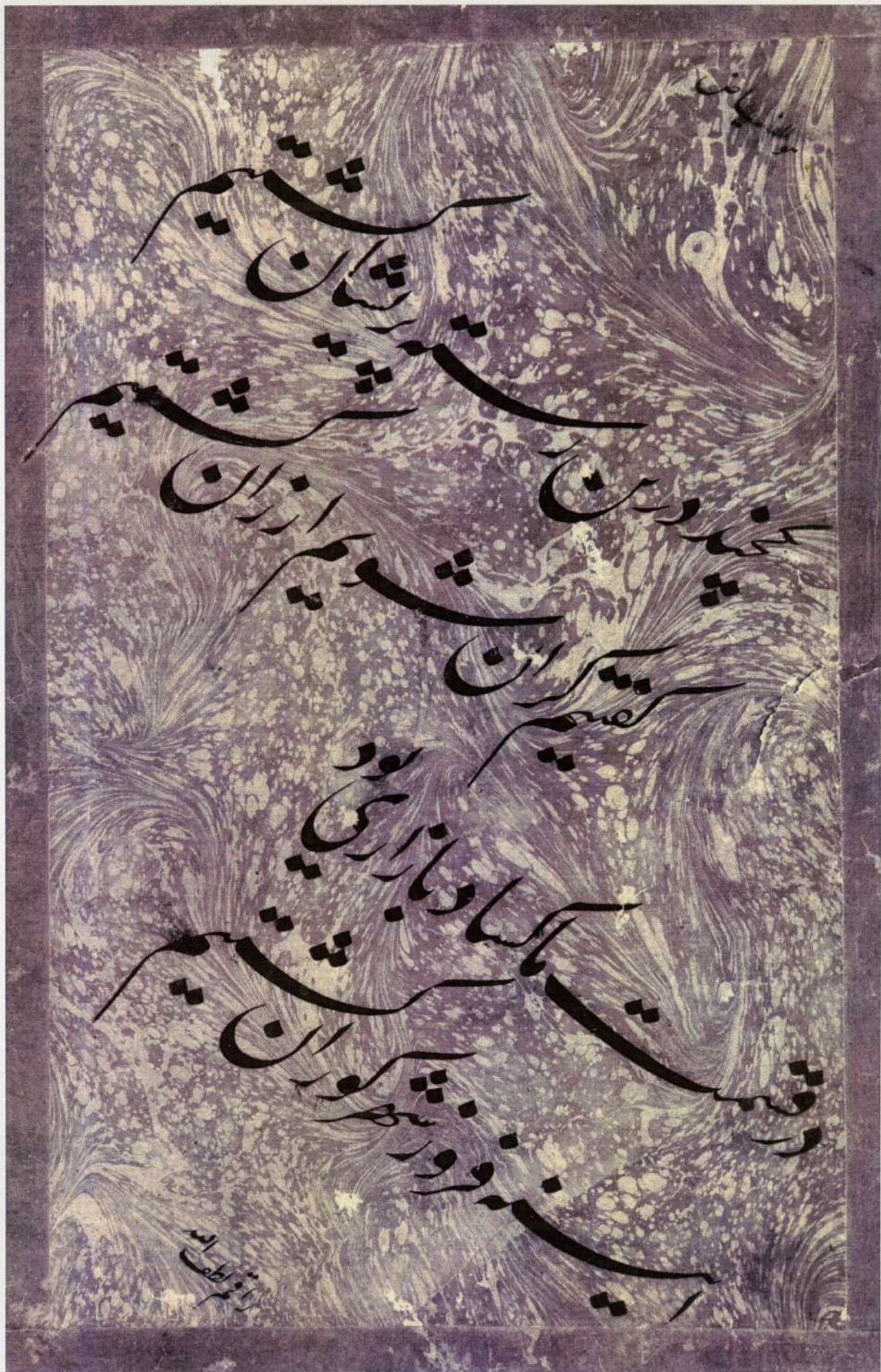
Sultan Muhammed Adil Shah in court





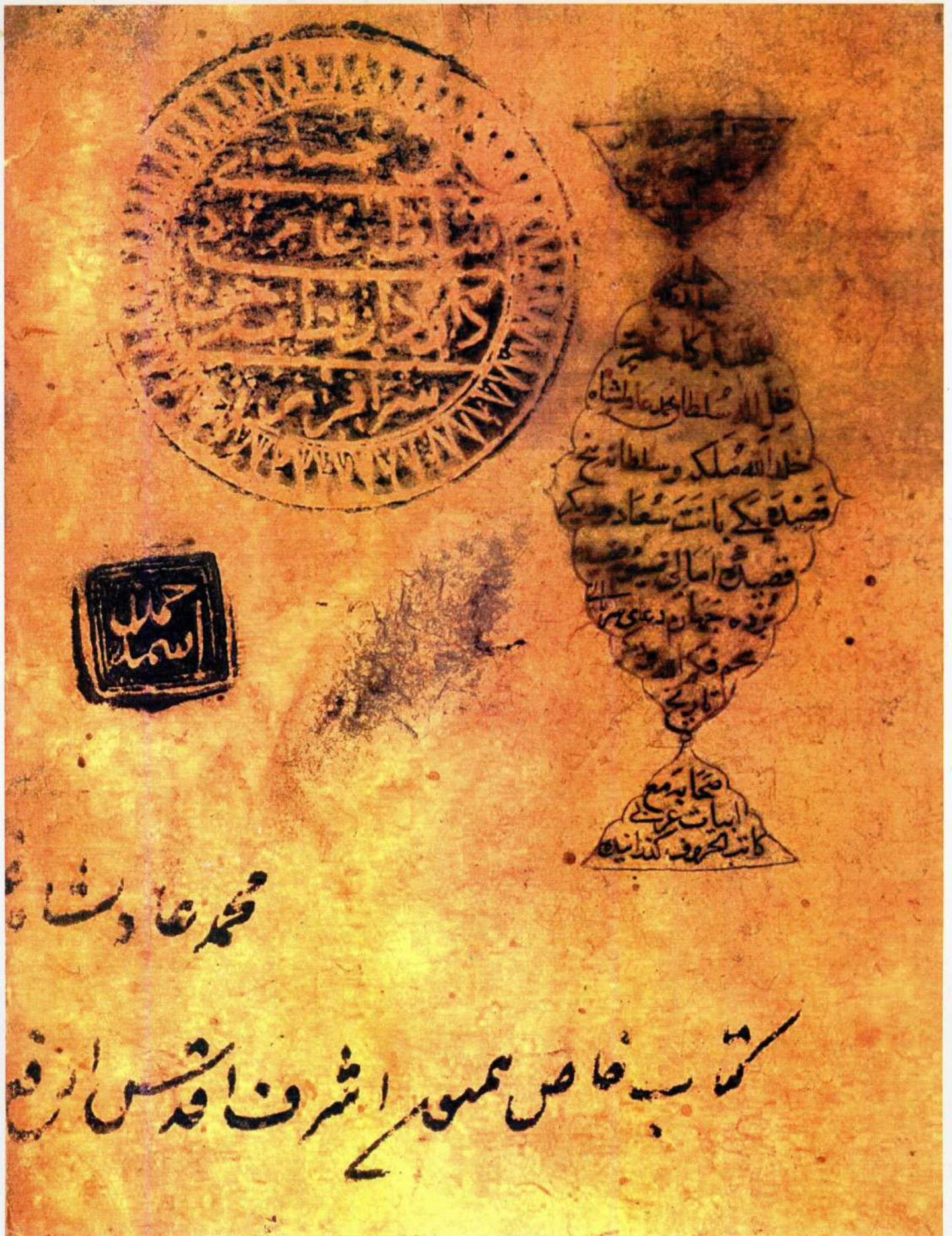
Miniature of Sultan Muhammed Adil Shah with Ikhlas Khan





Calligraphy QITA by Lutufullah Ahmad Muhandis at back of miniature





The manuscript of "Five Qasidas" from the library of Muhammed Adil Shah, Sultan of Bijapur



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قصیدہ رودہ دعای سریانی

قصیدہ فہم اللہ دیگر تاریخ و بعض اشعار

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جمع کتابخانہ عامہ شدہ ساری

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۱۶ ماہ رح







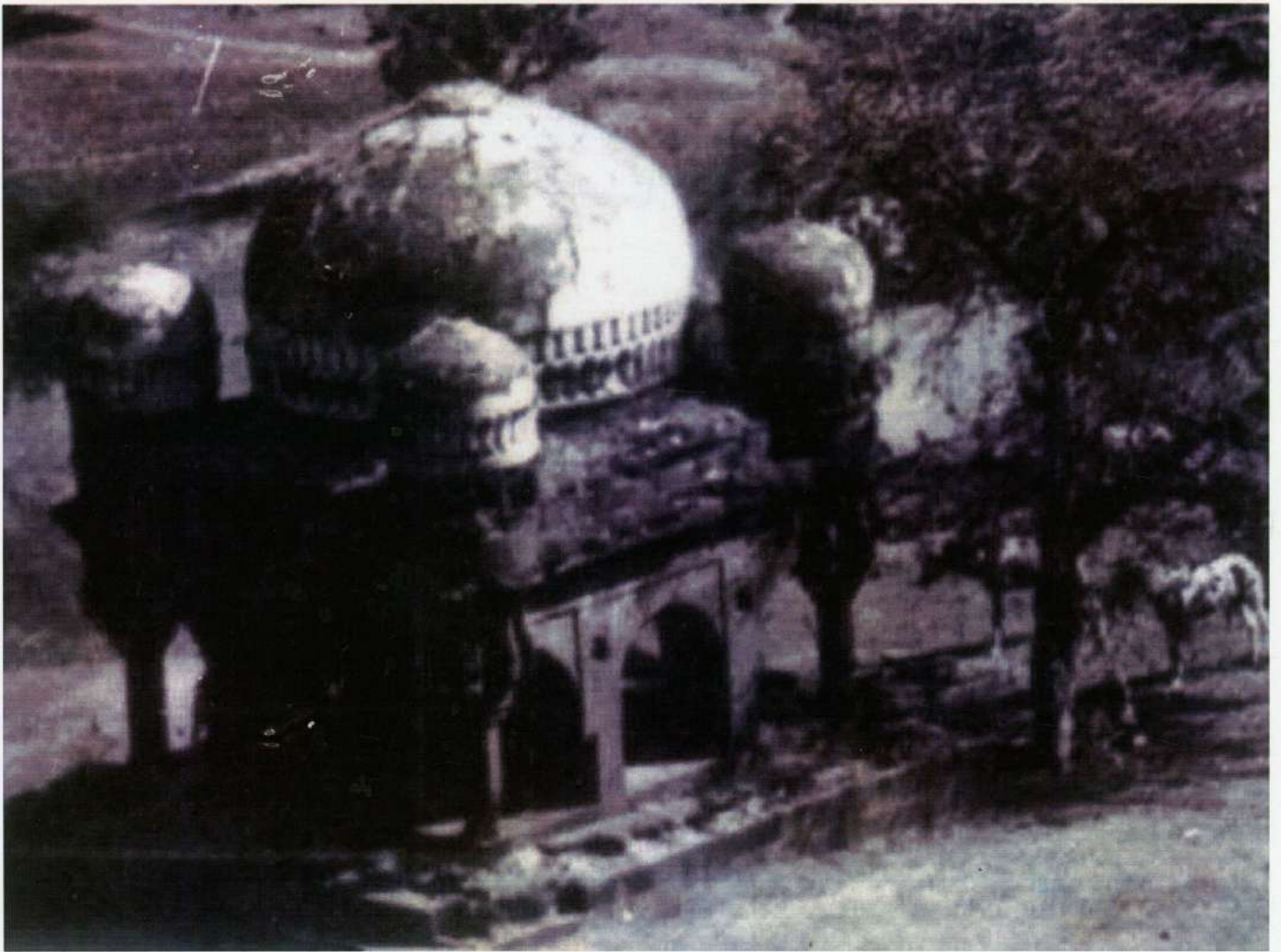
Seal of Ustad Ahmad Mimar probably a signet ring "Asama" Ahmad





Profile of Malik Ambar the founder of Khadki later Aurangabad





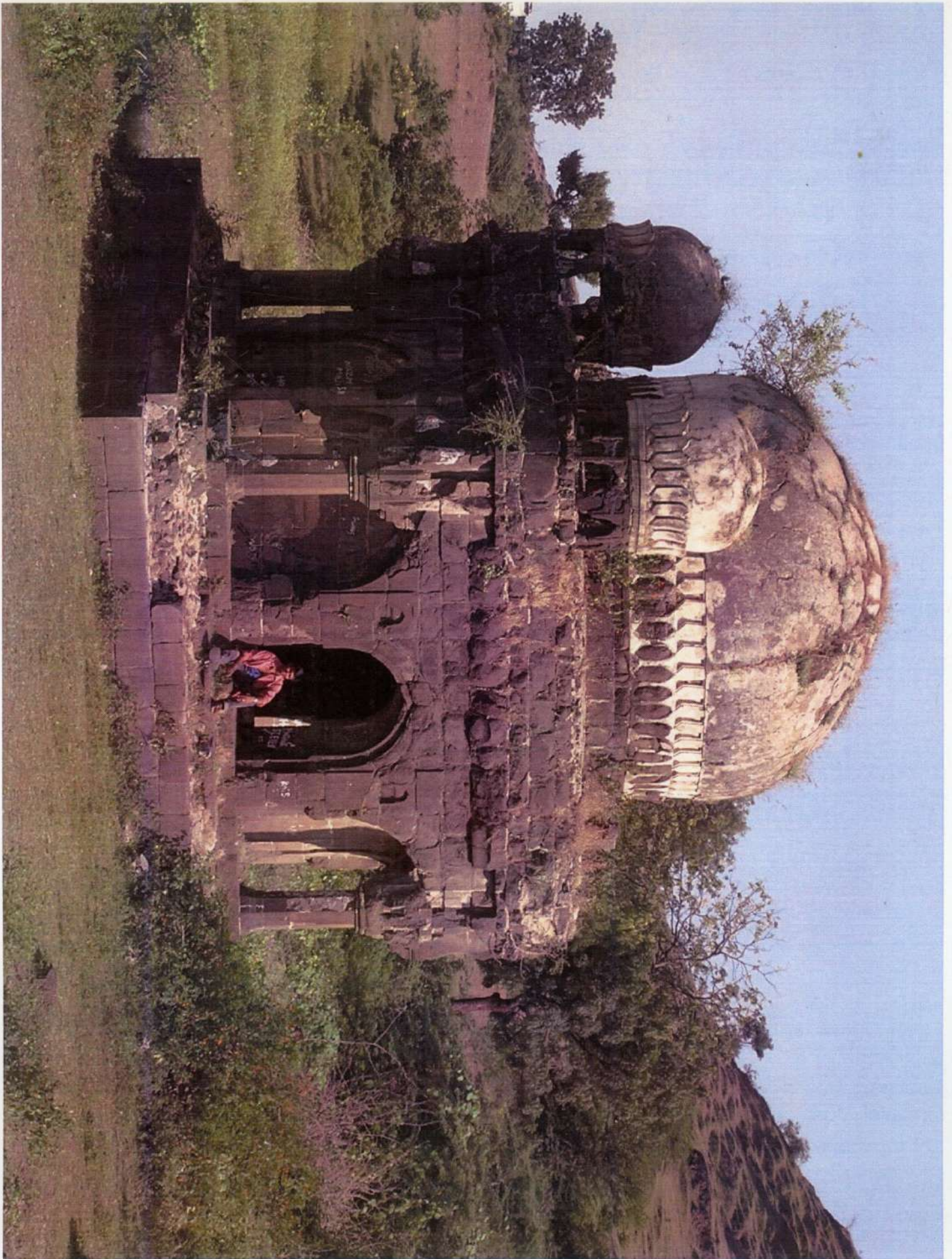
A view of the monument after 1860 A.D, with all four minarets intact





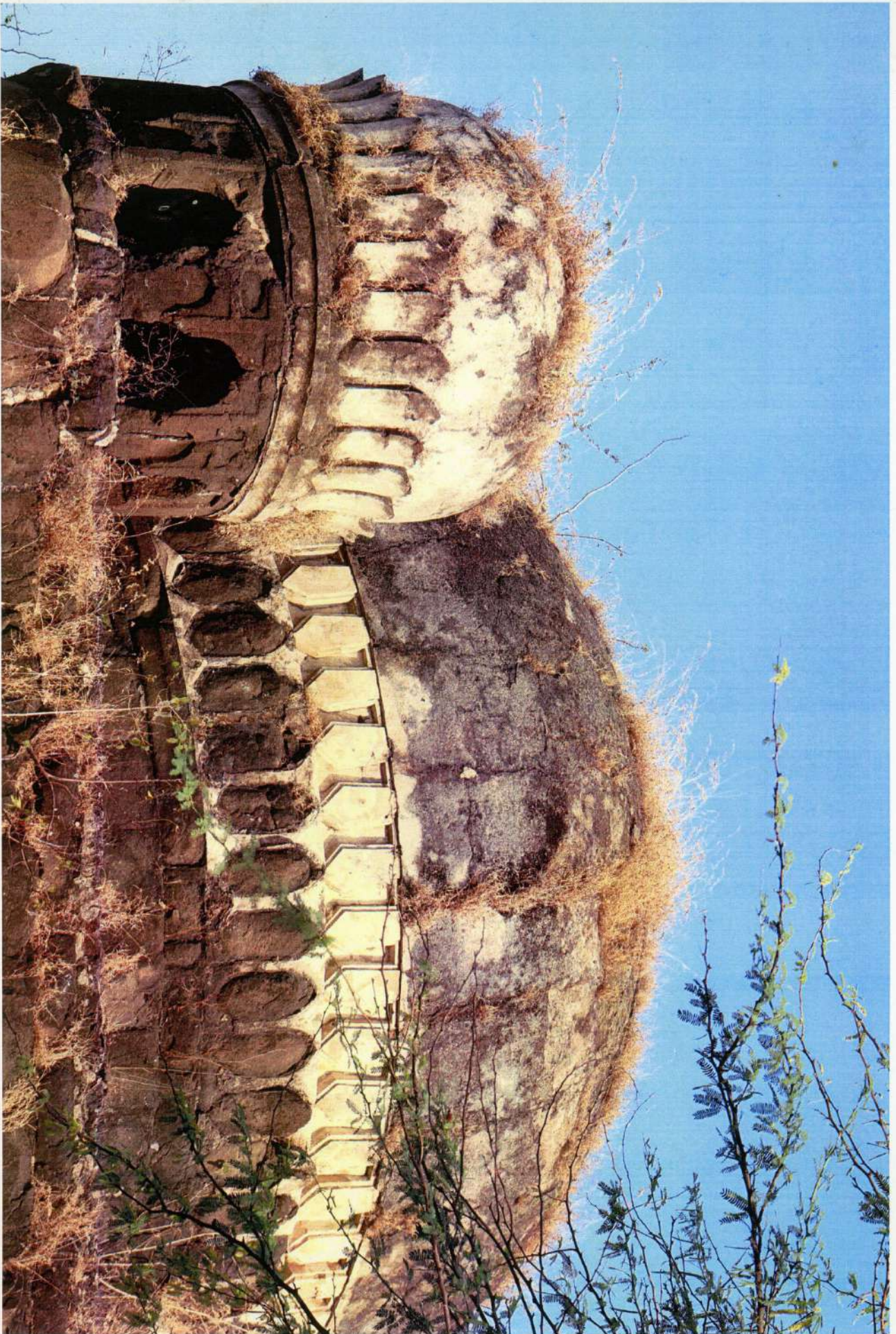
A view of the monument with the Sarcophagus intact at that time





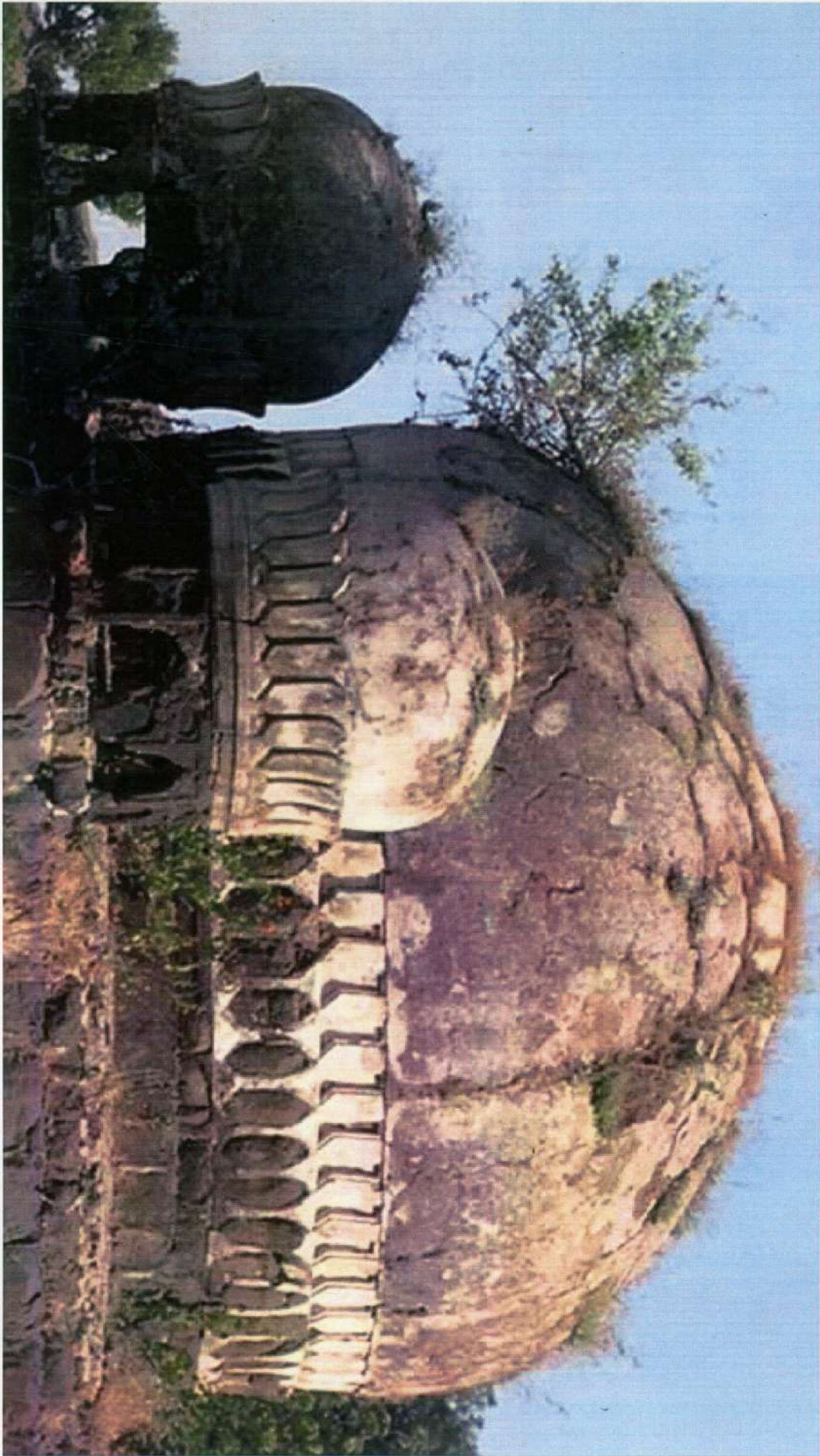
A view of the monument minus the overgrown weeds





A close view of the Khuldabad monument





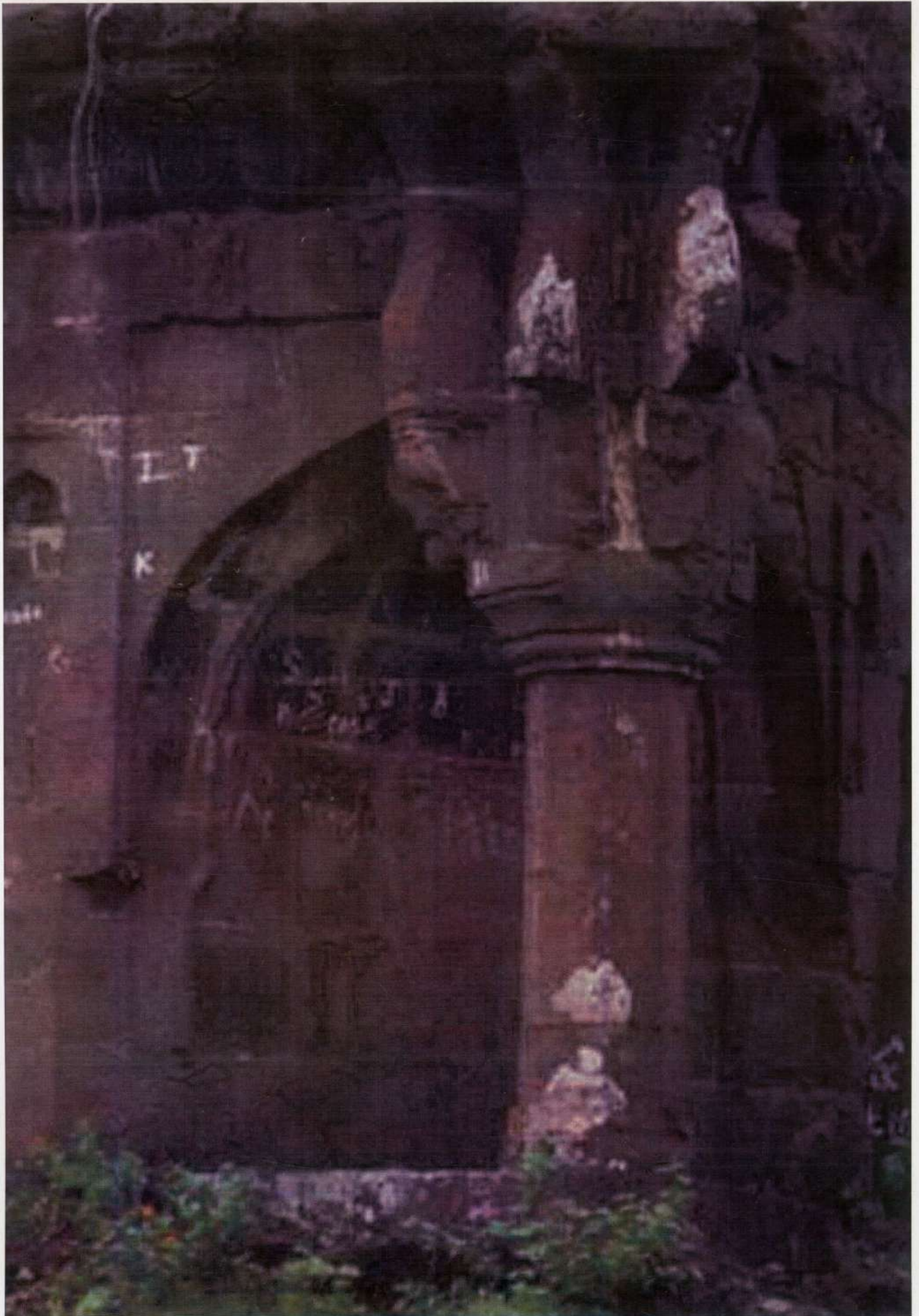
Another view of the monument





A view of the monument in Khuldabad in Ambar complex





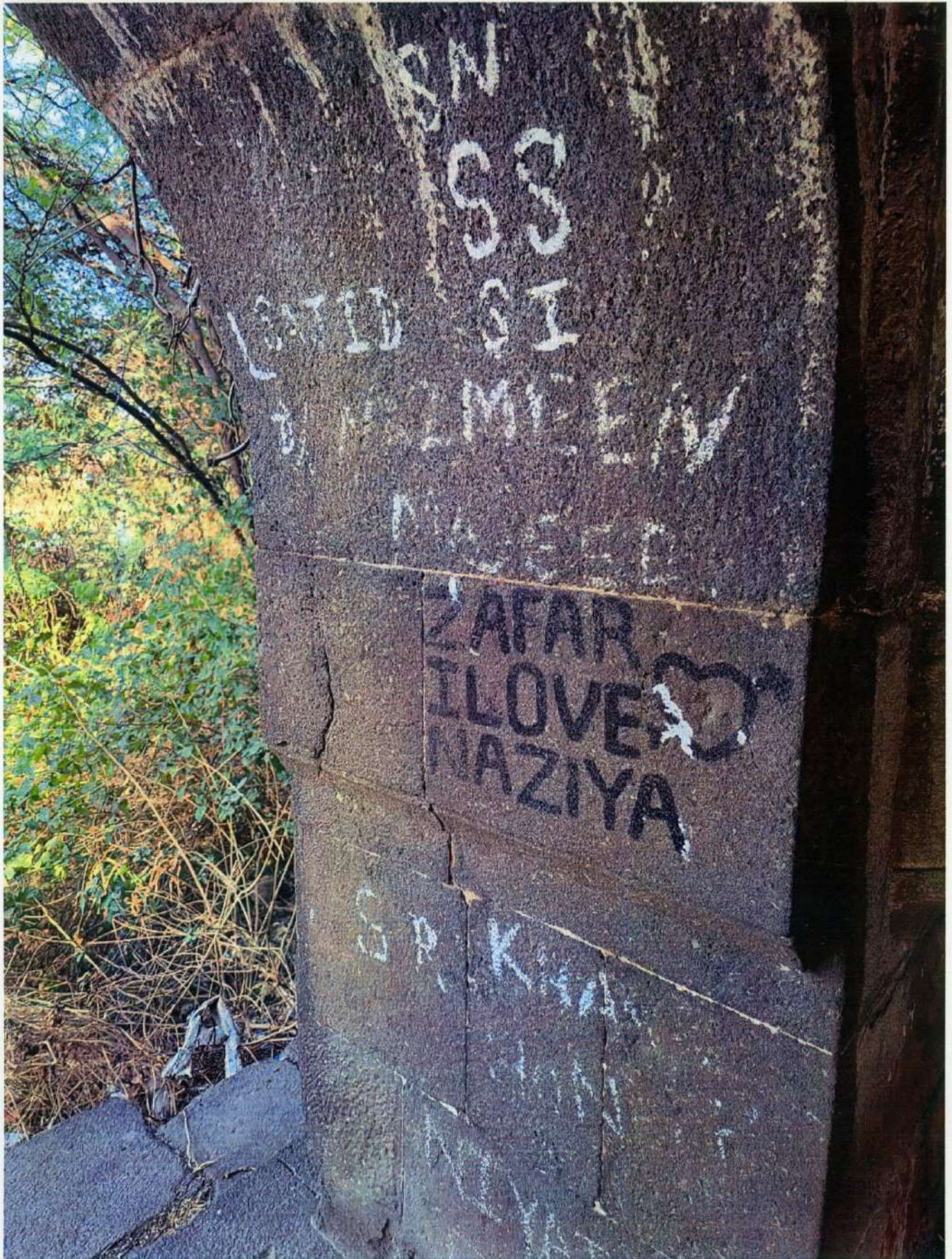
The giveaway Mughal pillars of the Khuldabad monument





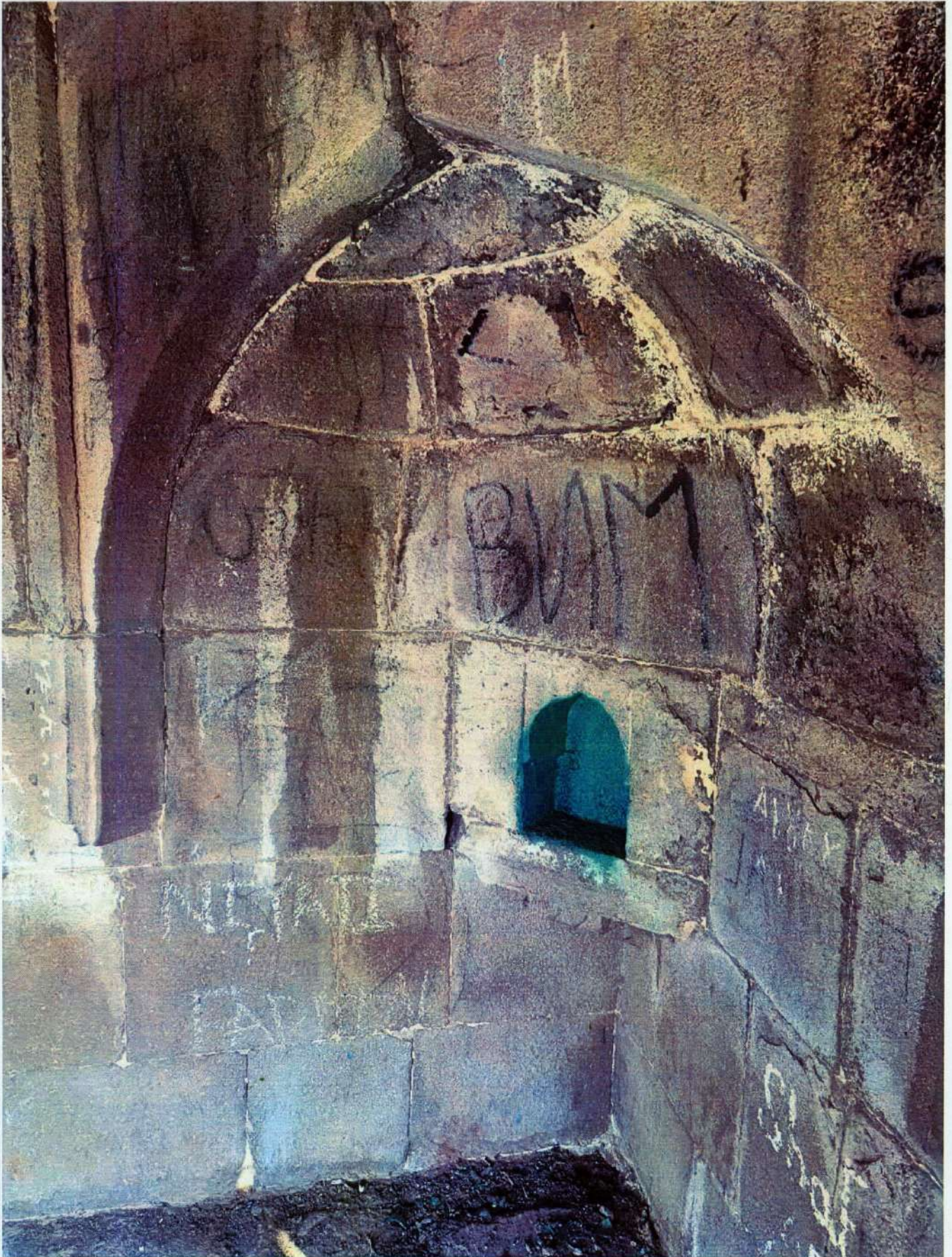
Mughal pillars like ones made in Agra and Lahore





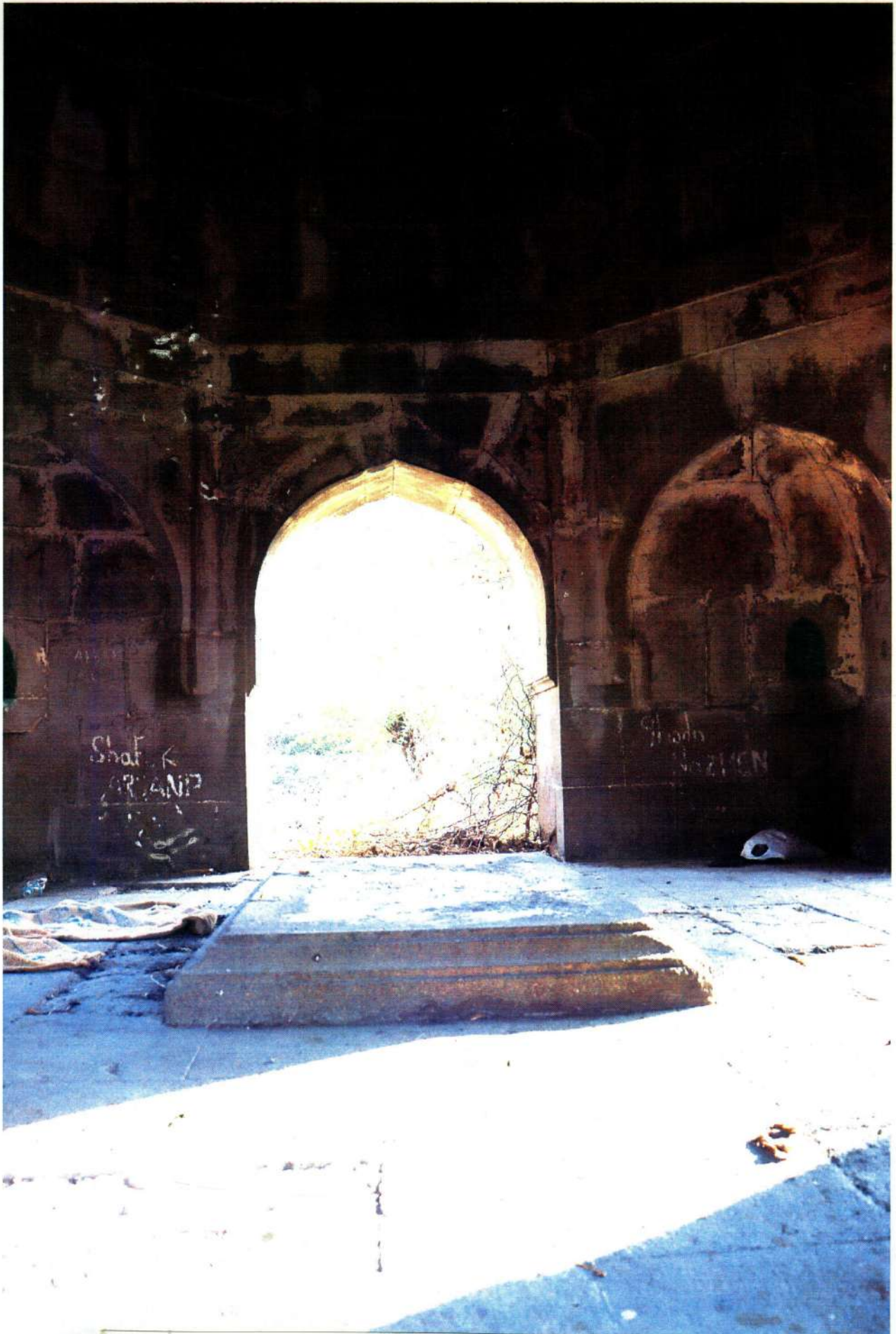
LOVE ECHOES EVEN NOW IN LOVE MONUMENT CREATOR





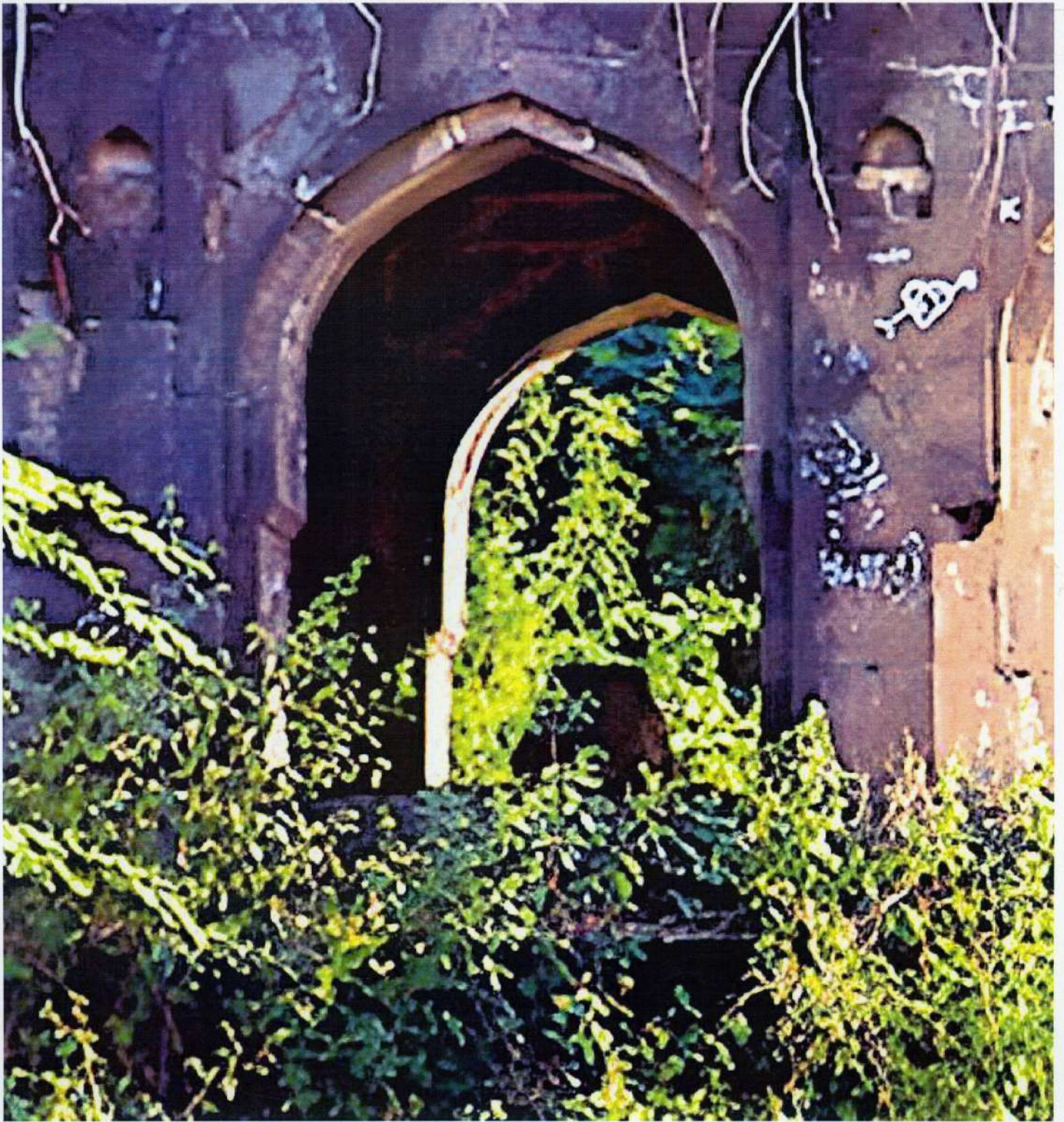
INSIDE CORNER OF MONUMENT FOR BURNING LAMP (DIWA)





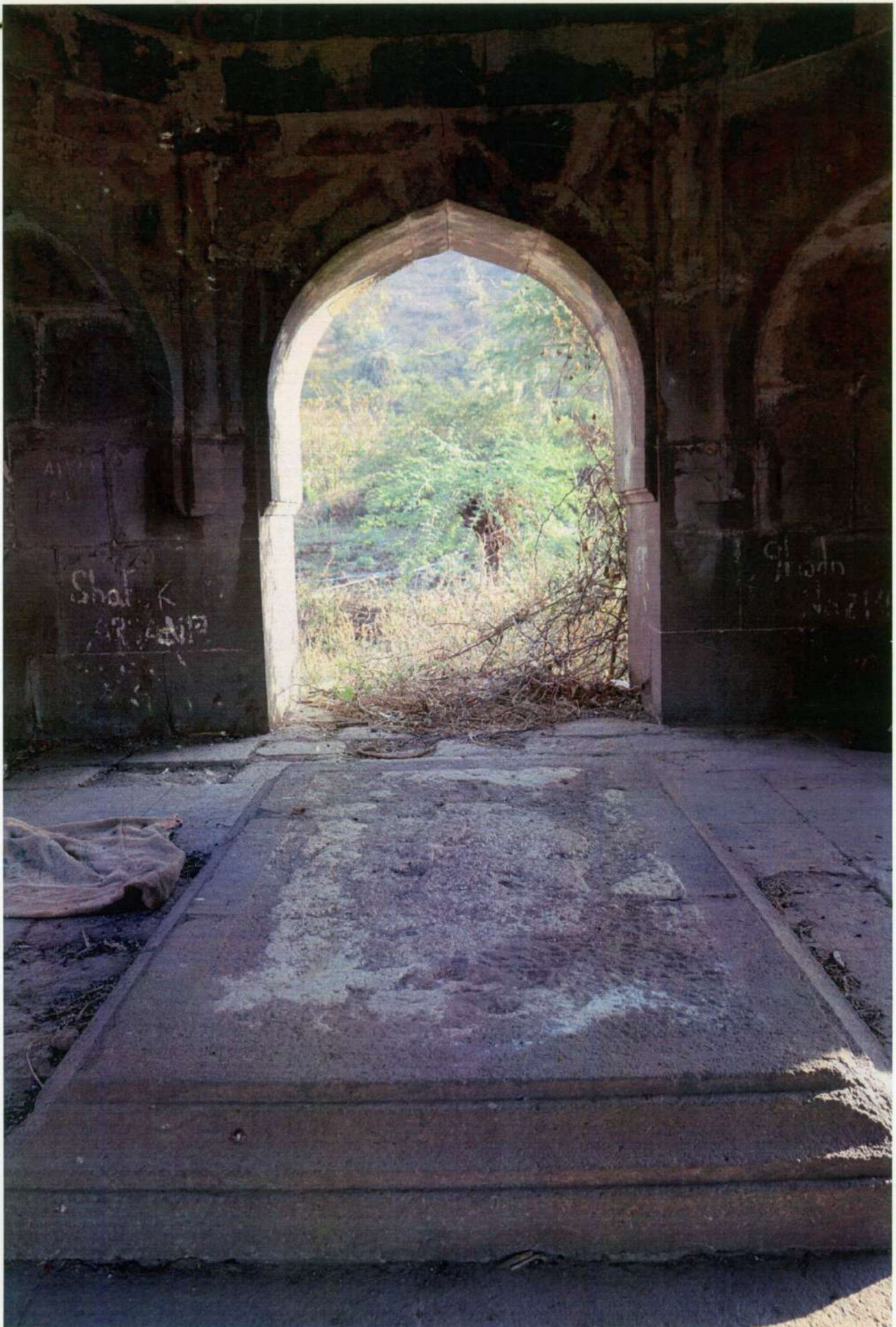
A close view of the remaining monument in Khuldabad





A view of the Sarcophagus before its destruction by conspiracy





A 374 YEARS OLD SARCOPHAGUS MISSING AND DESTROYED TO UNDO THE MUSLIM NARRATIVE ABOUT THE TAJ MAHAL CREATION HISTORY.



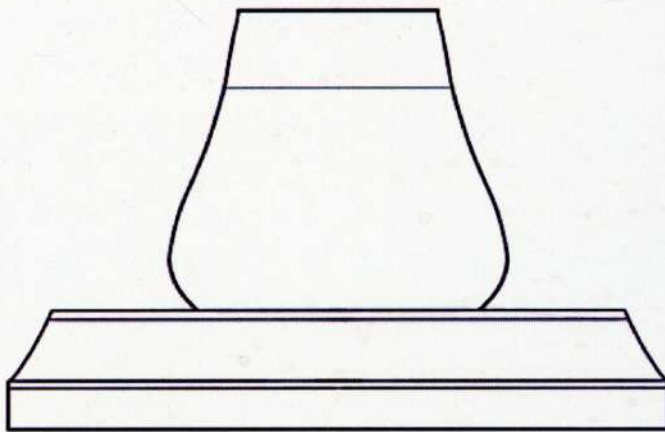
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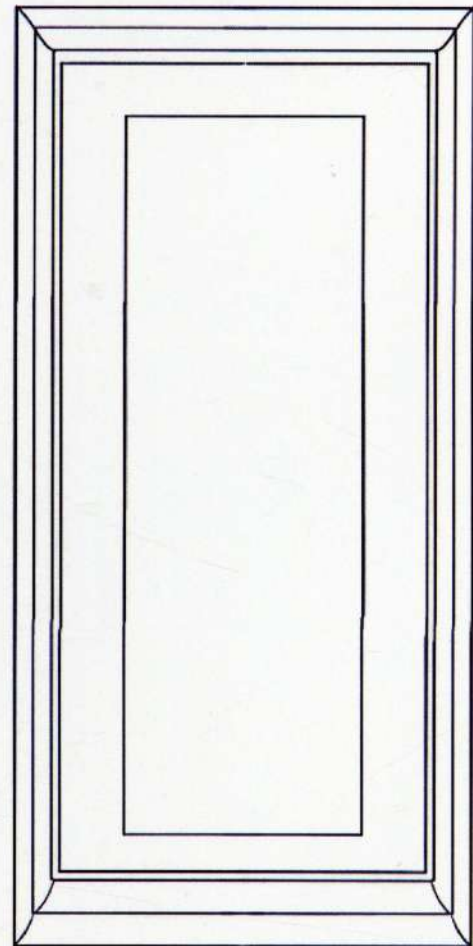
A piece of broken Sarcophagus perhaps with writing



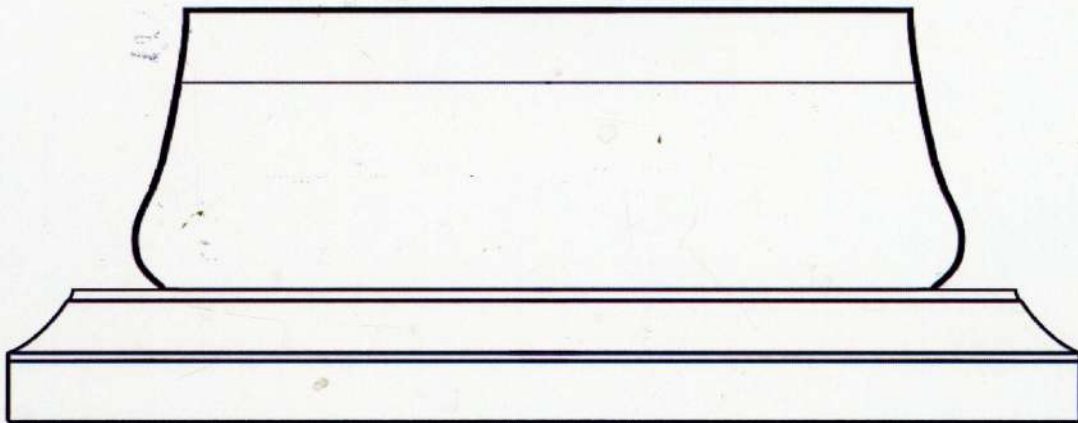
# Sarcophagus Khuldabad



Front View



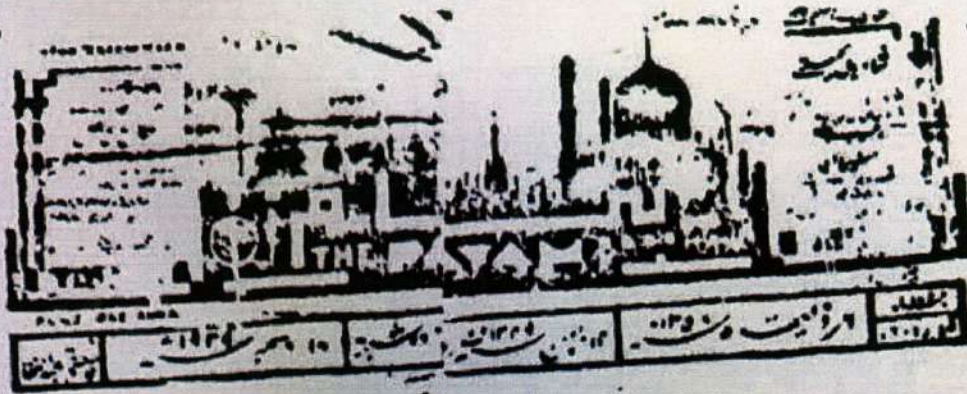
Birds Eye View



Side View

An imagined analysis of the Sarcophagus based on view



No.  
95

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DE L'ASIE.  
FIGURE XLIII.

99



FRENCH MAP AGRA MADE IN 1683 A.D WITHOUT SO-CALLED MANDIR



