
WAYNE E. BEGLEY

Four Mughal Caravanserais Built during the Reigns of Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān

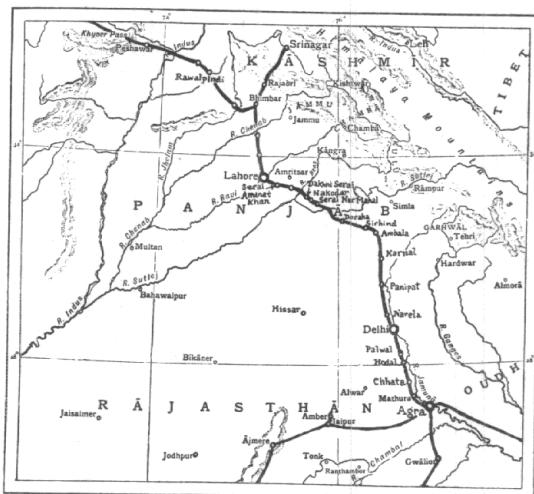
Of the major structural types of Indian Islamic architecture, the caravanserai has perhaps been the most neglected by modern scholars. This is an unfortunate omission, in view of the extremely important role that caravanserais once played in political, economic, and cultural life. We know that seventeenth-century European travelers in India were greatly impressed by the large, walled hostelleries they found there in such numbers and so conveniently situated. The capital city at Agra boasted eighty or more serais, and along the major Mughal highways they were to be found at regular intervals, approximately every twenty miles and sometimes even closer. Today the serais in the cities have largely disappeared, victims of urban expansion. Similarly, most of the serais along the old Mughal highways also gradually fell into disuse with shifting travel routes and the advent of railroads in the nineteenth century and are by now rather dilapidated. A few have been designated protected monuments by the government of India or state archaeology departments, but most have simply been swallowed up by encroaching villages and towns, with only an occasional gateway still standing as a reminder of the original spacious, walled enclosures. The names of numerous serais can be found in various district gazetteers and lists of antiquarian remains, but otherwise the literature on Mughal architecture has largely ignored these important and often still imposing monuments.¹

Altogether more than twenty Mughal serais still stand along the old Mughal highway between Agra and Lahore, a distance of more than four hundred miles (fig. 1). Since many of these are on the verge of total collapse, there is an urgent need to document them all. As a first step in that direction, four large caravanserais in the Punjab, built during the reigns of Jahāngīr (r. 1605–27) and Shāh Jahān (r. 1628–58) will be

described here: Serai Dorāha (Ludhiana district), Serai Nür Mahāl and Serai Dakhnī (Jullundur district), and Serai Amānat Khān (Amritsar district). Only the first of them is on the modern Grand Trunk Road (recently redesignated Sher Shāh Sūri Mārg by the government of India); the other three lie along the now little-used, original route which, after crossing the Sutlej River, turned directly west from the town of Phillaur.

These particular serais were chosen for detailed analysis both because as a group they are representative of the range of major serai types to be found along this route and because they illustrate well the complex methodological problems involved in tracing caravanserai history. Two of them bear inscriptions giving the dates of construction and the names of their builders. The other two are not inscribed and therefore had to be assigned

Figure 1. Major halting places along old Mughal highway connecting Agra, Delhi, and Lahore. Map; adapted from Coomaraswamy, *Rajput Painting*.



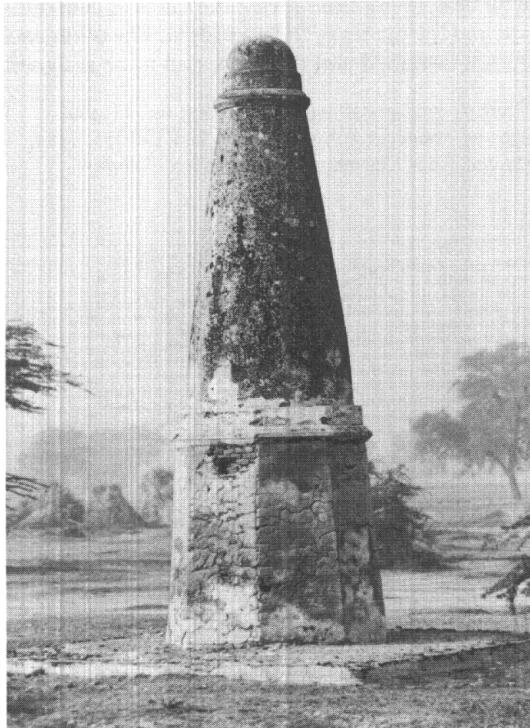
approximate dates on the bases of their style and of inferences drawn from various Mughal literary sources. Since the four serais are all close to each other chronologically as well as geographically, they can be arranged into a fairly cohesive stylistic sequence that can provide a tentative model for future investigations.

SERAI NŪR MAHAL

Although literary sources inform us that it was the Sūrī ruler Sher Shāh (r. 947–52/1540–45) who first ordered the systematic planting of trees and the construction of public serais along the Agra-Lahore highway, most of the surviving structures appear to date no earlier than the end of the reign of the great Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 963–1014/1556–1605) or the beginning of the reign of his son and successor Jahāngīr (r. 1014–37/1605–27).² As we know from his memoirs, Jahāngīr promulgated an order at his accession calling for the construction of wells and serais at regular intervals on major roads throughout his kingdom.³ Fourteen years later, in 1028/1619, he also ordered mileage towers, or *kōs minār*, to be set up along these roads at regular intervals of one *kōs*, or about two miles (plate 1).⁴

Perhaps the most magnificent serai built dur-

Plate 1. Mughal mileage tower (*kōs-minār*). One of a number erected by Jahāngīr between Agra and Delhi.



ing Jahāngīr's reign was the one endowed by his queen, Nūr Jahān (985–1055/1577–1646), at a place now called Nūr Mahāl, a fairly sizable town on the Phillaur-Sultanpur road about thirteen miles west of the Sutlej crossing. The west gateway of the serai is still in excellent condition (plate 2); the east gateway and the original mosque inside the walled enclosure are much deteriorated. Of the four serais this is the only one that attracted any detailed scholarly attention in the nineteenth century: it was surveyed by Alexander Cunningham in 1878–79 and published in the Archaeological Survey of India reports.⁵ According to Cunningham's measurements, the serai is 551 feet square, measured from the outside of the octagonal corner towers (fig. 2). Built into the arcaded enclosure wall were more than 124 chambers facing toward the vast and originally completely open courtyard. These rooms were available for a modest fee to travelers, although most caravans simply stayed in the courtyard itself. Estimates vary, but apparently two thousand or more travelers, together with their camels and horses, could camp inside the serai at a time.⁶ In theory a traveler could camp inside the courtyard without fee; in practice the managers of some of these establishments occasionally assessed certain charges on their own authority — though a later inscription on the west gateway at the Serai Nūr Mahāl specifically forbids this practice.⁷

Serais were customarily built entirely of brick. The Serai Nūr Mahāl is apparently unique among serais in the Punjab in its use of red, Sikri sandstone to face the exterior of its impressive west gateway (plate 2). Since the quarries at Faṭehpur Sikri were more than three hundred miles distant, considerable expense was no doubt involved in transporting the stone slabs. The gateway façade is topped by bold crenellations and divided into three major sections: the main arch, which is advanced forward from the enclosure wall, and the two triple-storied side bays, which return at a diagonal. Adjoining the spandrels of the main arch are two square-domed, projecting balconies supported on intricately carved brackets. The façade is subdivided into numerous panels, many of which are filled with animals and ornamental designs carved in low relief. The greatest number of these rather fanciful and anecdotal motifs is found at the top of the inner recessed arch, just above the entrance. This is also the location of the rectangular marble slab containing the serai's foundation inscription (plate 3).

The text of this inscription (plate 4) consists of four rhymed couplets, which Cunningham⁸ translated as follows:



Plate 2. Serai Nūr Mahāl. West gateway. Dated 1030/1620.

During the just rule of Jahangir Shah, son of Akbar Shah,
Whose like neither Heaven nor Earth remembers,
The Nur Serai was founded in the district of Phillaur
By command of the angel-like Nur Jahan Begam.
The date of its foundation the poet happily discovered:
"This serai was founded by Nur Jahan Begam" (1028).
The date of its completion wisdom found in the words:
"This serai was erected by Nur Jahan Begam" (1030)

The dates of the two chronograms correspond respectively to A.D. 1618–19 and A.D. 1620–21. From certain references in Jahāngīr's memoirs, it is possible to date the serai even more precisely. Very likely, the order to erect the serai was given around Shawwal 1028 (October 1619) when the court was at Agra, for that was the very month that Jahāngīr issued the proclamation to construct the kōs minārs throughout the empire; it was therefore a likely time for Nūr Jahān to have hit upon the idea of endowing a serai. In fact, the whole scheme for improving the demarcation of the royal highways may have been hers, which she persuaded Jahāngīr to implement. In any event, the serai was undoubtedly complete by the close of 1620, since Jahāngīr records in his memoirs that the royal entourage stayed there for two days in Safar 1030 (January 1621).⁹

Why did Nūr Jahān decide to erect a serai at that particular place and at that particular time? It was certainly a long-standing Islamic custom in India as elsewhere to endow serais, wells, and other charitable constructions for the benefit of travelers. This pious practice is well corroborated by the testimony of numerous European travelers of the period, including the English clergyman Edward Terry, who was in India from 1616 to 1619 — around the time Nūr Jahān ordered the Serai Nūr Mahāl to be built.¹⁰ Not all European observers attributed such high-minded motives to the patrons of these particular serais, however, as we know from the rather pointed criticisms of the queen's character found in the writings of an agent of the Dutch East India Company, Francisco Pelsaert of Antwerp. Pelsaert reached India in 1620/1029, while Nūr Jahān's serai was still under construction. In 1626/1036, in his capacity as senior factor at Agra, he wrote the report which has come to be known as the *Remonstrantie*, in which he accuses the ambitious Nūr Jahān of having usurped royal power and wealth to the point that her approval was required before even Jahāngīr's own orders could be implemented.¹¹ Pelsaert seems to suggest that even the motives behind Nūr Jahān's charitable foundations were

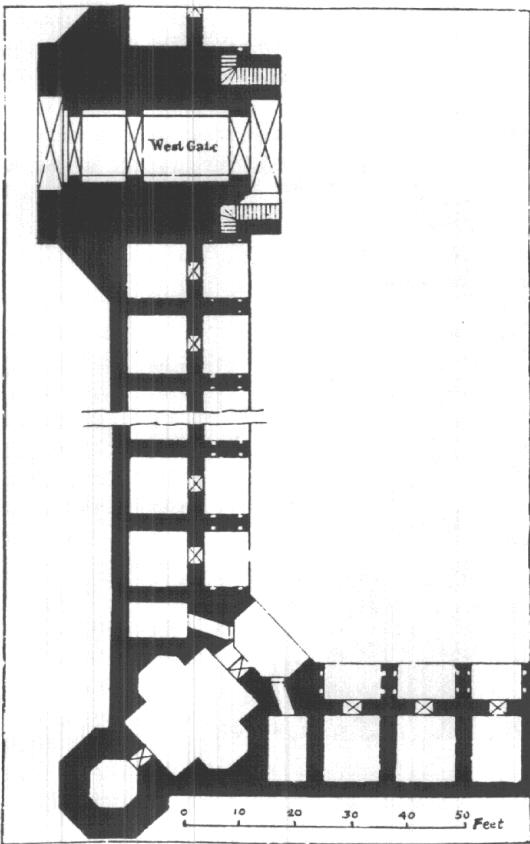


Figure 2. Serai Nür Mahal. Detail of plan, after Cunningham, *ASI Report*, vol. 14.

Plate 3. Serai Nür Mahal. Detail of west gateway showing inscription panel.



suspicious: "Meanwhile she [Nür Jahān] erects very expensive buildings in all directions — serais, or halting-places for travelers and merchants — intending thereby to establish an enduring reputation."¹² Nür Jahān endowed a great many monuments, so we cannot be certain that Pelsaert had the Serai Nür Mahal in mind, but evidence suggests he may have made at least one journey to Lahore between 1621 and 1626 (1030–36), and if he did, he probably would have passed through that part of the Punjab.

As for Nür Jahān's choice of site, a local tradition has it that as a child she spent some time in that area, and, of course, her family's hereditary fief was in the Punjab.¹³ Moreover, from 1025/1616, when her title was changed from Nür Mahal ("Light of the Palace") to the more glorious sounding Nür Jahān ("Light of the World"), her power and influence kept increasing steadily. Consequently, the architectural grandeur and extravagance of her serai should perhaps be viewed as expressions of her imperial aspirations rather than her piety. This interpretation also helps to explain why the west gateway bears such a striking resemblance, in both form and material, to the vast Buland Darwāza attached to the great mosque at Fatehpur Sikri. If Nür Jahān's purpose was to symbolize her own imperial destiny, she could hardly have chosen a more effective vehicle than Akbar's magnificent gateway.¹⁴

SERAI DORĀHA

The Serai Nür Mahal is unusual among serais in the Punjab, both in design and in the use of

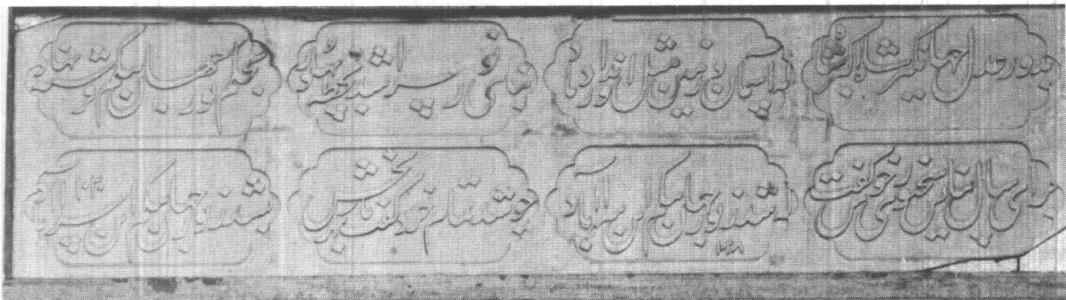


Plate 4. Dedication inscription of Nür Mahal.

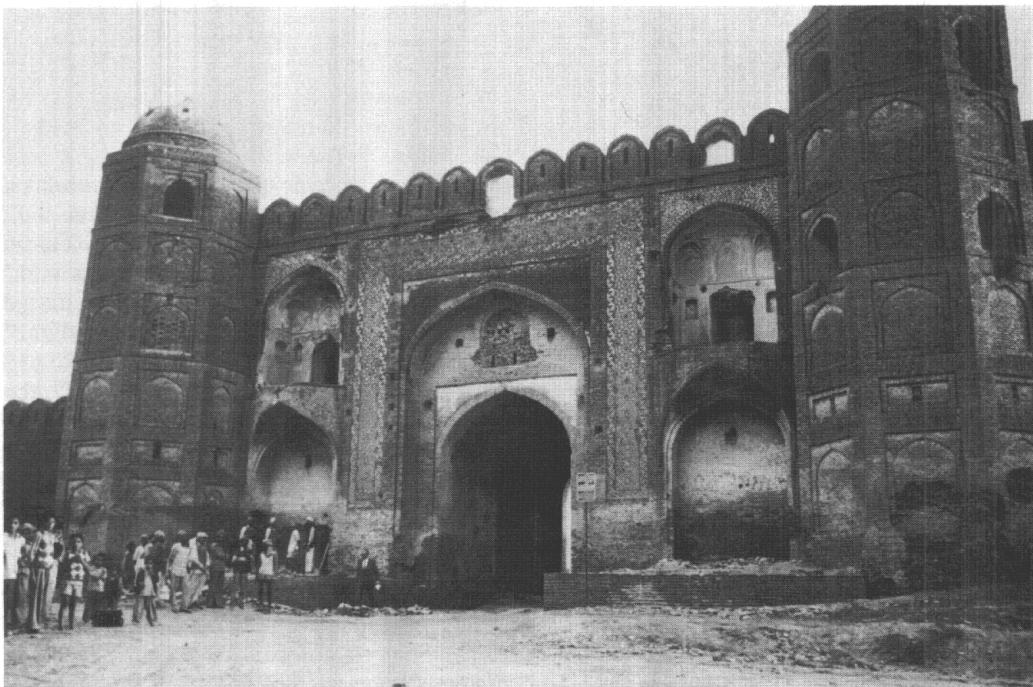
imported stone. The remaining three serais are much more typical of the region, particularly in their gateway façades. Those façades are built entirely of brick, decorated here and there with inlaid color tilework (*kāshī kāri*) — a technique that is seldom found outside the Punjab, whose city of Lahore seems to have been the chief center of its manufacture.¹⁵

The distinctive architectural features of this class of brick serais are clearly seen in the north gateway of the Serai Dorāha (plate 5), one of the earliest in the series. As its name implies (*dorāha* means "two roads"), the serai is situated at the intersection of two main routes.¹⁶ Although undated and uninscribed, circumstantial evidence suggests that it dates to the early years of Jahāngir's reign, perhaps to 1015–19/1606–11, at least a

full decade before Serai Nür Mahal. The gateway of the two serais bear little resemblance to each other; their only major common feature is the row of crenellated projections across the top cornice — a decorative element that disappeared around 1040/1630. The Dorāha façade is rather simple in design. A large central arch is flanked on both sides by double-storied bays with arched alcoves. Framing the façade at the corners are two dome-capped, octagonal brick towers, divided into five stories by slightly recessed panels with arches. Between the towers, the façade is completely flat, with the exception of the recessed main arch and two overhangs above the lower arched alcoves in both side bays.

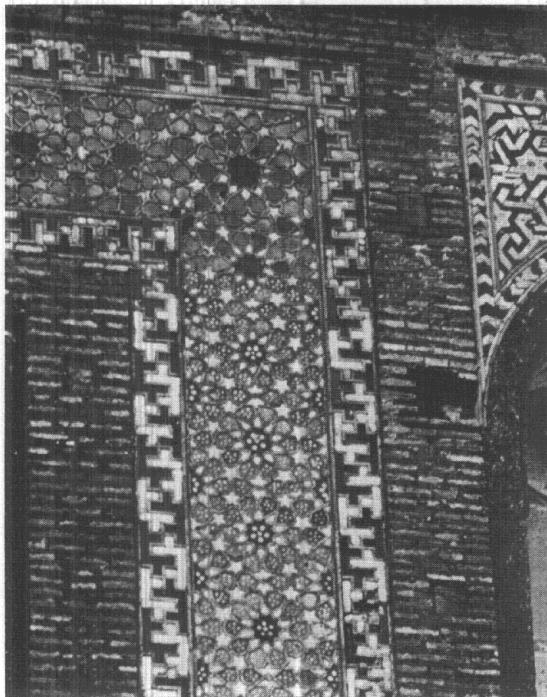
The most striking decorative feature of the Dorāha façade is the use of geometric patterns

Plate 5. Serai Dorāha. North gateway, c. 1015–19/1606–10.



of inlaid color tiles around the main arch and in the spandrels of the two upper arched alcoves (plate 6). Because of these geometric patterns, the Serai Dorāha seems to be approximately contemporaneous with a tomb at Nakodar (about fifty miles to the west, the first halting place after Serai Nūr Mahāl), which is dated 1021/1612–13.¹⁷ The entire Dorāha façade — octagonal towers as well as geometric tile patterns — is also extremely close in design to the gateway of a now densely occupied serai at Faṭehpur (the first halt westward across the Beas River), which was apparently begun shortly after 1015/1606. According to the travel account of the Englishman William Finch, who journeyed through this area in early January of 1611 (1019), the Faṭehpuri Serai had been built by Emperor Jahāngīr to commemorate his victory over his rebellious son Khusraw, which had occurred at that very place on 27 Dhu'l-Hijja 1014 (5 May 1606).¹⁸ Since Finch also mentions stopping at Dorāha, the serai must have already have been built as well. On stylistic grounds alone, it is difficult to determine whether Dorāha is earlier or later than Faṭehpur, but both were undoubtedly in existence by 1019/1610. During the reign of Shāh Jahān, the Serai Dorāha was apparently known as the serai of I'timād al-Dawla, who was the former prime minister of Jähāngīr and the father of the queen, Nūr Mahāl.¹⁹ As this region

Plate 6. Serai Dorāha. Detail of tilework, north gateway.



formed part of I'timād al-Dawla's fief (*jāgīr*), he may have undertaken its construction shortly after Jahāngīr's accession in 1014/1605, when, as mentioned, the emperor commanded serais to be built throughout the realm.

SERAI DAKHNĪ

When we turn to Serai Dakhnī (plates 7–8), about five miles northwest of Nakodar, it is obvious that its façade is substantially later than that at Dorāha. There are no crenellations, and consequently the gateway looks less like a fortification. The octagonal towers at the corners are similar in their lower sections (both have recessed panels arranged in five stories), but their superstructures are dramatically different. At Serai Dakhnī, each tower has a widely flaring cornice supported by squinch-like arches. Instead of low domes, the towers at Serai Dakhnī are surmounted by domed *chattrī* pavilions raised on pillars. The frame around the central arch has been extended to surround the side bays as well; these are now three-storied, but the two upper, arched alcoves on both sides have been replaced by rectangular balconies, each with three arches supported on narrow pillars.

With the extending of the arch frame, the area decorated with tilework has also been increased, and the whole character of the inlaid tile designs radically altered. Instead of abstract geometric patterns, the tilework on the Serai Dakhnī consists of curvilinear plant forms describing a graceful arabesque; a far greater range of tile colors has been used as well (plate 9).

Unfortunately, Serai Dakhnī has no inscriptions and must therefore be dated on stylistic grounds alone.²⁰ The arabesque tile designs bear a slight resemblance to the pietra-dura work on the famous tomb at Agra which Nūr Jahān built for her father I'timād al-Dawla, who died on 24 Rabi I 1031 (6 February 1622), just two weeks after the royal entourage had once again passed through Serai Nūr Mahāl on its way to Kangra.²¹ According to its inscriptions, the tomb of I'timād al-Dawla at Agra was completed in 1037/1627, the last year of Jahāngīr's reign. Stylistically, however, the Serai Dakhnī arabesques appear to be significantly later than this date, and they much more closely resemble the extensive tile patterns on the impressive mosque of Wazīr Khan at Lahore, completed in 1044/1634–35.²² For most of his life Wazīr Khan was one of the most trusted courtiers of Jahāngīr's son and successor, the emperor Shāh Jahān (r. 1037–68/1628–58); and consequently, he attained an extremely high rank



Plate 7. Serai Dakhni. East gateway, c. 1042–44/1632–34.

Plate 8. Serai Dakhni. View of interior courtyard, facing west (mosque at left).



in the Mughal nobility. In the last month of 1041 (June 1632), he was appointed governor of the Punjab, and the mosque in Lahore is just one of the many pious constructions he endowed in that region under his administration.²³

The similarity of some of their architectural features (such as the towers with flaring cornices), as well as their inlaid tile patterns, suggests that the Wazir Khan mosque and Serai Dakhni are more or less contemporary. If that surmise is correct, then Wazir Khan himself may have been the serai's patron, since maintaining accommodations along the royal highways would have been one of his responsibilities as governor of the province.²⁴ Serai Dakhni may even be slightly earlier than Wazir Khan's mosque, for the most probable time for him to have ordered its construction was 1042/1632–33, as he was on his way to take up his

new assignment in Lahore. He may well have anticipated that Shāh Jahān would eventually take this very same route through the Punjab, and it was not long before the emperor did just that. In Shawwal 1043 (April 1634) Shāh Jahān arrived in Lahore to instruct Wazir Khan to take charge of various palace constructions in the fort.²⁵ If Serai Dakhni was completed by that trip, the emperor would certainly have halted there while on his way to Lahore.²⁶

SERAI AMĀNAT KHĀN

The fourth serai, the Serai Amānat Khān (plate 10), is fairly close in style to Serai Dakhni, and, since it is dated 1050/1640–41, it furnishes another, much needed fixed point in establishing the chronology of serais in the region. It also

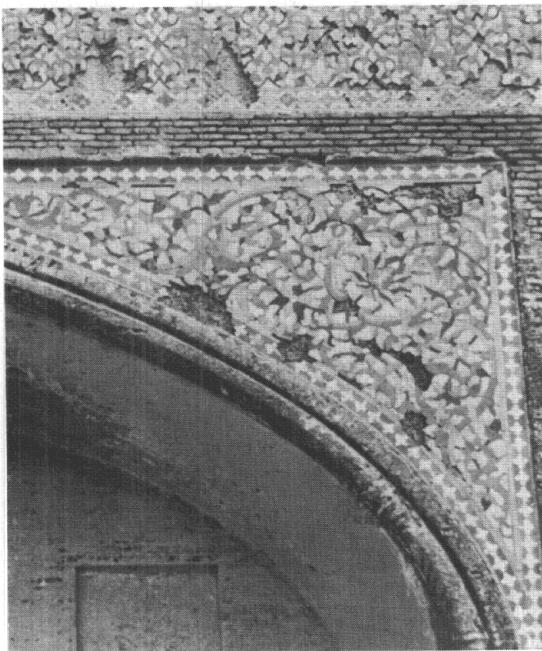
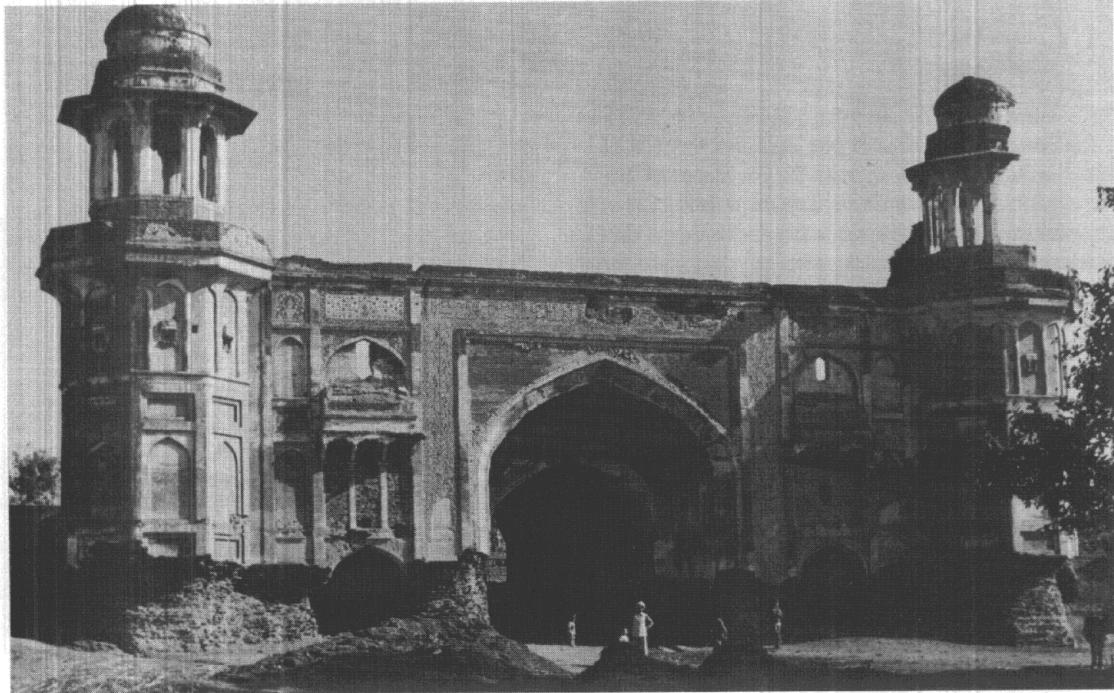


Plate 9. Serai Dakhnī. Detail of tilework, west gateway.

Plate 10. Serai Amānat Khān. West gateway.
Dated 1050/1640–41.



marks a kind of culmination of the stylistic development we have been tracing and is in many respects the most interesting piece of architecture of the entire series.

Unfortunately, this once magnificent monument has today fallen into a state of extreme disrepair and is in urgent need of conservation. Despite its historical importance and great artistic merit, it also passed almost completely unnoticed by scholars until about three years ago. Its neglect is undoubtedly a result of its present isolated location off the main highway that passes through Amritsar, the holy city of the Sikhs, which lies some twelve miles to the north. The serai is almost five hundred feet square (fig. 3), but its once spacious courtyard is now crowded with village houses, many of which were built of bricks robbed from the serai's enclosure wall (plate 11).

Serai Amānat Khān's most remarkable architectural features are its two enormous gateways on the east and west sides, through which the old Mughal highway to Lahore once passed. A comparison of these gateways with those at Serai Dakhnī reveals several interesting stylistic changes that had occurred in the few years' interval separating the two monuments. At Serai Amānat Khān, the central entrance arch is much wider and more subtly articulated, through the addition of a chamfered intrados leading the eye back into the shadows of the deeply recessed inner arch. The panels on the octagonal towers are varied in size and coordinated with the design of the adjoining side bays of the main façade. These

side bays with their projecting balconies have been much refined, with a narrowness that effectively accentuates the vastness of the central arch. All these changes indicate the hand of a highly skilled and sophisticated architect, perhaps the same architect who had designed the Wazir Khān mosque at Lahore some six years earlier.²⁷ In addition to the architectural differences between Serai Dakhnī and Serai Amānat Khān, the tile designs at the latter serai also reveal greater variety and subtlety, particularly in the treatment of the delicate arabesque patterns in the spandrels (plate 12; cf. plate 9). All these details clearly indicate that Serai Dakhnī must have preceded Serai Amānat Khān by a few years — thereby providing additional support for the tentative date assigned to it above.

Like Serai Nūr Mahāl, the Serai Amānat Khān also bears inscriptions giving the date of its construction and the name of its benefactor. These inscriptions constitute the monument's most prominent decorative feature since they entirely fill the two enormous panels framing the gateway arches (plate 13). Boldly executed in blue and yellow glazed tiles, the inscriptions clearly reveal the hand of a master calligrapher. As it turns out, the calligrapher and the builder of the serai were one and the same man, the great calligrapher Amānat Khān, who also executed the calligraphy on the Tāj Mahāl. Since the text of the inscription on the

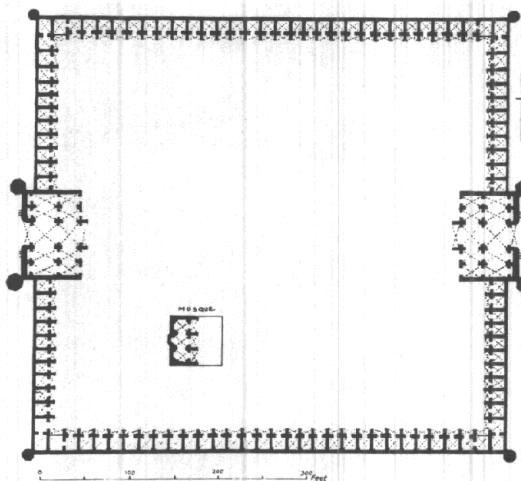
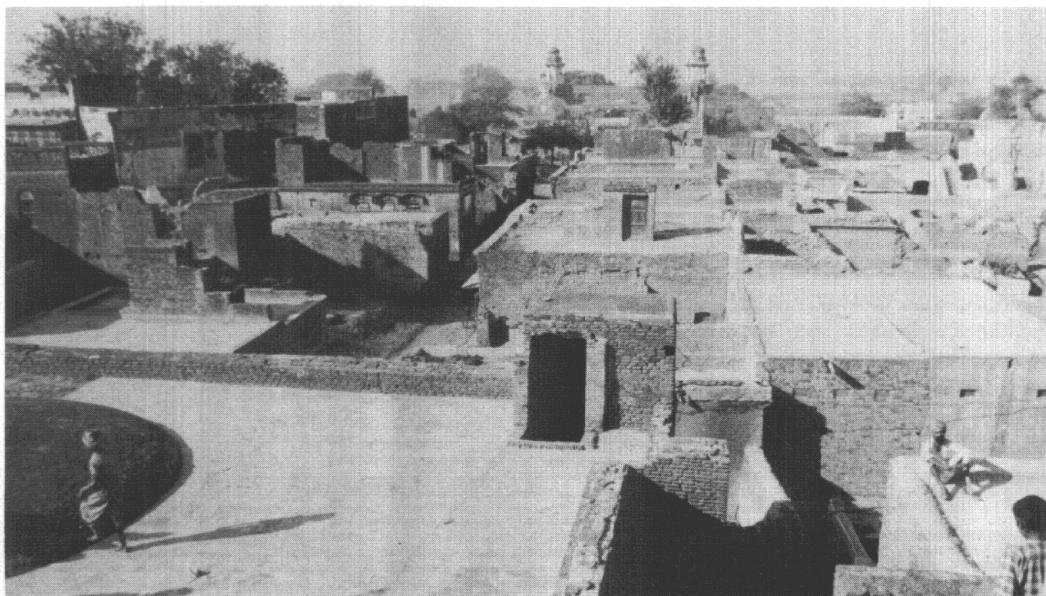


Figure 3. Serai Amānat Khān. Plan.

west gateway is given in the first person, it appears that Amānat Khān was the author as well as the scribe. The first half of the inscription consists of an effusive panegyric to Shāh Jahān, but at the upper left corner of the framing panel the statement of Amānat Khān begins (plate 14):

I have founded this serai in this land for the comfort of God's creatures, [and] having completed it on this date, the fourteenth year of the accession of His August Majesty [Shāh Jahān], corresponding to the Hijri year

Plate 11. Serai Amānat Khān. View of modern structures in interior courtyard, facing west (domed roof of east gateway in left foreground).



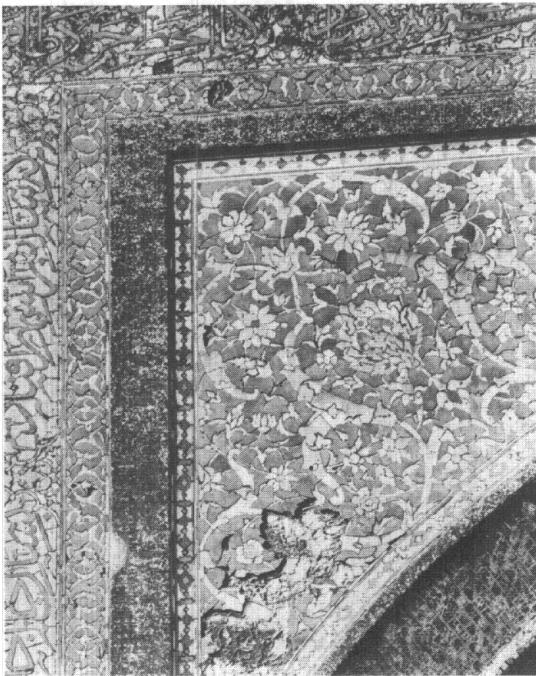


Plate 12. Serai Amānat Khān. Detail of tilework, east gateway.

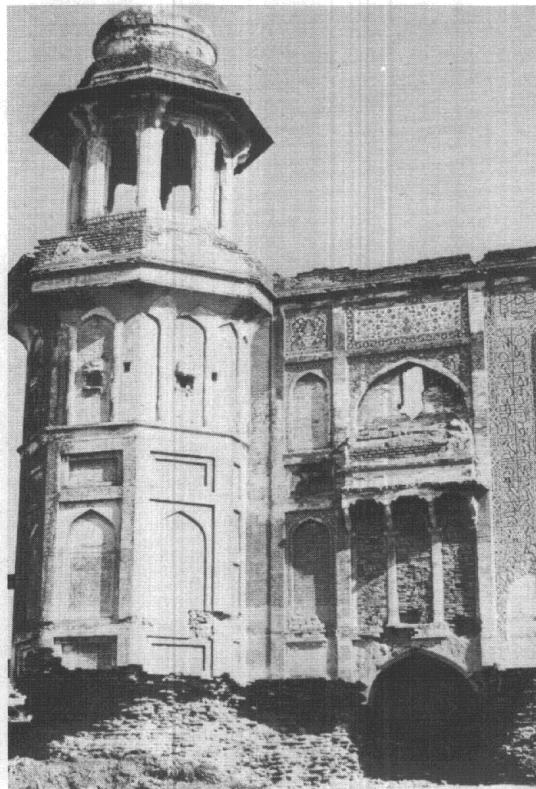
one thousand and fifty, [I wrote] this inscription with my own hand by way of a remembrance. . . .²⁸

How and why did Amānat Khān come to endow his serai at this particular time and at this particular place, about a day's march from Lahore?²⁹ First of all, we know that Amānat Khān had received his title from Shāh Jahān in 1041/1632, probably in connection with his appointment as calligrapher of the Taj Mahal.³⁰ As we know from the calligrapher's prominent signature and colophon inside the Taj Mahal, the inscriptions on the mausoleum itself were completed in 1048/1638–39, in the twelfth year of Shāh Jahān's reign — or just two years before Serai Amānat Khān was constructed. We also know that Amānat Khān's elder brother was Afzal Khān, Shāh Jahān's prime minister and one of the most powerful officials in the realm.³¹ When Afzal Khān died in Lahore on 12 Ramadan 1048 (17 January 1639) at the age of seventy,³² a few days later Amānat Khān and his two sons were received at court as an expression of the high esteem in which Shāh Jahān had held the deceased.³³ According to the contemporary literary work *Chahār Chaman*, composed around 1657 by the Mughal court poet Chandrabhān, Amānat Khān was deeply grieved by his brother's death — so much so that, "resigning service and giving up office and rank, he sought the nook of retirement and led an absolutely secluded life, and constructed an attractive

serai at one march's journey from Lahore and founded a village there, where he is presently lying at rest [that is, buried]."³⁴ It would be tempting to assume that the serai was intended as a kind of memorial to Amānat Khān's late brother, but in fact the lengthy inscriptions on both gateways do not mention him. While Afzal Khān had reached the high *mansab* rank of seven thousand when he died, his brother Amānat Khān attained only the rank of *hazāri*, or "commander of one thousand." Nevertheless, his stipend, and perhaps his inheritance from his brother, had provided him with sufficient wealth to endow one of the most magnificent serais built during the entire reign of Shāh Jahān.³⁵

The mosque inside the serai (plate 15) was built at the same time and also bears calligraphy designed by Amānat Khān and dated 1050/1640–41. Since the *Chahār Chaman* informs us that Amānat Khān was buried at the site, it can only be in the small, ruined tomb lying about eight

Plate 13. Serai Amānat Khān. Detail of west gateway; dated inscription at right.



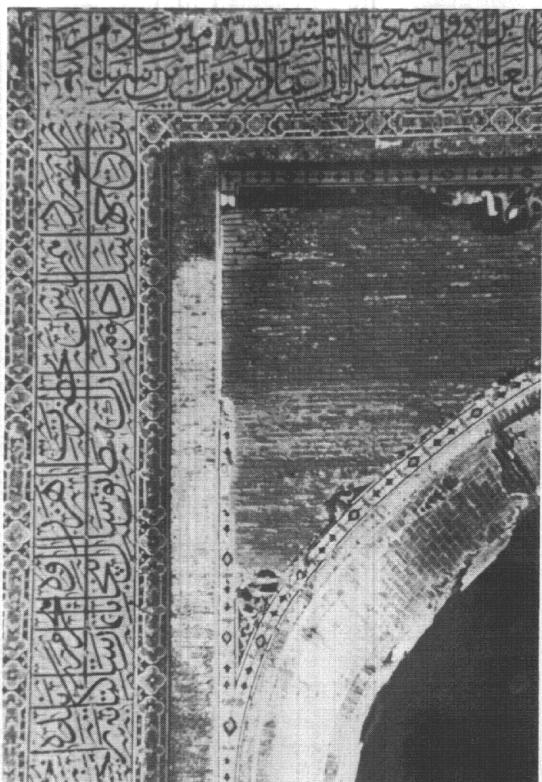


Plate 14. Dedication inscription of Amānat Khān.

hundred feet due south of the serai's east gateway (plate 16). Although uninscribed and on the verge of total collapse, the tomb is stylistically of the period. It may have been started during Amānat Khān's lifetime or constructed after his death by one of his two sons — probably by 'Āqil Khān, who ultimately rose to an even higher rank in the Mughal nobility than his father had.³⁶ The exact date of Amānat Khān's death is unknown; the official history of Shāh Jahān's reign, the *Bādshāhnāma*, states only that he died in the eighteenth year of the reign; that is, sometime between Jumada II 1054 and Jumada I 1055 (August 1644 and July 1645).³⁷ The serai itself is mentioned in passing in the *Bādshāhnāma*, in connection with a halt Shāh Jahān made there on 1 Safar 1055 (29 March 1645) on his way from Agra to Lahore. One wonders whether that halt may have been prompted in part by the emperor's desire to pay his last respects to the great calligrapher and devoted servant of the state.³⁸

The Serai Amānat Khān is also listed by various European travelers as one of the stations along the Agra-Lahore highway.³⁹ In the same year that the serai was completed the Portuguese friar Sébastien Manrique was making his way from Agra to Lahore, where he arrived on Sunday,

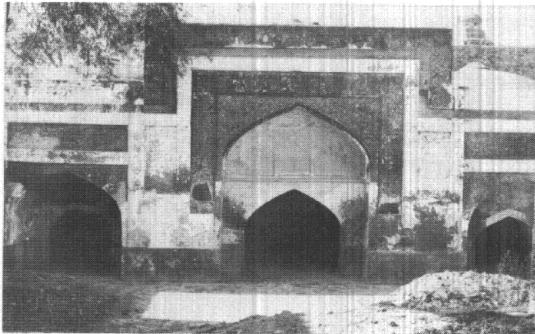
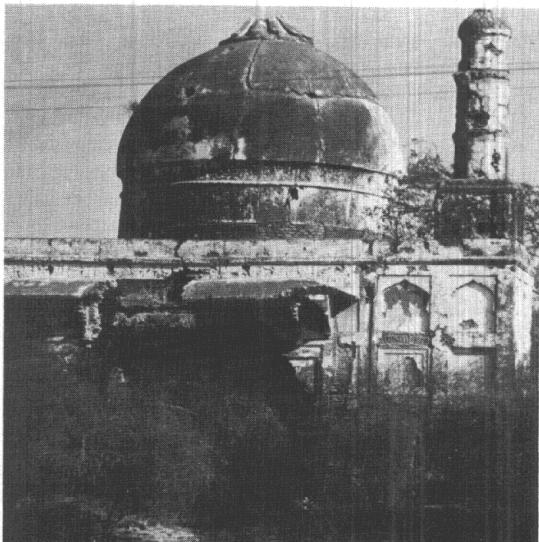


Plate 15. Serai Amānat Khān. Mosque. Dated 1050/1640–41.

Plate 16. Amānat Khān's tomb, c. 1054–55/1644–45.



10 February 1641 (28 Shawwal 1050).⁴⁰ Although he describes the imperial garden and serai at Sirhind, Manrique unfortunately omits specific details about the places he halted after that. The journey between Sirhind and Lahore took thirteen days, as Manrique recounts:

[We] traversed many towns and large villages situated along the very road itself, all well and plentifully supplied with provisions and good Caravanserais. Some of the latter are handsome and particularly well built, in which we could not find room to stop owing to the stream of passengers of all sorts and conditions, who were at that time following those roads, owing to the presence of the court at Lahore.⁴¹

Elsewhere, Manrique briefly characterizes the motives of those who built serais in a passage that certainly seems applicable to the Serai Amānat Khān and indeed to all four serais discussed here.

"They are," he says, "sometimes erected at the expense of neighboring villages, sometimes at the cost of rich and powerful men, who erect them in order to keep their memory green or to satisfy their conscience, and large sums are left for such works which in their opinion are works of piety and acceptable to God."⁴¹

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
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NOTES

1. This article is an expanded version of a paper presented in the session on Islamic architecture at the thirty-third annual meeting of the Society of Architectural Historians in Madison, Wisconsin, in April 1980. All four of the serais described here were visited and photographed by me in December 1979 in the company of Dr. Z. A. Desai, Director of Arabic and Persian Epigraphy of the Archaeological Survey of India, who has very kindly furnished translations of some of the inscriptions we encountered. Although reference works such as the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* and the various district gazetteers are useful for locating specific monuments, the historical data they contain are cursory at best and frequently unreliable. Aside from a few miscellaneous articles, the only fairly detailed study of some Indian serais is R. C. Kak, *Antiquities of Bhimbar and Rajauri*, Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, no. 14, (Calcutta, 1923). The few surviving Persian sources were first surveyed by Jadunath Sarkar, *The India of Aurangzib . . . with Extracts from the Khulasatu-t-Tawarikh and the Chahar Gulshan* (Calcutta, 1901). For recent listings of serais located along major trade routes, see Abul Khair Muhammad Farooque, *Roads and Communication in Mughal India* (Delhi, 1977); and H. D. Verma, *Medieval Routes to India: Baghdad to Delhi* (Calcutta, 1978); cf. the important study by Jean Deloche, *Recherches sur les routes de l'Inde au temps des Mogols* (Paris, 1968).

2. *The Cambridge History of India* (reprint ed., Delhi, 1971), vol. 4, *The Mughul Period*, p. 57; specific sources cited in Farooque, *Roads and Communications*, p. 11.

3. Jahāngīr, *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, or Memoirs of Jahangir*, trans. and ed. A. Rogers and H. Beveridge, 2 vols. (reprint ed., Delhi, 1968), 1:7-8.

4. Jahāngīr, *Tuzuk*, 2:100; cf. Deloche, *Recherches*, pp. 35-37.

5. Alexander Cunningham, in *Archaeological Survey of India Reports* (hereafter ASI Reports), 14:62-65; see also S. Narain, "Serai Nur Mahal," *Journal of Punjab Historical Society* 11 (1931): 29-34.

6. In 1632, Peter Mundy stayed outside Agra at a serai, also built by Nūr Mahal, which he estimated could accommodate 500 horses and 2,000-3,000 people; see *The Travels of Peter Mundy*, 2 vols. (London, 1914), 2:78. The estimate of Niccolao Manucci in 1656 was "from 800 to 1,000 persons, with their horses, camels and carriages"; see *Storia do Mogor, or Mogul India*,

trans. William Irvine, 4 vols. (reprint ed., Calcutta, 1965), 1:67.

7. Cunningham, *ASI Reports* 14:63. Manucci claims that during the reign of Sher Shāh, everything, even food, had been provided free to the traveler (*Storia do Mogor*, 1:115).

8. Cunningham, *ASI Reports* 14:64-65. A similar inscription once existed on the now very damaged east gateway, but it was destroyed in the nineteenth century. A local resident had copied the text of this inscription before its disappearance, however, and gave the text to Cunningham, who published this translation of it:

During the reign of Jahangir Badshah, Lord of the Universe,

King of kings of this world and his time, the Shadow of God,

The fame of whose goodness and justice overspread the earth

Until it reached even the highest heavens above,

His wife and trusted companion Nur Jahan
Commanded the erection of this serai wide as the heavens.

When this fortunate building rose upon the face of the earth —

May its walls last for ever and ever! —

The date of its foundation wisdom found in the words: "This serai was founded by Nur Jahan Begam" (1028).

9. Jahāngīr, *Tuzuk*, 2:192, where it is also mentioned that Nūr Jahān arranged a lavish feast for Jahāngīr on this occasion. Cunningham, *ASI Reports* 14:63, points out that royal apartments had been built into the south wall of the serai.

10. See William Foster, ed., *Early Travels in India* (London, 1921), p. 325.

11. Jahāngīr's *India*, *The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert*, trans. W. H. Moreland and P. Geyl (reprint ed., Delhi, 1972), p. 50.

12. Ibid.

13. See Bakhshish Singh Nijjar, *Panjab under the Great Mughals* (Bombay, 1968), p. 194; cf. Chandra Pant, *Nur Jahan and Her Family* (Allahabad, 1978).

14. The resemblance is generic rather than specific, although certain motifs, such as the embossed *shamsa* medallions in the spandrels of the Serai Nūr Mahal gateway, seem directly derivative. There are several precedents at Fātehpur Sikri for the projecting balconies with squared domes. For a recent study of Akbar's ceremonial capital, see S. A. A. Rizvi and V. J. A. Flynn, *Fāthpur-Sikri* (Bombay, 1975); see also the critical review of that book by Z. A. Desai in *Islamic Culture* 52 (1978): 57-67. For the architectural symbolism of Fātehpur Sikri, see the excellent article by J. F. Richards, "The Formulation of Imperial Authority under Akbar and Jahāngīr," in J. F. Richards, ed., *Kingship and Authority in South Asia* (Madison, Wis., 1978).

15. For a detailed introduction to Indian tilework, see J. P. Vogel, *Tile Mosaics of the Lahore Fort* (Calcutta, 1920); cf. R. Nath, *Colour Decoration in Mughal Architecture* (Bombay, 1970).

16. Verma, *Medieval Routes to India*, p. 61.

17. Cunningham, *ASI Reports* 14:58–62. According to its inscriptions, this handsome octagonal tomb was built for Muḥammad Mu'min Ḥusayn, whom Cunningham identifies as a famous musician of the period of Akbar. Adjacent to this tomb at Nakodar is another, also decorated with tilework and dated 1067/1656–57.
18. Foster, *Early Travels in India*, pp. 158–59. For Jahāngīr's account of Khusraw's rebellion, see Jahāngīr, *Tuzuk* 1:51–69.
19. See the official history of Shāh Jahān's reign by 'Abd al-Ḥamid Lāhūrī, *Bādshāhnāma*, ed. Kabir al-Din Ahmad and 'Abd al-Rahīm, 2 vols. (Calcutta, 1867–68), 1b:9, where it is mentioned that Shāh Jahān halted at this serai on 23 Ramadan 1043 (23 March 1634), while on his way to Lahore.
20. According to Vogel, *Tile Mosaics*, p. 9, Serai Dakhni was built "about A.D. 1640" by the Mughal noble 'Ali Mardan Khan (who became governor of the Punjab in 1049/1639), but no substantiation is offered for this opinion.
21. Jahāngīr, *Tuzuk*, 2:220–23.
22. See M. Abdullah Chaghatai, *The Wazir Khan Mosque* (Lahore, 1975).
23. For Wazir Khan's biography, see Shāh Nawāz Khan, *Ma'āthir al-Umarā'*, trans. H. Beveridge as *Maathiru-l-Umara*, 2 vols. (Calcutta, 1911–12), 2:981–83. See also the numerous references in Lāhūrī, *Bādshāhnāma*. Wazir Khan held the post of governor of the Punjab for more than seven years, until the end of 1639, when he was removed from office for "some improper actions" and subsequently reappointed as governor of Agra, a post he held until his death in 1051/1641.
24. The origin of the name Serai Dakhni is uncertain, but it could mean "southern serai"; if so it may refer to its position as the southernmost of the numerous constructions endowed by Wazir Khan in the Punjab during his tenure as governor.
25. Chaghatai, *Wazir Khan Mosque*, p. 6; Lāhūrī, *Bādshāhnāma*, 1b:13.
26. Incidentally, thanks to the capable efforts of the Archaeological Survey of India conservators, the Serai Dakhni is one of the few well-preserved serais in the Punjab; it is, moreover, completely devoid of the encroaching village constructions that have choked most of the other caravanserais (see pl. 8; cf. pl. 11). Nijjar, *Panjab under the Great Mughals*, p. 199, mentions that the serai was used as a leper colony in the nineteenth century.
27. The identity of the architect of the Wazir Khan mosque is unknown, though at least two different calligraphers have signed their names on the monument. Serai Amānat Khan has several architectural features in common with Wazir Khan's mosque, most notably the similar arrangement of recessed panels on the towers/minarets.
28. Translation of Dr. Z. A. Desai, who intends to publish all of the Serai Amānat Khan inscriptions in a forthcoming article in *Epigraphica Indica, Arabic and Persian Supplement*, of which he is the editor.
29. This question and the chronology of Amānat Khan's life are discussed at some length in my recent article, "Amanat Khan and the Calligraphy on the Taj Mahal," *Kunst des Orients* 12 (1978–79): 5–60, and therefore only a few points need to be summarized here. See also my article, "The Myth of the Taj Mahal and a New Theory of Its Symbolic Meaning," *Art Bulletin* 61 (1979): 7–37.
30. Lāhūrī, *Bādshāhnāma*, 1a:429.
31. For Afzal Khan's biography, see Shāh Nawāz Khan, *Maathiru-l-Umara*, 1:148–53.
32. Lāhūrī, *Bādshāhnāma*, 2:131.
33. Ibid., 2:132–33.
34. I am grateful to Dr. Z. A. Desai for calling this reference to my attention, which comes from the third section of Chandrabhān's work; see the recent critical edition by Muḥammad Rafiq, "Chahār Chaman of Chandrabhān Brāhman Lāhūrī" (M.A. thesis, Punjab University, Lahore, 1970), pp. 114–16. Since Chandrabhān's former patron was Afzal Khan, he must also have been acquainted with Amānat Khan. See F. M. Asiri, "Chandra Bhan Brahman and His Chahār Chaman," *Visva-Bharati Annals* 4 (1951): 51–64; and Muhammed Abdul Farooqui, *Chandra Bhan Brahman, Life and Works* (Ahmadabad, 1967).
35. For an explanation of the *mansabdārī* system of Mughal nobility, see, among numerous works on this subject, U. N. Day, *The Mughal Government* (New Delhi, 1970). Amānat Khan's rank was not without prestige; of more than 850 nobles listed in various histories of Shāh Jahān's reign, 428 were below the rank of *hazārī*.
36. For 'Āqil Khan's biography, see Shāh Nawāz Khan, *Maathiru-l-Umara*, 1:259–61. According to the biography of Amānat Khan contained in the *Mi'rāt al-'Ālam*, the calligrapher himself built the garden which formerly surrounded his tomb; see Sajida S. Alavi, ed., *Mi'rāt al-'Ālam . . . of Muhammed Bakhtawar Khan*, 2 vols. (Lahore, 1979), 2:487.
37. Lāhūrī, *Bādshāhnāma*, 2:737; but see *Maathiru-l-Umara*, 1:260, where it is stated that Amānat Khan died in Shāh Jahān's sixteenth year, or Jumada II 1052 to Jumada I 1053 (September 1642 to August 1643).
38. Lāhūrī, *Bādshāhnāma*, 2:413. The passage merely mentions that Shāh Jahān held audience in the serai; no reference is made to Amānat Khan's death.
39. For example, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, in his *Travels in India*, trans. V. Ball, 2 vols. (reprint ed., New Delhi, 1977), 1:77, where "Menat-Kan" (Serai Amānat Khan) is listed as the first halt after Lahore and two halts before "Sera-Dakan" (Serai Dakhni).
40. *Travels of Fray Sébastien Manrique*, trans. C. E. Luard, 2 vols. (London, 1927), 2:184.
41. Ibid., p. 100.