

Qutb Shahi Dynasty's Architectural and Cultural Legacy in Hyderabad - Focus on Golconda Fort, Qutb Shahi Tombs and Charminar

Dr. K. Vijay Kumar

Principal and Associate Professor of History, Government Artis & Science College, Kamareddy, Telangana.

¹Received: 31 July 2023; Accepted: 30 November 2023; Published: 07 December 2023

ABSTRACT

The Qutb Shahi monuments of Hyderabad, including Golconda Fort, Qutb Shahi Tombs, and Charminar, are significant examples of Deccani architecture and cultural heritage. This study explores the historical context, architectural features, and cultural significance of these monuments, highlighting their importance as symbols of the Qutb Shahi dynasty's legacy. The research examines the intricate stone carvings, grand mosques, and majestic tombs, showcasing the blend of Persian, Islamic, and local influences. By analyzing these monuments, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the Qutb Shahi dynasty's contributions to Indian architecture and cultural heritage. Golconda Fort is a Historical significance, architectural features, and military importance, Qutb Shahi Tombs are Architectural style, historical context, and cultural significance and Charminar is a Iconic status, architectural features, and cultural importance and Deccani architecture are like Blend of Persian, Islamic, and local influences. This study provides insights into the Qutb Shahi dynasty's architectural and cultural legacy, highlighting the importance of preserving these monuments for future generations. It contributes to a deeper understanding of Indian architectural history and cultural heritage.

INTRODUCTION

Landmarks that are representative of the Qutb Shahi Dynasty can be found in the city of Hyderabad, which serves as the capital city of the state of Telangana. These include the Golconda Fort, the Qutb Shahi Tombs, and the Charminar. While the Qutb Shahi tombs are located an additional kilometer to the north-west of the Golconda Fort, the Golconda Fort is located 11 kilometers to the west of the city of Hyderabad. Hyderabad's Charminar may be found right in the middle of the city's historic district. It is important to note that although these three monuments are not located within the same complex, they collectively constitute the Qutb Shahi layer of Hyderabad's history. Furthermore, they are all members of the Qutb Shahi dynasty, which controlled the region beginning in 1518 A.D. to the year 1687 A.D. The Bahmani Dynasty was overthrown in 1518 A.D., which resulted in the establishment of five significant dynasties in the Deccan. One of these dynasties was the Qutb Shahi Islamic Sultanate. Seven dynastic monarchs ruled for a total of 170 years, during which time they successfully fought an onslaught by the Mughals until the year 1687 A.D. It was the final kingdom to be incorporated into the Mughal Empire, which was expanding at the time.

For example, Golkonda is a walled citadel and an early capital city of the Qutb Shahi dynasty. The monuments that date back to the Qutb Shahi period exhibit diverse types of buildings. It consists of a collection of military constructions, ramparts, gates, bastions, and armory; religious structures, such as mosques and temples; residential structures, such as palaces; and water systems, including canals, fountains, and landscaped gardens. The tombs of Qutb Shahis are a mausoleum complex, a royal necropolis that includes the tombs of the Royal family as well as the tombs of the officials who diligently served them. In addition, the tombs include a funerary bath and mosques. The Charminar, on the other hand, is a ceremonial Gateway that was constructed in 1591 A.D. to commemorate the establishment of Hyderabad as a new Millennial City. A testament to the previous glory of the Qutb Shahi dynasty and its creative accomplishments, the monuments are masterpieces of the Qutb Shahi Dynasty and serve as a testament to the dynasty's creative achievements.

A historic Islamic village is encircled by the Golconda Fort, which is comprised of stone defenses that stretch for more than seven kilometers in length. In addition to military and defensive constructions, the ancient structures include funerary baths, silos, mosques, gardens, residential quarters, pavilions, and royal courts. These structures showcase

¹ How to cite the article: Kumar K.V. (December 2023); Qutb Shahi Dynasty's Architectural and Cultural Legacy in Hyderabad - Focus on Golconda Fort, Qutb Shahi Tombs and Charminar; IJASSH, Jul-Dec 2023, Vol 16, 93-99

the whole range of structures that were necessary for living in a medieval fortified town in India. The Silah Khana, Nagina bagh, Ambar Khana, Akkanna-Madanna Offices, Ramdas Jail, Darbar hall, Baradari, Hammams, Mahals, and royal courts that serviced the capital of the Qutb Shahis are all located within the Bala Hisar, also known as the citadel.

The Qutb Shahi tombs complex is comprised of thirty tombs, as well as mosques and a funeral bath. The tombs are the property of the kings and queens of the Qutb Shahi Dynasty, as well as their children and the nobles who served them with unwavering devotion. It includes the epigraphically documented tombs of five of the seven sultans of the dynasty, as well as the tombs of four additional members of the royal family, and it spans the period of time from 1543 to 1672, which is a total of 130 years. The Qutb Shahi tombs, when seen as a whole, are an exceptional example of an Indo-Muslim dynastic necropolis. They are also the most extensive and best epigraphically documented tombs in the entirety of India.

The Charminar, which is located in the old city of Hyderabad and serves as the city's symbolic fulcrum, is situated at the intersection of two arterial axes. Its four entrances are positioned in the direction of the four cardinal directions. According to contemporary historical sources, the construction of the Charminar dates back to the year 1000 AH (1591 A.D.). It was the first building to be constructed in the new city of Hyderabad, which was established by Sultan Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah, outside of the Golconda fort. It is of particular significance as the date of its construction coincides with the commencement of the second millennium of Islam, an event that was widely honored throughout the Islamic world and, as a result, suggests that Hyderabad was purposefully created as a "Millennial" city.¹

The Qutb Shahi Dynasty was responsible for the development of technology, skills, and innovations, all of which were incorporated into these monuments. Together, they represent a product of the same time period. They are significant marks of the splendor that existed during the Qutb Shahi Period (1518-1687 A.D.), and they continue to be extremely prominent in the urban landscape of modern-day Hyderabad even to this day.

The Charminar served as both a point of origin and a reference point for the design grid that was used to establish the layout of the city of Hyderabad to be constructed. It was the capital of the Qutb Shahis and the Asaf Jahi Nizams, and it is now the capital of the state of Andhra Pradesh. Hyderabad previously served as the capital of both of these groups. Even in modern times, Hyderabad is still thriving and is the fifth largest city in India. The Charminar, which serves as the city's logo, is a visual representation of Hyderabad.

THE ARGUMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE

The Qutb Shahi monuments of Golconda Fort, Qutb Shahi Tombs, and Charminar are the oldest and most notable monuments of the sister cities of Golconda and Hyderabad, which were successive capitals of the Qutb Shahi Islamic Sultanate (1518-1687). These monuments are located in Hyderabad and Golconda. Golconda was a medieval fortified city that served as a residential, military, and courtly center. It is also known as the fabled center of diamond trading. The Qutb Shahi tomb complex was a magnificent royal necropolis that was designed in the peculiar architectural style of the Qutb Shahi architects. At the same time as the court expanded beyond the boundaries of the Golconda fort, the urban metropolis of Hyderabad was established, and the monumental Charminar was placed in the center of the city as a grand hundred-year landmark.¹⁵⁵ The Charminar is widely regarded as a masterpiece of Islamic architecture, despite the fact that its architectural typology is completely unique. Because of its one-of-a-kind shape, architectural style, and location, it is considered to be one of the most identifiable symbols of Indian architecture.¹⁵⁶

Striking evidence to the creative synthesis of Persianate and Indic cultural traditions with a distinctive Deccani character can be found in the monuments that date back to the Qutb Shahi dynasty. The Qutb Shahi architectural style originated from Bahmani moorings and developed into a sophisticated architectural aesthetic within the Deccani paradigm. It is considered to be the pinnacle of Islamic architecture in South India.

Because of its magnificent conception, design, and execution, the Charminar is widely regarded as a masterpiece of architecture from around the world. The most fascinating aspect of Charminar is the originality of its design, which was unusual at the time and was to have a significant influence on the following development of Deccani architecture from a historical and aesthetic standpoint.¹⁵⁷ It became the template for later Islamic architecture in India because it was based on a system of interconnecting voids and solids, which can be seen in the alternating rhythms between its soaring arches and towering minarets.

However, it acts as a monumental landmark for the central node in Hyderabad's four-quartered architecture, despite the fact that it does not adhere to any of the conventional building forms that are found in the Indo-Islamic world. The Charminar is the prototypical example of a chaubara, often known as a "four-fold house." It is located at the intersection of four cardinal avenues and provides a diverse range of breathtaking views. It is a one-of-a-kind monument because it exemplifies a one-of-a-kind design and contains ideas that were not present in prior structures.

In order to commemorate the beginning of the second Islamic Millennium, the urban ensemble consisting of the Charminar and the Char Kaman is a spectacular example of Shia city planning. It resonates powerfully with symbolic and ceremonial value. The universe was envisioned as a domed quadrangular building of enormous proportions, carried on four arches, and illuminated at its apex by the sun as the light of heaven and earth. This symbol was used to represent the entirety of the universe. The ground floor of the Charminar is, in fact, topped by a modest dome that is squeezed downward and decorated with a solar lotus at its highest point.

These Qutb Shahi monuments, when taken as a whole, offer a singular testimony to the thriving cosmopolitanism that was characteristic of the medieval period in India, and more specifically in the Deccan region on the Indian subcontinent. The Qutb Shahi Sultanate appears to have been in the forefront of this cosmopolitanism, despite the fact that other Deccani sultanates were simultaneously multi-ethnic and multi-lingual. The family that established the dynasty, together with a large number of powerful nobles, originated from Iran. In order for the Qutb Shahi empire to be successful, it was essential that these "westerners" (gharbian) were able to create alliances not just with members of the deeply embedded class of Deccani Muslims, but also with the local Telugu-speaking Hindu elite. The Qutb Shahi monuments, in a manner that is more spectacular than at any other site, reflect the innovative and inspired blending of Persianate and Indic cultures that resulted from the successful integration of this multi-ethnic civilization. This blending of cultures was a result of the successful integration of this multi-ethnic society.

The medieval diamond trade at Golconda fort attracted tourists from all over the world, and the mixture of cultures that occurred during the construction of the fort can be seen in the progression of the phases. One of the local Indic architectural traditions is represented by the highest circuit of walls that date back to the 14th century. It was the Qutb Shahis who were responsible for the introduction of the Persianate architecture of walled lower city (pa'in shahr) and high citadel (bala hisar). The axial alignments of defense gates, commercial streets, ceremonial entrances, and audience halls¹⁵⁸ are the best examples of the urban traditions that are prevalent in Iran. At Golconda, the most cutting-edge developments in the field of defense technology are the water system and the accurate acoustical system that are located within the fort. When Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah established Hyderabad in 1591 (AH 1000) to honor the beginning of the second Islamic millennium, 159 the complete synthesis of Indic and Persianate cultural elements was accomplished. This was done in order to celebrate the birth of the Islamic empire. In spite of the fact that this was a Persianate impetus, the planners were drawing on ancient Hindu cosmological traditions regarding the central ritual node (chaubara) from which the four-quartered capital would develop. A traditional Persian representation of the universe, known as the chahar taq or "four arches," served as the source of inspiration for the formation of the Charminar in its formal incarnation.

The monument served as a source of inspiration for the design of another Charminar, which was built in the year 1807 in the city of Bukhara, which is located in the country of Uzbekistan. This Charminar is now comprised of the "Historic Centre of Bukhara" World Heritage Site. Despite the fact that the Bukhara Charminar serves more as a gateway than as a component of the greater urban armature, it still adheres to its design in a very faithful manner.

The monuments that date back to the Qutb Shahi period offer a one-of-a-kind testimony to the social, economic, cultural, political, and technological milieu that existed during the time of the Deccani Islamic Sultanate in medieval India. The Golconda Fort, the Qutb Shahi Tombs, and the Charminar are three of the most notable examples of the blooming of Deccani art and architecture. These three structures are also exceptional manifestations of the religious and artistic blossoming of the Islamic Sultanate in Southern India.

As a result of its location on a significant trade route that connected the port town of Masulipatam to the hinterlands, Golconda Fort developed into a significant commercial hub, as well as an international market place for textiles, printed cloth, and the well-known Golconda diamonds. It also became one of the most important cities in the Eastern region. Because of its proximity to diamond mines, it developed as a diamond trading center and, as a result, played a big role in the economics of the region.

The Qutb Shahi rulers were the patrons of a culture that is sometimes referred to as the Deccani culture. This culture is the result of the synthesis of cultures, beginning with the indigenous Dakhani culture of southern India and resulting in the mingling of the cultural nuances and ideas brought by the Afaqi settlers from other parts of the Islamic world and the numerous travelers who flocked to the diamond trade center of Golconda. There was a unique flowering of art, architecture, language, literature, music, food, and costume that took place in the twin capital towns of Golconda and Hyderabad. This flowering was mirrored discreetly but perceptibly in the miniature paintings architecture and the Shi'a culture of the time period.

An exceptional example of an Indo-Muslim dynastic necropolis is demonstrated by the collection of tombs belonging to the Qutb Shahi family. Despite the fact that numerous other Indo-Muslim dynasties were also responsible for the creation of such necropolises, the Qutb Shahis's is exceptional on three different points. Firstly, it is a more

comprehensive dynastic complex than any other in India. This is because it is the only place in India where the tombs of five of the seven rulers of the dynasty as well as four other members of the royal family are found in the same geographical location. Second, the archaeological site has a temporal range of 130 years, which is longer than any other necropolis in India that has been documented. Third, the necropolis is a unique testament not only for the stylistic development of Qutb Shahi architecture, but also for the dynastic politics that took place inside the dynasty. This is because of the first two criteria mentioned above.

As a result of the fact that the Qutb Shahi necropolis has nine tombs belonging to members of the royal family, all of which can be positively identified by the epitaph inscriptions, the complex provides the most controlled way of comprehending the evolution of the Qutb Shahi architectural style and its chronology. When compared to the tomb of the next-to-last monarch, Abdullah (d.1672), which displays all of the characteristic qualities of the fully formed Qutb Shahi style, the earliest tomb, which is that of the dynasty's founder Sultan Quli (d.1543), exposes its dependency on late Bahmani traditions of tomb design. There are numerous odd versions as well, such as the tomb of Muhammad Quli (d.1612) with its Iranian-inspired post and beam porticoes (talar) and the so-called tomb of Jamsheed (d.1550) with its remarkable two-storeyed octagonal design. In between, every intermediate stage is represented, and there are also several unusual variants.

In addition to this, the complex offers a wealth of data that sheds light on the nature of dynastic politics within the Qutb Shahi dynasty. In addition to the tombs that were constructed for the ruling sultans, tombs were also constructed for their wives and consorts, as well as for sons who were not eligible for succession. The spatial relationships that exist between these numerous tombs consistently provide a great deal of educational value. Therefore, up until the 1620s, the original necropolis was confined to the southwestern block of the existing enclosure. Within this block were the massive tombs of Sultan Quli (who died in 1543), Ibrahim (who died in 1580), and Muhammad Quli (who died in 1612). Additionally, there was a modest tomb of Ibrahim's son, Mirza Muhammad Amin (d.1596), which was located on the same terrace as his father's tomb. Additionally, there were a number of smaller graves that were devoid of inscriptions and most likely belonged to various members of the Qutb Shahi elite. Although there are two structures in this region that are commonly believed to be the tombs of the Sultans Jamsheed (who died in 1550) and Subhan (who also died in 1550), with whom Ibrahim fought a succession dispute, neither of these tombs contains epitaphs that confirm this identification. Furthermore, the tombs are constructed in the fully developed style of the middle of the seventeenth century, which makes it impossible for them to belong to these two rulers. At least during the sixteenth century, it would appear that Jamsheed and his son Subhan were not allowed to enter the royal necropolis. This would be interpreted as a denial of the fact that their reigns had ever taken place.

With its impregnable defense mechanism, unique water supply and distribution system, as well as the unique sewage disposal mechanisms and extraordinary acoustical system, the Golconda Fort is an outstanding example of military architecture. It is also in a league of its own when it comes to the architectural history of the Deccan and possibly even the military architecture of India. Golconda is one of the largest strongholds in south India. For seven centuries, it has ruled over the trade and destiny of South India, as well as the geopolitics of the region. It has also been the center of the highly sought-after diamond trade.

DECLARATIONS OF GENUINENESS AND/OR GENUINENESS OF INTEGRITY

Among the oldest strata of the original Qutb Shahi city of Hyderabad are the Golconda Fort, the Charminar, and the Qutb Shahi tombs. There is a high degree of authenticity in each of the three structures, and they are all protected under national and state protection. Golconda has the eerie sense of ruins that are placed within the old defensive city, in contrast to Charminar and Qutb Shahi tombs, which are both intact and have a high degree of integrity. With the exception of a few minor structural repairs and routine maintenance that have been documented since the early nineteenth century, the buildings still display their original structural fabric and design. Some of these repairs and maintenance have been documented. The most significant management issues that the monuments are currently facing are those that are associated with urban growth pressures and the need to strike a balance between Hyderabad's past, present, and in the future.

Administration and Safety Measures:

In accordance with the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act of 1958, both the Charminar and the Golconda Fort have been designated as monuments of national significance. The Archaeological Survey of India, which is the custodian of the monuments and is also responsible for their care and management, is the entity that is accountable for the Charminar and the Golconda Fort. Furthermore, in accordance with a Government Notification issued by the Government of India, a special boundary of 100 meters and an additional boundary of 200 meters has been delineated beyond the core zone of the monument. These areas have been declared as the "prohibited" and "regulated" areas, respectively, for the purpose of various operations such as mining and construction (Order No.

S.O. 1764 dated 16 June 1992, published in the Gazette of India, Part II, Section 3, sub-section (ii) dated 4 July 1992). The Department of Archaeology and Museums belongs to the Government of Andhra Pradesh, and it is responsible for managing the Qutb Shahi tombs.

Additionally, in accordance with the Hyderabad Urban Development Authority (now known as HMDA) Zoning Regulations, 1981 (Regulation 13), specially designated Heritage Precincts have been established. These include the Charminar region, which is composed of the historic center of the historic city and encompasses a large number of historic neighborhoods, street facades, structures, and buildings in the vicinity of Charminar. Including the Shekhpet Sarai and the Qutb Shahi tombs, the Golconda Fort Area encompasses the entirety of the fort's interior, which is contained within the outer walls.

The mortared stone and carved stucco that are used in the construction of the buildings in these three zones are the traditional materials that are used in the composition of their physical structures. They are immediately recognizable as authentic monuments of the Qutb Shahi era, not only in terms of their materials and fabric, but also in terms of their style and conception. This identification is confirmed in many cases by the existence of dated Persian foundation inscriptions that were created during the same time period as their construction. There are foundation inscriptions on the most significant of the Qutb Shahi tombs, which date from 1543 to 1672, as well as on some of the most important gateways and bastions in the Golconda fort (for example, Makka Darwaza, 1559; Musa Burj, 1666). Additionally, these inscriptions can be found on a variety of other structures within the fort, such as the congregational mosque that Sultan Quli established in 1518 and the Ambar Khana storeroom that was built in 1642 (Yazdani 1917, 1919). The legitimacy of the design of these buildings is further supported by descriptions that are included in documents that were written in Europe and Iran throughout the early and middle of the seventeenth century. Furthermore, the identification and dating of many of these buildings is ensured by dated Persian inscriptions that were written during the same time period as their establishment.

In current Persian historical literature, the year 1591 is represented as the year that the Charminar was built, despite the fact that there is no foundation inscription on the structure. In addition, the design and appearance of the monument are described in these texts, and these descriptions are in close accordance with the real appearance of the monument being described. Beginning in the middle of the seventeenth century, these indigenous descriptions are supplemented by those written by Europeans who were traveling through the region, such as Jean de Thevenot (Sen 1949, page 133).

Although there have been a few minor structural repairs and regular maintenance programs that have been documented from the early nineteenth century, the buildings still reflect their original structural fabric and design. This is evidenced by the fact that the buildings have been preserved. In the case of the Charminar, for instance, it was reported in the early twentieth century that the southwestern minaret had collapsed and fallen as a result of a lightning strike in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. However, it was explained that the minaret had been replaced by the Mughal governor Bahadur Dil Khan at a cost of sixty thousand rupees (Bilgrami 1927, pp. 18-19). It is clear that this replacement was carried out with a meticulous eye for ensuring that the structure and proportions of the other three minars were taken into consideration. Some of the carved stucco work seen today has been restored in the past, as stucco is a less permanent material that needs regular repair and periodic replacement, but this has been carried out in accordance with traditional craft technique and in a manner that appears to follow closely the original design.¹⁶¹ Since the 1953 inauguration of the annual Indian Archaeology-A Review, the Archaeological Survey of India has regularly published brief notices of all conservation work it has performed (or which has been carried out by the various States' archaeological departments). A thorough examination of these volumes reveals that conservation efforts of some kind have been carried out at Golconda Fort and at the Charminar practically every year since 1953. These efforts have been carried out in a variety of forms. This work has included a variety of activities, including the removal of vegetation and debris, the consolidation of structures that have been compromised, the leveling and resetting of pavers and steps, the repointing of masonry joints, the repair of stucco ornament, the provision of spouts for water drainage from rooftops, the maintenance of pathways for visitors, and so on. According to these assessments, the interventions that have been carried out have been carried out solely in the name of preservation and with the intention of halting the further deterioration of damaged buildings. Furthermore, measures have been taken to ensure that the work is carried out "in the original style," and it has frequently been carried out by "specially trained artisans." Particularly in the case of stucco repair, "before and after" photographs have been published, which convincingly document the high quality and accuracy of the repairs.

Authenticity:

The preservation efforts for the monuments have been ongoing for more than a century, and as a result, they are in a good state of preservation and continue to preserve a high level of integrity. While the Charminar and Qutb Shahi tombs have not been damaged, Golconda is characterized by defensive walls that enclose a variety of monuments,

some of which are still standing while others are in ruins. This character has been meticulously preserved by the Archaeological Survey of India, which is the organization that is responsible for watching over the site.

The spatial integrity of the three component sites is at least as significant as the integrity of the individual monuments that make up the monuments. One of the most remarkable aspects of Golconda is that the majority of its urban armature from the Qutb Shahi period has been preserved in its entirety. This includes the successive lines of defenses, as well as the entrances and thoroughfares. Additionally, a significant portion of its Qutb Shahi architectural fabric is still preserved, which provides the visitor with a good feeling of the city that existed in the sixteenth century and how it interacted with the older architectural history of the Kakatiya period as well as with its larger physical context. There is also a significant portion of the fort's original hydraulic system that has been maintained and may be seen. The portion of the site that contains the palace, which is located at the base of the eastern flank of the citadel, is the only part of the site that has experienced a substantial loss of integrity. The majority of these palace buildings are in a very poor condition of preservation, having lost their superstructures and even significant chunks of their walls from the destruction that has occurred. Despite the fact that this lack of integrity makes it difficult to comprehend the nature and functions of the various buildings in this key zone of the city, it is in fact a part of the historical and archaeological record of the site. This is due to the fact that the palace zone appears to have been burned after the fort was taken by Mughal forces in the year 1687.

Although the Charminar itself is nearly in excellent condition, the integrity of the site where it is located has been slightly undermined over the course of time. Maintaining the integrity of the site is of the utmost importance, and the continuing preservation of the four vast avenues that radiate out from the Charminar is absolutely necessary. This is because the entire purpose of the monument is to identify the focal point from which these avenues extend. The continuation of the preservation of the four symbolic gateways to its north, known as the Char Kaman, is of equal importance. These gateways were originally used to delineate a vast open plaza (jilau khana) that was located before the Qutb Shahi palace, which was located on the western side of them. Even though the palace complex itself is no longer preserved, and even though the four corners of the jilau khana have been filled in with commercial buildings from at least 1772 (Shorey 1993), the Charminar zone nevertheless provides a good sense of the city's original form and significance. This is because the Charminar zone was built in the early 19th century.

Hyderabad has been subject to continuous growth and development ever since it was established in 1591. It is presently the sixth largest urban agglomeration in India, with a combined population of 7.5 million people. As a consequence of this, the Qutb Shahi monuments in the city are constantly threatened by the pressures of even further growth and urban expansion. As a result, a significant number of these monuments have either disappeared entirely or undergone irreversible transformations. At the same time, however, a great number of monuments have been well conserved and are virtually entirely unaltered. This is a result of their continuous use as well as the long-standing recognition that they are essential components of the cultural legacy of the local community. This nomination includes three zones: the Golconda Fort, the Qutb Shahi tombs, and the Charminar area. These zones were selected not only because to their exceptional worldwide importance, but also because they are among the Qutb Shahi structures that possess the highest degree of integrity and authenticity.

The monuments are a part of the complex and dense urban landscape, and there are a number of pressures that contribute to the threat that the monuments face. These pressures include urban development pressure, tourism pressure, environmental pressure, and other pressures. In order to guarantee that development is under control and that the authenticity and integrity of the monuments are preserved, the Management Plan which is currently being drafted is being prepared.

CONCLUSION

Some Indo-Muslim kingdoms, although not all of them, were responsible for the creation of royal necropolises; nonetheless, the Qutb Shahi necropolis is the most massive and well recorded specimen of its kind in the all of India. As a result, two neighboring tombs in the Lodi Gardens have been recognized as belonging to the first two Lodi sultans (Digby 1975; Parihar 1997). This indicates that the practice appears to have made a very hesitant beginning in Sultanate Delhi. The Mughals, in contrast, did not establish a dynasty necropolis; their mausolea are widely dispersed, with the first six kings each entombed in a different place (Kabul, Delhi, Sikandra, Lahore, Agra, and Khuldabad). The Bahmanis had constructed three distinct necropolises in the Deccan prior to the arrival of the Qutb Shahis. These necropolises included two distinct clusters of tombs at Gulbarga, as well as a third necropolis located just outside of Bidar. During the same time period as the Qutb Shahis, the tombs of the first four Adil Shahi sultans of Bijapur were built in a necropolis located near Gogi. The tombs of the subsequent four Adil Shahi sultans were each built in a different area within Bijapur itself. In order to ensure that their bodies be laid to rest, the majority of the Nizam Shahis of Ahmadnagar had their remains transported to the Shi'i holy place of Kerbala. It is also a dramatic contrast to all of these examples that the Qutb Shahi necropolis has the epigraphically documented tombs of five of

the seven sultans of the dynasty, in addition to the tombs of four other members of the royal family, and it spans the period of time from 1543 to 1672, which is a period of 130 years. The Qutb Shahi monuments of Golconda and Hyderabad can be compared to a number of other sites, not just in India but also in other nations that are located in the greater region of South Asia, Central Asia, and West Asia. This comparison can be beneficial and informative. These other sites include a number of properties that have previously been inscribed on the World Heritage List (from India, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan and), one that is on the Tentative List of Iran, and one in India that is neither on the World Heritage List nor on India's tentative list.

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