

# THE ARCHITECTURAL AND ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE QUTB SHAHI DYNASTY

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## ABSTRACT

*The Qutb Shahi dynasty's architectural and artistic achievements showcase a unique blend of Persian, Indian, and Deccani styles, characterized by grand monuments, intricate decorative elements, and vibrant artistic expressions. Their legacy includes iconic structures like the Charminar and Golconda Fort, as well as contributions to miniature paintings, literature, and crafts. These abstract highlights the dynasty's cultural synthesis and creative vision, which continue to inspire and fascinate. The Qutb Shahi architecture is a particular style of Indo-Islamic architecture that was built during the rule of the Qutb Shahi dynasty, which is often referred to as the Golconda Sultanate. Architecture of the Qutb Shahi style can be seen in the city of Hyderabad and the areas surrounding it. The Golconda Fort, which was constructed before the city was established, is the first example of this principle. During the reign of Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah, who established the city of Hyderabad and built the Charminar as the city's focal point, the style achieved its pinnacle of perfection. The style is comparable to that of the Bahmani Sultanate as well as other Deccan Sultanates, the monuments of which can be found in Gulbarga, Bijapur, and Bidar. The architecture of the Persians has had a significant impact on it. Monuments and Forts of the Deccan Sultanate is the term given to a collection of buildings in the style that were included on the "tentative list" of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2014 for the purpose of becoming World Heritage Sites.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Qutb Shahi dynasty, also known as the Golconda Sultanate, was a Muslim dynasty that ruled the region around Golconda (near present-day Hyderabad) from 1518 to 1687. They were one of the five states that succeeded the Bahmani Sultanate after it was dissolved. The dynasty was established by Sultan Quli Qutb-ul-Mulk, who had previously held the position of Bahmani governor prior to the decision to declare independence in the year 1518. He chose the walled city of Golconda as the location of his capital, which eventually developed into a significant power centre. The Qutb Shahi tombs and the city of Hyderabad are two examples of the distinctive Indo-Islamic architecture, which was established by Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah. Through the formation of strategic alliances and the conduct of military battles, Sultan Quli and his successors were able to expand their domain and obtain control over a sizeable chunk of the Deccan region. During the Qutb Shahi dynasty, a wealth of architectural, cultural, and administrative practices was left behind for future generations to enjoy. It is a tribute to the Qutb Shahi monarchs' control that the tombs of the Qutb Shahi rulers and the city of Hyderabad both stand today.

## CHARMINAR

Located in the center of Hyderabad, in the west-central region of Telangana state, in the south-central region of India, the Charminar is a historic monument. Additionally serving as the capital of the old princely state of Hyderabad, the city that is now the capital of Telangana state was once the capital of Hyderabad. Muḥammad Qulī Quṭb Shāh, the fifth monarch of the Quṭb Shāhī dynasty, is credited with constructing the monument in the year 1591. It is said that it was the first edifice to be constructed in Hyderabad, which was his new capital. It has developed into a signature monument to the city's legacy and an iconic emblem of the city's history during the course of its existence. One tradition states that during the time that Muḥammad Qulī Quṭb Shāh was moving his capital from Golconda, which was located nearby, to the new city, the Hyderabad region was in the midst of a devastating disease. In order to commemorate the end of the epidemic, he constructed a mosque, which came to be known as the Charminar because of the four high and distinctive minarets that were placed on each of the four corners of the edifice. It served as the focal point around which the planning of Hyderabad was undertaken. The Charminar, which is a magnificent architectural composition in Indo-Saracenic style, is widely recognized as one of the most outstanding architectural accomplishments of the Quṭb Shāhī period for various reasons. Using stucco as an ornamental material, it is constructed out of granite and lime mortar. In terms of its dimensions, the square construction is 66 feet (20 meters) on each side. In addition to having a pointed arch that is 36 feet (11 meters) wide at its base and reaches 66 feet high at its apex, each side of the structure faces one of the cardinal directions. A multisided column rises on each corner of the construction and continues upward until it reaches a minaret with a dome-shaped roof that is located 160 feet (49 meters) above the ground. The base of the column is formed like a lotus leaf. The entrance to each minaret is provided by a spiral staircase that is located on the internal wall of the minaret. Each minaret is comprised of four levels, and each level has a covered walkway that is colonnaded in a delicate manner around the external wall. There are two storeys that are located above the arches of the main construction. In the Quṭb Shāhī era, the first building served as a madrasah, which is an Islamic college. The second building is home to a tiny mosque devoted to worship. Forty-five more prayer spaces may be found within the Charminar, in addition to the mosque. The roof and minarets of the Charminar provide breathtaking views of Hyderabad, including the old Golconda Fort to the west and the lively Lad Bazaar, which is located right next to the Charminar and is famous for its traditional lacquer bangles that are adorned with colored glass and stones.

## GOLKONDA FORT

Originally constructed on a hilltop in 1143, the fort presently known as Golkonda was formerly called Mankal. When the Rajah of Warangal was in charge, it was a mud fort. Subsequently, the Bahmani Sultans and the governing Qutub Shahi family reinforced it from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century. The monarchs of the Qutub Shahi dynasty made Golconda their major capital. Approximately 130 meters high, the hilltop pavilion offers a bird's-eye perspective of other buildings and is located within the inner fort, which also has the remains of palaces and mosques. There is little doubt that the Golconda fort complex is among India's most impressive fortresses.

Beginning in the early thirteenth century under the reign of the Kakatiyas, Golconda Fort was thereafter governed by the Qutub Shahi kings during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Huge crenelated ramparts encircle the stronghold, which is perched on a granite hill 120 meters high. Legend has it that a shepherd lad discovered an idol on this rocky hill and reported it to the monarch of the Kakatiya kingdom, hence the original name of the hill—Golla Konda in Telugu—Shepherd's Hill. After 200 years, the Bahamani kings acquired possession of the land where the monarch had built a mud fort around this sacred site. This was then turned into a huge granite fort with a diameter of 5 kilometers by the Qutub Shahi dynasty. A silent observer of past events, the fort has stood the test of time. Mughal emperor Aurangzeb ran over the Qutub Shahi's Golconda in 1687, ending the Shah's rule and leaving the city in ruins on purpose. The majesty of Golconda's palaces, magazines, stables, mounted cannons, four drawbridges, and eight entrances are all still there. After Aurangzeb's army passed through this gate with great triumph, the outermost enclosure was named Fateh Darwaza, which translates to Victory gate. One of the numerous well-known technical wonders of Golconda is Fateh Darwaza, where one may observe remarkable acoustical phenomena. At a specific spot close to the dome's entrance, clapping your hand causes a reverberation that can be heard clearly from the hilltop pavilion, which is nearly one kilometer distant. Of course, today it entertains tourists, but it once alerted the fort's residents to any approaching danger. The fort is a monument to Hyderabad's illustrious history and an architectural wonder, earning it a prominent position among India's revered heritage buildings.

## MACCA MAJID

Mughal and Qutb Shahi architectural styles have been combined to create the Mecca Masjid in Hyderabad, which is a spectacular example of Indo-Islamic architecture. The design of this structure incorporates aspects from the holy land of Mecca, including a vast prayer hall, elaborate arches, and magnificent minarets. It also demonstrates the meticulous craftsmanship that was used in its construction. The mosque is well-known for having one of the largest prayer halls in India, which has the capacity to accommodate more than 10,000 worshippers. The prayer hall is supported by fifteen intricately carved granite arches, with the central arch being constructed out of bricks originating from Mecca. Tall minarets that are embellished with flowery patterns and inscriptions from the Quran are located on either side of the main entryway. There is a clear indication of the Qutb Shahi style in the delicate flower motifs that have been carved into the arches. The prayer hall is made even more magnificent by the presence of crystal chandeliers imported from Belgium. The tranquillity of a wide courtyard that features a pond and benches makes it an ideal location for contemplation. The tombs of the Asaf Jahi monarchs and their relatives are located within the complex of the mosque. One of the most impressive examples of how Indo-Islamic architectural traditions may be harmoniously combined is the mosque. There is a strong spiritual connection shown by the bricks from Mecca that were utilized in the central arch. The mosque is a historically significant structure that exemplifies the cultural inheritance of the Asaf Jahi dynasty as well as the royal history of Hyderabad. It is not just a place of prayer, but also a notable cultural and historical monument, reflecting the architectural beauty and spiritual depth of Hyderabad. The Mecca Masjid is located in Hyderabad.

## QUTUB SHAHI TOMBS

A complex of magnificent structures housing the remains of the Qutub Shahi rulers, showcasing intricate carvings, domes, and arches. The Qutub Shahi Tombs are a historical necropolis located in Hyderabad, Telangana, India, showcasing stunning Indo-Islamic architecture. Built in the 16th and 17th centuries, these tombs house the remains of the Qutub Shahi dynasty rulers who governed Golconda for nearly 170 years.

**Quli Qutb Shah Tomb:** The mausoleum of Sultan Abdullah Qutb Shah, the sixth Qutb Shahi Dynasty king, is the first structure. I started my tour chronologically, like a good history student. I skipped numerous sites and proceeded straight to Quli Qutb-ul-Mulk's tomb, the Qutb Shahi Dynasty's founder. The Quli Qutb Shah mausoleum, albeit not the tallest, sets the standard for his successors. You see twenty-one unidentified tombs while reaching the elevated cubical platform. Each side has three hanging arches with a hemispherical dome and sharp finial. The building resembles early Bahamian architecture. The central octagonal chamber holds three burials. The tomb's three-band Naskh and Tauq inscription calls the Sultan “Bade Malik” (the Great Master).

**Jamsheed Quli Qutb Shah Tomb:** Jamsheed Quli Qutb Shah, Sultan Quli's second son, successor, and assassin, is buried west of him. No other tomb is like this. The tomb is the most noticeable distinction. Jamsheed Quli's double-story octagonal mausoleum rises on an octagonal base, unlike the others. Domed lotus on finial. It is the only Qutb Shahi mausoleum without reflective black basalt. It is the only Qutb Shah mausoleum without an inscription. Balconies with elegant balustrades protrude from the overlying arches.

**Tomb of Subhan Quli Qutb Shah:** The dynasty's youngest emperor, Subhan Quli Qutb Shah, has the smallest mausoleum. Sultan, known as “Chote Malik” (Little Master), lays between his father, Jamsheed Quli, and grandfather, Sultan Quli. Despite its minor importance, it has three intricate ogee four-centred arches on each side. The one-story building has a striped bulbous dome with a finial and projecting balconies.

**Tomb of Ibrahim Quli Qutb Shah:** The 4th Sultan, Ibrahim Quli Qutb Shah Wali, is buried southwest of his father's monument. A bulbous dome with geometric designs, a finial, and five arches on each side make up the two-story mausoleum. The façade has Indo-Islamic sculptures, patterns, and motifs. Cut-out sinuous elements decorate each base corner. The tomb room, slightly larger than his father's, features two main graves and beautiful frescoed arches on the wall and ceiling. Multicolored painted tiles on the tomb walls make it unique. It combines Bahamani and Golconda architecture. The terrace outside the monument has 16 tombs, perhaps his children and close associates. The casket has a Thuluth inscription.

**The Tomb of Qutb Shah:** The Heritage Park's feature is Sultan Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah's tomb. Hyderabad's founder's 60-metre mausoleum is the royal necropolis' largest and tallest. A tiny water channel goes to the tomb. The construction is double-terraced. Below the terrace is the Sultan's vaulted burial. A bulbous dome serves as a finial. Minarets with onion-shaped domes on finials are below the dome. Projecting balconies connect minarets. The tomb has one story with recessed

bays on either side. Granite pillars and caps, inspired by temple architecture and brackets, distinguish the construction. Central to the room is a Sultan cenotaph. The hall's echoing is another intriguing chamber feature. Persian with Naskh lettering is on the sarcophagus. Muhammad Qutb Shah Tomb: Sultan My favorite part was seeing Muhammad Qutb Shah's grave. The "Azaan" started as I walked through the courtyard to the tomb. The wind was flowing through the tree leaves, and the atmosphere gave me shivers. Two stories make up the 6th Sultan's tomb. The bulbous dome is flanked by projection balconies joined by second-floor minarets with five arches. The first floor is wider and has four minarets connecting the balconies. Lower level contains seven lancet arches. An arching gallery surrounds six Thuluth and Naskh-inscribed burials in the central chamber. Mausoleum facade has enamelled tiles.

Abdullah Qutb Shah Tomb: This is where the tour usually starts. The 7th Sultan of Golconda, Abdullah Qutb Shah, was buried there. The double-story mausoleum has a bulbous dome on a finial like his father's grave. The upper level has tiny minarets on the four projected balcony corners. Small pole-like structures with spherical, strangely shaped domes and finials are also on the intended balconies. Five ornate arches are also there. The four lower minarets have modest black-striped circular domes on each corner. Traces of green and blue tiles remain. Bottom floor features seven ogee-four-centred arches. Last Golconda Sultan mausoleum. The dome-less mausoleum of Sultan Abul Hasan Tana Shah, the last Qutb Shahi Dynasty ruler, is ahead of Sultan Abdullah's. Tana Shah died in Daulatabad after Aurangzeb arrested him. He buried his son-in-law, Nizamuddin Ahmed, in the completed mausoleum. The Sultanate's most prominent woman, Hayat Bakshi Begum, is buried next her husband, Muhammad Qutb Shah. The tomb matches her husband's. The monument includes four majestic minarets and seven arches on each side. Verse-written black basalt sarcophagus. Her mausoleum, called 'Ma Saheba' (Revered Mother), features a mosque and water channel at the entrance. The "Great Masjid" of the Golconda tombs has 15 cupolas on the top and two tall minarets on the prayer hall corners. Inscriptions in calligraphy decorate the mosque. Qutb Shahi Heritage Park has twin graves. Sultan Abdullah's favorite Hakims, Nizamuddin Ahmed Gilani and Abdul Jabbar Gilani, have tombs. Sultan Abdullah Shah's favorite courtesans Premamati and Taramati have another twin mausoleum.

In addition to mausoleums, the necropolis complex has the royal mortuary bath, Shahi Hamam. It faces Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah's tomb and was built by Sultan Quli. The Sultan and other royals were ritually washed in the hamam before burial. The 'Badi Baoli' (large stepwell) embraces the complex. Multifoil arches and underground galleries line the stepwell. It's 250 feet deep, and elephants were employed to fetch water.

## MINIATURE PAINTINGS

Characterized by vibrant colors and intricate details, often depicting court scenes, royal processions, and religious themes. There are miniature paintings that were created during the Qutb Shahi dynasty, which was centered in Golconda. These paintings are distinguished by their vivid colors, precise details, and images of courtly life. These paintings include scenes of nobility, musicians, and dancers. There is a clear indication of Persian influence, particularly in the manner

in which horses and rocks are depicted, whilst the depiction of vegetation and landscapes demonstrates the influence of native inspiration.

- a. Vibrant Colours: Rich, deep blues, greens, and reds are typically included in the paintings, and gold is frequently used to highlight these colors.
- b. Intricate Details: Miniature paintings from this time period are renowned for the extraordinary level of detail that they contain, which demonstrates the artists' level of expertise.
- c. Country Life: Numerous paintings represent scenes of monarchy, including portraits of rulers and scenes of courtly gatherings with singers and dancers. Numerous paintings also depict scenes of courtly life.
- d. Influence of Persian and Local Styles: Persian and local styles have both left their mark on the paintings. While Persian styles are readily obvious, particularly in the depiction of horses and rocks, the paintings also combine local styles in the depiction of plants and landscapes.
- e. Depiction of Animals: Elephants are a popular topic, and they are occasionally depicted in dynamic stances. Other animal studies, on the other hand, use a technique that is less realistic and a "fanciful palette" more frequently.

## OTHER MONUMENTS

Between the two banks of the Musi River, the Purana Pul was another early edifice that was constructed in 1578. Both the Shaikpet Sarai and the Taramati Baradari are examples of the ornate caravanserais or resthouses that were constructed by the Qutb Shahi monarchs' administration. The first one consisted of thirty rooms, stables for horses and camels, a mosque, and the grave of a Sufi saint who was unknown to the public. The Khairtabad Mosque, the Hayat Bakshi Mosque, the Musheerabad Mosque, and the Kulsum Begum Mosque are some of the other mosques that were constructed during this time period. Additionally, the Qutb Shahi monarchs built significant additions to the Gandikota Fort during their occupation. Architecture and various forms of artistic expression flourished in the kingdom during the reigns of succeeding monarchs of the dynasty. In the Deccan sultanates, Ahmednagar is the location of the first school of painting that is still in existence. Palaces such as the Farah Bakhsh Bagh, the Hasht Bihisht Bagh, and the Lakkad Mahal were among the many structures that were constructed, along with tombs, mosques, and other structures. During their rule, numerous forts in the Deccan region, including the fort of Junnar (which was subsequently called Shivneri), Paranda, Ausa, Dharur, and Lohagad, amongst others, underwent significant improvements. Along with being massively fortified and expanded during their reign, Daulatabad, which served as their secondary capital, was also created. An abundance of manuscripts, such as the Tarif-i Husain Shah Badshah-i Dakan, provide evidence that the monarchy placed a significant emphasis on the promotion of literature. As evidenced by the writings of Sabaji Pratapand Bhanudatta, the institution of Sanskrit scholarship was also given a boost during their rule. Soon after its creation, the city of Ahmadnagar, which was established by the Nizam Shahs, was compared to Cairo and Baghdad. This comparison was made within a few years of the city's establishment. The Shi'i ideology of

the dynasty was taken into consideration when designing it, and it was modeled after the major cities of the Persianate world.

## CONCLUSION

Scholars have viewed the Qutb Shahi dynasty as a "Composite" of Muslim and Hindu religious and social practices. People of many various nationalities, faiths, and sects made up the Qutb Shahi Society. They were never one to force their religion on anyone. People of different faiths and sects were instead granted full freedom. In all affairs of state, their subjects were afforded equal opportunity. Nobility from all walks of life and faiths filled every office in the government. The patronage of Telugu poets was very generous under the Qutb Shahi dynasty. His court exemplified a harmonious community where poets and scholars of both Hindu and Muslim faiths enjoyed equal standing. Not only was this doctrine extended to religious institutions, but it was also extended to affairs of state and administration. An integral part of the Qutb Shahi Kingdom was the fact that the Sufis of that time belonged to both Muslim sects. All of them advocated for a liberal worldview, and their teachings and actions reflected that. All of them were patronized by the Qutb Shahs. Some Qutb Shahi rulers formed marriage ties with Sufis, disregarding the conventions of the period. In order to foster religious concord and a sense of brotherhood in society, the Qutb Shahs utilized religious festivals. It is noteworthy to note that the diverse society of the Qutub Shahi Kingdom was able to become more integrated due to the persistent efforts of the Qutub Shahs and their support of both Muslim and Hindu institutions during their reign. In the pursuit of a multicultural society in which all people may live in peace and harmony, these policies redirected popular emotion and had far-reaching effects on people's political, social, economic, and cultural lives. The Charminar, a valuable gem of Hyderabad and a source of national pride for India, is the beating heart of the city. It is a symbol of the city's rich history and culture. For the purpose of paying tribute to the majesty of the Sultanate, the Qutb Shahi Dynasty presented it as a gift. This massive specimen of Indo-Islamic architecture is known as a Charminar, which literally translates to "four minarets" and provides a history of the monument. The Charminar is home to the oldest mosque that has ever been built in the "City of Nizams." Residents and organizations affiliated with the government need to work together in order to ensure that the architectural and cultural significance of the two locations is maintained.

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