

Architectural Legacy of Zīb Al-Nisā' : Patron of First Mughal Woman Architect



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Abstract: *The Standpoint Theory, a principle in the field of women's studies, asserts that individuals in positions of authority have the ability to shape the prevailing knowledge within a society. As a result, individuals who have been historically excluded or underrepresented, especially in the realm of generating information, have been ignored or marginalised.*

The architectural contributions of Queen Nūrjahān and Princess Jahānāra Begum highlight the presence of highly skilled women in several professions, particularly building, within our region's history. Unfortunately, the contributions of these individuals are seldom highlighted or thoroughly examined, resulting in the loss of valuable historical information due to the existence of erroneous claims and irresponsible judgements.

Zīb al-Nisā', the eldest and most beloved daughter, engaged in a power struggle with her father to preserve the authority and influence that her predecessor had possessed. Aurangzīb exerted full dominion over both the government and the religious sphere, solidifying his position as an absolute ruler. He adhered rigorously to a traditional interpretation of Islam. This not only hinders the progress of female empowerment but also undermines the arts in general. Notwithstanding the challenges faced by the female court during the Aurangzīb era, erudite, enlightened, and well-informed women of the Mughal court persisted in making significant contributions and leaving a lasting impact on Mughal architectural history.

Keywords: Mughal Women, Zīb al-Nisā', Mughal Architecture, Chauburji

1. Introduction

This study investigates the influence of women on architecture throughout history, encompassing their roles as both architects and benefactors of architectural projects. Furthermore, it highlights research that specifically addresses gender-related topics within the field of architectural studies. Women have been pivotal in the field of architecture and have consistently encountered opposition in the traditional narratives of art and architectural

history, despite their noteworthy accomplishments. Women have faced gender prejudices, including being barred from engaging in construction activities beyond personal use, having restricted opportunities for architectural education, and not receiving recognition when they challenge society conventions by constructing public buildings. The objective is not solely to analyse buildings erected by a woman, but to investigate and recognise the presence of her financial backing. Moreover, there has been a longstanding

assumption that women lacked the necessary means and legal status to initiate construction projects. However, recent research is currently disproving this belief. This study seeks to evaluate the architectural heritage that Mughal women established during the Aurangzib Era, serving as a testament to their role as benefactors and potentially even creators, thereby offering evidence of their socioeconomic standing.

Historically, the attribution of architecture to its designer or architect was infrequent. However, its main purpose was to serve as a commemoration of either a person or an event, and the benefactor who financed it was thus disinclined to receive any acknowledgment. Hence, it is unsurprising that there exist a scarcity of well-documented cases of female architects throughout the entirety of Islamic civilization's history. Male architects, while being the prominent figures in the field, were hardly acknowledged, except for a few highly regarded architects or in specific culturally sophisticated nations with robust artistic customs, such as the Ottomans and Tamurids. Uncovering evidence of a female architect from the Mughal era inside the complex narratives of historically biased reports controlled by men is a major advancement in the examination of women in architecture.

2. Research Design

Researching the artistic works of women during the pre-modern era is tough due to the scarcity of visual and textual resources. Artistic creations crafted by individuals with less power or authority sometimes fail to stand the test of time and are subsequently disregarded in the conversation. Therefore, in order to examine the connection between gender and sexuality in the visual arts, it is necessary to conduct a thorough examination of traditional sources. This study entails the use of diagnostic tools and procedures, as well as a commitment to reassessing multiple established conventions of art and architecture history. The retrieval of evidence from preexisting sources can solely be accomplished with this approach (Watenpaugh, 2013). Furthermore, individuals can explore nontraditional sources, such as esoteric biographies, to uncover relevant details

regarding the topic. Subsequently, this data can be juxtaposed and scrutinised in conjunction with additional visual and textual resources (Watenpaugh, 2005). The aim of this study is to comprehensively analyse various sources that address gender-related subjects that are possibly relevant to the study of art and architecture. The objective of this work is to provide solutions to three fundamental inquiries, specifically:

- Are there any examples in Mughal history of women engaging in architectural pursuits? If such is the case, what was their specific function within those projects?
- How did Princess Zib al-Nisa' incorporate their legacy into architecture?
- What were the specific circumstances and cultural traditions that not only permitted but also enabled Mughal ladies and their female advisers to freely showcase their artistic talents via the medium of Architecture?

To address these issues and construct a coherent argument and structure, the literature for this inquiry was chosen based on three key themes. The primary focus of this issue revolves around the scholarly works produced by historians who specialise in the gender-sensitive examination of Mughal architecture. The second theme only concerns the conservation of architectural relics. The latter investigates the socio-political and cultural factors that contributed to the empowerment of women. Thus, the literature explores the way of life of women linked to that specific era of the dynasty.

2.1 Type of Research

With the specific focus on the Greater Mughal period, this research predominantly utilises qualitative methodologies to elucidate the fundamental factors that contributed to the underappreciated occurrence of female participation in architecture during the Mughal era.

2.2 Scope and Limitations

This study focuses on documenting the historical contributions of women who have acted as patrons and influences in the domain of

Mughal architecture. This will cover the contributions made by the royal Mughal women and their female acquaintances throughout Aurangzīb's reign. It will highlight the various aspects of their supervision, control, and support. This study will specifically exclude female architects who were employed by monarchs other than the Mughals throughout the designated timeframe, as well as female architects who worked prior to or during the Zīb al-Nisā' era. The research will exclusively concentrate on the historical facets of these sites and will not encompass any measures pertaining to their conservation or preservation.

2.3 Importance of Study

This study posits that when a woman endorses and advances something, it signifies her autonomy and significance as an intellectual and member of the human society, drawing from the research conducted by feminist scholars such as Fāṭimah Mernissi, Leslie Peirce, and D. Fairchild Ruggles. Moreover, the records of favouritism provide insight into the societal stratifications that moulded and impacted the experiences of women in previous times. Remarkably, these divisions have displayed enduring resilience as they persistently impose burdens on women and gender-related issues even in the present period. Hence, it is imperative to examine the correlation between women's support and their visibility, even in the contemporary era.

3. Findings

3.1 Zīb al-Nisā' Begum

Zīb al-Nisā', meaning the "Ornament of Womankind," was the eldest child of Prince Muḥī al-Dīn (Aurangzīb) and his first wife and principal consort, Dilras Bānū Begum. She was born on February 15, 1638, in Daulatabad, Deccan. Despite their theological differences, she was widely considered to be his favourite. The education of the emperor's kin was given the highest attention, as expected. She possesses a mysterious and profound intellect and often creates deeply moving poems in the Persian language. Because of Aurangzīb's unwavering commitment to orthodoxy, he disapproved of poetry. Consequently, she adopted the pseudonym Makhfi, which signifies "Hidden One," and frequently engaged in clandestine writing. For additional details, please consult Figure 1. She exhibited an extensive mastery of Persian, Urdu, and Arabic (Mukherjee, 2001, p. 179). Throughout the latter two decades of her existence, she was confined by her father. There

are differing opinions regarding the origin of her downfall. Some claim that it was due to her alleged romantic relationship with an inappropriate partner, while others attribute it to her association with her brother, who had rebelled against Aurangzīb. Some people attribute it to a particular incident in which she assisted the Maratha leader Shivaji in fleeing Aurangzīb (Ibid, p. 156).

However, the Princess, who was meant for a remarkable future, following in the footsteps of her aunt Jahānāra, endured a sorrowful existence and made the decision to remain unmarried throughout her life. This was due to the cancellation of her marriage to Shikōh's son, which occurred as a result of the succession conflict. She ultimately perished of natural causes in solitary confinement within the prison, while Aurangzīb was out on a journey to Deccan (Khaleeq, 1905). Zīb al-Nisā' had a secretive life, intentionally kept away from the public eye, likely because of the perception that her thoughts and intelligence were a threat to the Emperor's politically motivated religious beliefs. However, it is reported that upon hearing the news of Zīb al-Nisā', Aurangzīb wept and promptly commanded her burial in Ta'izz Hazari Bāgh, where an exquisite tomb was constructed, complete with a red stone mosque. According to reports, when the British constructed the railway line, they relocated her burial, together with its original tombstone, to Akbar's mausoleum at Sikandra, Agra. Additionally, the entire original edifice was completely demolished. In his 1869 book "Qīṣaṣ al-Hind" ("Stories of India"), Shamas al-Ulamā Muḥammad Ḥusayn Azad recounts his visit to the tomb and states that he personally funded the restoration of a section of the bala khana (top storey). Maulana describes it as an exquisite, tranquil, and harmonious structure, as depicted in Figure 2. (Chughtāi Museum, 2016).



Figure 1 Dīwān-i Zīb al-Nisā' Makhfi ca. 1700. Retrieved

from:

<https://lib.utah.edu/collections/rarebooks/exhibits/past/MessengerOfThought.php>

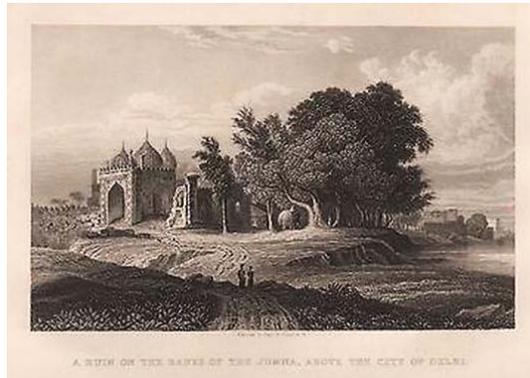


Figure 2 Perhaps the mausoleum of Zīb al-Nisā', Delhi. Source: <https://www.antiq-prints.de/index.php?lang=ENG&list=KAT20>

3.2 Chauburji, Lahore, Pakistan (1646)

The term 'Chauburji' in Urdu translates to "Four Towers". The Chauburji gate is the last surviving element of a vast garden that has completely vanished. Over time, the garden's aesthetic appeal diminished as a result of both neglect and natural disasters. During the 19th century, the monument had deteriorated to some extent, as it had suffered damage from an earthquake in 1846, resulting in the loss of its northwest tower. Please refer to Figure 3 for visual reference. In the 1960s, the Department of Archaeology repaired the damaged tower and restored several remaining sections of the monument, as depicted in Figure 4. Chauburji is constructed using a distinctive blend of architectural elements, including Shāhjahāni Mughal, Timurid, and Perso-Arabic styles. The defining characteristic of this structure is its tall minarets, which widen at the top and bear resemblance to the ancient Timurid tradition, a feature not found anywhere in the sub-continent. The eastern and western facades have two-storey Timurid-style iwans, accompanied by two levels of alcoves in the classic Shāhjahāni architecture, all in line with the same theme. According to reports, the structure was adorned with elaborate blue and green Kashikari tile work and paintings. Some vestiges of this ornamentation may still be seen on the uninjured side of the monument. The iwans are adorned with Persian muqarnas as well. The building features red brickwork, which is characteristic of the early Mughal style. The extant inscriptions on Chauburji comprise Ayat al-Kursi inscribed in Arabic script, situated in the uppermost section of the edifice adorned with blue tile

craftsmanship (Akhtar, 2020).



Figure 3 Chauburji, Lahore in 1930 Source: <http://lahore.city-history.com/chauburji.html#&qid=1&pid=1>



Figure 4 Chauburji, Lahore. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pict._by_Aasil_Atif_-_Chauburji_Lahore.JPG

3.2.1 Uncertainty about the sponsorship of Chauburji garden

The inscription on the gate confirms that the date is 1056 AH (1646) and credits it to "Sahib-i Zībinda Begum-i Dauran". The full inscription reads (also see Figure 5):

"This garden, in the pattern of the garden of paradise, has been founded...

(the second line has been effaced)

*The garden has been bestowed on Miā Bā'ī
By the bounty of Zībinda a Begum, the lady of
the age". (Akhtar, 2020)*

.....
بنا پذیر شد این باغ روضه رضوان
بگشت مرحمت ابن باغ بر میا بانی
ز لطف صاحب زبنده بیگم دوران

Figure 5 Extract from Taḥqīqāt-i Chishti Source:

Syad Muḥammad Laṭīf, a historian from the 19th century, had the belief that Miā Bā'ī was the preferred female attendant of Zīb al-Nisā' Begum. In the inscription, Zīb al-Nisā' Begum's name has been altered to Zebinda Begum for artistic purposes. In his book *Tahqīqāt-i Chishti*, Maulwi Nūr Aḥmad Chishtī recounts a similar incident found in the *Shāhjahānāma*. The narrator states that a garden was designed for Zīb al-Nisā' Begam, with the oversight entrusted to a woman named Miā Bā'ī. On the day the princess intended to assess the garden's development, she inadvertently overheard someone mentioning her imminent visit to Miā Bā'ī's garden. The garden being referred to as 'Miā Bā'ī's garden' displeased the princess, prompting her to offer the garden to Miā Bā'ī. Please consult Figure 6.

باغ چوری

(ص ۵۷۰) کتاب شاہجان نامہ معتمد نظام الدولہ میں مندرج ہے کہ جب وہ باغ زیب النساء نے جو اب مقام چوری مشہور ہے معرفت میا بی بی وادہ تعمیر کرایا تو ایک روز زیب النساء واسطے دیکھنے اس باغ کے آئی۔ راست میں سنا کہ انخاص عام و خاص کہ رہے ہیں کہ زیب النساء واسطے دیکھنے باغ آیا وادہ چلی ہے۔ اس استماع سے گونہ رنجیدہ ہو کر دل میں خیال کیا کہ اس باغ سے میری ناموری نہ ہوئی۔ اب یہ ہی مناسب ہے کہ بروقت چھپتے در باغ کے جو کوئی مجھ کو دعائے عافیت بخیر دے یہ باغ اس کو عطا کروں۔ اللہ جب باغ پر پیشی تو اتفاقاً "میا بی بی نے استقبال کر کے دعائے عافیت بخیر دی۔ شہزادی نے حسب شرط وہ باغ اسی کو عطا کر دیا اور خود بنا دیکھنے باغ کے واپس ہو آئی۔ یہ ذکر دروازہ باغ مذکور یعنی چوری کے اوپر لکھ میں تحریر ہے۔ بعد ازاں یہ باغ جس میں اب موضع ٹوال کوٹ کہلا ہے تعمیر کرایا۔

Figure 6 Extract from *Tahqīqāt-i Chishti* Source: <https://www.rekhta.org/ebooks/tahqiqat-e-chishti-tareekh-e-lahore-ka-inciclopedia-noor-ahmad-chishti-ebooks-1>

In 1964, a publication by the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Pakistan, determined that Zīb al-Nisā', due to her age of eight in 1646, could not have been the patron of the garden. Hence, this idea was eliminated. According to archaeologist Muḥammad Waliullah Khān, it is hypothesised that Princess Jahānāra is the likely person who commissioned the garden (Khan, 1964). Furthermore, Waliullah proposes that, in contrast to Laṭīf's belief that 'Miā Bā'ī' was a maid, it is more reasonable to consider her as a woman of high social standing. This is supported by the fact that her name is accompanied by the prestigious title 'Fakhrunnisa' (the pride of women), making it highly improbable that she belonged to a lower social class.

Given the absence of any other references to the garden in other historical texts, one might analyse the circumstantial evidence to arrive at a

likely conclusion. In March 1644, Jahānāra experienced a mishap resulting in severe burns. Consequently, she dedicated the entirety of the next year to her recuperation. Given that the tragedy occurred in Delhi, it is reasonable to infer that she did not engage in extensive travel in the year 1645. After her recovery around 1646, the princess embarked on a journey to the shrine of Mu'īn al-Dīn Chishtī in Ajmer. If the completion date of the garden was also 1646, it implies that the garden was being built before that time. This construction took place while she was experiencing significant physical stress, and it is conceivable that she may not have been primarily interested in undertaking a self-serving project such as the creation of a private luxury garden, especially in a city where she did not reside.

Regarding Zīb al-Nisā', it is established that she had already completed the memorization of the Qur'ān by the age of seven in the year 1645. Her father commemorated the achievement by hosting a lavish banquet and declaring a public holiday throughout his realm. Zīb al-Nisā' received a reward of 30,000 gold pieces from her father, who was pleased with her (Lal & Westbrook, 1913, p. 7). An additional 30,000 gold pieces were given to her tutor, 'ustani bi', a highly esteemed and renowned courtier who held a prominent position (Raman, 2009). These tales describe how Zīb al-Nisā' was supported by influential women in the court and had the financial resources to create a garden in her honour. It is possible that she was being mentored by a career-oriented court woman who aimed to groom Zīb al-Nisā' into a powerful princess, similar to her aunt Jahānāra.

Another hint might be derived from the fact that the garden was built at Lahore, which was under the governance of her paternal uncle, the crown prince Dārā Shikōh, at that time. According to reports, Zīb al-Nisā' was engaged to Prince Sulaiman Shikōh, who was the son of Dārā Shikōh and her grandpa, Emperor Shāhjahān. Therefore, it was natural for her to be inclined towards the reign of her strong uncle. In addition, the choice of garden location can also be rationalised by the expectation that, as the daughter of a prince, she would keep her projects far from Delhi and Agra, which were the centres of real power during the reign of Shah Jahan. This was unlike the initiatives supported by the Padshah Begum of that time. In addition, it is improbable that a mature and sophisticated Padshāh Begum like Jahānāra would respond with envy towards her contractor Miā Bā'ī.

The aforementioned circumstances existing at the time of the garden's completion suggest that it would be unjustifiable to disregard the claims made in classical texts solely based on Zīb al-Nisā's young age. This should not be considered a sufficient reason to deny credit to a highly skilled princess like Zīb al-Nisā. Given that oral traditions held a holy status in eastern cultures, it is crucial for modern scholars to handle anecdotal data with great care and refrain from disregarding it as insignificant hearsay.

3.3 The sole documented female architect in the field of Mughal Architecture

An interesting aspect of the Chauburgi narrative is that Miā Bā'ī could potentially be regarded as the first documented female architect/builder in Mughal history, as she was referred to as a "supervisor" of a construction project, which is precisely how mediaeval architects were officially defined in historical records. The building's designer evidently intended to establish her identity, as evidenced by the prominent yellow inscription on the southern tower proclaiming her name and role as the builder of the structure (Figure 7). The inscription reads, '... Because Miā Bā'ī erected this wonderful shrine'.

بازوئے عمارتِ خلی کے کتبہ پر جسکی رنگ میں بھفظ علی ایک بیت موجود ہے، جس کا ایک یہ مصرع پڑھا جاتا ہے۔

ساخت میا بائی چون روشد عالی ارم

Figure 7 Extract from *Tahqīqāt-i Chishti* Source: <https://www.rekhta.org/ebooks/tahqiqat-e-chishti-tareekh-e-lahore-ka-inciclopedia-noor-ahmad-chishti-ebooks-1>

Therefore, it is not unreasonable to designate Miā Bā'ī as the architect of Chauburji garden, since this can also account for its particular visual aesthetics and unique architectural design. According to certain sources, there are reports suggesting that 'Miya Ba'ī' was a knowledgeable woman who was engaged as a tutor for the princess. If this is accurate, it indicates that she has the necessary skills and qualifications to undertake an architectural project.

3.4 Tomb in Nawan Kot, Lahore, Pakistan (1669)

Maulwi Chishti asserts that Zīb al-Nisā, having already bestowed Chauburgi garden upon Miā Bā'ī, directed the establishment of a fresh garden in Nawan Kot, situated in close proximity to Lahore (see to Figure 8 & 9). Within this garden, she also commissioned a sepulchre specifically

meant for her own burial. Nevertheless, as a consequence of destiny, her father's directions resulted in her burial in Delhi instead. The Punjab archaeology department has documented the existence of anonymous burial sites within the tomb. In contrast, there are stories suggesting that one of the burials is ascribed to Hāji 'Abd al-Karīm. The tomb's ornate features and components have been removed by Sikh plunderers, who took its rich materials for their own memorials. As a result, the tomb is now bereft of these decorative elements. The mausoleum showcases a notable dome that is supported by a square drum and transforms into a curving pyramidal structure on the outside, while the interior adopts a spherical dome shape. The structure is raised on a brick platform, showcasing a central cusped arch encompassed by cusped arch insets on either side. The tomb maintains its original flooring composed of white and black marble, commonly referred to as Sang-i Bādal.

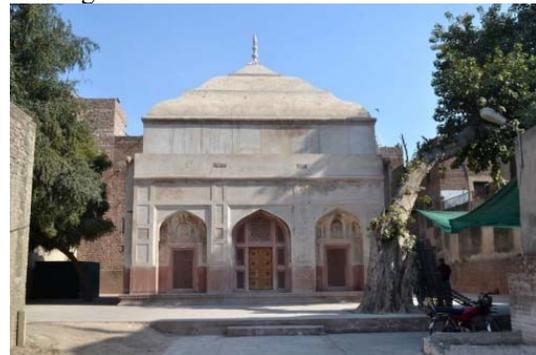


Figure 8 "Tomb in Nawan Kot" Lahore. Source: <https://archaeology.punjab.gov.pk/tomb-zaibunnissa>



Figure 9 "Tomb in Nawan Kot" Lahore. Source: <https://archaeology.punjab.gov.pk/tomb-zaibunnissa>

3.5 Zīb al-Nisā' Palace, Aurangabad

Aurangabad city, originally named Khadke, was assimilated into the Mughal Empire in 1637. Aurangzīb, the Mughal Emperor, relocated his court to Aurangabad in 1681-2 and established it as his strategic military headquarters for operations in the Deccan region. The city was

renamed in 1707 as a tribute to Aurangz̄ib upon his death. Aurangabad, as the centre of authority, witnessed the finest illustrations of Mughal Architecture under the reign of Aurangz̄ib. In the 1880s, Deen Dayal captured an image of a palace in Aurangabad, which he correctly recognised as the Palace of Z̄ib al-Nisā', the daughter of Aurangz̄ib. This may be shown in Figure 10. Regrettably, the aforementioned palace in Ta'izz no longer exists, and the only remaining evidence of its existence is a photograph. The origin of the building is uncertain, as it is unclear if the princess herself commissioned it or if it was given to her by her father. The photo reveals a grand palace characterised by its towering structure and a magnificent garden adorned with exceptional water features.



Figure 10 Palace of Z̄ib al-Nisā', Aurangabad, Maharashtra. Photograph taken by Deen Dayal in the 1880s, Curzon Collection: 'Views of HH the Nizām's Dominions, Hyderabad, Deccan, 1892' Source=http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00routesdata/1600_1699/aurangzeb/aurangabad/aurangabad.html

3.6 Travelling Ā'inah tent of Z̄ib al-Nisā' (1679)

Z̄ib al-Nisā' is attributed with numerous innovations, one of which pertains to architecture - a portable tent referred to as the Ā'inah (mirror) tent. It is thought that she commissioned this tent for her private use in 1679. This was the inaugural specimen and was crafted from abrak (mica). Figure 11 displays couplets composed by Naimat Khān Aali to extol the tent. (Chughtāi Museum, 2016). Figure 12 depicts the utilisation of mica in contemporary interiors to enhance the visibility of the renowned tent.



Figure 11 Ā'inah tent of Z̄ib al-Nisā', Source: Manuscript of Naimat Khān. Courtesy: Chughtai Museum Lahore.



Figure 12 Use of Mica in modern Interiors. Source: https://avanistudios.com/dt_gallery/floors-ceilings/

4. Discussions

Several extensive studies were carried out in the late 19th and 20th centuries, specifically examining the historical narratives of women in Islamic nations. Scholars have examined the topic of women in several domains, including national identity, colonialism, social status, modernism, and sociological and economic progress. According to these studies, researchers, both Muslim and non-Muslim, have agreed that the approach used for Western studies should not be blindly used while studying women's history in the Eastern context. While there has been a recent emphasis on investigating the experiences of Muslim women, it is important to highlight that only a small number of researchers have specifically explored this subject in the context of architecture and visual culture (Ruggles, 2000).

The objective of this research is to rectify this oversight through an analysis and comparison of the architectural assistance rendered by women throughout the Mughal dynasty, with respect to

the historical principles of women's representation and empowerment. An examination of the annals of Mughal history reveals that structures benevolently commissioned by women and frequently bearing their names implies that the patroness exerted some influence over the depiction. In contrast to structures commissioned by men, those commissioned by women showcased a discernible viewpoint. The architectural chronicles of this area document a multitude of occurrences in which women actively participated in the field, showcasing their robust uniqueness and influential status in moulding the dominant aesthetic of the era (Ibid.). The purpose of this investigation is to ascertain the manner in which a patroness is portrayed in these structures. This entails an analysis of the patroness's influence on the physical creation, the way she is portrayed in inscriptions, and the degree of prominence or anonymity she retains in the eyes of the general public. The classification of several structures commissioned by women as acts of charity is unmistakable. The way in which these initiatives serve as physical reminders of the charitable organisation should be duly considered. Ruggles (2000) asserts that the structure serves as a symbolic representation of its contributors and attains public acknowledgement, a status that is denied to the woman herself.

The most thoroughly investigated aspect of the relationship between architecture and women throughout the history of Islamic art and architecture is the study of women's patronage. As benefactors, unquestionably, a substantial number of women contributed significantly to the development of art and architecture. Significant advancements were documented in the 1993 special issue of *Asian Art*, titled "Patronage by Women in Islamic Art." Furthermore, the essays showcased in the scholarly volume *Women, Patronage, and Self-Representation in Islamic Societies* (Ruggles, 2000) effectively exemplify the research undertaken in this specific domain. These aforementioned studies, in addition to others undertaken during this era, focused on the financial means and sway of these women. Consequently, they dispense significant perspectives regarding the societal status and financial welfare of women in a specific nation. Particular disciplines, such as Ottoman history, have witnessed the emergence of a considerable corpus of knowledge and groundbreaking scholarly findings. Prominent scholars who have undertaken unparalleled investigations into the

historical experiences of Ottoman women include, among others, Ülkü Bates, Tülay Artan, and Lucienne Thys-Senocak. As demonstrated by Lucienne Thys-Senocak, the restrictions imposed on the upper class's mobility and exposure during the Ottoman Empire prompted the creation of particular architectural solutions. One can observe an empirical manifestation of this assertion at the Yeni Valide mosque complex situated in Eminönü, Istanbul. In the late 1500s, a notable pavilion was situated, providing Hatice Turhan, the imperial mother, with expansive views of the harbour and surrounding urban areas from its windows. Ellison Banks Findly's research on the patronage of Nūrjahān (1577–1645) revealed how Nūrjahān, in her capacity as a Padshāh Begum or Lady King, adeptly integrated Persian and Hindu architectural elements to construct tombs, mosques, and caravanserais (Findly, 1993).

Conclusion

During the reign of Shhjahān, Mughal architecture achieved its pinnacle. As a result, ladies during the Aurangzib period appear to be seeking to resuscitate architectural styles, much like the early Mughal era women did when they introduced funeral building to the subcontinent. Various architectural styles influenced by various locations of the Muslim world were regaining favour. Chauburji exhibits the merging of Timurid architecture, which is frequent in Gawhar Shād supported constructions, with Persian and Mughal architectural styles.

Art and architecture history conducts extensive research, documentation, and analysis of Mughal architecture. These historical investigations primarily centre on male subjects, except for Empress Nūrjahān. History has paid considerable homage to her due to the extraordinary and indispensable contributions she made to the architectural landscape of her era. However, these studies present Nūrjahān as an anomaly or an occurrence that deviates from the norm, whereas the empirical results of this investigation demonstrate otherwise. This study seeks to challenge this idea by illustrating that Zīb al-Nisā' and her peers, even during the negative rule of Aurangzīb, actively participated in self-representation through their support of architectural projects. This action not only corresponds with the extensive historical practice of women supporting architecture in the wider Muslim community, but also underscores the anticipated character of such undertakings. In line with their male counterparts, women

engaged in the construction of structures to further their political and religious ambitions, in addition to for practical and ideological reasons. Consequently, this bestows immortality upon their names within the chronicles of architectural history. However, it is worth noting that official historical records often suggest that the noteworthy architectural accomplishments of women during each era were frequently eclipsed by the projects that were backed by their male counterparts.

Many excellent architectural examples are excluded or devalued purely because of the patron's gender, which not only hinders the study of architecture and history but also has larger consequences for comprehending women's roles in the modern world. Perceptions formed by collective human memory impact the socio-cultural environment that modern women must navigate in the present and future.

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