

ANTHONY WELCH

THE SHRINE OF THE HOLY FOOTPRINT IN DELHI

The Mughal emperor Awrangzeb (1658–1707) was fiercely passionate about his own brand of justice, and he liked to dispense it. After overthrowing and imprisoning his father Shah Jahan (1628–58) and disposing of three brothers, a son, and a nephew, he set out to make his accession to the imperial throne an event to be remembered by lawbreakers: five hundred thieves were brought before the walls of the shrine of Qadam Sharif (the Shrine of the Holy Footprint) in Delhi and executed. The event made a big impression on the Venetian physician Niccolo Manucci, long resident at the Mughal court:

[The emperor] well knew that liberality and generosity are necessary to a prince; but if not accompanied by justice and sufficient vigor they are useless; rather do they serve to the perverse as occasion for greater insolence. . . . Thus, after the festival, he sent an order to decapitate five hundred thieves, thereby terrorizing the perverse. These executions were to take place in front of the mosque called Cadam Racul (Qadam-i Rasul) — that is to say, "Footsteps of the Sent" — because it has a stone on which two footmarks are cut, for which the Mahomedans have great veneration.¹

Manucci's fleeting reference is to the Qadam Sharif, built to shelter an impression of the Prophet's foot in a block of stone. It was one of the most sacred and visited pilgrimage sites in seventeenth-century Delhi, and Manucci's comment is the first clear reference to it since its founding in the fourteenth century. With its relic of the Prophet — Islam's preeminent ruler, lawgiver, and judge — the shrine was a fitting location for Awrangzeb to underscore in copious blood his understanding of the connection between imperial power and divine law. One hundred and eighty six years after the five hundred heads rolled in front of the shrine, it turns up again. In 1844 Sir Thomas Metcalfe, the British Resident at the court of the last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah (1837–58), compiled an illustrated manuscript for his daughter Emily, born in India in 1830 but sent home to England for schooling when she was five. For his now fourteen-year-old child, her father wrote an account of Delhi and its historic architecture and hired accomplished Indian artists to provide watercolors of build-

ings, people, landscapes, ceremonies, flora, and fauna. His *Reminiscences of Imperial Dehlie* was an enticing book designed to prepare Emily for her return to India and her father's home three years later.² Relying on local historians for his information, Metcalfe presents a text that pays more attention to colorful histories than to individual Delhi buildings, but the illustrations are documents of primary importance.³ Metcalfe was fascinated by the founding of what his nineteenth-century sources called "the *dargāh*" (a saint's shrine) and by the relic that made it sacred and suitably exotic, though he brings his account carefully to a close with a self-righteous demonstration of British rectitude and power:

The Durgah Qudum Shureef or Shrine of the Holy Foot is situated about one mile to the n.w. of Dahly. It is so denominated from a Slab within the Building said to bear the impression of the Foot Print of the Mohummudan Prophet Mahomet.

The Tradition is that in the time of the Emperor Feroze Shah — about five centuries ago — a celebrated Devotee and a Disciple of the Emperor's was deputed to Mecca (to which all True Mohummadans are bound to make one Pilgrimage, if they hope for Salvation) to obtain from the Caliph of that Place a Khillut or Dress of Honor.

The boon was granted, and in addition as a mark of high consideration, the Slab in question was also consigned to the Care of the Devotee.

It was brought to Dahly. The Emperor and all his nobles proceeded to a distance of 15 Miles from the City to do Honor to this precious Relic. It was escorted with much Pomp and finally deposited by order of the Emperor in the Royal Treasury. Subsequently, the prince Futteh Khan, a son of the Emperor, having been permitted to select from the Treasury what he deemed most valuable, claimed possession of the Relic. The Emperor refused to bestow it, considering it as his own exclusive Property, but decreed that it should be placed over the Remains of the one who should first demise.

To the Prince's lot it fell and the Emperor fulfilled his Promise and around the Grave has arisen the celebrated Shrine commenced by Feroze Shah but enlarged and embellished by successive kings and men of piety.

Originally it was intended to form the Sepulchre of only men of exalted Rank or of great Sanctity. In modern times but few of either are to be found and consequently the exclusiveness has been much entrenched upon. Of those of later days who have been interred there was the Nawab Shumsoodin Khan of Ferozepoor who instigated the mur-

der of the lamented Wm. Fraser. His body having been conveyed direct to the Shrine from the scaffold on which he met an ignominious Death.⁴

If Metcalfe's words all but ignore the architecture, the illustration does not (fig. 1). A marble-paved courtyard is flanked by pillared arcades with remnants of stone railings along the roof line and with ribbed domes at the ends. In the center is a polygonal structure, and through the doorway can be seen a cenotaph covered with a cloth. The entrance is brilliantly decorated in floral patterns, and four *chhatris* (cupolas resting on pillars) with four-sided pyramidal domes stand over each side. While the rest of the structure is painted white, a dull gray wall circles the tomb's base, and the tiny human guard to the right implies that this wall and the whole complex were of great size and height, though the wall is, in fact, only 140 cm high.

Two years later in his *Athar al-Sanadid*, the great Urdu scholar, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, is far more informative about the actual complex of buildings that constituted Qadam Sharif:

This famous dargah is the tomb of Prince Fateh Khan, son of Firoz Shah. He died in 776 (1374) and was buried here. His father had a school, a mosque, and other buildings built around this tomb. A great tank was also dug near its enclosing wall; it is still intact. It is said that as a result of some miracle, footprints of the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad were permanently made in stone slabs and one of them bearing a footprint of the Prophet was brought to India, and this stone was placed at the grave of his son by Firoz as a mark of sanctity. Hence it became famous as the

Qadam-Sharif. A tank with marble screen around it has been built near it. The footprint of the Prophet is washed by its water which is collected as sanctified and taken away by the visitors. An annual fair is held here on the 12th of Rabi^c al-awwal. Thousands of Malang Faqirs assemble and perform ecstasies in front of its gate.⁵

According to Sayyid Ahmad Khan, who also calls it a *dargah*, the Qadam Sharif, founded in the fourteenth century, was a repository of spiritual power and popular adulation during the reigns of Shah Jahan and Awrangzeb, and continued to be a major pilgrimage center in the nineteenth century when the relic's blessed run-off water was dispensed to the faithful. It was also part of a far larger architectural complex than Metcalfe indicates: it included a *maktab* (school), mosque, *baoli* (water tank), and other buildings. Standing in the same spot inside the shrine, the artist Mirza Shah Rukh Bek corroborates in his picture (fig. 2) much of the information in Metcalfe's illustration: the domes are ribbed; the railing is intact; the halls depend upon massive single and double piers; the entrance to the tomb is ornate and wrapped around with the same circular wall. Three of the *chhatris* are sharply delineated; the dome of the fourth is ineptly shown as if it were a peaked roof. People can be seen in the pillared halls, and a figure stands just inside the tomb's doorway; they create a less grandiose and far more accurate human scale than the picture from Metcalfe's *Reminiscences*.

Late-twentieth-century Delhi finds the shrine of Qadam Sharif much altered, both from these nineteenth-century representations and from its origins un-

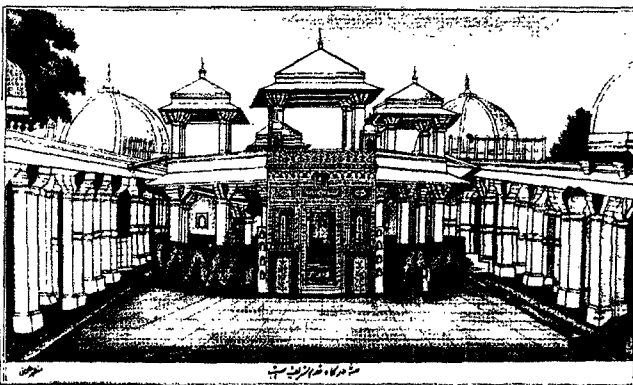


Fig. 1. Shrine of Qadam Sharif. Artist unknown. Illustration for Thomas Metcalfe's *Reminiscences of Imperial Delhi*. (Photo: from Sonia Lochner, "Ruins of Power: Picturesque Portraits of Sultanate Architecture," M.A. thesis, University of Victoria, 1990)

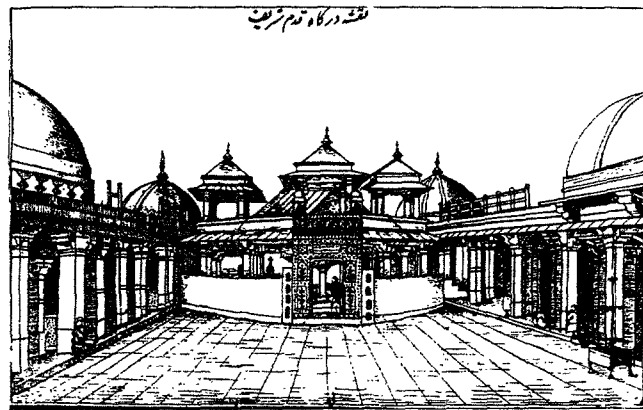


Fig. 2. The Shrine of Qadam Sharif. Illustration by Mirza Shah Rukh Bek for Sayyid Ahmad Khan's *Āthār al-sanādīd*. (Photo: from Sonia Lochner, "Ruins of Power: Picturesque Portraits of Sultanate Architecture," M.A. thesis, University of Victoria, 1990)

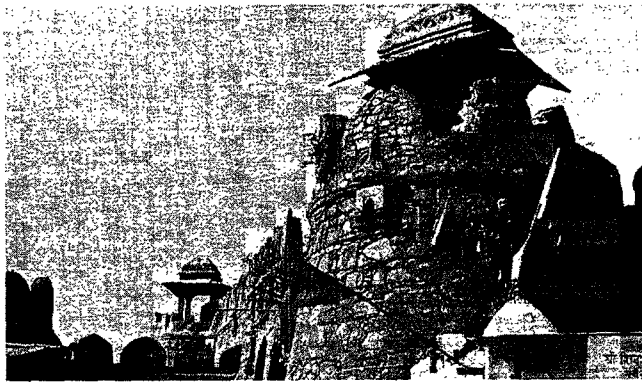


Fig. 3. Shrine of Qadam Sharif. View of south wall. (Photo: from T. Yamamoto et al., *Delhi: Architectural Remains of the Sultanate Period* [Tokyo, 1968–70], vol. 1, M. 0.8, pl. 149b)

der Sultan Firuz Shah (1351–88), the third ruler of the Tughluq dynasty (1320–98). Some 600 meters northwest of Delhi's main railway station, it is located in the district of Paharganj, one of the modern city's most heavily populated areas, and it has suffered from congestion and neglect. Demands of human habitation, particularly after the 1947 Partition of India when almost all the Muslim population of this *mahalla* (district) left, have put extraordinary pressure on the site, much of which has simply disappeared beneath the contemporary city. The shrine and its associated buildings were originally enclosed by four fourteenth-century battlemented walls 7.5 meters high and 100 meters long, but these and the gates on the north and west sides have all but vanished within the last hundred years, as they have been absorbed into contemporary construction (fig. 3).⁶ The shrine was neglected for many years after the Partition, but within the last few years a resident *maulvi* has had the shrine regularly cleaned, and marigolds and other flowers have been placed around the grave.⁷

Fourteenth-century Delhi had been an assemblage of urban areas and fortified centers connected by roads and the Jumna river over a wide region.⁸ Walled gardens, orchards, cultivated fields, and hunting preserves separated the settlements; deep wells and often enormous *baolis* (multi-storied cisterns), set deep in the ground, conserved water and provided shelter from heat and the sun for village and urban communities, while numerous dams and sluice gates collected water in the rainy season and controlled its flow in the dry. Like ninth-century Samarra, Delhi had spread out from the twelfth century as successive kings had defined themselves and their reigns through constructing new royal residential and administrative quarters. By the reign of

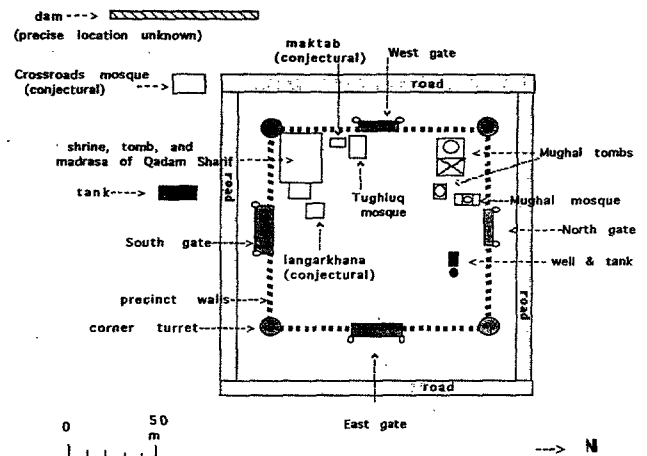


Fig. 4. Shrine of Qadam Sharif precinct. Schematic rendering, 14th–18th century.

Sultan Firuz Shah the city had moved from an original core, established by the first sultans in the late twelfth century over earlier Hindu settlement in the southern part of the Delhi plain, first slowly north, then abruptly southeast, and then north again, where the sultan began to build a large citadel in 1354 on the western bank of the Jumna. Around his own walled and turreted headquarters of Firuzabad, as around those of his predecessors, the nobility, officer corps, and administrators bought land and constructed their own homes, so that the sultan's castle was the locus around which the metropolis grew.

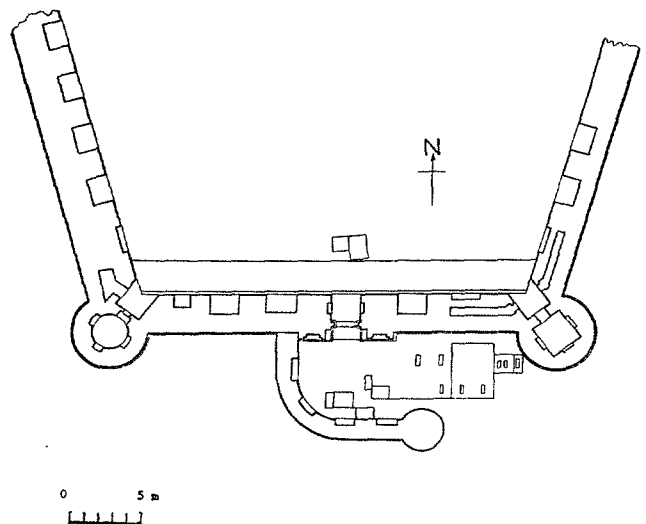
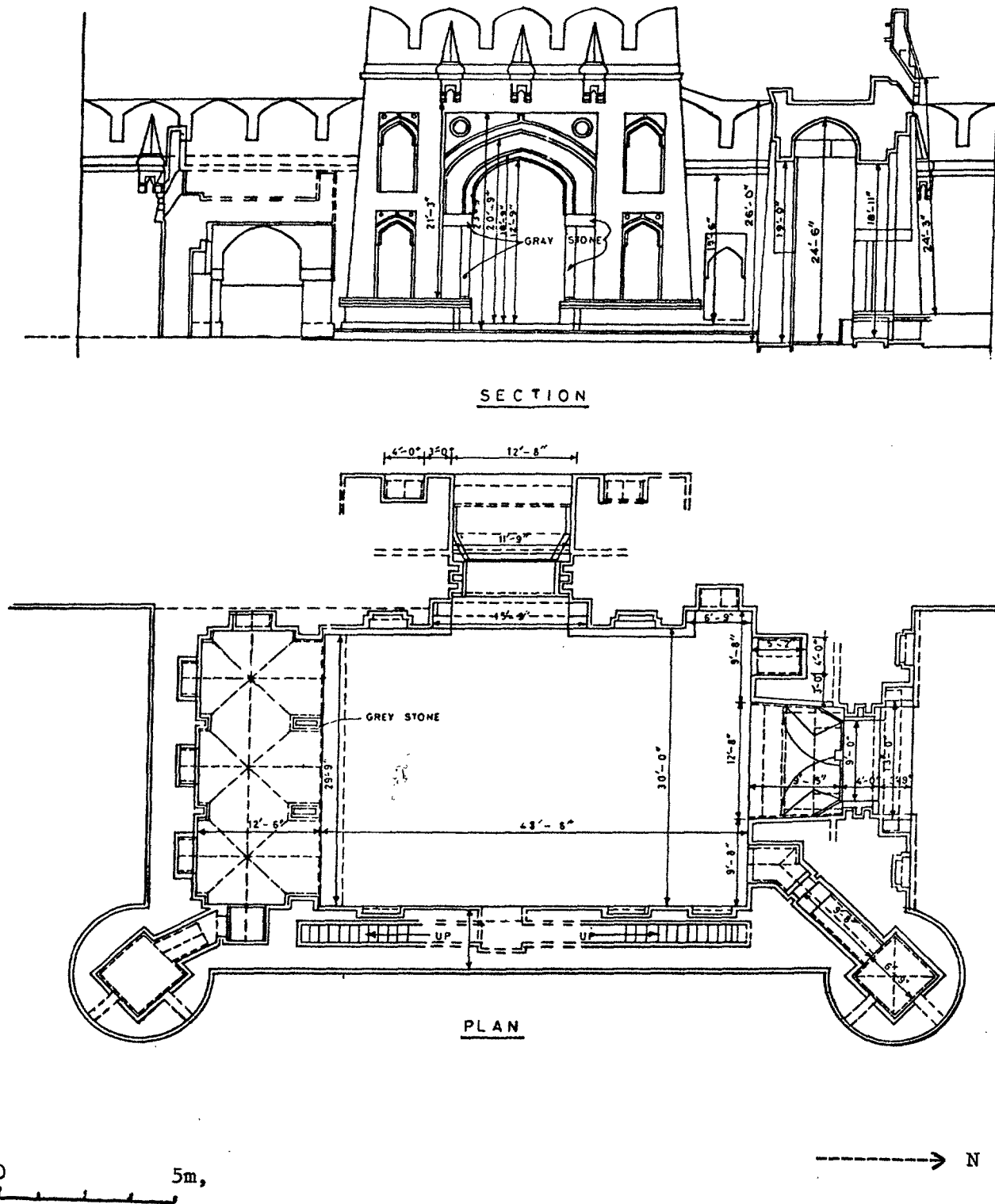


Fig. 5. Shrine of Qadam Sharif precinct. South gate. Ground plan.



But sites of secular power were not the only urban magnets. Three kilometers to the northwest of this new capital, Qadam Sharif (fig. 4) must have looked like a smaller version of the sultan's city. In the fourteenth century, the holy precinct occupied an area of about 1.25 hectares and was bounded on all four sides by roads: the shrine undoubtedly served as an important economic center in medieval Delhi. At one of the crossing points was a small mosque known as the Masjid Chaurahiya Qadam Sharif or Mosque of the Qadam Sharif Crossroads that presumably served the Muslim community outside the walls.⁹ Also to the southwest, situated between the fortress and Delhi's Southern Ridge, was a dam (*bund*) and reservoir (*hauz*) that retained rainwater to nourish the population outside the walls and to irrigate the fields and gardens that provided food for the population of Qadam Sharif. Anyone approaching the walled shrine would have faced a compact and impressive fortification, a veritable little citadel of God on the outskirts of Delhi.¹⁰ The south gate (fig. 5) measured some 43 meters in length and projected 29 meters out from the wall; a curving projecting wall with turret protected the approach and suggests that the south was the principal and the most vulnerable entrance: it faced the most heavily populated areas of fourteenth-century Delhi extending west from the urban area around Firuzabad. Built of uneven blocks of stone bound with mortar, it was faced with thick plaster, originally painted. The east gate was smaller (figs. 6–8), 11.5 meters high, 27.5 meters wide, and 11 meters deep. Both gates recall the finest surviving Tughluq gateway, which guards the ca. 1325 tomb of Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq at Tughluqabad in south Delhi. Extant brackets below the battlements of the fortified precinct's walls supported eaves to protect them during the monsoon, and a turret crowned by a red-sandstone *chhatra* stood at each of the citadel's corners. Within the walls near the north gate there was a two-storied rectangular *baoli* with an adjacent circular well,¹¹ along with several other structures described below. In the southwestern corner of the walled area was the complex containing the tomb of Prince Fath Khan and the Shrine of the Holy Footprint that was the spiritual reason for the precinct's existence.

Prince Fath Khan was born in 1351, while his father was marching from Thatta to Delhi to assume the Sultanate, and in recognition of his birth the city of Ikdar in the Punjab was renamed Fathabad.¹² At the age of seven in 1358 he went on his first military campaign when he accompanied his father into Bengal; two years later he rode with his father on a second Bengal expedition, and

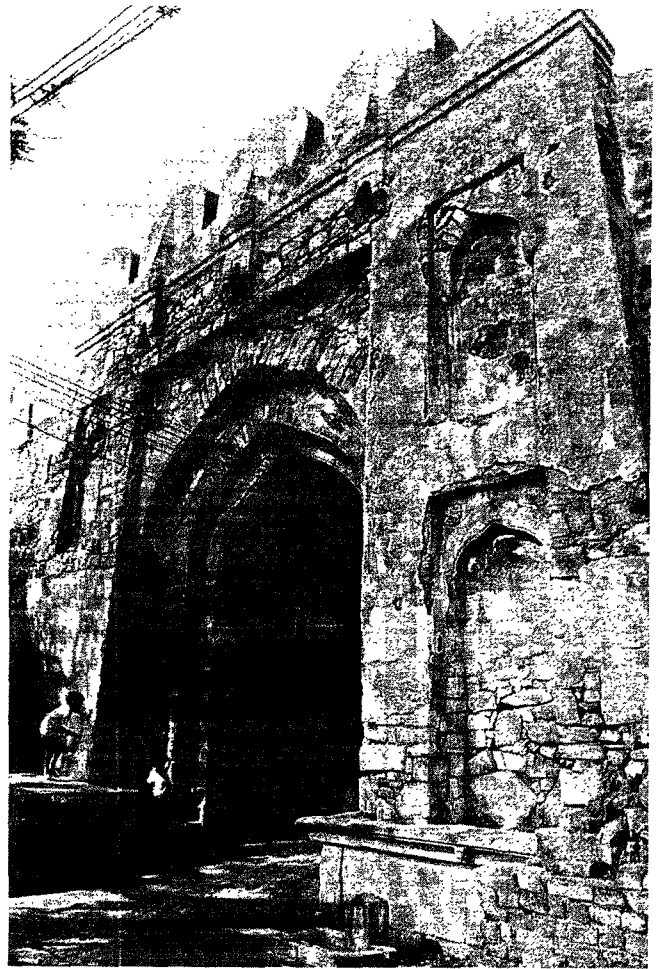


Fig. 7. Qadam Sharif precinct. East gate. View from west.

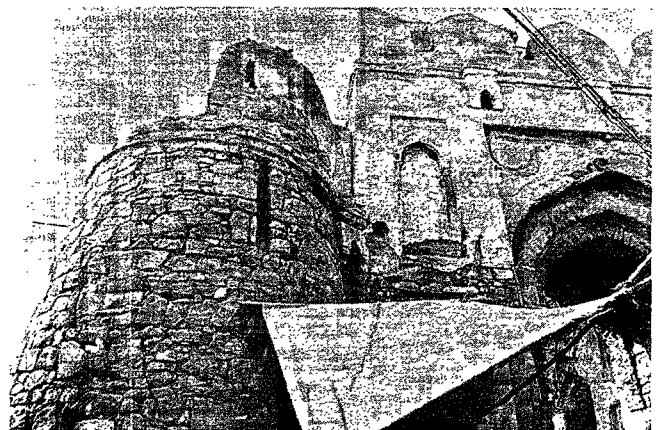


Fig. 8. Qadam Sharif precinct. East gate. Exterior turret and battlemented entrance from the east.

Firuz Shah named him then as his heir. During the army's march from Jaunpur to Lakhnauti, the sultan presented Fath Khan with royal regalia, such as elephants and a red canopy, ordered that coins be struck in the prince's name, and gave him robes of honor (*tirāz*) sent by the caliph in Cairo. He was appointed governor of Sind in 1367. The prince died on the twelfth day of Safar in 776 (23 June 1374) in the town of Gunnaur, near Badaon in Uttar Pradesh. Recently victorious over a rebellion in Thatta, his father, deeply distressed at his son's death, withdrew from governance and left Delhi to visit the tomb of Sayyid Salar Mas'ud Ghazi at Bahraich, one of the most venerated Muslim shrines of northern India.¹³ The sultan ordered that a marble mausoleum be built around that saint's tomb and that it be enclosed by a square fortification ninety meters on a side, a building program bearing significant resemblance to the one he shortly afterward undertook at the Qadam Sharif in Delhi.¹⁴

Work on Qadam Sharif presumably began as soon as the sultan returned to Delhi. As at Bahraich and other shrines, an extensive community came to live around the Qadam Sharif fortress to serve both the community within the walls and the pilgrims who came to the shrine. Later Mughal additions and British Raj attention to Qadam Sharif indicate that it retained its reputation and status as a major holy site until 1947. Though these three building periods — Tughluq, Mughal, and British Raj — emphasize the site's continuing spiritual importance over five centuries, they also make the present-day site sometimes less than architecturally coherent or aesthetically impressive.

Although key fourteenth-century historians like Barani and Afif include references to architectural projects and extant buildings in their writings, they do not specifically mention Qadam Sharif, and the sultan himself in his own memoir does not allude to it, except indirectly in a general reference to his construction of madrasas.¹⁵ Still, the aura of great sanctity and the fervor associated with the shrine made it one of the most esteemed locations in Delhi. It was a popular pilgrimage site, and at least in the middle of the nineteenth century, if not earlier, water used to cleanse the relic was distributed to pilgrims who considered it *tabarruk* (a blessing) and valued it for its healing qualities.¹⁶ The fort was also the center around which other buildings were constructed, namely a cemetery, an *idgah*, a caravanserai, and a *baoli* (stone water tank) just to the south of the south gate.

The precinct of Qadam Sharif is now accessible by way

of its east gate through which one passes and turns right to an inner gate. Like the outer gate, the inner gate has the remains of a battlement. Both gates are built of uneven blocks of stone, covered with stucco (*gach*), now whitewashed: in the fourteenth century they would have been more colorfully painted. Each entrance arch is supported by plain, massive, square double piers and simple capitals; stucco roundels with characteristically fourteenth-century ornament decorate the spandrels. As with the ca. 1325 religious center built around the tomb of Nizam al-Din Awliya, the inhabitants of Qadam Sharif must have felt the need for defensive walls, for it was three kilometers to the west of the sultan's citadel at Firuzabad, too far for immediate benefit from royal protection.

Mongol incursions had periodically threatened Delhi during the reign of Sultan Muhammad (1325–51), and there had been no absence of civil strife in the Sultanate's past. So fortified walls and gates would have been a sensible precaution. Surviving a siege would also have necessitated ample stores of food within the walls and may also have meant that the shrine had its own militia and captain, who could direct the defense. The prayers of the pious and the military preparations of the community protected both the living and the dead in their tombs. Battlemented walls, whether here or at the *dar-gāh* of Nizam al-Din Awliya, also served a symbolic purpose: to the non-Muslim majority they were visible reminders of Islam's power and presence. With walled precincts, whether they contained palaces or tombs or shrines, Islam created worlds apart that were protected and intact. Hence, the image of Sultanate Delhi as a number of fortified islands spread over a plain largely inhabited by Hindu agriculturalists is singularly appropriate. Muslim patrons and builders must have been keenly interested in projecting this aura of power: Islam triumphant is a vital image in medieval northern India and is chiefly conveyed through architecture. In its frenetic building activity and its hostility to sacred construction by non-Muslims, the Sultanate gradually appropriated the landscape of "the other" and made the construction of monumental architecture a right almost entirely reserved to the Muslim ruling class.

Extant or recorded monuments are located in the western half of the precinct, and the eastern half was probably occupied by the homes of those who served the shrine.¹⁷ Thus there was a substantial *baoli* constructed by the sultan near the northern gate,¹⁸ and a larger *baoli* outside the southern gate. Just to the west of the northern gateway into the precinct is a small

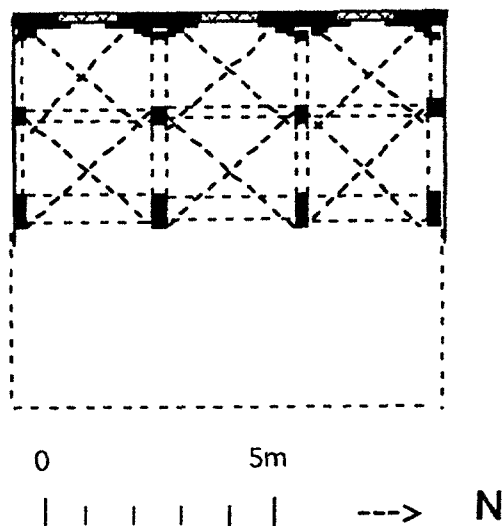


Fig. 9. Mosque of Qadam Sharif. 14th century. Ground plan. (Plan: A. Welch and N. Welch)

mosque, built of plastered, rubble masonry and consisting of a central domed chamber flanked by two vaulted chambers: the whole structure measures 6.5 by 4.7 meters and has a courtyard of similar size. Over the central mihrab is a damaged inscription that credits the building of the mosque to the shrine's attendants during the reign of the Mughal emperor Akbar (1556–1605): "... By the efforts of the Mujawirs (custodians) of the footprint of the asylum of the Prophet ... Akbar ... the slave ... Husain."¹⁹

In the precinct's northwest quadrant are located two tombs, both identified by Zafar Hasan as Mughal.²⁰ Adjacent to the west gate is a mosque constructed during the reign of Firuz Shah (fig. 9), six cross-vaulted bays with four sets of double piers facing the courtyard, a common formula for small mosques during his reign. The mosque's walls are 4 meters high, and on the roof is a 2.5-meter-high octagonal *chhatri* with an eight-sided pyramidal dome (fig. 10): four-sided *chhatris* appear on the turrets of the precinct's battlemented walls and over the entrances into the shrine's inner pavilion, but here the *chhatri* was apparently intended to serve as the mosque's minar, not the only time that Firuz Shah's builders would experiment with a minar based on a long-established Indian architectural form.²¹

The shrine in the southwest quadrant of these outer fortifications was also walled, though more modestly. On the east side is a late-seventeenth-century Mughal assembly hall (*majlishkhāna*), a simple flat-roofed structure with cusped arches resting on baluster columns

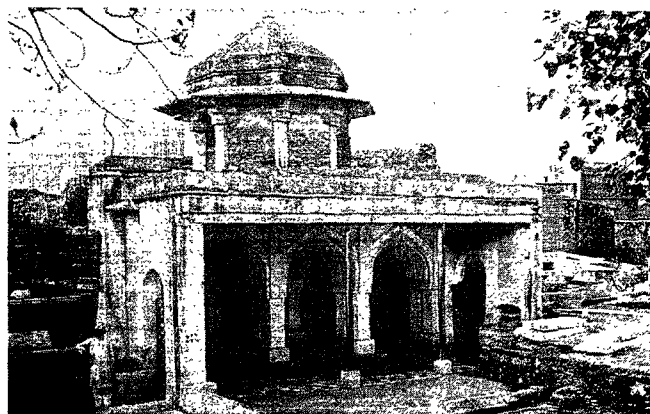


Fig. 10. Mosque of Qadam Sharif, 14th century. (Photo: from T. Yamamoto et al., *Delhi: Architectural Remains of the Sultanate Period* [Tokyo, 1968–70], M. 21, p. 33a)

(fig. 11). It was used for teaching and discussion and was likely built in the second half of the seventeenth century, at the same time as an undated Persian inscription was placed over the east doorway in the northeast corner of the shrine: "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet. Muhammad Mir, custodian of the chinaware of the king Alamgir." Muhammad Mir was apparently the patron responsible for the addition of the *majlishkhāna* to the shrine during the reign of Awrangzeb (Alamgir). Sayyid Ahmad Khan mentions that there was also an attached school (*maktab*) and a soup kitchen (*langarkhāna*), but these buildings appear since to have been incorporated into the modern houses crowding the complex.

Extending to the west from the threshold of the *majlishkhāna* is a rectangular space measuring 17.8 by 20.3



Fig. 11. Shrine of Qadam Sharif. *Majlishkhāna*. View from northeast.

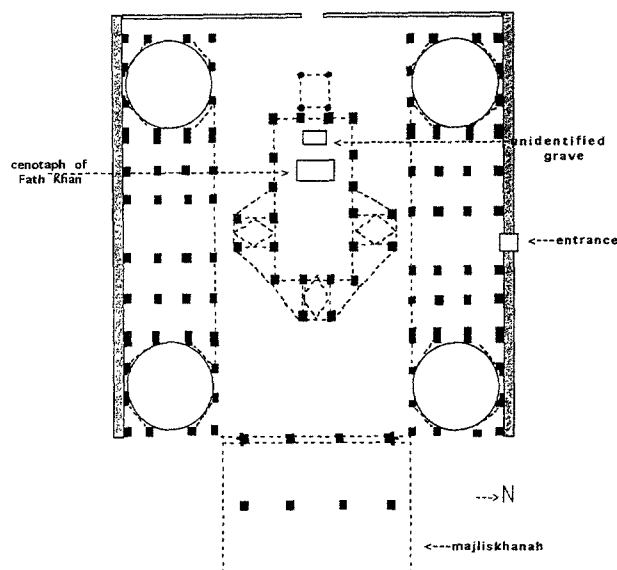


Fig. 12. Shrine of Qadam Sharif. Ground plan. (Plan: A. Welch and N. Welch)

meters (fig. 12). Its north and south sides, slightly raised above the level of the courtyard, are occupied by two identical halls 4.5 meters deep with a dome 4.17 meters in diameter resting on an octagonal drum and eight massive square pillars (fig. 13) at each end. The columns of these halls have a base 37 cm high, a shaft of 200 cm, and a two-part capital (22 and 28 cm). The outside of the domes are plastered and decoratively ribbed; they were probably painted in brighter colors in the fourteenth century, and their interiors still bear traces of paint. A 3.6-meter-high flat-roofed hall extended be-

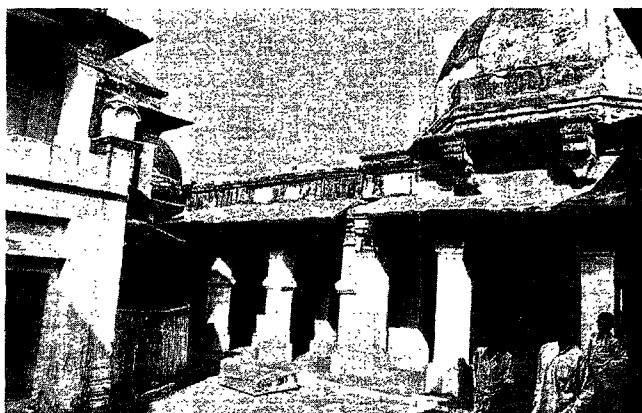


Fig. 13. Shrine of Qadam Sharif. Exterior of northeast dome, north hall, and northeast side of sanctuary.



Fig. 14. Shrine of Qadam Sharif. Interior of northeast dome and north hall.

tween the domes, each of which is 7.9 meters high. Massive brackets at the roof line support broad protective eaves, and a second lower level of eaves directly above the capitals projects into the courtyard; a stone railing protected people on the roof from falling off. These domed and flat-roofed arcades replicate similar halls at the Hauz Khas madrasa and may also have been used for teaching purposes (fig. 14). They now shelter a number of unidentified graves.²² In effect, the two halls occupy half the space beyond the *majliskhāna* and frame an inner court in which is situated the pillared pavilion that shelters both the prince's tomb and the stone relic.

The halls are separated by less than a meter from the north and south entrances to the pavilion and only forty centimeters from the raised platforms, so that it is now a narrow squeeze between tomb pavilion and arcades (fig. 15). The eaves of the halls even overhang those of the pavilion entrances. The double pillars marking the tran-



Fig. 15. Shrine of Qadam Sharif. View of east entrance to pavilion.

sition from corner cupolas to arcades are clearly composite, for the attached pillars leading into the hall rest on smaller, lower bases and have a projecting band 170 cm above the floor, so that the pillars resemble those of the late-twelfth–early-thirteenth-century Quwwat al-Islam mosque, where one pillar is placed above another to gain height. This tight fit is accentuated even more by the curving sandstone walls that were most likely constructed in the first decades of the nineteenth century to limit access to the pavilion to its three entrances on the east, north, and south sides. It was perhaps at this same time that the entrances themselves were modified by placing small square and capped finials at each corner. Over each of the entrances is a raised two-meter-high *chhatri* with four square pillars supporting eaves, entablature, and a four-sided pyramidal dome, similar to the dome over the mihrab of the 1231 tomb and madrasa of Prince Nasir al-Din Mahmud, south of Delhi,²³ and a number of other Sultanate structures, including the corner towers of the Qadam Sharif precinct itself. Immediately overhead in each of the three entranceways is a “lantern” ceiling, a common feature of Sultanate architecture in the Delhi area from the early thirteenth century (fig. 16), so that these entryways must be part of the original structure. Eaves project from the *chhatris* and from the sides of the pavilion. The entire complex was whitewashed to resemble marble.²⁴ By Awrangzeb’s reign the east entrance into the pavilion had clearly become the major one: it was embellished with painted floral decoration, recorded in Metcalfe’s illustration and obviously imitating the inlaid stonework of great Mughal mausolea like the tomb of Iʿtimad al-Daulat and the Taj Mahal in Agra. Directly over this east entrance

was a lengthy and dated inscription, identifying the patron of these changes to the structure:

The guide of those who have lost their way [is] Muhammad; the director of directors is Muhammad.

Glorious are the school (*madrasa*), the pulpit (*minbar*) and the court (*bārgāh*) where there is read the praise of Muhammad.

For the broken-hearted he is a balm, for the hearts of the afflicted he is a medicine.

The sky becomes secure under the feet of him who has become the dust of the foot of Muhammad.

I am one of the dogs of his lane, and Shirwan has become a beggar of Muhammad.

He known as Shirwan Khan, the son of Raihan Khan, the Abyssinian . . . wrote these lines on the 23rd of Rabia II of the year 1082 [August 29, 1671].²⁵

The illustrations for Metcalfe’s and Sayyid Ahmad Khan’s books do not record a further major restoration to the pavilion that must therefore have taken place after 1846 during the British Raj, when the flat roof between the *chhatris* was raised to a height of 4.7 meters above the ground so that it presented a massive, windowless block, built of bricks and obscuring the former open roofline. Though the interior was probably painted with decorative designs in the nineteenth century, as it is now, this structural addition dramatically changed the building’s profile. At the same time decorative panels on the three pavilion entrances were stripped of ornament and filled in so that the doorways resembled unarticulated slabs: erosion of the plaster in some places now reveals a brick interior. The pavilion’s west (qibla) side now has a minbar but no mihrab (fig. 17), and the wall may also have been removed then, for Metcalfe’s illustration (fig. 1) shows an intact mihrab niche.

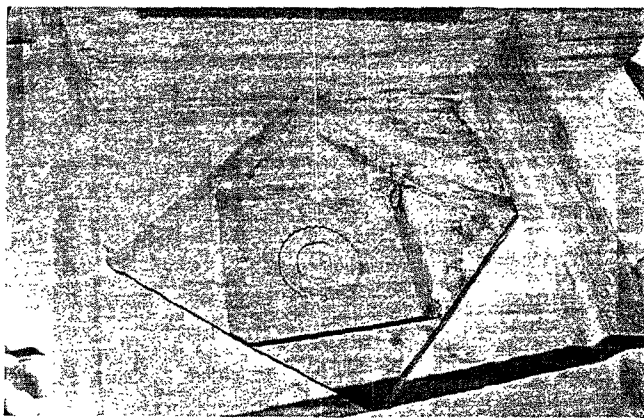


Fig. 16. Shrine of Qadam Sharif. East entrance to pavilion. Lantern ceiling.

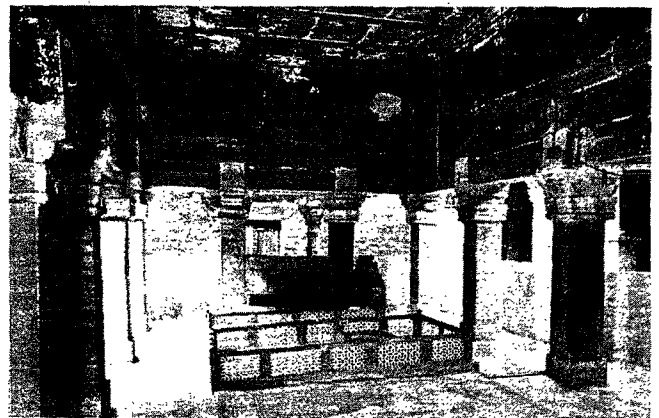


Fig. 17. Shrine of Qadam Sharif. Pavilion interior. View to west.

At the far west end of the pavilion a projecting four-pillared portico rests on slender circular pillars and supports a pyramidal roof corresponding to those at the three entrances. To its east and at the west end of the pavilion's interior, on a low platform paved in white marble, is the cenotaph of Prince Fath Khan (fig. 18), consisting of an openwork rectangular enclosure half a meter high and measuring 2.8m by 1.4m. Within it and reportedly directly over the prince's heart is a smaller, solid enclosure that originally held the stone *qadam*. Around the walls of this enclosure was a Mughal inscription:

The piece of land, which bears the print of the sole of thy foot, will continue for years to be worshiped by sagacious persons.

When Yusuf, at the footprint (*qadamgāh*) of Muhammad, built this enclosure by the help of God,

For the date of the completion of its erection I heard the invisible crier say "Well done!" [1067 H./1656–57 A.D.]

The formal composition of the shrine is unprecedented in Tughluq architecture: two halls flank a smaller rectangular pavilion with three projecting entrances and a portico. But the individual elements — pyramidal domed *chhatris*; round, ribbed domes; and hall and pavilion pillars with bulky capitals — have ample Sultanate precedent. For a period of at most fifty years from 1657 to 1707, Qadam Sharif benefited from the patronage of three lesser Mughal officials: in 1656–57 the stone railing was put up around the relic; in 1671 the east entrance was refurbished; and at some point between 1657 and 1707 the *majliskhāna* was constructed. But there is no evidence that these additions and improvements affected the basic structure of the Tughluq complex. That three different Mughal officials supported various embellishments of the shrine and left their names in prominent places indicates that the shrine was a site of power and prestige during the reigns of Shah Jahan (1628–58) and Awrangzeb, and, like the shrine of Nizam al-Din Awliya, received regular attention during the entire Mughal period and remained one of Delhi's most important spiritual centers.²⁶ Successive Mughal patrons, like their Lodhi predecessors, added mosques, tombs and *baolis* to the land around the Quwwat al-Islam mosque, esteemed as the memorial to Islam's advent in northern India. They were responsible for important additions to the great Chishti shrines in Delhi that were rich in *barakat*, like the *dargāh* of Nizam al-Din, the *dargāh* of Nasir al-Din Mahmud (Chiragh Delhi), and the *dargāh* of Qutb al-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki, and they

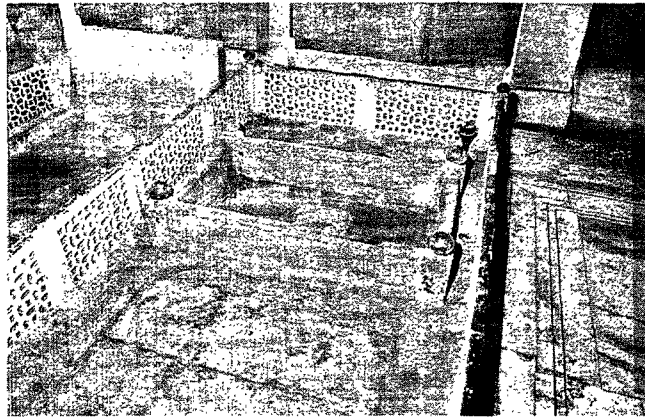


Fig. 18. Shrine of Qadam Sharif. Cenotaph of Prince Fath Khan and enclosure for relic.

oriented some of the important secular tombs toward them: the 1621–22 tomb of the Khan-i Khanan, who served both Akbar and Jahangir, is in the vicinity of Nizam al-Din, and the tomb of Akbar's martyred official, Atgah Khan, overlooks the walls of the *dargāh* itself. There is clearly nothing unusual in their attentiveness to the shrine of Qadam Sharif.²⁷

The complex would have been animated with the movement of pious celebrants and the madrasa's students, faculty, and attendants. Those who sought salvation through prayer at the relic and through the acquisition of water that had bathed it saw the pillared and *chhatri*-sheltered structure as the goal of their journey and the realization of their hopes. That the mark of the Prophet's foot rested over the heart of the deceased prince meant that their prayers were directed to Fath Khan as well as to the relic and that the prince had become a *de facto* saint. Waiting for the Last Day under the Prophet's foot, he had been blessedly transformed into "the dust of the foot of Muhammad," and the *barakat* from the Holy Footprint helped the prince and those buried near him to attain salvation. Some earlier royal figures had sought out quasi-sacred ground for their tombs: Sultan Altamsh built his mausoleum immediately behind the qibla wall of the Quwwat al-Islam mosque in the Lal Kot; 'Ala al-Din Khalji chose the madrasa in its vicinity for his tomb. Other sultans, like Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq, built tombs unattached to religious sites. Without the presence of the Holy Footprint, that would presumably have been the case for Fath Khan, but the relic conferred instant holiness on the beloved prince. And if Firuz Shah, who was well aware of the economic value of well-situated buildings, wanted

the mausoleum to become a revenue-generating pilgrimage site, then conferring the Holy Footprint on the tomb of Fath Khan was an astute financial move. This living symbol had meaning not only for long-time Muslims but also for more recent converts from Hinduism, for whom the gesture of placing one's head under the foot of a revered or powerful superior would have been perfectly familiar.

If the placement of the relic carried significant meaning for both religious communities and for those individuals who mixed elements from each, so too did the cleansing of the relic to which Sayyid Ahmad Khan referred in 1846. There seems no reason to doubt that this practice existed in the fourteenth century. When he was on military expeditions, Sultan Muhammad would only drink Ganges water, and Firuz Shah poured water from the spring at Zemzem into a newly refurbished reservoir in Delhi. Firuz Shah was intimately concerned with the sacred nature of water: he built his own tomb at the Hauz Khas madrasa, where the reservoir's water lapped the grand staircase leading up to the founder's mausoleum, and a second set of stairs led from the water washing the mosque's qibla wall up to and through the mihrab itself.²⁸ The attendants at the Qadam Sharif who washed the stone footprint were surely aware that their Hindu counterparts washed the sacred images in their own temples and knew that the run-off water was valued as a talisman to protect and to heal. It is little wonder that long-standing Indian ritual became part of the shrine's practice.

In its juxtaposition of structural elements the complex is unlike earlier or contemporary Sultanate tombs which, whether built for kings or princes, present more predictable solutions: the cenotaphs of Altamsh (ca. 1235), Ghiyath al-Din (1325), Zafar Khan (ca. 1323–25), Sultan Firuz Shah, and the clerics buried in the gardens of the Hauz Khas madrasa are or were situated under domes. Fath Khan's grave is located at the end of a pillared hall that may originally have been open to the sky, like the tomb of Darya Khan in Delhi (attributed generally to the fifteenth century) and the seventeenth-century tombs of Akbar and Jahangir. While pillared arcades with domes at each end can be found in the madrasa of Firuz Shah at the Hauz Khas, at Qadam Sharif they frame a rectangular court containing the pavilion with its three projecting porticoes on the south, east, and north sides. Originally, this pavilion without the present sandstone enclosing wall and without the massive roof would have been far more open to air and light, and late-fourteenth-century pilgrims approaching

the shrine could have seen its glistening domes rising above the lesser and lower buildings outside. Coming in from the east side, visitors would have had a different vista of dazzling white and brilliantly painted surfaces and a profusion of piers with massive capitals, supporting flat roofs crowned by domes on the outer side and pyramidal *chhatris* on the interior. Awkward in its design, it suggests the kind of eclectic experiment and unconventional result of which Firuz Shah and his builders were fond and presages the combination of pavilions, domes, *chhatris*, and columns in Mughal architecture.²⁹ It is, after all, a pilgrimage site built around a relic of great value, and it is reasonable to suppose that the building's design was affected by its special architectural requirements: the builders had to create a suitable shelter for the cenotaph of an esteemed prince and an accessible place for the relic.

For the minar adjoining his mosque in Firuzabad, Firuz Shah had directed that a stone Asokan pillar, admired as an imposing monument from a mighty past, be embedded in a unique stepped structure, and the resulting Minar-i Zarin stands absolutely apart from the entire formal history of minar construction in Islam. Despite the additions wrought by later patrons, it is apparent that the sultan's builders also sought a novel solution for the shrine of Qadam Sharif.

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NOTES

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1. Niccolao Manucci, *Storia do Mogor or Mogul India*, trans. William Irvine, 4 vols. 1 (1st ed., 1907; rpt. Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, Delhi, 1981), 2:2. The name he applies to it,

- Qadam Rasul (Footprint of the Prophet), is commonly used now for buildings with a similar function throughout the Islamic world. See the informative overview of these sites by Perween Hasan, "The Footprint of the Prophet," in *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 335–43.
2. In M.M. Kaye, ed., *The Golden Calm: An English Lady's Life in Moghul Delhi*, presents the memoirs of Emily Metcalfe and selected pages from her father's *Reminiscences*.
 3. Paintings and drawings of India's historic architecture done by Indian and British artists during the Raj are a major research source. They have been studied by Sonia Lochner, "Ruins of Power: Picturesque Portraits of Sultanate Architecture," M.A. thesis, University of Victoria, 1990. I am indebted to her incisive discussion of the illustrations in both Metcalfe's and Sayyid Ahmad Khan's books.
 4. Perween Hasan records the tradition that the footprint was brought to Delhi by Makhdum Jahaniyan Jahangasht of Uchh, Firuz Shah's chief spiritual guide, "Footprint of the Prophet," p. 337.
 5. Translation from an abridgment of the *Āthār al-sanādīd* by R. Nath, *Monuments of Delhi* (Delhi, 1979), p. 39; 12 Rabi' al-awwal is the 'urs of the Prophet's death. It was common practice that a deceased person's 'urs be celebrated at his or her tomb.
 6. See T. Yamamoto, M. Ara, and T. Tsukinowa, *Delhi: Architectural Remains of the Sultanate Period* (in Japanese), Indo Shiseki Chosa Dan hen, 3 vols. (Tokyo, 1968–70), 1: monument O.8.
 7. Carr Stephens (*The Archaeological Monumental Remains of Delhi, Ludhiana and Calcutta* [Simla, 1876; rpt., Delhi, n.d.], pp. 147–48) provides an accurate description of the shrine (including dimensions) and a rough and sometimes inaccurate English translation of the inscriptions over the east entrance to the pavilion and around the marble retaining wall enclosing the relic. Neither of these inscriptions is still in place. H.C. Fanshawe, *Delhi: Past and Present* (1st ed. 1902; repr. Delhi, 1979), provides a helpful summary of the shrine and the area around it: to the immediate north of the shrine was a caravanserai known as the Idgah Sarai; just to the south of the shrine's south gate was a "fine stone tank" or *baoli*, as well as the main Muslim burial ground of Delhi. Zafar Hasan, *List of Hindu and Mohammadan Architecture of Delhi Province* (Delhi, 1916–19), 2: 241–46, provides an invaluable description of the Qadam Sharif precinct and its extant structures, along with the original text and a sound translation of the inscriptions. Yamamoto, Ara, and Tsukinowa (*Delhi*) document the shrine, mosque, walls, and *baoli* of Qadam Sharif. Y. D. Sharma, *Delhi and Its Neighbourhood* (Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1974), p. 133, provides a brief note on the complex. Abha Rani, *The Tughluq Architecture of Delhi*, (Varanasi, 1991), pp. 42–43, offers comments on Qadam Sharif based entirely on Stephens, Fanshawe, and Zafar Hasan. Elsewhere in her book she incorporates without acknowledgment entire paragraphs from Anthony Welch and Howard Crane, "The Tughluqs: Master Builders of the Delhi Sultanate" (*Muqarnas* 1 [1983]: 123–66), which she neither footnotes nor lists in her bibliography.
 8. For a map of Delhi under the sultans, see Anthony Welch, "A Medieval Center of Learning in India: The Hauz Khas Madrasa in Delhi," in *Muqarnas* 13 (1996): 165–90.
 9. The mosque no longer exists but is briefly described in Sayyid Ahmed Khan's *Āthār al-sanādīd* (in Urdu) (Delhi, 1847 and 1854); English translation and abridgment by R. Nath, *Monuments of Delhi* (New Delhi, 1979), p. 39. Stephens, *Archaeology and Monumental Remains of Delhi*, p. 148, reports that the Crossroads Mosque was built soon after the shrine and that it resembled "the mosques attributed to Khan Jahan," namely the Kalan Masjid in Old Delhi and the Khirki Masjid in south Delhi (see Welch and Crane, "The Tughluqs," pp. 130–40).
 10. It has been said that Delhi under Firuz Shah was not a fortified city, as the Tughluqabad of his grandfather Ghiyath al-Din (1320–25) had been and the Jahanpanah of his uncle Sultan Muhammad (1325–51). This is a misconception. Delhi in the second half of the fourteenth century was a collection of walled cities and citadels, linked by roads and separated by gardens, orchards, and fields. There were walled royal enclosures like Lal Kot, Siri, Jahanpanah, Tughluqabad, and Firuzabad, and there were walled sacred precincts like the madrasa of Nasir al-Din Mahmud (1231) in south Delhi and the *dargāhs* of Nizam al-Din, Zafar Khan, and Chiragh Delhi, all of them battlemented islands to which their surrounding communities could retreat in times of danger, whether it came from foreign invasion or from the royal court.
 11. Yamamoto, Ara, and Tsukinowa, *Delhi*, vol. 3, monument W. 34.
 12. In the courtyard of the mosque he constructed there, Firuz Shah installed an Asokan pillar inscribed in Arabic with the genealogy of the Tughluqs, presumably as a means of proclaiming the legitimacy of Tughluq rule.
 13. Believed by his devotees to be a twelfth-generation descendant of 'Alī as well as the nephew of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, Sayyid Salur left his uncle's entourage to preach the message of Islam in India. His followers credit him with the conquest of Delhi, but say that he rejected its throne and settled in Bahraich where he acquired such a large and enthusiastic following that the local aristocracy attacked him. He was martyred at the age of nineteen on 14 June 1033. His shrine still attracts large numbers of Hindu and Muslim pilgrims, and religious practices at the tomb share elements of both faiths. See Tahir Mahmood, "The Dargah of Sayyid Salar Mas'ud Ghazi in Bahraich; Legend, Tradition and Reality," and Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, "A Note on the Dargah of Salar Mas'ud in Bahraich in the Light of the Standard Historical Sources," in Christian Troll, ed., *Muslim Shrines in India: Their Character, History and Significance* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 24–43; 44–47.
 14. That the relationship between the Bahraich and Delhi shrines continued for centuries is indicated by the fact that Asaf al-Dawla, the nawab of Oudh (1775–97), built a shrine near the tomb of Mas'ud Ghazi to house a *qadam* he had also obtained. It attracted so many pilgrims and such a number of unorthodox rituals that Sikandar Lodi (1489–1517) tried to suppress the cult (Mohammad Yasin, *A Social History of Islamic India, 1605–1748* [Delhi, 1958], p. 90).
 15. Mughal inscriptions, discussed below, call Qadam Sharif a *madrasa*. The internal layout of its central building suggests that it was already used as a madrasa during Firuz Shah's lifetime. The sultan is also careful to mention that he endowed madrasas and other pious institutions with sufficient income, and he must also have provided the Qadam Sharif with an ample endowment. That he located both his son's tomb and his own in madrasas suggests that he hoped the continuing prayers of those within them would benefit the deceased. Diyā al-Dīn Baranī, *Ta'rikh-i Firūz Shāhī*, Persian text ed. S.A. Khan (Calcutta, 1860–62), selectively trans. in H. M. Elliot and J.

- Dowson, *The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians*, 8 vols. (Allahabad, n.d.), 3: 93–268; Shams al-Dīn ‘Afif, *Ta’rikh-i Firūz Shāhī*, Persian text, ed. M. W. Husain (Calcutta, 1890), also selectively trans. in *ibid.*, 3: 269–373; Firuz Shah, *Futūhāt-i Firūz Shāhī*, trans. in *ibid.*, 3: 374–88. The sultan also does not refer to his other major madrasa at the Hauz Khas (See Welch, “A Medieval Center of Learning.” It is strange that so imposing a complex was not mentioned by Sharaf al-Din Yazdi in his account of Timur’s conquests, including his 1398 taking and sack of Delhi, the *Zafarnāma*, since Timur was usually careful to be publicly pious and since the complex housed such a significant relic. The emperor was attentive to architecture during his conquest and sack of Delhi in 1398: it may be that the buildings in the Qadam Sharif precinct were not notable enough.
16. It was a popular belief that whenever the Prophet stepped on a stone, his foot left an imprint. Similar beliefs are found in Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism, and in India are widespread, though the Qadam Sharif shrine in Delhi appears to be the earliest instance. It has important connections with pre-Islamic practice in India: the Buddha is represented by his footprints, as is Vishnu; see *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 4: 367–68. The shrine’s prominence as a pilgrimage site may have presented special problems to the functioning of the madrasa, and the distribution of water as *tabarruk* may have been a matter of particular concern to some orthodox ulama.
 17. That there were other buildings with diverse functions at Qadam Sharif, including living and teaching facilities for the pious community, is suggested by the far better preserved *dargah* of Nizam al-Din Awliya, also a fortified and self-contained community. See Zafar Hasan, *A Guide to Nizamu-d Din*, *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, no. 10 (Calcutta, 1922).
 18. Described by Zafar Hasan, *ibid.*, p. 246, it was a two-story structure with a stone façade over a rubble core. Yamamoto, Ara, and Tsukinowa, *Delhi*, vol. 1, monument W. 34 and p. 98, figure 59, located the upper remains of the *baoli*, now filled in.
 19. Translation of this and subsequent inscriptions by Zafar Hasan, *Guide to Nizamu-d Din*, pp. 242–43, who also supplies the Persian text. These inscriptions are no longer in place, and their present whereabouts is not known.
 20. *Ibid.*, pp. 245–46.
 21. See Anthony Welch, “Architectural Patronage and the Past: The Tughluq Sultans of India,” *Mughnas* 10 (1993): 311–22.
 22. The overall effect was of a nearly square space with domes in each corner, a plan seen in the Delhi area as early as the 1231 tomb of Nasir al-Din Mahmud, a mausoleum substantially restored by Firuz Shah that was the center of a sizable community in Mughal times.
 23. *Chhatris* of this sort are found on the walls of the Qadam Sharif fortress and on the mosque.
 24. Firuz Shah paid often lavish attention to the restoration of buildings put up by his predecessors, and he often embellished them with marble: the fourth story of the Qutb minar and the qibla wall of the 1231 tomb of Nasir al-Din Mahmud are notable examples. It is puzzling that in constructing the new shrine of Qadam Sharif he made use of less opulent materials.
 25. As noted above, the Mughal inscriptions identify the structure beyond the east entrance as a *madrasa*, refer to its *minbar*, and repeatedly name the Messenger Muhammad. The word *dargah* does not appear. Metcalfe in 1844 provides the first instance and Sayyid Ahmad Khan the second of that term’s use which may reflect either a change in the structure’s function or the fact that the words *dargāh* and *madrasa* were used interchangeably in the nineteenth century. The function of the complex was not static, and its uses and nomenclature changed. Manucci’s reference to it as a mosque may simply lack precision.
 26. Both Abu’l-Fazl and Badaoni recount the story of Akbar’s attention to a suspect *qadam* brought to the Mughal court. According to the latter, “At this time Shah Abu Turab, and I‘timad Khan Gujrati, who had been together on a journey to Hijaz, returned, and brought with them a stone of very great weight, which required a very strong-bodied elephant to lift it. A foot-print was clearly to be seen on it, and Shah Abu Turab declared it to be the impression of the foot of the Prophet (God bless him and his family and give them peace!):
‘On the tablet at the head of our grave,
We have engraved thy image.
Until the day of the resurrection
Our head and thy foot are together.’”
Badaoni’s verse with its pointed reference to the *qadam* at a grave site where the head of the deceased rests under the footprint must be describing the Qadam Sharif in Delhi, rather than the purported *qadam* of the two Mughals (Badaoni, *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, trans. W.H. Lowe [Calcutta, 1899], 2: 320). Abu’l-Fazl doubts the authenticity of the *qadam* (Abu’l-Fazl ‘Alami, *Ā‘in-i Akbari*, trans. H. Blochmann, 2nd ed. [Calcutta, 1927], 1: 207 and 570).
 27. The shrine of Qadam Sharif is only 600 meters from the Ajmer Gate of Shahjahanabad, but there are no Mughal tombs of comparable grandeur in its vicinity. While the tomb of Nizam al-Din Awliya in Delhi was a powerful magnet for Mughal mausolea, Qadam Sharif was not: inside the shrine are only a few unidentified cenotaphs. As the comments by Sayyid Ahmad suggest, the shrine may have functioned on a much more popular level and been regarded somewhat askance by the orthodox. For a study of these three Chishti *dargāhs*, see Matsuo Ara, *Indo shi ni okeru Isuramu seibyō* [*Dargāhs in Medieval India — A Historical Study of the Shrines of Sufi Saints in Delhi with Reference to the Relationship between Religious Authority and Ruling Power*], (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai; University of Tokyo Press, 1977).
 28. See Welch, “Medieval Center of Learning in India.” Without indicating his source, Zafar Hasan, *Guide to Nizamu-d Din*, p. 241, reports that Firuz Shah originally intended that the Qadam Sharif would be his own tomb but that on Fath Khan’s death he assigned it to him. Since the Hauz Khas madrasa, built around Firuz Shah’s tomb, had been begun on the sultan’s accession in 1352, this suggestion seems unlikely.
 29. For information on Firuz Shah’s taste, patronage, and architectural establishment, see Welch, “Architectural Patronage and the Past.”