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Comparative Study of Reading offered by various authors / scholars of Epigraphs of Makli

Abstract

The Necropolis of Makli is situated about sixty miles east of Karachi, the provincial capital of Sindh province, in Pakistan. It has a large number of structures, some of these being the outstanding pieces of funerary architecture, displaying a wide variety of inscriptions in traditional Arabic and Persian epigraphical tradition, carved on good quality sandstone, however few are written on glazed ceramic tiles as well. There are vast number of cenotaphs and slabs with inscriptions carved, these offer the reading that becomes difficult due to the weathering, coupled with the paleographical tradition of script. Various writers have copied these and published, but the readings offered contain some errors. The paper compares these with the readings given by Dr. Lashari, to see how the errors may have occurred in earlier readings. The results are properly charted and nature of missreadings explained.

Keywords: Epigraphy, Heritage, sacred texts, Persian, *Katbat e Makli*, transcription / reading

The Makli Necropolis is inscribed on World Heritage list, its importance and the outstanding universal value lies in the enormity of inscriptions, and the subjects covered. These inscriptions have added element of curiosity to the site. With the publication of Dr. Kaleemullah Lashari's monumental work on the Epigraphy of Makli, it has become possible to put a glance on the work of various writers, who paid attention to the inscriptions in the Makli Necropolis, and offered readings of these. It is worthwhile to compare these readings with the readings presented by Dr. Lashari, in his recently published work on Makli. The book is in detail, so much so that each structure is dealt comprehensively, leaving nothing out.

The subject matter of the inscriptions is varied; it may be the quotes from sacred texts, traditions of the Holy Prophet, the secular texts, specifically the epitaphs in large numbers, along with certain Persian verse compositions.

Some of the Epitaphs of Makli were available in various forms; these were fondly referred in essays about historic persons & events. One such work was by famous scholar Dr. Molvi Muhammad Shafi, a very prolific Orientalist, having wide exposure to the epigraphic material from the Islamic World. He was responsible for the compilation of encyclopedia of Islam in Urdu, which is famous

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as “*Daira e Muarif e Islamia*,” published under the same project by Punjab University. Dr Sahib had deep understanding of Persian as well as Arabic inscriptions; he happened to visit Makli sometimes in the year 1934, but his stay in Makli was very short.

His write-up about inscriptions of Makli appeared as a chapter in his book *Sanadid e Sind*. The epitaphs copied from the funerary structures were shortened in this publication; these recorded the names, and the year and also “*Madeh-e-Tarikh*,” which denoted the year of death of the person concerned. This work was edited by Ahmed Rabani. It is not certain whether Dr. Sahib had precised those inscriptions, or it was done by the editor; but the forms in which the inscriptions are available, are the shortened versions of the epitaphs of Makli.

Mehboob Ali Channa was another writer, who described the experience of his visit to Makli; he chose to copy epitaphs, these were made available in a series of articles in a newspaper; it was subsequently published in the book from as “*Makli Takri Jo Sair*.”

“The other learned attention was paid by none else then our famous scholar Hussamuddin Rashdi, his work was published in Quarterly *Mehran* in 1957; it became famous as “Makli Nama”. Rashdi Sahib has described his experience of Makli, in a very loving way. He indicated a certain *Biaz*, which he happened to have in his possession; it is described by Rashdi as “*Biaz of Khudadad Khan*”. With the assistance available to him through the *Biaz*, and his frequent visits to Makli, Rashdi Sahib was able to copy quite a good number of Epitaphs from Makli.

Another writer, a religious scholar from Makli – Thatta itself, who took upon himself to make the corrections in already published inscriptions of Makli; his book was entitled “*Jadeed Makli Namo*.”

Later on the Department of Archaeology & Museums survey team did also go to the Makli; they recorded the epitaphs of Makli, for their official assignment. The results of their survey were published subsequently in the Journal of Museums.

With this over view of writings available on inscriptions of Makli, we arrive at the latest publication on the subject that is Dr. Lashari’s Study of Makli Inscriptions. It is by far the most detailed, and comprehensive recording of the epigraphical material of Makli.

Dr. Kaleemullah Lashari arranged a program to train young scholars and research assistants in field of epigraphy; it is the result of the supervision of that training program that the undersigned had the chance to review the deciphering & readings of the inscriptions, committed on the stone.

Whatever came from the field was reviewed and corrected in presence of the review team, headed by Dr. Lashari, who compared his original notes; discussions on the finer points of calligraphic art and practice were again designed to sensitize the trainees, about the fineries of calligraphic renderings, which actually made the readings difficult.

His epigraphy of Makli is indeed a monumental work, and it shall be held in grant esteem, so this was the area of training, where Dr Lashari contributed much

of his time. This paper is related to comparing the different readings made by all those scholars who had published their work on Makli earlier, and compare it with the inscriptions recorded in “*Epigraphy of Makli*” and see, how much of these inscriptions read by the other writers; once read where are these different from the readings offered by Dr. Lashari.

Therefore, the study presented hereunder is the result of part fieldwork, and part desk job.

Analysis of Readings of Epitaphs offered by Various Writers

The readings as appear in the nine works have been taken in to account, and these were compared with the readings offered by Dr. Lashari, and analyzed as to the content and accuracy of the readings done by the nine authors.

The table here shows the number of the Inscriptions with respects to the accuracy of its content viz a viz the name rightly read, the year, the *Madeh e Tarikh*, wherever it appears, correctly decoded or otherwise etc.

Analysis of Readings of Epitaphs offered against a total number of 377 by Various Writers

Published Work	Name Correctly Offered	Name Offered otherwise	Year Correct	Year Offered otherwise	Madeh e Tarikh Correctly deciphered	Madeh e Tarikh un-Deciphered	Total Epitaphs	% of total Epitaphs
Jadid Makli Namō	17	50	34	15	5	12	62	16.45
Sanadid-e- Sindh	170	5	91	58	29	16	183	48.54
Meeras Javidan	77	10	51	21	11	21	97	25.73
“Makli Hill Visited”	82	6	56	29	7	23	85	22.55
Museum Journal	197	22	123	21	21	31	242	64.19
Makli Namō	83	7	58	29	12	12	105	27.85
Turkhan Namō	5	0	2	0	1	3	6	1.59
Tarikh-e-Tahri	3	0	1	0	1	1	3	0.8
Lubb-e-Tarikh	2	3	0	1	0	8	12	3.18

Illustration 1

Introduction of the writers & Review of the Readings offered by them

1. Pir Hussamuddin Rashidi

Pir Hussamuddin Rashidi (Sindhi: پير حسام الدين راشدي) an outstanding Pakistani historian and scholar. Was born in 1911 in Larkana District, he was younger brother of Pir Ali Muhammad Rashidi, a well-known politician. Rashidi Sahib was self-groomed but he went on to achieve international fame.

Rashidi Sahib passed class 4th and completed *Sikander Nama* at his village and got English education from the Local Railway station master. He was very

fond of studying books and newspapers, that's the way he got information and was able to make head in Persian, English, and Urdu languages.

Rashidi started his career in journalism at the age of 18. First, he joined the newspaper *Jagan*. He chose to become the editor of *Al-Manar Newspaper* at Sukkur in 1930. At last he started his own newspaper, *Sitara-e-Sindh* in collaboration with his elder brother.

He visited many countries with delegations of scholars. He was awarded *Nishan-e-Spas* by the Iranian government in 1963, and *Tamgha-e-Imtiaz* from the Government of Pakistan the next year.

He published more than 40 books on topics ranging from history and archaeology to biography, and collections of essays and lectures.

During his illustrious career he also worked on Epigraphy related to Sindh. His research on Makli, the largest necropolis in Sindh, and his edited volume of Mir Ali Sher Qani's Makli Nama was first published in "*Sindhi Adabi Board's Quarterly magazine*" "*Mehran*" in 1956 [٤٥٦/٤-٣], later on this was published in 1968 as an independent book titled as *Makli Namō*. Basically this work is based on a Persian *Masnavi* by Mir Qanai, with extensive notes and references.

About this work Dr. Kaleemullah Lashari says, Rashdi, eagerly sought and utilized the information, maps, sketches & photographs provided to him. Understandably Rashdi did not design *Makli Namō* as an Epigraphic study. He however tried to build a compendium of source material for historical reconstruction of three centuries (15th to 17th of CE), but could realize very late that it needed a simple but different treatment. Whether any one considers the edited volume of *Makli Namō* to be a history of the period or not,¹ Rashidi died on April 1, 1982 & he was buried in Makli.

According to Dr. Kaleemullah Lashari, *Pir Hussamuddin Rashdi, admits possession of some readings by Khudadad Khan from which he referred freely in his writings. While using this information Rashdi has mentioned these with the title 'Katbat e Makli as Biaz Khudadad Khan (Biaz). Rashdi has at times mixed up epigraphs and locations of these; it supports the presumption that neither he was clear about the location of some of the inscriptions, nor the notes could make things very clear for him*².

When we compare the work of Dr. Kaleemullah Lashari with Hussamuddin sahib there are some coequal differences between them; Rashdi sahib has described 170 graves having sacred text, whereas Dr Lashari has given large number of inscriptions having sacred text.

2. Khudadad Khan

The famous author Khudadad Khan's family had been long settled in Sindh at Sukkur. He is said to have been educated by Akhund Allah Bakhsh at a village-maktab near Chiman in the Sukkur taluka of the present Sukkur district. There he learnt Sindhi, Persian and some Arabic. Later, he joined another maktab at Shah Khairuddin's mosque at Sukkur. While he was studying there an English officer, Major Frederic Goldsmith, who was also the Nazir-e-Madaris (Inspector of School), visited the maktab, and being impressed by the intelligence of young

Khudadad, sought his father's permission to take the boy under his own care. Probably, it was due to the patronage of Major Goldsmith that, soon after, Khudadad Khan was employed by British, serving at a comparatively younger age.³

The *Lubb-e-Tarikh*, which was written in Persian during his service, and later on it was translated, and published under the supervision of Dr N.A Baloch. It shows his interest in the Epigraphy of Sindh. Peer Hussamuddin Rashdi, who edited Mir Qani's *Makli Nameh*, and published it with extensive notes, mentioned some of the inscriptions from Makli referring these to be taken from *Biaz of Khudadad Khan*.⁴

Even though Pir Sahib has not introduced the *Biaz*, or the extent of the coverage by Khudadad Khan, yet the page numbers referred to the *Biaz* indicate sumptuous coverage.

According to Dr. Kaleemullah Lashari, "*The Notes of Khudadad Khan have not been introduced in a due manner, even though many of the inscriptions have been either quoted or referred to, in footnotes of the Makli Namoh. It would have been commendable if he (Rashidi Sahib) had described briefly the extent of information available and manner of its arrangement. Unfortunately, he has not left any clue of the whereabouts of the Biaz either*".⁵

*It is not known whether the inscriptions were copied actually, or simply the Ayah numbers were given in the Biaz; however as discussed earlier the way it appears in the footnotes, having page numbers mentioned, it leaves the impression that Biaz could be a pretty organized source material. If so, its importance lies in the fact that many of the structures, cenotaphs and stone slabs available during the late nineteenth century, might have been lost to us; in fact, couple of such instances have been noticed while perusing the Makli Namoh. However, we fear that there might have been more losses than what we can make out today, on the bases of partial references made available in Makli Namoh.*⁶ *Lubb-e-Tarikh-e-Sindh*, which is Khudadad Khan's main work, was compiled by him at the desire of Hon.H.E.M. James, the Commissioner in Sindh (1888-1900A.D.); he has devoted half of the book to the British period.⁷

He being the Native Chief Munshi / scribe of the Commissioner in Sindh, being excessively busy with his assignments and routine duties, also was resourceful enough to get epitaphs recorded for him.⁸

Khudadad Khan died in 1903 (Sunday, 4th Shawwal 1320 A.H), and was buried in the mosque built by him. The following inscription in Persian stands on his grave:

کتبه
تاریخ وفات حسرت یات جناب ذی شان مرحوم مغفور خان بهادر خداداد خان صاحب نور الله مرقده ،
سابق میر منشی کمشنر قیس ، پینشن بردار و جا گیر دار ساکن سکر کهنه روز یکشنبہ چہارم شوال
۱۳۲۰ھ

تاریخ

وفات

خداداد	خان	حمیدہ	صفات
خیر	خواہ	سر	کار
۱۹۰۳			۱۹۰۳

3. Dr. Maulvi Mohammad Shafi

Dr Maulvi Mohammad Shafi was among the first Muslim scholars of the 20th century, who displayed a deep interest in the rich heritage of Muslim culture, scattered in Sindh in the form of physical remains viz. mosques, mausoleums, graveyards, minarets, etc. He made extensive tours of the province on several occasions beginning with 1936 and deciphered inscriptions on various monuments in Makli, Thatta, Bukkur, Sukkur, Rohri and Sehwan and published his findings in the oriental collage Magazine. These writings are of immense value to the students of history.

Dr. Maulvi Muhammad Shafi, a very prolific Orientalist and he had a wide exposure the epigraphic material from the Islamic World. He was responsible for the compilation of the Urdu encyclopedia, which is famous as “Daira e Muarif e Islamia (دایره معارف اسلامیہ)”, which was published, on the completion of project by Punjab University. Dr Sahib had deep understanding of Persian as well as Arabic historic texts; he happened to visit Makli sometimes in the 1930s.

During his tour of Sindh his stay in Makli was brief, most probably he spent a single afternoon there. Regarding his work on Makli inscriptions, which was published, covers the shortened epitaphs, where he deciphered the chronographs and wrote down the year, along with it he did mention the recorded the year and “*Madeh-e-Tarikh*,”. Subsequently it was included as a short article in a book published under the title of *Sanadid-e-Sindh* edited by Ahmed Rabbani. It is not certain whether Dr Sahib had précised those inscriptions or it was done by the editor; but the forms in which they are available are the shortened versions of the epitaphs of Makli, presented in chronological order.

He has contributed greatly to the literary and historical heritage of Pakistan, particularly towards the studies on Sindh’s history.¹⁰

The results of years of research, conducted by Dr Mohammad Shafi, were compiled by Ahmed Rabbani in “*Sanadeed-e-Sindh*”. The value of his work is enhanced by the inclusion of photographs of various monuments and inscriptions.

He has discussed epigraphical wealth spread all over Sindh; one of very interesting episode in the history of Sindh was covered by him, wherein he established the fact of Muhammad Tughluq’s buried in Sehwan, on the basses of Epigraphy, where he mentioned the extended connections of Feroz Tughlaq with Sehwan.¹¹

4. MEERAS E JAVEDAN

Kamal Sayyid Javedani a great Scholar has worked on many valuable academic projects; survey & recording of Persian epigraphic content throughout Pakistan was one commendable undertaking of his. The compilation of this material under the name of Meeras-e-Javedan, in two volumes is greatly appreciated by the students & Scholars of Persian & history.

The author his introduction from very beginning of his official assignment as the Cultural Counsellor of the Islamic Republic of Iran Pakistan, from November 1989, he began serious endeavors to record the remnants of the everlasting culture legacy, which was scattered throughout Pakistan, in the shape of monumental inscriptions.¹²

In a very short time member of his team reached out to the historical sites scattered for & wido. Sayyid sahib has mentioned historical texts some of these are information with us, unfortunately available today Thanks to this work we have this.¹³

The volume 1 consists of an Introduction and the inscriptions and petro graphs of Persian in the province of the Punjab. The volume 2 contains a brief Introduction about the style of architecture, art and buildings along with the actual inscriptions and petro graphs of Persian in the other three provinces of Pakistan, namely, Sindh, Baluchistan and N.W.F.P.

Although there are a few books written on different aspects in Persian inscription, the present work is important because it covers a large area and contain a large number of photographs. The book also contains historical background derived out of historical narratives written invariably in Persian in the sub-continent. It is very helpful for those who are interested in the history of India and Pakistan relating to the Muslim Period. There are a large number of monumental inscriptions on, the gates of the government buildings, mosques, mausoleums and shrines, tombstone, in all of which Persian language has been used.¹⁴

The author as well as his young collaborators have been able to accomplish this difficult and important task. On the other hand, author has mentioned the list of the inscriptions and petro graphs in the order of the date of the building, date of death or the date of its reconstruction.

He has quoted:

The famous couplet of Babur

نوروز و نوبهار و می و دلبرے خوشست
بایر بہ عیش کوش کہ عالم دوبارہ نیست

Also Humayun's famous two liners:

اگر بہ پرسش عشاق می نہد قدمی
ہزار جان گرامی فدائے ہر قدمش

To indicate how the Mughals, cherish Persian and helped promote literature in it.

The number of inscriptions mentioned in his book is 192 out of these 161 are marked with the dates and have been recognized. Whereas, 31 of them do not exhibit any date. These inscriptions belong to Azad Kashmir, Northern Areas, Provinces of Sindh and Baluchistan.

5. Channa, Mehboob Ali Sehwan.

Mehboob Ali Channa was a renowned author, Poet and scholar. Mehboob Ali Channa was born on 12 March 1922 in Sehwan at Muhammad Saleh's house. He started his career from 1942 as a teacher of Municipal Middle School Sehwan subsequently he served in Sindh Madrasa, and NGV High School Karachi.

In 1948 Channa Sahib was selected for a lectureship in government College Hyderabad, and established the Sarwary College in Hala. He was selected as a Chairman of Sindhi Department in Sindh University and served during 1953-55.

After passing Sindh Public Service Commission Exam and became the Persian and Arabic professor, He was the first Sindhi who had been selected for secretary National Book Council in Islamabad since 1973-75.

Channa Sahib was the good author wrote various books and worked in magazines newspapers, he was the editor of "*Ferdous magazines*" in Hala. Channa Sahib was the member of Sindhi Adabi Board and Shah Latif Cultural Council and Shahbaz Cultural Council; also he was the chairman of "*Anjuman-e-Frog Adabi Hala*".

He died in Maki (Arbustan) in 24th November 1977.

6. Journal of Department of Archaeology Pakistan

"The Department of Archaeology Pakistan, later re-organized as Department of Archaeology and Museums (DoAM), had a few good attempts to initiate epigraphic survey of the Site, much in tradition of its forerunners ASI".¹⁵ It seems that certain hindrances affected the initiatives of the department, that is the reason that no such earlier work recording, are available.

"However, a smaller initiative of the DoAM in shape of a month long training program did produce results. Participants of this training have published some of the proceedings of the survey, to give an idea about the richness of the inscriptions at Makli and their importance:"

The article (Bukhari et.al) reported 269 inscriptions / epitaphs based on the survey carried out during the training, incidentally all funeral statement carried dates, and these were translated in to English as well.¹⁶

7. Mir Tahir Muhammad

Mir Tahir Muhammad ibn Hassan Sabzavari Thattavi was a poet and historian, born in the year 1582AD. Tahir Muhammad belonged to 'Sayyed family' of Thatta (Sindh). There are very few references to Tahir, in historical writings, however is certain that when Mirza Ghazi Beg left Sindh in 1604AD for the court of Emperor Akbar, he took Tahir Muhammad with him.

Not much is known about the author, Mir Tahir Muhammad Nisyani, who composed poetry under the pen-name *Nisyani*. But from his frequent autobiographical references in this work supplemented by some information left by Mir Ali Sher Qani, we gather the following facts about his family and career.¹⁷

Sayyid Hasan the father of Mir Tahri appears to have entered military service after his family emigrated to Thatta, Sindh from [Iran](#). His original ancestral surname was *Sabzvari*. His father was a [Sawar](#) and served the [Mughal](#) governor of Eastern Sindh and later Gujarat during the reign of [Mughal Emperor Akbar](#).¹⁸

He was a man of fortitude devoted to duty even in adverse circumstances. Three aspects of his career stand out prominently: as a sepoy in active military service doing his duty conscientiously: as a civil servant attached first to the entourage of Mirza Ghazi Beg and thereafter to that of Shah Beg Muhammad Adil Khan: and as a literary man trying to win recognition for himself in that field. He specifically studied Persian poetry, and became a poet himself.¹⁹

This long period of a quiet life gave him an opportunity to do some reading and writing. He probably compiled the story of ‘Umar and Marvi’, in Persian prose during this period. Since the death of Mirza Ghazi Beg in 1021, Mir Tahir Muhammad had also been contemplating to write this history of the Arghun and Tarkhan rule in Sindh and was in search of a patron to sponsor it; for, as he saw it, every author ought to have a patron.²⁰

He composed under the nom de plume of “Nisyani”. In Maqalat al Shura, Mir Ali Sher Qani has mentioned him under ‘Tahir and also quoted his following verses:

ز آب	حیات	قلم	هر	که	زیست
نمیرد	بود	زنده	تا	زندگیست	
ولی	مردہ	از	زندگانی	کسی	است
کہ	درنامہ	نامش	ندانند	کیست	
زدل	نقش	غمش	زائل	نگردد	
				سویدا خط انسانی نباشد	

When Emperor died in 1605AD Tahir Muhammad who had cultivated poetic talents, composed the Chronogram “ فوت اکبر شہ “.

The following inscription is obtained from on the tomb; stone which stands in the family graveyard of the Baghai Sayyids adjacent to the mausoleum of Abdullah Shah and which the present descendants of the author acknowledged that grave to be that of Mir Tahir Muhammad, the author of Tarikh-e-Tahiri:

بنمود	وفات	میر	طاہر		
کو	اصل	نکو	سرشتی	آمد	
زین	واقعہ	دیدہ	گشت	دریا	
			زان دریا غم آب بکشتی آمد		
از	لوح	فنا	سترد	نتوان	
این	حرف	کہ	سر	نوشتی	آمد
رفتہ	جو	بفکر	سال	فوتش	
			سید طاہر بہشتی آمد		

References to learned men, and to poets and their verses in his history of the ‘Tour of Thatta’ indicate Mir Tahir’s deep interest in literary circles. Starting with his mention of ‘Waqari’ (Mirza Ghazi Beg) whose verse he quotes. He notices Akhund Ishaq Bakhari and Sayyid Zahiruddin Shirazi, poet Muqim, Bar Ali Khan whose verse he quotes, Mulla Shikebi, Mulla Rashidi, Mulla Murshid Brujurdi

also whose verse he quotes, Talib Amuli and poet shams are other outstanding men of letters. These references, though made casually in this work, have remained as an original source of information for later writers, and Mir Ali Sher Qani has cited them frequently.²¹

Epitaphs

The reading is the most interesting aspect of the Epigraphy of the Makli, as it throws all sorts of possibilities to the intending reader, firstly because the tradition of the Persian has quite dwindled and is way out of the fashionable circles. Secondly the colloquial Persian may not afford any easy approach to the inscriptions boldly looking at the onlookers.

The learned visitors have afforded us a respect number of the inscriptions/readings, thus this assorted and easy to decipher funeral statements may have been instrumental for quite a large number of the visitors to the site to have further attempted at other such un-reported epitaphs which were not attempted before, or at least were not published, and definitely were not available for reference. This is an amazing fact that there is a very huge interest that exists in the monuments of Makli, which it duly deserves, but the little amount of the recording/readings were either attempted or published. The publications on Makli are not as numerous as we would like to think, though there is a great number of references to it, as indicated earlier the European visitors showed their astonishment at the sepulchral remains, but understandably none of them was in a position to comment on and also appreciate the epigraphic content, the applause that came was the just reaction to the magnitude of the interesting monuments standing without any reference but earning respect because of the inherent beauty, the symmetry and the ornamentations adorning these.

There is however an exception when one Khan Bahader Khudadad Khan, serving with the British high official, the Commissioner of Sindh, having interest in Epigraphy, recorded quite a good number of the inscriptions found in many of the historical places including Makli in his notebook/Biaz, that he left behind him, and it has been referred to by a couple of scholars, but he too quoted few inscriptions in his Persian history “Lubb e Tarikh Sindh”. In the earlier half of twentieth century Dr. Maulvi Mohammad Shafi undertook a trip to Sindh, and was able to visit Makli too. His recordings were published in the Journal of the Oriental College Lahore, and later appeared under the title of “Sana deed e Sindh”. In the fifties a Persian Masnavi of Mir Ali Sher Qani was edited with the copious notes by Pir Hussamuddin Rashdi, entitled as Makli Nameh, it had a quite a few inscriptions referred to wherever the learned editor thought it fit to make an attempt at reading. In seventies a monograph was presented to the Department of Central Asian Studies, University of Karachi by an eminent epigraphist, discussing the calligraphy, the monograph was published as *The Calligraphers of Thatta*. There were however a couple of other attempts were made, obviously not directly at the reading, but had a few epigraphs copied. One was by Professor Mehboob Ali Channa and other by Muhammad Ismail Ursani.²²

These were quite popular little accounts of visit to the historic site. These were followed by another attempt by a scholar from Thatta, who styled his work as “Makli Namō Jadeed”. When we discuss the epigraphic content at Makli, it is not to forget that there has been a good number of chronographs quoted in one important work written by a Thatta scholar of 18th century Maqalat e Shuara, some of these Qatae Tarikh are reflected on the grave stones also, thus that helps in the correct reading of those ones either worn out, corroded or have been rendered quite crowded by the scribes. But if we compare their reading with recent research of Dr Lashari he has made it very clear, he started his work from the survey of whole Makli site and then read the epitaphs in a very deep way which helps us today a lot to understanding the scribe inscriptions. The various writings are with us where need to formalize them.

In Dr Lashari’s work one doesn’t find any difficulty in reading as the transcriptions given long with the photographs but in others the situation is different. Basically the reading is not always easy, at times it happens that under the shining sun the shadows are of the kind, thus there is distortion in the view, as happened in this epitaph: there is slight variation in reading and year is missed by Khudadad Khan,

There are two types of Chronograms, “Manvi & Soori” (معنوی ، صوری), in some cases the decipherment of Manvi chronographs is not correct as he has miss read the chrono and slight variation is found in his reading, that is most probably the reason probably for that he could not solve the Manvi Chronogram بجستم از خرد تاریخ او گفت میسر از من بپرمی از داغ دلها Whereas Dr Lashari has read it as: بجستم از خرد تاریخ او گفت // میسر

از من بپرس از داغ دلها {1045}

The right reading shows how word has been miss-red by Khan, as giving by Lashari Sahib, the exact opposite of میسر should be بپرس as such the reading given by Khan as میپرمی is out of place and doesn’t serve the purpose of the composition.

Further he has missed the chronograms, thus couldn’t give the year.

In the next inscription, his reading is good but again he has missed the chronograms, which is معنوی. Lashari Sahib given the year 1049.

Makli Epitaphs which are not easy to read them but Dr Lashari has transcribed each and every single word correctly, but Khudadad Khan, who made many mistakes and could not able to solve the Chronogram.

If we see the work of Hussamuddin Rashdi who had compiled the work of Khudadad Khan, he also made various mistakes and did not read them as Dr Lashari has done; such as:

Structure 208, Rashdi Sahib and Sayed Kamal read name in correct حور بیگم
?.....But

Dr Lashari has given complete name and read epitaph correctly.

منتقل شد از دار غرور پدار سرور مرحومه مغفوره المعرفة بالاحسان بیگم خورشید بنت مرحوم
مغفور میرزا محمد باقی ترخان بتاریخ روز جمعه شهر ربیع
الاول سنه ۱۰۱۲



Illustration 1

Rashdi Sahib noted the name wrongly (structure of 99) as he read the مح.....ه but Dr Lashari read it as:



وفات یافت میر مخمورم ابن
امیر یادگار مسکین تاریخ سنه ۹۷۸

Illustration 2

Inscription of grave 56 face problem in year. Rashdi Sahib and Sayed Kamal recorded name wrongly but Bukhari transcribed امیر اصغر مرزا اصف and year given by Rashdi Sahib ۹۵۴ هـ, Bukhari ۹۷۲ هـ but Sayed Kamal and Dr Lashari omitted the year.

وفات یافت علیجناب مرحومی مغفوری امیر صفراء بتاریخ شهر جمادی الآخر سنه.....



Illustration 3

Rashdi sahib transcribed the year incorrectly as he read the inscription on the grave of Shahr Bano (grave number is 378) he gave ۹۵۰. Bukhari has assigned the year that is again incorrect as ۹۵۲, he mixed up the inscription of the adjoining grave (structure number is 379 instead of 378). Bukhari resultantly has added the extra couplet of other structure such as: زیادگار بهشتی زپیر عقل چوتاریخ فوت طلبیدم. It is interesting to note that he did not decipher the chronogram, otherwise the correct year of that structure would have come to surface. But Dr Lashari transcribed the inscription on the first grave and noted the year correctly:

وفات مستوره مغفوره توفی شهر بانو سنه خمس وعشرین فی شهر رمضان سنه ۹۸۰

The epitaph on the grave of Sultan Muhammad has been read by Mehboob Ali Channa who transcribed (the grave 161) precisely, omitting some parts of it, and on the other hand Rashdi Sahib has read complete inscription but has given incorrect name as he reads it حاجی بیگ. Dr Lashari given complete epitaph and has solved the chronogram as well, assigning the correct epitaph to each grave.

قد توفی الامیر المرحوم سلطان محمد بن امیر حاجیکه مغل فی یوم الخمیس سنه ثلاث وستین وتسعمائة 963

Rashdi Sahib read the inscription on structure # 210 and has transcribed a part of it, where in the name is incorrect and year is also given wrongly ۱۰۰۱ وفات. Dr Shafi also read the inscription precisely, he has not mentioned the year. On the other hand, Sayed Kamal also read the year wrongly ۱۰۰۱ and inscription is also shortened.

In Journal of Archaeology Bukhari sahib deciphered the correct reading but year is incorrect as he has assigned the grave as ۱۰۱۲.

Dr Lashari deciphered the year correctly and read the complete inscription as under:

وفات نامه مرحومه مغفوره همسایه چوچکه بیگه عاجزه حضرت نواب رضوان مقامی بتاریخ ۲۶ شهر شعبان المعظم سنه ۱۰۱۰



Illustration 4

Rashdi Sahib read year incorrectly on the grave of Arghun Baig, as 1000 (structure no 197) and Bukhari gave the correct year 1009. Dr Lashari's reading as given under, he confirms the year as 1009:

وفات ارغون بیگہ بنت امیر محمد علی ارغون ۱۰۰۹

Rashdi Sahib transcribed epitaphs of the structure number 696, but year attempted by him is wrong (۹۶۷); Mehboob Ali Channa and Bukhari both gave the same year ۹۶۲, which is wrong.

Dr Lashari deciphered the year correctly.

میرزا عیسیٰ جماد الاول سنہ ۹۶۴ وفات ترسون بیگہ بنت

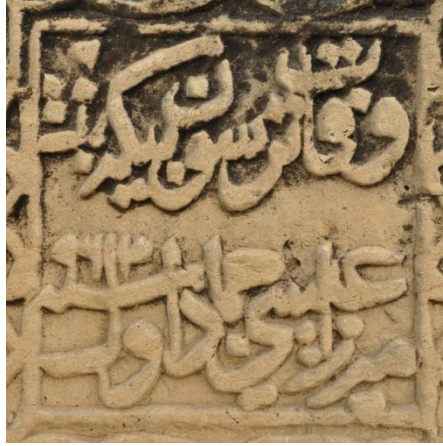


Illustration 5

Rashdi Sahib and Sayed Kamal read the epitaph on structure 693, where they deciphered the year wrongly i-e ۹۴۱ھ. And Bukhari transcribed the inscription partly تاریخ وفات جان بیگہ.

On the other hand, Dr Lashari gave the different year and that is correct.

وفات مستوره مرحومہ بیگہ جان بیگہ فی سن ستین یوم عید رمضان سنہ ۹۴۶

Rashdi Sahib Transcribed the structure number 201 whereas he gave the year incorrect ۱۰۰۱, where Dr Lashari gave the year which is correct وفات ماه بیگم تاریخ سنہ ۱۰۰۰

Rashdi Sahib transcribed the year incorrectly (structure 204) ۱۰۱۳سنہ and name could not read clearly بنت شاہ بیگہ But Dr Lashari has given name and read year correctly.

وفات اوفت بیگہ ماه بنت کلندر سلطان تاریخ ۹۹۶(کذا)

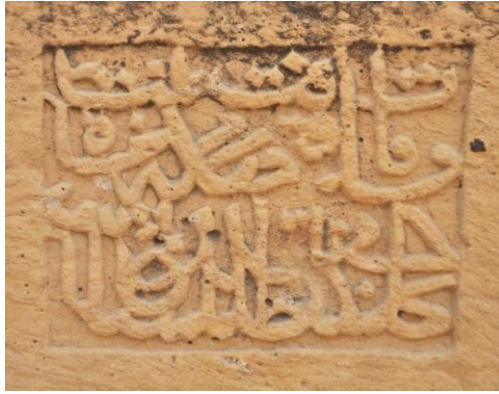


Illustration 6

Rashdi Sahib and Bukhari transcribed the inscription completely but bukhari read year incorrectly ٩٦٣, on the other hand Dr Lashari was not sure about the name but he gave the year correctly.

قدتوفى الامير الاعظم امير محمد سلطان قلى سا . . . تبا (؟) بن سلطان مرحوم امير حسين
بيگلار ظفى
فى خمس عشر شهر صفر
ختم بالخير والظفر سنه ٩٥١

The epitaph on the the grave of Hussain Baig Turkhan has been readly by Rashdi Sahib who deciphered (694) precisely as well as Rashdi Sahib and Bukhari they both read name incorrectly حسين

but Dr Lashari has transcribed the complete inscription and read name as:

توفى الامير المرحوم چين بيگ ترخان فى سن ثلاث وثلاثين آخر اربعا الصفر سنه ٩٤٩

Grave of Zareef bint was transcribed by Rashdi Sahib, read the year incorrectly ٩٥٣ and read name as: بظريف بيگه بنت On the other hand Bukhari and Dr Lashari read name as: بيجه ظريف as well as read year incorrect ٩٥٣ But Dr Lashari read it as:

وفات حضرت عصمت مآب عفت مناب قدوة المخدرات بيجه ظريف بنت عاليجناب دولت مآب
معالى صدر امير مرحوم شجاعت شعار الواصل الى جوار الله الغفور امير محمد مؤمن بيگ در تاريخ
دهم روز جمعه ماه رجب سنه ٩٥٢

Structure# 459 grave of Doust Muhammad Bin Ameer Darwaish Muhammad transcribed by Rashdi Sahib read year incorrectly ٩٤٥, but Sayed Kamal read inscription precisely . . . دوست محمد بن درويش محمد . . . and given year incorrectly ٩٩٤. Dr Lashari transcribed the inscriptions correctly and year as well.

وفات يافت دوست محمد بن

امیر درویش محمد ازلات سنہ ۹۵۵

Rashdi Sahib read year ۹۹۰ & name مهتر بابل which are incorrect But Dr Lashari deciphered it as:

وفات یافت مرحوم مغفور الواصل الى رحمة الله مهتر بلبل بتاریخ سنہ ۹۶۵

Rashdi Sahib and Sayed Kamal decipheres the (grave of 678) name is incorrect

حیدر محمد برلاس and year is also incorrect ۹۷۶ھ

But Bukhari and Dr Lashari read the name and year same.

وفات ماه بیگہ بنت امیر مرحوم امیر محمد حیدر بلاس بتاریخ

روز یکشنبہ ہژدہم شہر رجب المرجب

سنہ ۹۷۵

Mehboob Ali Channa, structure # 1176 transcribed precisely / امیر محمد شہباز / ابن امیر سید قنبر بیگ and year is not attempted. Rashdi Sahib deciphered name incorrectly محمد شہید. But Dr Lashari read it as:

وفات یافت سیادت مآب مرزا محمد شہباز

ابن امیر سید قنبر بیگ لار حسینی تاریخ سنہ

۱۰۰۰



Illustration 7

Rashdi Sahib, Dr Shafi and Sayed Kamal 1035 read the same year but Mehboob ali channa noted as 1002 and Dr Lashari read it 1052 they all read year differently because the way calligrapher write is difficult to understand the numbers. Mehboob ali channa transcribed precisely تاریخ وفات او چنین گفت

نور بصری امیر (ان باغ محمد علی) شاد ۱۰۰۲ and Rashdi Sahib omitted the name نور بصری امیر Sayed Kamal also could not read the name نور بصری امیر فانی

... maybe he could not read properly but Dr Lashari transcribed the complete inscription.

تاریخ وفات او چنین خرد گفت
 از باغ محمد گلی رفت ببادے سنہ ۱۰۵۲
 نور بصری امیر خانے
 اسماعیل قدم بفر دوس نہاد

In Structure number 1193 Rashdi Sahib added extra words like وفات او and Dr Lashari says: there is no such word actually it was his habit to add the extra word but those should be related.

Rashdi sahib has read Sultan Qasim Ali's inscription where he could not read complete name سلطان قاسم علی but Dr Lashari has cleared that who was his father.

وفات یافت مرحومی مغفوری سلطان قاسم علی بن حضرت خدا قلی لنگاہ بتاریخ شہر رجب ماہ
 یازدہم روز یکشنبہ سنہ ۱۰۱۹

Muhammad Quli Bin Shah Quli inscription showed year ۱۰۳۰ by Rashdi Sahib which is incorrect, but Dr Lashari has confirmed that وفات یافت مرحومی مغفوری محمد قلی بن شاہ قلی لنگاہ

بتاریخ روز سہ شنبہ بیست ہفتم شہر جمیدی الاسانے
 سنہ ۱۰۳۶

In this grave Rashdi Sahib read the month correct but the spell is change on the الثانی grave.

Grave of Muhammad Quli Bin Shah Quli Dr Shafi and Sayed Kamal noted the year incorrectly ۱۰۳۰ and the month spell is change whereas Dr Lashari transcribed the inscription.

وفات یافت مرحومی مغفوری محمد قلی بن شاہ قلی لنگاہ بتاریخ روز سہ شنبہ بیست ہفتم شہر جمید السانی سنہ ۱۰۳۶

Sayed Kamal could not read the few words عقیبہ المعالی چون امیر ابو المعالی and the last line where month name is written could not read properly ۱۹..... الاول the word بدود basically it is بدرد which means hurt . It shows that (Structure 526) the font which calligrapher used is quite difficult but Dr Lashari read it complete.

چون	میر	ابو المعالی	پیمود	راہ	عقبی
اول	پذیرہ	کر	دید	آمرزش	خدایش
آنکاہ	سال	فوتش	جستم	از	ملایک
رضوان	بدر	گفتا	بہشت	بادا	جایش

۱۹ شہر جمادی الاول سنہ ۱۰۲۹

On the grave of 66 in first line is readable but the second one is not in condition which could read وفات یافت مرحومی میرزانی محمد as well as year is not attempted. Dr Lashari attempted the year and read complete inscription وفات یافت مرحومی میرزا ن تتانی تاریخ سنہ ۱۰۲۴

The grave of 682 is BiBi Naranj, read by Sayed Kamal which is difficult to identified the correct name (مریم) مبرورہ بی بی and also Mehboob ali Channa could not read the name مبرورہ بی بی but Dr Lashari noted the correct name مبرورہ بی بی although it is so difficult to understand.

وفات یافت مرحومہ مغفورہ مبرورہ بی بی نارانج (کذا) بتاریخ شہر شعبان سنہ ۹۶۷



Illustration 8

Grave of 1192 has became color less because of pollution therefore Rashdi Sahib could not decipher year correctly ۱۰۷۴ he read only South side did not read North side. But Dr Lashari transcribed the both side of structure and also read year correctly.

بنٹ	مغفرت	پناہ	مہر	وفات یافت مرحومہ مغفورہ ادغا
ز میرک	۹۸۷ھ	۱۰۰۴ھ	تاریخ یوم الخمیس نہم	شہر شوال سنہ ۱۰۰۴ھ

Grave of 342 Foot stele: South face has chronogram which Rashdi Sahib transcribed the year wrongly ۹۸۷ھ, as well as Sayed Kamal and Mehboob ali Channa did not attemptd the year, wheras Dr Lashari has been count from ۹۹۴ھ and it gives 994AH and that is coorrect but Rashdi sahib counted the abjad incorrectly. Mehboob ali channa noted a word (ہمیشہ) but Dr lashari's read says شہید.

میرک چو شہید شد بگفتم/

باخامه	که	سال	آن	نوشتی
				گفتا که نوشتم ویرآمد/
				تاریخ ز میرک بهشتی
				994AH{

On the East side of 1164 structure have Chronogram but the epitaphs which Rashdi Sahib has given and Bukhari did not attempt the chronogram although it is very clear فاطمه جوادان بازیب جنت در جوار فاطمه on the other hand Lashari Sahib gave the of this chrono:

فاتحه بر روح آن معصومه کز لطف آله/ یافت فردوس برین ماوی بحسن خاتمه/ سال تاریخ وفاتش از سر ایقان نوشت/ جوادان بازیب جنت در جوار فاطمه (1089)



Illustration 8

Epitaphs of 1163 is very easy to solve the inscription but Rashdi Sahib has given ۱۰۷۹ if we see the picture it shows 1176 in Lashari Sahib reading gives correct year.

بتاریخ هشتم
شهر صفر سنه ۱۰۷۶
برحمت حق پیوست

Grave of 1650 is near Jalwagah Imameen in this epitaph has chronogram and Ayyah tul Kursi but our authors noted the inscriptions precisely such as Khudada Khan and Rashdi Sahib ۱۱۴۲ ال عباس است, but Sayed kamal has read complete epitaph and he had added extra line like سیف جنگ خلد منزل ازلی

And Dr Lashari's reading is

کز وفاتش خلق مشتاق فناست. از برای جستن تاریخ او نکته سنجان راز فکرش جان بکا ست
بلبل. طبعم ز غم نالید و گفت دست وی بادامن



Illustration 9

Rashdi sahib has read the name differently and has curtailed the inscriptions, it is very difficult to identify the name of burial because the condition of the structure was not possible to do that at that time

ناهيد سلطان بنت امير خليل

the author could not read the name properly on the other hand after many decades the reading of Dr Lashari brought it out the name of burial is:

هذه روضة المنوره للجناب الصالحة العابدة الواصل الجوار الى الله الملك المنان ببيحه سلطان
بنت امير مرحوم محمد (باقى).....

عاشت فى طاعة رب العلمين صارف عمره فى اعان المسلمين رحلة الدنيا الفانية فى يوم الثلاثاء
ماه رجب المرجب سنه احدى ستين وتسعمائة (٩٦١هـ)

Hassan Ali farzand mirza Muhammad Hakeem's epitaph gives the date 1189 but Rashdi Sahib transcribed year incorrectly ١١٥٩. And Dr Lashari read the epitaph correctly.

بتاريخ سلخ جمادى الثانى ١١٨٩ / حسن على فرزند

مرزا عبدالله / حكم از دار الفنا بدار البقا رحلت نمود

Head stone of 1616 slab has sedimental falls that is why year could not read by Rashdi Sahib ۱۱۵۱ but Dr Lashari deciphered the year incorrectly.

هو الغفار

وذرت الى الكريم بغير زاد من الحسنات بالقلب السليم

فحمل الزاد اقيح كل شيء اذا كان الوفود الى الكريم

بتاريخ ۱۵ شهر شعبان سنه ۱۱۸۱

Khudadad khan read پی پی which is wrong and year is un-deciphered, whereas Dr Lashari deciphered the and name correctly.

بگفتابی حجاب از غیب هاتف سعادت جاودانی یافت بی بی ۱۱۱۳

The epitaph of mirza Essa has chronogram but Khudadad khan read chronogram wrongly ، آسوده میرزا بکام میرما واه ، and could not read year but Sayed kamal read chronogram correctly and نموده میرزا عیسی بگلزار ارم ما وا but could not solved. Turkhan Namo attempted the year wrongly although he read chronogram نموده میرزا عیسی

Dr Lashari read the chronogram correctly and solved it as well: 1061 بگلزار ارم ما وا چو رحلت کرد از دار فنا آن سرور ترخان جنان به بستان آسوده شد در منزل اعلیٰ بپرسیدم چو سال رحلت او از خرد گفتا نموده میرزا عیسی بگلزار ارم ما وا ۱۰۶۲

khudadad khan read the structure of Ameen uddin but little bit change like ۱۱۴۷. and un-deciphered the chrono and Sayed Kamal read year incorrectly. Mehboob ali channa and Dr Lashari read it correctly.

خان باتمکین امین الدین امیر // عالی از حسن عمل درجات او // چون سفر کرد از جهان بی ثبات // سال فوتش داخل الجنات او سنه ۱۱۲۷

خان	باتمکین	امین	الدین	امیر //
عالی	از	حسن	عمل	درجات
چون	سفر	کرد از	جهان	بی ثبات
سال فوتش داخل الجنات او سنه ۱۱۲۷				

Structure of 1282 Khudadad Khan read a شد ، and did not slove Chronogram and Dr Shafi read inscription precisely and the word میباش he read باش but Chronogram is mentioned, on the other hand Dr Lashari gave the chrono and the complete epitaph.

ندا رسید که وی واصل خدا شد گفت

غمین میباش که فردوس ساخته روشن {1052}

Grave number 9 has chronogram which Khudadad khan could not deciphered, and did a changing in word like بپرمی. As Dr Lashari deciphered the chronogram.

بجستم از خرد تاریخ او گفت // میرس

از من بپرس از داغ دلها {1045}

Khudadad khan read a word گونی and chrono is un-deciphered and year, and sayed Kamal also undeciphered the chronogram and read inscription precisely سرور و سردار باقی When we read Dr Lashari reading in that he has deciphered the chronogram also read the complete inscription.

ز غیب آمد ندا تاریخ او گفت

کہ کوی سرور و سردار باقی

(1050)

The epitaph of Jesar bin Murad year is omitted from grave only he was the one who noted the year which is not exist today, Dr Shafi transcribed the year ۸۰۰ but epitaph is precised and Mehboob ali channa's reading is precised and year is omitted. As well as Dr Lashari also omitted the year but read inscription completely

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

فالله خير حافظا وهو ارحم الراحمين.

هذا القبر جيسر بن مراد

Mirza Muhammad Painda was son of Mirza Muhammad Baqi Turkhan his date of death is wrong which is read by Mehboob ali channa ۱۰۰۳ and precised the inscription. In Turkhan Namō's reading we find that he omitted the words میرزا and year is correct ۱۰۰۰ Bukhari deciphered the epitaph correctly and also he mentioned the year which also correct. On the other hand, Dr Shafi transcribed the inscriptions precisely but year is correct. Dr Lashari read the complete epitaph and mentioned the year correctly.

قدوصل الى جوار الملك السبحان حضرت رحمة الله تعالى مرزا محمد پائنده ابن مرزا محمد باقی
ترخان تاریخ ماه صفر سنه ۱۰۰۰

The Epitaph of Sajida Bega is read by various authors whereas Bukhari could not read the year and Mehboob ali channa miss-read the word بیگم and Dr Shafi read year incorrect ۱۰۰۱ and Dr Lashari transcribed the inscription.

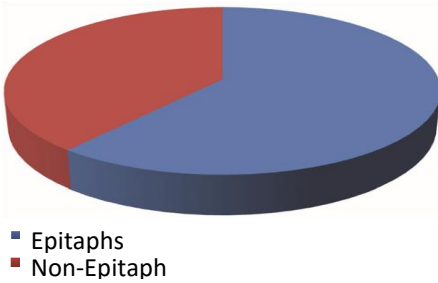
دوست بنت مرحومی مغفوری یادگار محمد بتاریخ ماه وفات یافت مرحومه صالحه ساجده بیگم
رجب سن ۱۰۱۲

Grave of Hassan Beg Khan date of death read wrong by Dr Shafi 1001. Dr Lashari modified the epitaph correctly.

وفات یافت حسن خان ولد اله وردی بیگ کرد بتاریخ ۱۶ ماه ذوالقعد روز دوشنبه از دنیا فائے
روی سالم بدینا باقی (کذا) سنه ۱۰۳۵

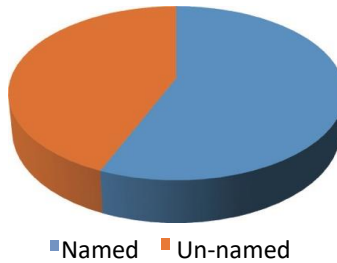
Although various authors have worked on the necropolis of Makli, such as Pir Hussamuddin Rashidi, Dr Moulana M Shaffi, Mehboob Ali Channa & others, their coverage of inscriptions is focused only on epitaphs, excepting Rashdi, who did mention few of the Sacred text. Dr Lashari on the other hand has covered every single word that appears on the cenotaphs and monuments of Makli. He clearly indicated that all the cenotaphs finely dressed do not necessarily contain inscriptions.

The Ratio of Cenotaphs with and without Epitaphs



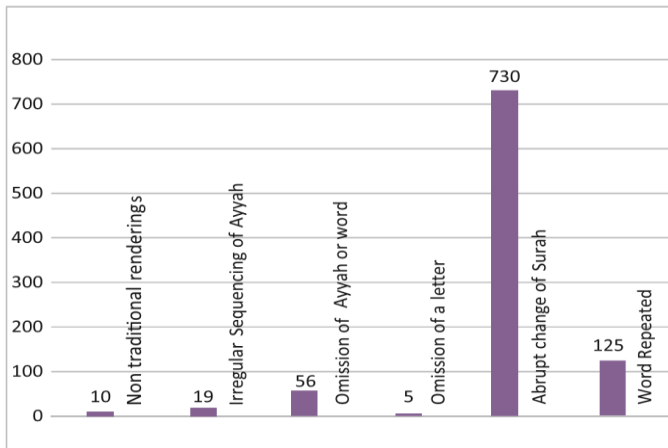
Whenever there are inscriptions, these may not be proper epitaphs, as many of these do not indicate the name of person buried.

Inscribed Graves Named & Un-named



The research of Dr Lashari is fascinating, who has described the various aspects of these systematically, where he has taken into account the location of each line, and goes on to point out even where the fragments of *Ayah* are inscribed. His analyses are thorough as could be clearly seen from the following Table, where mention of different types of divergences are practiced, very different from the formal way.

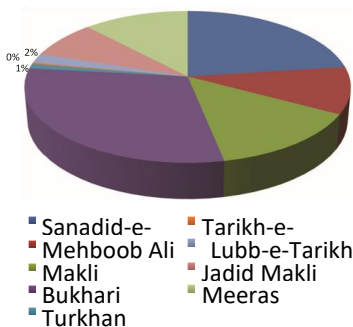
**Count of Various Elements in
Omissions & Commissions**



We compare the work on inscriptions of Makli done by Lashari Sahib with other authors in order to show what is required to be done that is going to be very helpful for students & budding scholars. Normally the writers like to copy the names and relevant date from the epigraphs, and reproduce it, without offering much explanation. On the other hand, the careful system that was observed by the Epigraphical Survey, conducted by the officers of Archaeological Survey was taking into consideration requirements of copying & presenting. This type of diligence is not observed by writers while reporting Makli inscriptions. The learned Rashdi would have liked to sort the notes on inscriptions, copied in the Biaz of Khudadad Khan with the positions assigned there, with his observations on ground, as he was a very careful scholar, but due to his circumstance, ill health and traveling, hard pressed with the time he couldn't bring relevance to the data, showed dependence on the data as it appeared to him.²³

Works reporting the inscriptions of Makli largely show the usual difficulties faced. The writers were aware of historical references and outstanding personalities of Thatta, while recording/copying the inscriptions they allowed the conventional perceptions to tint their recordings. Naturally the recordings reported were meant to substantiate the historical events they were narrating,²⁴ rather than finding the correct reading, with diligence.

Quantification of Readings Offered



The writer of this paper has taken cognizance of the work of various writers, who had been indulgent enough to transcribe the inscriptions from the historical graveyard. Though these writers were not trained epigraphists, still their recordings have served good cause, as to make available historic material, to the students of history. Some of these writers, as seen in the table made a very little contribution, whereas there are others, like Dr. Shafi, and the team of the Department of Archaeology, who have referred a quite good number of Epitaphs. Dr. Lashari's work has enabled the writer of this paper to analyze at length these contributions, and quantified it with regards their accuracy, and resultant utility.

It is to put on record the acknowledgement of the learned contributuins of these men of letters, who chose to undertake the study of historical monuments. This writer is highly indebted to Dr. Kaleemullah Lashari, who allowed usage of the field data in his possession.

Notes & References:

- ¹ Dr. Kaleemullah Lashari, 2018, *Epigraphy of Makli*, Sindh Exploration & Adventure Society, Karachi. p. xxi.
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