

Review CLASS LINKS page

<http://faculty.humanities.uci.edu/apatel/Class%20Links/classlinks.html>

The Catalogue Entry

450 words MAXIMUM

Identify & illustrate the object (including material, condition); where is the object now?

Put yourself in the reader's position: Why is the object worth viewing?

- help the reader see the work more clearly and through your eyes --
CONVINCE THE READER OF A POINT (Thesis)

- relevance to the larger exhibition

- comparison to another object, if needed

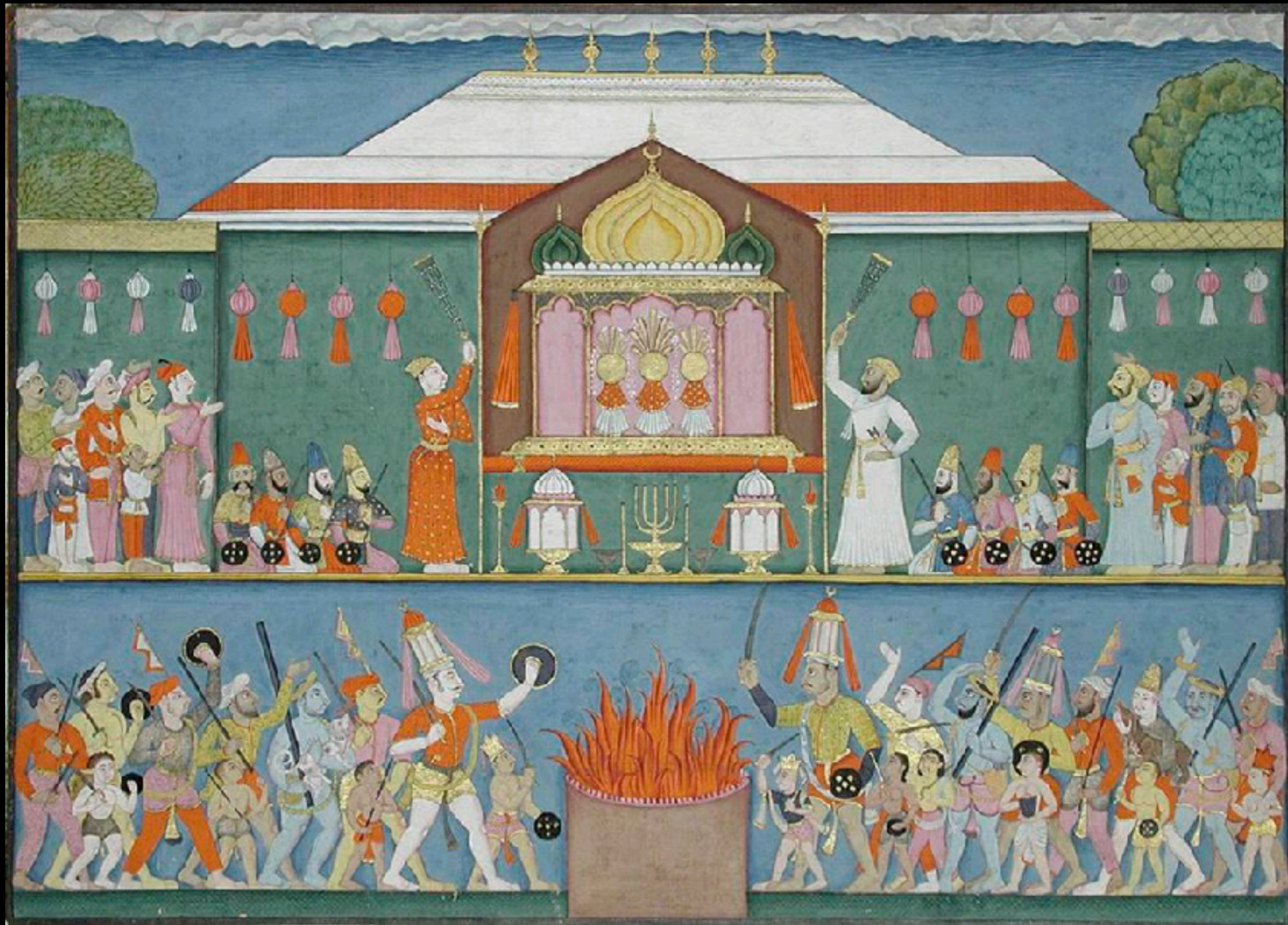
Formal Analysis of the object

How does the work mean?

Description vs. Analysis:

- description = lists what you see
- analysis = argues a thesis with what you see
- include subject, style, iconography

Use abbreviated bibliographic references in text &
include full bibliography of at least 3 references



Observance of Muharram
Opaque watercolor and
gold on paper, ca. 1775
India, Hyderabad or Arcot
Edwin Binney 3rd Collection
1990:552

Two horizontal registers depict simultaneous scenes where the artist communicates the appeal across social and religious lines of festivals that occur during Muharram, the most significant holy month for the Shi'ite branch of Muslims. The top register shows the veneration of enshrined Muharram banners ('alam) by the military and political elite. The lower register contains a diverse group—ranging from Hindu holy men to children—participating in the exuberant public pageantry.

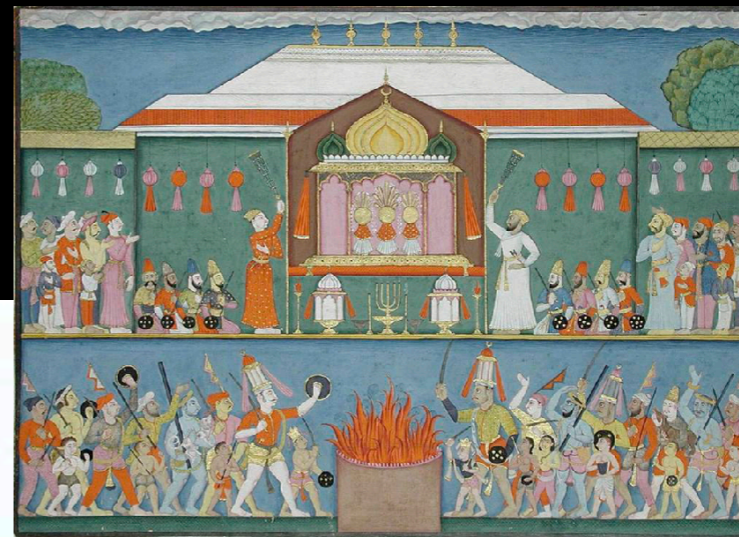
As early as the 15th century, the Indo-Muslim sultans who ruled territories in the Deccan embraced the Shi'ite branch of Islam as the official religion. However, even after this region's annexation in the second half of the 17th century by the Mughals, who adhered to the rival Sunni branch of Islam, the intense and emotionally charged religious festivals of Muharram continued to be supported and celebrated. (AP)

76 *The Observance of Muharram (?)*

The subject of this tightly organized painting, split into registers in which different moods prevail, is possibly the great Muslim festival of Muharram. In the Islamic calendar, the year begins with the month of that name, but it is the tenth day of the month—called the "Ashura" and originally suggested by the Prophet as a day for fasting—that came over time to be especially revered. It became associated with one of the great martyrdoms of Islam, that of Hussain, the Prophet's grandson. It was on this day that Hussain, "that candle of the gathering of grandeur," died fighting, together with seventy-one of his companions, against overwhelming odds in the battle of Karbala. Throughout the Islamic world, but especially among the Shi'ites, the day is observed with extraordinary fervor: people mourn, *marsiyas* (dirges) are recited, great gatherings visit mosques, processions are taken out in which people flagellate themselves. Above all, *ta'ziyahs* or *tabuts*—tall domed structures that represent the biers of the martyrs, beautifully carved and gilded or painted—are paraded and finally given a burial in designated places.

Muharram, as observed in the Adil Shahi sultanate of Bijapur or the Qutb Shahi kingdom of Golconda, had a special flavor, according to observers. In these places, people of all description, crossing religious and sectarian boundaries, seemed to participate in the festival. Great processions were taken out; *marsiyas* in "Dakhani" Urdu were recited; in Hyderabad, the mausoleum called Chhote Hazrat ki Dargah was thronged by visitors; and many of the festivities borrowed heavily from Hindu practices. There is no inscription that helps identify the scene rendered in this painting, but it possibly represents one such Deccani celebration or observance.

In the top part of the painting, under a conventional sky and flanked by trees, stands a walled structure in the middle of which is set another, temporary domed structure, elaborately decorated with flags and streamers, hanging lanterns and domed candle stands.¹ Installed ceremonially within this domed structure, which is perhaps a *ta'ziyah*, are three small, tiered devices covered with colorful cloths and topped



by striplike objects that fan out decoratively. On either side attendants or devotees stand, waving *morchhal* (peacock-tail) fly whisks in gestures of veneration. Some soldierly figures sit on either side, wearing tall conical caps and bearing swords and shields, as if keeping guard. Groups of people, including children, stand in orderly fashion outside the structure. They are very differently dressed from one another, especially with respect to their headgear, gazing at the spectacle with respect and admiration. A sense of order and restraint prevails.

In the lower register of the painting, however, there is noise and commotion. Two motley groups of people—most persons wearing short drawers or loincloths, some wearing tall, lanternlike caps to which streamers are attached, others in flat, low turbans, nearly all of them carrying some weapon or other—move toward the center of the painting, where a large, brilliant fire burns in a masonry structure, a reference perhaps to the "fire walking" that can eventually become a part of the self-flagellation in Muharram festivals. It is difficult to be certain, but there seems to be no suggestion here of groups marching toward each other for battle; simply one of energetic, determined-looking people who shall merge eventually to form a procession. The mix of people here is curious, from soldierly types and near beggars, two of them carrying dogs in their arms, to little children carrying clubs and sticks and miniature shields. The painter depicts, possibly, his view of a cross-section of society, the great variety of people here to take part in the show.

There is wonderful stylization in the work, with everything from the setting to stances and postures carefully choreographed, as it were. The eye shifts from one register to the other and back, taking in, by turns, the quiet order and the commotion. The coloring is muted, the slate blue of the background helping to gird diverse elements together. Some of the details, like the leaping tongues of fire or the eager expressions on the faces of the dogs, are sharply observed and rendered with marked flair. Over the whole painting, however, hangs the air of a tableau, or of some impending performance.

Architectural Documentation

450 words

Identify & ILLUSTRATE the building: where, when, “who”

Why is this building interesting to you??

- help the reader understand the building, through your eyes

- **CONVINCE THE READER OF A POINT**

- describe **WHOLE** building, e.g. general shape, material of construction;
THEN point out noteworthy specifics, e.g. tilework, dome

- describe the **CONTEXT** of the building, e.g. what is around it (open field or urban development), what is close by (businesses, residences)

- was it sited *purposefully* within this context (interviews would be nice...)?

What regional precedents does the structure follow, historical “Islamic”, contemporary, or both???

- if historical “Islamic” elements present, juxtapose with one example from the region

- also discuss its similarities/differences with its context: is it distinctive, does it stand out or not?

- **Do you think the building is a successful project, i.e. valuable addition to the community AS A BUILDING?**

Use abbreviated bibliographic references in text & include full bibliography of at least 3 references



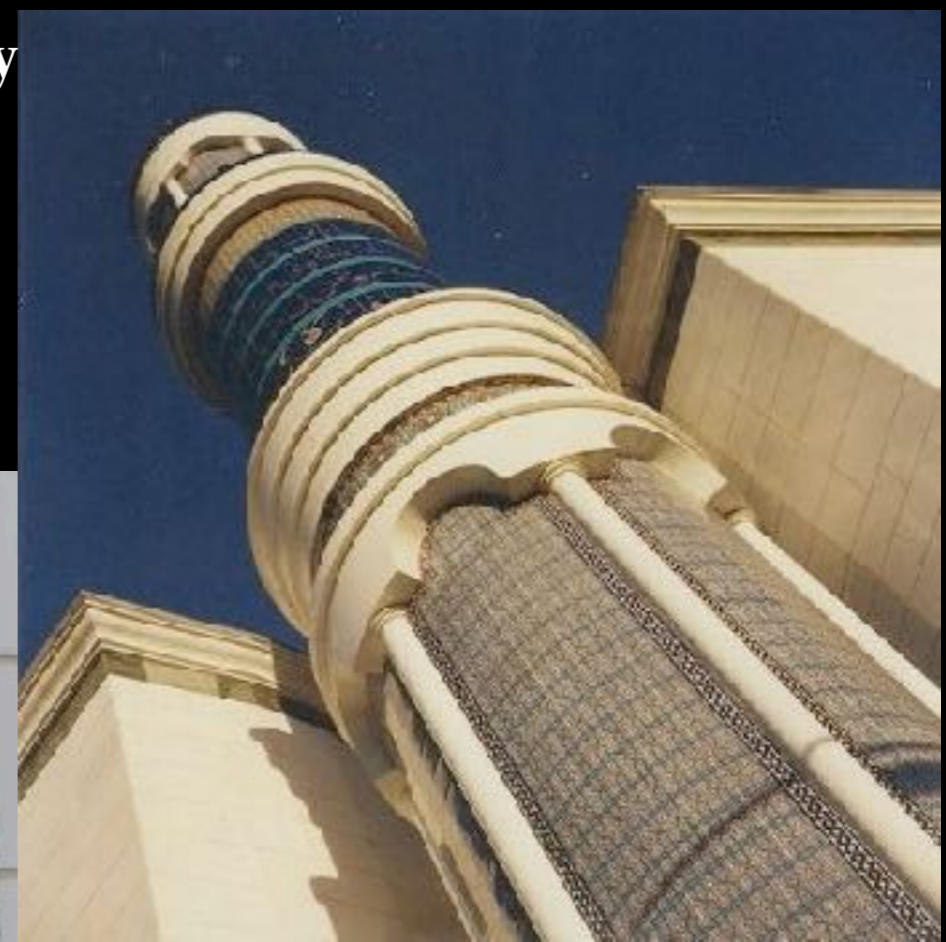
Alhambra, Court of the Lions, mid-14th c.

King Fahd Mosque, Culver City



Land: Prince Abd al-Aziz ibn Fahad ibn Abd al-Aziz al-Saud, Minister of State and Cabinet Member (1993)
Construction: King Fahd (1995)

King Fahd Mosque, Culver City



King Fahd Mosque, Culver City: Possible Comparisons?



**Congregational Mosque
(later, cathedral)
Cordoba, Spain
Begun 785**



King Fahd Mosque, Culver City: Possible Comparisons?



**Mausoleum of Uljeitu
Khodabanda (r.
1304-1316).
Sultaniyya, near
Tabriz.
1313.**

King Fahd Mosque, Culver City: Possible Comparisons?



**Congregational Mosque (*Jami Masjid*).
Isfahan, central Iran. Founded Late 8th century; major additions/expansions in 12th century (Saljuq) and onward.**

Style & Iconography

ICONOGRAPHY = the subject or “content” of a work of art, e.g. painting, sculpture, ceramics, metalwork etc.; *usually not applicable to architecture as a whole*

STYLE = the way in which the subject or “content” was executed, where formal elements can be identified (requires description and sometimes comparison with other objects to make/clarify a point); applicable to architecture