



Taj Mahal

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Background

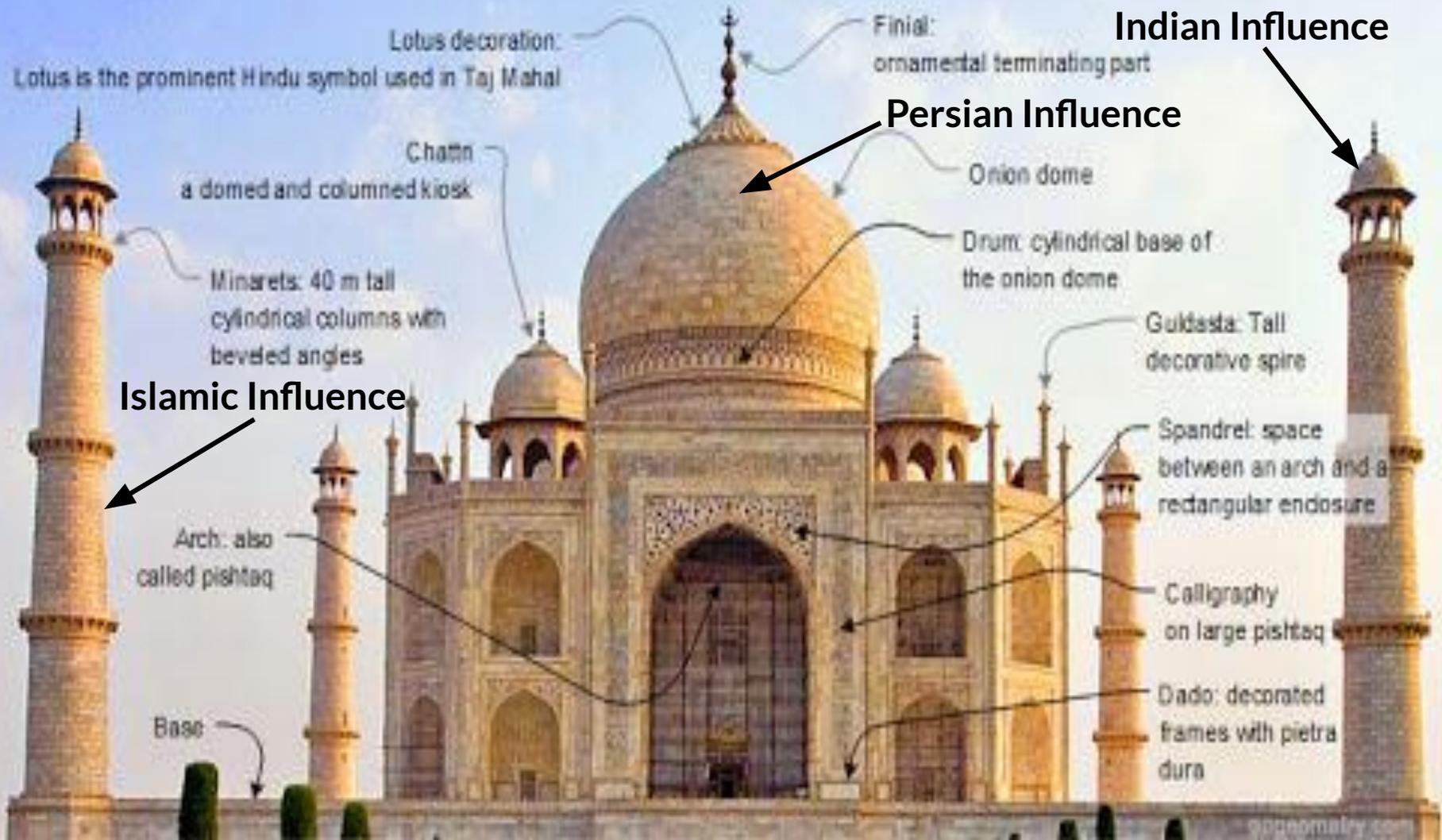
- It is located in northern India on the right bank of the Yamuna River. It is in the western Uttar Pradesh state in the city of Agra.
- It was created in the 17th century by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan.
- Its purpose was to be a mausoleum for his wife named Mumtaz Mahal who died during her childbirth to their 14th child in 1631.
- It is India's most famous monument, used as a shine to eternal love, and nicknamed the Monument of Love.
- It started to get built in 1632 and took about 22 years to be completed
- It is one of the seven wonders of the world.
- It cost 32 million rupees (\$447,452) for the Taj Mahal to be completed.
 - Financed by raising land taxes which forced a lot of peasants into poverty

Shah Jahan Quick Facts

- Mumtaz Mahal was his third wife and a Muslim Persian princess. She was nicknamed “Chosen One of the Palace”.
- He is the grandson of Akbar the Great.
- He met Mumtaz at age 14 and got married to her five years later.
- He ruled most of northern India from the 16th century to mid 18th century.
- He was crowned emperor in 1628 which was a year later after the death of his father King Jahangir due to a power confrontation with his brothers.
- Soon after the Taj Mahal was completed, he lost his throne to his son Aurangzeb in 1658 and put under house arrest at the nearby Agra fort.
- He died in 1659 and is buried in the Taj Mahal with Mumtaz Mahal.
- The Taj Mahal’s ordered symmetry symbolized absolute power by representing the perfection of Mughal leadership.
- The great size and all its extravagant materials also brought glory to Shah Jahan’s reign.

Fun Facts

- It contains optical illusions everywhere due to the craftsmen and architects being masters of proportions and tricks of the eye.
 - For example, the minarets (towers) surrounding the tomb seem straight but actually are leaned outward which provides aesthetic balance.
- 22,000 artisans from India, Persia, Europe, and the Ottoman empire participated in its construction and 1,000 elephants were used.
- It was the finest example of Mughal art and architecture.
- It had the combination of Indian, Persian, and Islamic influences .
- The chief architect was Ustad Ahmad Lahouri who had Persian descent.
- It was constructed of white marble inlaid with precious stones such as jade, crystal, lapis lazuli, amethyst and turquoise forming intricate designs in a technique known as pietra dura.
- Verses from the Quran were inscribed in calligraphy on the arched entrances to the mausoleum and in other places as well which goes along with Islamic traditions.



Lotus decoration:
Lotus is the prominent Hindu symbol used in Taj Mahal

Finial:
ornamental terminating part

Indian Influence

Persian Influence

Chattri
a domed and columned kiosk

Onion dome

Minarets: 40 m tall
cylindrical columns with
beveled angles

Drum: cylindrical base of
the onion dome

Islamic Influence

Guldasta: Tall
decorative spire

Arch: also
called pishtaq

Spandrel: space
between an arch and a
rectangular enclosure

Base

Calligraphy
on large pishtaq

Dado: decorated
frames with pietra
dura

