

November 2014

RENAISSANCE MONTHLY

Your monthly update on The Renaissance Project



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Yasmine Saqer

Dear Friends,

This month the Renaissance Project invites you to learn of one of Islam's most important astronomers, and to awe at yet another architectural wonder.

An astronomer from Syria, **al-Battani's** discoveries and observations have given us the most accurate information and understanding of our planets and stars.

In Lahore, Pakistan, the remarkable and incredibly detailed **Wazir Khan Mosque** sits at the Delhi Gate, a spectacle of the city and one of the finest artistic examples of the Mughal period.

We hope you enjoy the read.

Best,

Yasmine Saqer

"The Astronomer"—Al-Battani

Muslim of the Month by Yasmine Saqer, Newsletter Editor



One of the most famous Muslim astronomers, **al-Battani's** life and work produced remarkably accurate astronomical explanations and observations.

Al-Battani was born around 858 C.E. in Harran to his father, Jabir Ibn San'an al-Battani, a well known scientist at the time.

Educated first by his father, al-Battani received an advanced education in his early life, inspiring him to achieve his later status as a scholar. His family members were of the Sabian sect, a religious sect of star worshippers from Harran. As worshippers of stars the Sabians were motivated to study astronomy. While al-Battani did study astronomy extensively, he was not a believer of the Sabian religion.

Al-Battani made most of his observations while living in ar-Raqqah, Syria, where he became prosperous under the Caliph Harun al-Rashid.

Unlike other scientists, al-Battani used trigonometric methods in his studies, which were an important advancement. From it he showed that the farthest distance of the Sun from the Earth varies and, as a result, annular eclipses of the Sun are possible as well as total eclipses. His descriptions were more accurate than that given in Ptolemy's *Almagest*.

Al-Battani's most noteworthy achievements include: cataloging 489 stars, refining the existing values for the length of the year (365 days, 5 hours, 46 minutes, 24 seconds), and calculating 54.5" per year for the precision of the equinoxes and obtaining the values of 23° 35' for the inclination of the ecliptic.

Al-Battani dedicated his life to the observation of planets and stars, giving the world some of the the most important knowledge of the universe.

Keep Up-To
Date With
Our News



[The Renaissance Project](#)

[@ProjectR2012](#)

Contact Us

Therenaisanceproi@gmail.com



Wazir Khan Mosque—Lahore, Pakistan

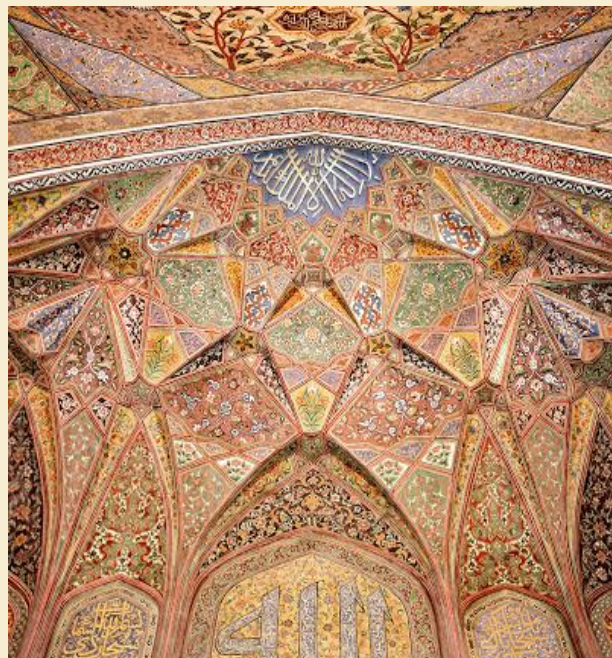
Islamic Architecture by Yasmine Saqer



Famous for its extensive tile work and frescos, the Wazir Khan Mosque is an exquisite and meticulous work of Islamic architecture.

Located inside the Inner City with access from the Delhi Gate, the Wazir Khan Mosque was built around 1635 AD during the reign of Mughal Emperor Shah Jehan. The construction took seven years to complete, and was built by and named after Hakim Ilmud-din Ansari, a Chiniot native who later became the court physician to the Shah and the governor of Lahore. Commonly known as Wazir Khan, Wazir translating to 'minister' in Urdu, the mosque was named after Ansari.

The mosque is made of brick and faced with brightly colored glazed tile mosaics in yellow, green, and blue. The floral tiles and designs represent Qashani work from the Mughal period. Since its creation the paintings have been carefully restored by the few remaining Islamic craftsmen of Pakistan.



The Muslim Credo at the entrance of the mosque contains verses from the Qur'an on the panels along the façade. Inside the prayer hall has five chambers, each surmounted by a dome. The courtyard has octagonal minarets at each corner, and holds the grave belonging to Syed Muhammad Ishaq, or Miran Shah, a saint who settled in Lahore during the Tughluq dynasty and died in the 14th century—predating the mosque.

Adorned with both a beautiful interior and exterior, the Wazir Khan Mosque is a breathtaking work of architecture and one of Lahore's greatest masterpieces.