

## TOR GUMBAT AND SPIN GUMBAT: LOCATED ON MAIN ROUTE TO THE INDUS PLAIN AT THAL, KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA, PAKISTAN

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### ABSTRACT

The tombs (Tor and Spin Gumbats) are located in on the ancient rout along the Kurram River at Thal in Kohat Division. It was one of the main routes of for army movements from Ghazni to the Indus plain in the past. The names are based upon the colour of the tombs. These tombs are the only example of their kind in this area.

**KEYWORDS:** Kohat, Thal, Kurram, Tor and Spin

### INTRODUCTION

#### Location

Both the tombs are located at Thal (namely Tor Gumbat and Spin Gumbat) on the right bank of the Kurram river about 251 km south-west of Peshawar, on the ancient route along the river Kurram connecting Parachinar with Kohat on the one hand and Bannu on the other. This was the main thoroughfare for the movement of armies from Ghazni to the Indus plain (Shakir 2012: 12).

### ARCHITECTURE

#### Tor Gumbat

The tomb building (Khan 1993: 189-90; Shakir 2012: 38-39) is square (Figure 7) in plan 7.20 x 7.20 m externally (Pl.Ia) and is constructed of dressed stones, *kanjur* blocks, river pebbles, cobbles and burnt bricks fixed in lime mortar. The total height of the building from the present ground level is 8.29 m and each side is relieved by a tall pointed arch, which accommodates the entrance in a rectangular frame of about 1.70 x 1.00 x 0.40 m.

Internally, the square tomb chamber, on each side is relieved by an alcove (Figure 6 & Pl.Ib) within a 4.70 cm deep rectangular frame. The arches up to the springing point are made of *kanjur* blocks fixed in lime mortar, while from the springing point upwards they are made of burnt bricks. Above the rectangular frame is a slightly projected cornice (Pl. IIa) showing some traces of lime plaster. The phase of transition (Figure 6) consists of four corner squinches with intermediate arches in-between having squattish clerestory windows. The middle portion of each represents the area of the keystone. The phase of transition is topped by a series of rectangular holes at a regular interval, which suggests that these holes were used for fixing wooden cross beams to strengthen the side of the building which have been originally lime plastered both internally and externally as traces are still visible at various spots.

The bricks are mainly used in the arched entrance and the dome with occasional use in the walls, but the size of these bricks is not uniform and varies from 24 x 19 x 5 to 30 x 21 x 5 and 19 x 17 x 3 cm. The floor is full of debris of the fallen dome (Figure 5) and other collapsed portions. Therefore it is not clear whether there is one or more graves paved with bricks or stone.

### Spin Gumbat

This building is located just a few metres to the south east of Tor Gumbat (Shakir 2012: 39-40). Externally it is square (Figure 10) in plan. The entrance (Pl.IIb) is provided on 30 cm height from the ground in the eastern side with a pointed arch and a metre above the entrance is an arched opening for light and ventilation (Figure 8). Similar openings can be seen on all the other three sides. The rest of the walls are plain. The south side of the chamber has two water shoots. This square chamber has a metre high round drum with a running moulding in plaster and is topped by a pointed dome with inverted lotus-like moulding.

Internally, the chamber walls have pointed sunk arches one on each side with a small projected cornice on the top. This square chamber is converted into an octagon by corner squinches and intermediate arches (Figure 9) topped by a projected cornice (moulding) all around to received a pointed dome. The grave chamber accommodates four graves, one large and three smaller in size with paved floor.

Externally and internally the building has a thick coat of lime plaster which has recently been white washed. Above the phase of transition is a running floral design painted in red and green, but mostly hidden under the white wash. The material used in the construction is locally available stone, *kanjur* blocks, small size bricks and lime mortar.

### DISCUSSIONS

This area from the time of Akbar to the invasion of Nadir Shah (1738) formed part of the Mughal Empire (Khan 1993: 190). The Tor Gumbat, owing to weathering effect and also the use of travertine stone in the construction, has with the lapse of time turned black and the other tomb (Spin Gumbat or white Cupola) is fully plastered and whitewashed. Now the words Tor and Spin in Pashtu mean “Black” and “White” in the same order. The expression “Tor Gumbat and Spin Gumbat” therefore suggests that these names were given to the monuments just because of there colours and for no other reason. Thus the real names seem to have long been forgotten.

These monuments are the only example of their type in this area and therefore, needs to be restored and preserved. No other monument in the whole neighbourhood can stand comparison with these tombs in terms of the use of different materials like (burnt bricks river cobbles and local available stones) fixed with grey mortar and plastered with thick lime coating. The question of attribution and date of the tombs is still unsettled----- historical sources and local tradition being completely silent in this regard; neither is there any epigraphic record or inscription available to help in resolving this problem. But the building style of these structures comprising low domes and square plans (Bunce 2004: figure 2 (c)) suggest a date not earlier than the last quarter of the reign of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan.

### REFERENCES

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APPENDICES



Figure 1: Hangu (Thal): Tor Ghumbat, General View



Figure 2: Hangu (Thal): Tor Gumbat, Showing Details of the Interior Northeastern Corner



Figure 3: Hangu (Thal): Tor Gumbat, Showing Corner Squinch in Phase of Transition



Figure 4: Hangu (Thal): Spin Gumbat, Showing Entrance and Details of the Facade

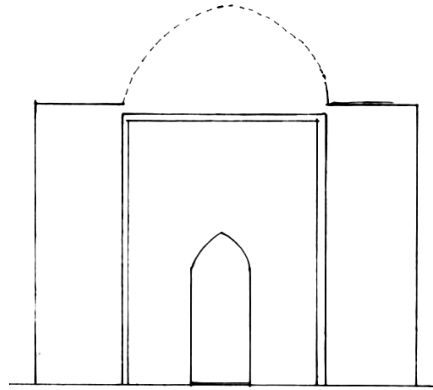


Figure 5: Hangu (Thal): Tor Gumbat Front Elevation

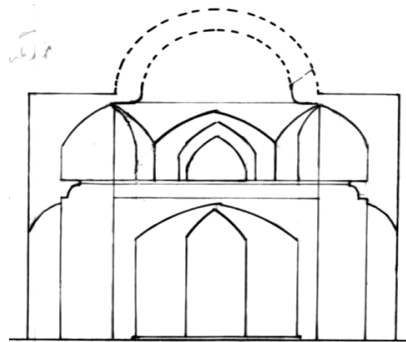


Figure 6: Hangu (Thal): Tor Gumbat Sectional Elevation

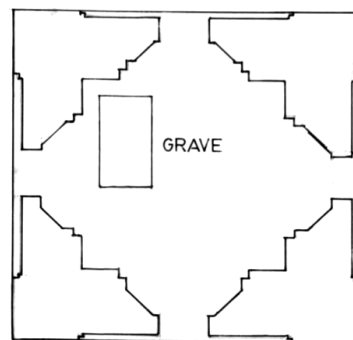


Figure 7: Hangu (Thal): Tor Gumbat: Ground Plan

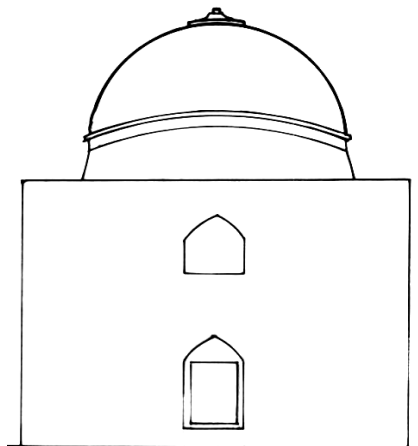


Figure 8: Hangu (Thal): Spin Gumbat Front Elevation

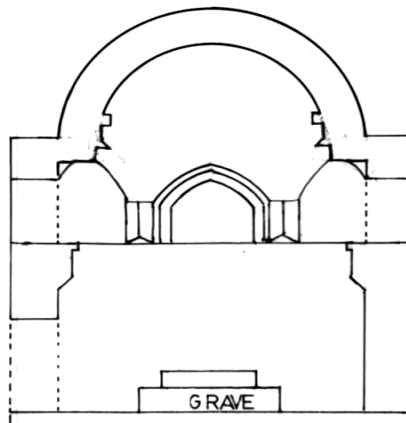


Figure 9: Hangu (Thal): Spin Gumbat Sectional Elevation

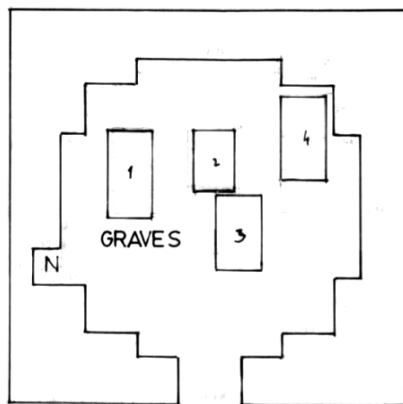


Figure 10: Hangu (Thal): Spin Gumbat: Ground Plan

