



The Gateways to Eternity: Exploring the Evolution and Significance of Mughal Tombs Gateways in Lahore

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ABSTRACT

Mughal Architecture, exemplified by its funerary tombs, echoes the memory of its powerful monarchy. Mughal tomb architecture evolved to symbolize the transition from worldly life to the spiritual realm, with gateways framing sacred gardens inspired by Quranic descriptions of paradise. These elaborate gateways have been key elements in Mughal tombs from Akbar's reign through Aurangzeb's period. This paper explores the architectural evolution of gateways in Mughal tombs, focusing on the tombs constructed in Lahore during the reigns from Akbar to Aurangzeb (1556-1707) to identify surviving gateways and those that have disappeared. Two case studies, the gateways of Jahangir's tomb and Nawankot Monument are selected to conduct comparative analysis of their forms through site visits and visual assessments. This research reveals distinct contrast in forms and decorations and calls attention to the urgent need for preservation efforts for future appreciation.



Introduction

Origin of Islamic Tombs

Islamic architecture has significantly developed artistic traditions related to death, with tomb construction gaining prominence, especially after the ninth century in eastern Iran (Michell, 1978). These tombs, often built to honor pious individuals, became a key architectural monument in Islamic culture. These could be found as standalone structures in cemeteries or attached to mosques and madrasas connected to the deceased. Due to the religious, social, or political significance of those buried within, these tombs were richly adorned with symbolic designs portraying paradise, Quranic inscriptions about death and the afterlife, and occasionally depictions of the deceased's virtuous life (Saud, 2003). Early forms of tomb construction, inspired by Zoroastrian Chahar-Taq designs of Persia featured domed square chambers, later evolving into diverse forms under Seljuk patronage, including octagonal towers and tombs integrated with mosques

(Krause, 2007), (Saud, 2003). Indian Muslim architecture developed tombs in domed square design as well as octagonal shaped forms, adding intricate decorative elements (Burton-Page & Michell, 2007).



Fig 1. Itmad-ud-dola Tomb, Depiction of Fishes, Vine Bottles, Flower Vases. Source: (Goyal, 2015).



Fig 2. Jahangir's Tomb, Depiction of Flower Vases. Source: (Chida-Razvi, 2017).

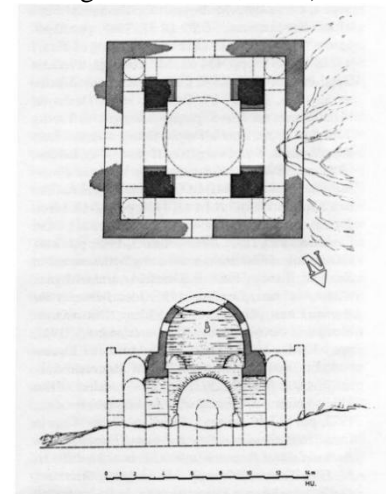


Fig 3. Early Medieval Chahaar Taq south east of Fasa in Fars. (Source: Huff & O'Kane, 1990, as cited in Encyclopædia Iranica)

Mughal Period Tombs and Architectural Features

The mughal tombs exemplify the fusion of cultures and serve as enduring symbols of paradise, unity, and eternity. Their design often reflected the quranic concept of an earthly paradise, with features like gardens, the hasht bihisht concept, water channels, and symmetrical layouts. The intricate geometric patterns and calligraphy on these structures emphasize the mughals' appreciation for beauty and their cosmic worldview (giridhar, 2019), (khan et al., 2023), (zaman et al., 2024). In islamic tradition, paradise is envisioned as a garden, and burial in such spaces reflects a longing for eternal bliss. These serene gardens honor the deceased, creating a peaceful connection between life, memory, and the afterlife (lange, 2012), (rahaei, 2015). A royal mughal tomb, set within a walled garden with grand gateways, transitions from a festive hall in life to a serene resting place in death. Surrounded by fountains and fragrant plants, it embodies beauty, peace, and reverence (dickie, 1985).

An overview of Tomb Evolution from Akbar to Aurangzeb Period (1556-1707)

Mughal emperors used funerary architecture as a lasting statement of their power and to solidify their legacy in India. Babur initiated this legacy by introducing Central Asian features, such as the chaharbagh (four-quartered garden) and multiple domes, seen in early projects like the Kabuli Bagh Mosque. Babar's stipulation of being buried in an uncovered grave reflects his adherence to orthodox practice and didn't allow the garden as a necessary adjunct to Islamic burial. Humayun didn't find the chance to plan his burial. Akbar's reign brought monumental scale, exemplified by Humayun's Tomb and the Buland Darwaza, alongside innovations like the noni-partite plan, radial symmetry, and Khurasanian vaults. His architects seamlessly integrated Indian and Timurid elements, such as trabeate designs and arcuate structures, into harmonious compositions using red sandstones.

Under Jahangir, the use of white marble, pietra dura inlay, and Christian-inspired motifs signified a period of artistic experimentation and left many examples like the Maryam Zamani Tomb at Agra and Tomb of Aitamadudola at Agra, which do not have a dome and stand at the intersection point of Chaharbagh. Shah Jahan's era is often seen as the zenith, showcasing the refinement of details in elegant monuments. The Taj Mahal of his era documents the use of white marble and red sandstone in construction, bulbous shaped dome, shift of tomb structure from the center to the periphery of walled garden enclosure overlooking the river below, noni partite plan, floral motifs, multi-foliated arches, and the introduction of minarets on both sides of tomb structure. A forecourt pau khiina with a series of cloistered cells was also added before the gateway for the visitors to prepare themselves before entering the sacred funerary gardens, this architectural evolution, rooted in adaptation and synthesis, reflects the Mughals' eclectic and inclusive vision, leaving an enduring legacy across the Indian subcontinent. Nearly all tombs built in the Mughal Period followed the fourfold garden concept, with the mausoleum either at the center, exemplified by Humayun's Tomb in Delhi, or at the periphery exemplified by the Taj Mahal in Agra. The riverfront setting of these monuments, such as the Yamuna and other rivers, was ideal for enhancing transport, views, climate, and water access.

Aurangzeb's architectural contributions reflect his orthodox beliefs and a practical, restrained approach, emphasizing religious and public structures. He memorized the entire Quran and wrote it out

several times in his entire life. Notable works include the grand Badshahi Mosque in Lahore, the Moti Masjid in Delhi, and the austere Mathura Mosque, all showcasing verticality and intricate ornamentation. His wife's tomb, the tomb of Itabi'a Daurani at Aurangabad, a simpler echo of the Taj Mahal, introduced new spatial arrangements and naturalistic floral stucco details. This tomb also truly ends the long-established imperial tradition of setting monumental tombs. This marks a shift from this type to simpler burials, like his own tomb at Khuldabad within a Chishti shrine, signifying a full-circle evolution of Mughal tomb traditions (Brand, 1993), (Giridhar, 2019), (Koch, 1991), (Rezavi, 2014), (Zaman et al., 2024). However, many of these architectural gems now face threats from neglect and external factors, highlighting the importance of preserving their historical and aesthetic value. Today, Mughal architecture continues to inspire admiration for its craftsmanship, elegance, and cultural significance (Khan et al., 2023).

Significance of Tomb Gateways

Gateways have played a crucial role in architecture across civilizations, evolving from symbolic structures like Ishtar Gate of Babylon and Roman arches to artistic and functional masterpieces like gateways to Baghdad's round cities. In South Asia, Mughal and regional influences shaped iconic examples like the Alai Darwaza and Buland Darwaza, reflecting power, spirituality, and craftsmanship (Alamgir, 2011). In Islamic culture, gateways served practical roles in medieval cities as defenses, social spaces, and ceremonial entrances, blending functionality with cultural significance (Sharif et al., 2023). As the Mughal tomb gardens are earthly manifestations of the Quranic description of the paradise garden, the Entrance gateways of the Mughal tombs are as significant as the gateway of paradise. Gateways of Mughal tombs symbolize the passage from the worldly to the spiritual realm. Designed with intricate details and perfect symmetry, they not only frame the tomb but also enhance its sacred aura. These gateways stand as powerful expressions of Mughal artistry and a tribute to the legacy of those they honor (Khan, 2019). These monumental gateways also reflect the architectural ornamentation of the interest of its patron conveying his dominion upon the beholder of the gateway (Abbas, 2023).

The traces of gateways within walled garden enclosures can be found in Gur-e-Amir (Tomb of Timur) in Samarkand, Uzbekistan (1404 CE) Fig 4. This tomb is an early example of where the concept of symmetry and garden elements began to influence mausoleum design (Rahaei, 2015). However, it was the Mughal dynasty in the Indian subcontinent that refined and popularized the integration of walled gardens with tombs on a monumental scale. The Tomb of Humayun in Delhi, built-in 1570 by Emperor Akbar's stepmother, is widely recognized as the first Islamic mausoleum to feature a fully realized *charbagh* garden enclosed within high walls. The gateway serves as a symbolic and ceremonial entrance to the sacred garden, aligning the earthly realm with paradise as described in the Quran (Abbas, 2023), (Hassona, 2019), (Krusche et al., 2010). Another prime example is the grand gateway of the Taj Mahal in Agra, which represents the pinnacle of Mughal design. Adorned with Quranic inscriptions, it frames the view of the mausoleum and its walled garden, seamlessly blending architecture with the surrounding landscape in perfect harmony. (Fischer, 2017)



Fig 4. .Gateway of Gur-e-Amir (Tomb of Timur) in Samarkand, Uzbekistan (1404 CE)

Source:(Huniewicz, 2014)

During the Mughal era, Lahore reached its architectural zenith, with impressive grand constructions that enriched the city's landscape. Among their many monumental works, the Mughals placed particular emphasis on tomb architecture. These tombs were not limited to the emperors but also housed their queens, ministers, nobles, and Sufi saints (Babur, 2024). In Lahore, many significant tombs are known for their splendor Architectural features with the gardens and gateways as their prominent feature exemplified by the Tomb of Jahangir and Asif Khan (Taxila Institute of Asian Civilization, 2001, p. 131). While iconic tombs often receive the most attention, Lahore is home to several lesser-known tombs that are equally significant in terms of historical value, though they remain overlooked by many. These tombs continue to reflect the same architectural legacy that defined the era (Babur, 2024). Numerous studies have been conducted to analyze the

significance, geometry, current conditions, and forms of Mughal tombs but a few explore the monumental gateways of these monuments. To document the architectural features of these gateways that lead to Mughal funerary monuments is imperative, as these serve both practical and symbolic purposes. This will help us to better understand the architectural influences and individual tastes of patrons of the era.

Research aims

- Explore the history of gateways in Mughal tombs, focusing on tombs built in Lahore from Akbar's period to Aurangzeb's reign (1556-1707).
- Conduct the form analysis of tomb gateways with a focus on the Architectural features of two selected case studies.

This paper is further divided into three sections. The first section will describe the methodology, followed by the second session that will first document the list of gateways built during Mughal ruled era in Lahore and then will select the two case studies from the list to study and compare their geometry, spatial arrangements, elements, materials and surface ornamentation. The last section will conclude with the recommendation for future research.

Methodology

This study adopts Qualitative research methods that rely on both primary and secondary sources to explore the history and evolution of gateways in Mughal tombs, specifically focusing on tombs built in Lahore from the reign of Akbar to that of Aurangzeb. The study takes an historical documentary research approach and starts with tracing the historical context of Islamic tomb architecture, setting the stage for understanding how Mughal tombs evolved, particularly during the reigns of Babur through Aurangzeb. The study then delves into the importance of gateways in Mughal tombs, highlighting their symbolic and architectural significance. Secondary data was gathered from historical studies, books, journals, academic papers, and government archives, all focusing on Mughal tombs and their gateways evolution over time. A major part of the research is dedicated to form analysis, where the study uses a comparative case study method to compare the architectural details of two selected Mughal tomb gateways in Lahore. Through site visits, photography, and visual assessments the study looks at the selected gateway's spatial design, elements, materials and ornamentation.

Documentation & Analysis

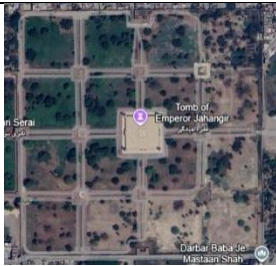



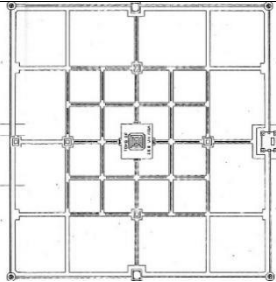
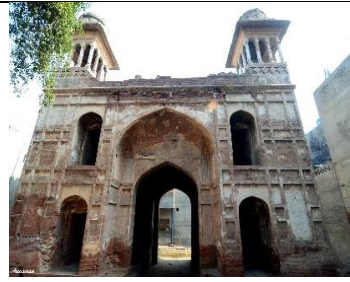
Tomb Gateways Built During Mughal Ruled Era in Lahore







Table-1: List of tombs with diminished gateways		
Name of Mughal Period	Name of Tombs/Date of Construction	Description
Jahangir (1605-1627)	Tomb of Anarkali/1650	The Tomb of Anarkali is located in Lahore's southeastern corner of the Punjab Government's Civil Secretariat complex. Initially, it was built on the left bank of the Ravi River, surrounded by a chaharbagh. This garden was enclosed by high walls and featured a grand entrance portal. The tomb played a significant role in shaping Mughal architecture in Lahore and across India. It marks a transitional period in architectural style between the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir. Over time, the surrounding garden, gateway, boundary walls, and other associated structures have vanished, leaving only the tomb as a testament to its historical significance.
	Tomb of Sadr-i- Jahan 1570	This is situated among a cluster of houses in the old village of Sodhiwal and was once surrounded by the Charbagh accessed through gateways. Over time, however, the garden and its gateways have vanished, leaving behind only traces of its former grandeur.
Shahjahan (1628-1658)	Noor Jahan Mausoleum/1912	This tomb is situated west of the complex comprising the tombs of Asif Khan and Jahangir. Originally the Charbagh surrounding the tomb of Nur Jahan was owned by her and contained several summer houses and pavilions used by her and other visitors for Jahangir's tomb. Its entrance gate was on the south. In the course of history, it suffered from neglect, violence and abuse during Sikh period. British government laid the railway line separating this tomb from the tomb of Asif Khan and Jahangir. Over the time it has gone through many restoration phases. Despite the fact, all the pleasing features of Chaharbagh and its loft massive boundary wall two gateways (recorded according to the Mughal tradition) have now disappeared.
	Tomb of Prince Pervez	This tomb stands in Karim Park, at Kot Khwaja Said in North Lahore. This area has been recorded as Mandi Pervezabad, named after Prince Pervez, the son of Emperor Jahangir and brother of Emperor Shahjahan. According to scholars, it might be the burial place of either the son of Nadira Begum (daughter of Prince Pervez) or Pervez's two sons. Historical records provide limited information about its bagh and gates. Kanhaya Lal observed that all its four sides had magnificent gates.
Aurangzeb (1658-1707)	Tomb of Nadira Begum/1698	The tomb of Nadira Begum, wife of Prince Dara Shukoh, is located in the Mahallah Hazrat Mian Mir. Architecturally, this tomb is unique in its construction as it lies in a water tank instead of Chaharbagh and resembles a pavilion rather than a tomb. Lofty gateways provided access to the tomb from the north and south through masonry bridges supported by the arches. The traces of gateways are not found now but a bridge on thirty arches still stands today.

Literary sources document a considerable list of the Mughal period tombs built in Lahore, from

Akbar's to Aurangzeb's. Still, few of them have surviving structures of gateways along with their gardens and tombs. During Akbar's reign, two notable tombs were constructed in Lahore: those of Qasim Khan and Nawab Bahadur Khan. However, detailed information regarding the gateways associated with these tombs remains largely unavailable. Many tombs built for nobles, courtiers, saints, and guides during the Jahangir, Shahjahan, and Aurangzeb periods have no gateway records. These include the Tomb of Nawab Sadiq, Tomb of Shah Rustam Ghazi, the Tomb of Khan-i-Dauran Bahadur Nusrat Jang, Tomb of Maulvi Sadiq Ali Gujrati, Tomb of Daughter of Khawaja Saeed, Tomb of Mir Niamat Khan, Tomb of Nawab Mian Khan, Tomb of Salih Kamboh and Inayatullah Kamboh, Hujra f Nawab Jafar Khan, Shrine of Sheikh AbdulHaque, The Bangla Makan. Nearly all of them are neglected monuments with no traces of gates (Rehmani, A, 2016). Based on the Literature from secondary sources two lists are generated below in table form. One list provides details of tombs that once had gateways but have since been lost due to various factors. The other list focuses on tombs that still retain their gateways. No surviving example of gateways marks its existence that was built during emperor Jahangir and Aurangzeb era. Only Shahjahan's era gives glimpses of such splendor masterpieces built in Lahore.

Table-2: List of tombs with surviving examples of gateways during Shahjahan's Era (1628-1658)

Gateways of Tombs	Date of Const	Name of Chaharbagh	Site Plan	Front View
Tomb of Jahangir	1637	Bagh e Dil; Kusha / Bagh e Dil Amez		
	Jehangir's Mausoleum is located at Shahdra, on the right bank of the River Ravi, about five km northwest of old City Lahore. It is situated in the extreme east of the mausoleum complex, including those of Asif Khan and Nur Jahan. The pleasure garden used for burial was owned by Nurjahan, the wife of Jahangir, and changed into funerary garden. Being only the tomb of a Mughal Emperor in Lahore, it has much significance. It emerged as a monument of surpassing beauty prior to the Taj Mahal and is recognized for its domeless enclosure, a chaharbagh comprising a double set of eight paradises with a Akbari serai in front, and a double-storey portal south and north of jilaukhana to approach the mausoleum.			
Tomb of Asif Khan	1641-1645	Bagh e Dil; Kusha / Bagh e Dil Amez		
	The tomb of Asif Khan lies in a square garden to the west of Jilaukhana of Jahangir's mausoleum. This monument, placed alongside the tombs of Jahangir and Nurjahan, reflects Asif Khan's prominent status in the court of Shahjahan, as he was the father of his beloved wife. The octagonal structure signifies the transition between the architectural styles of Jahangir and Shah Jahan. This tomb had gates on the south and west sides and a jawab to the entrance gate on the north. The south gate acted as the main entrance.			
Tomb of Zeb-un-Nisa	1646	The Nawankot Bagh		
	Nawakot monument, the tomb of Zebunisa, the elder daughter of Emperor Aurangzeb, is situated on Multan Road at a distance of 5 miles away from the famous monument of Choburji. The monument is within the unplanned locality of Nawakot. The tomb garden and its gateways are reported to have built by Zeb-un-Nisa herself. The garden had a distinctive design, where each section of the Chahrbagh was subdivided into four smaller gardens. Additionally, one of these smaller sections was further divided into four even smaller gardens, resulting in a total of 28 gardens overall. According to Kanhya Lal, this garden had four splendid gateways open able to all four directions. An entrance gateway, the tomb building and two corner turrets are the only remains of this tomb-garden. The gateway has been totally hidden and detached from the tomb due to encroachments			

	surrounding it.				
Tomb of Dai Anga	1655	Gulabi Bagh			
The gateway of Gulabi Bagh, also known as the garden of roses is located on the left side of GT road towards the Shalimar Gardens. The garden and its gateway were built by Mirza Sultan Baig who Shahjahan commissioned to build this rose garden, which is said to have beautiful turrets on its four corners, pavilions, arches, and paved floors. The garden has disappeared with time, only its magnificent, tiled gateway stands now to reflect the glory of that period. The tomb of Dai Anga was built here during Aurangzeb's time.					
Tomb of Ali Mardan Khan	1657	Baghicha-I-Ali Mardan Khan			
The tomb of Ali Mardan, the governor of Kashmir and Punjab, stands in the enclosure of the General Stores of Pakistan Railways. This is among the most important Mughal monuments in India due to its massive construction, height and originality of style. The spacious Charbagh surrounding the tomb now has disappeared, but its two-storey gateway in decayed condition still stands. The size of the gateway highlights the past grandeur of the garden. This gateway was used as a residence with an extra room built over it during the Sikh period, which Britishers demolished. This gateway resembles with Gulabi Bagh gateway in architectural style and decoration with floral patterns.					
Tomb of Mahabat Khan	N/A	Saithan di Bagheechi			
This tomb is located in Baghbanpura, from Lahore city towards Shalimar Gardens. Mahabat Khan was the commander during the successful reigns of Jahangir and Shahjahan, who laid a chahargagh and its gate in his life. Probably Lashar, the son of Mahabat Khan is buried here and was given the title Mahabat Khan likewise on his father's demise. At present, all that is left of this tomb is the damaged brick platform, a brick built grave, the garden and a gate on the west wall. A second storey was added on the top of the gate by Parsi inhabitants in nineteenth century. The existing remains are under the process of deterioration.					

Case Study Selection

The survey of Mughal tomb gateways highlights that only surviving monumental gateways date back to the reign of Shah Jahan (1628-1658). Among the examples listed, two gateways that originate from Shahjahan's era, lead to the tombs constructed during the Aurangzeb's reign (1658–1707). These include Dai Anga tomb and Zeb-un-Nisa Tomb. For this comparative analysis, two gateways are chosen: the main entrance gateway of Jahangir's mausoleum and the Nawankot Gateway of Zeb-un-Nisa's tomb. Jahangir's tomb gateway is chosen for its historical significance as the only royal tomb remaining in the city, and it represents the architectural style of gateways from that time. A notable feature of these gateways, particularly in the Shah Jahan period, is the recurring design of arched entrances topped with half-domed ceilings, a characteristic that became a defining feature of many gateways built during his reign.



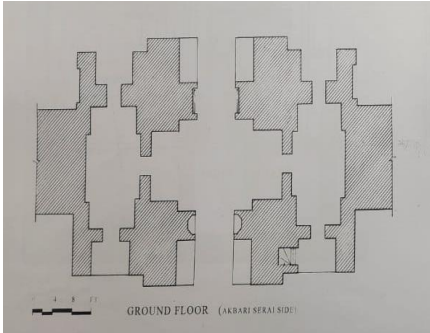
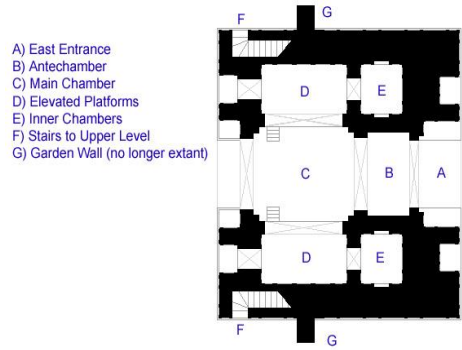
The Nawankot Gateway is selected because it's construction is attributed to Zeb-un-Nisa, the eldest daughter of Aurangzeb. It is another example of a tomb and its gateways in Lahore, which is associated with

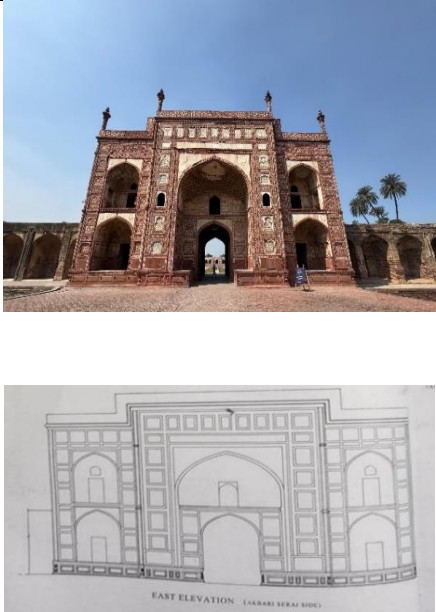
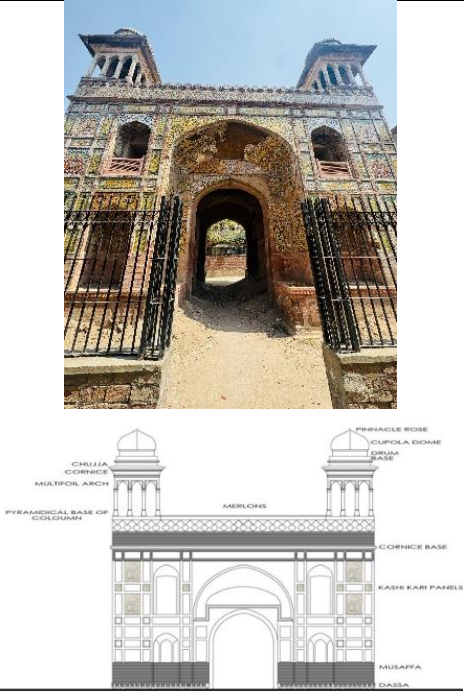

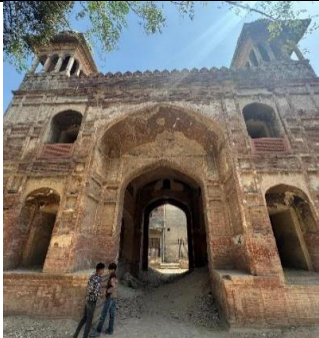
royalty, yet its relevance is questionable. It serves as a quintessential example of the architectural styles and elements that may differ from the other gateways associated with Shahjahan's era.



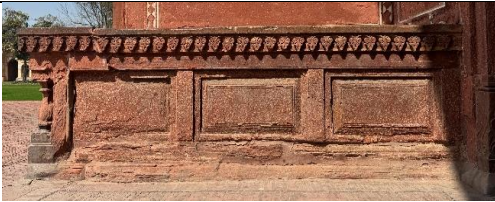


The other examples mentioned, apart from these two gateways, lead to the tombs of nobles or courtiers rather than royal figures. While they showcase unique architectural features, they fall outside the scope of this study.

From Analysis of Entrance Gateways

The present condition of these gateways is totally different from each other. The Nawankot Gateway is in a state of severe deterioration, facing numerous preservation challenges due to encroachments. Despite this, it still offers valuable insights into its distinctive features. In contrast, the gateway at Jahangir's Tomb is relatively well-preserved and continues to reflect the grandeur of its past. Analyzing the architectural forms of these gateways not only provides a glimpse into the aesthetic preferences of their patrons but also opens avenues for further research into their origins and historical significance.

Table.3-Comparative Analysis of Architectural features of selected Case studies		
r	Jahangir's Tomb Gateway-	Nawankot Monument Gateway
.	Axial Study	
	 <p>Fig 5. Site plan of Shahhdra Mausoleum Complex, Source: Google Earth</p>	 <p>Fig 6. Site Plan of Nawankot Monument Source: Google Earth</p>
	<p>Jehangir's tomb is accessed through the western entrance of the Akbari Serai, a unique west-facing entrance, unlike other Mughal tombs, which were typically entered from the south. This unusual orientation means visitors face away from the <i>qibla</i> as they enter, which was unconventional for spaces treated as sacred. The design choice likely stemmed from the garden's layout, where the main gate was on the west, creating a straight pathway to the tomb. Unlike other Mughal tombs, this decision seems purposeful, reflecting Nur Jahan's intent to make the tomb distinct while honouring Jahangir's identity. The westward entrance also aligns visitors with the rising sun, symbolizing Jahangir's title, "Nuruddin," and his association with light and divine authority. This creative yet practical design sets the tomb apart from Mughal traditions.</p>	<p>The tomb-garden built by Zeb-un-Nisa during her lifetime was enclosed by massive, sturdy walls. It featured four grand gateways, each opening to one of the cardinal directions. The existing gateway, which served as the main entrance to the tomb-garden, faces east. Its orientation might be attributed to the garden's initial use as a pleasure garden, which was later transformed into a funerary space.</p>
.	Geometrical Layout and Spatial Distribution	
	 <p>Fig 7. Plan of Jahangir's Tomb Gateway (Akbari Serai) Source: (Mir et al., 1996)</p>	 <p>Fig 8. Plan of Nawankot Gateway Source: Drawn by Timothy M. Ciccone (Butt, 2010).</p>
	<p>The central part of the structure extends outward, creating a cross-shaped layout. The design exhibits axial symmetry along both the north-south and east-west axes. Entrances on the eastern and western sides lead into a rectangular inner chamber. Narrower chambers flank this central space, linking the two zones through smaller archways, seamlessly connecting the Akbari Serai garden</p>	<p>The arrangement of spaces in this square-shaped layout follows a distinct hierarchy. An antechamber connects the eastern entrance to the main inner chamber, disrupting the axial symmetry along the north-south axis. Elevated platforms on the northern and southern sides of the main chamber provide access to small rooms or cells, referred to as chambers, located to the</p>

	with the serene paradise gardens of the mausoleum.	east. These chambers are completely dark, with the entrance serving as their only source of light.
	Architectural Elements of Façade	
	<p>In royal Mughal funerary architecture, gateway facades were often elaborately decorated on both sides, as seen in the tomb gardens of Humayun, Akbar, and Shah Jahan's Taj Mahal. Jahangir's tomb garden, initially a pleasure garden, required modifications to its existing gateway to suit its new role as an imperial funerary site. The eastern facade, facing the tomb, was adorned with floral motifs, while the western side, facing the serai, was covered in sandstone and marble contrary to the usual Mughal practice of reserving the finest materials for the side facing the tomb.</p>	<p>This gateway displays consistent materials and techniques on both its east- and west-facing entrances. The ornamentation on both sides is identical, with no evidence of alterations or additions from a later period.</p>
	 <p>Fig 9.Elevation of West Façade of Jahangir Mausoleum Gateway Source: (Mir et al., 1996)</p>	 <p>Fig 10. East Façade of Nawankot Gateway Source: (Mir et al., 1996)</p>
	 <p>Fig 11. East Façade of Jahangir Mausoleum Gateway Source: The Authors</p>	 <p>Fig 12. West Façade of Nawankot Gateway Source: The Authors</p>

 <p>Fig 13. Four Centred double Arched passage of Jahangir Mausoleum Gateway Source: The Authors</p>	 <p>Fig 14. Four Centred double Arched passage of Nawankot Gateway Source: The Authors</p>
 <p>Fig 15. Plinth of Jahangir Mausoleum Gateway (West Façade) Source: The Authors</p>  <p>Fig 16. Plinth of Jahangir Mausoleum Gateway (East Façade) Source: The Authors</p>	 <p>Fig 17. Plinth of Nawankot Gateway Source: The Authors</p>
Entrance Passage	
<p>The double-storey portal, viewed from both the front and back, features a four-centered double arched passage topped with a semi-spherical muqarnas vault crafted from red sandstone. The large central arch has a small arch shaped opening on top of it to provide light and air circulation to the upper level. On each side of the passage, there is a pair of Tudor arches, one on each floor. These side arches are also adorned with spherical ceilings, intricately designed with honeycomb niches.</p>	<p>The front and rear façades feature a four-centered double arched passage, but the vaulted ceiling of the arch, though adorned with muqarnas, is not as pronounced as the entrance of Jahangir's tomb. The entrance portal does not extend outward. On either side of the main entrance arch of this double-story portal, there is a pair of small arched niches. These openings are positioned close to the frame of the main arch, creating a harmonious architectural composition.</p>
Parpet	
<p>The parapet on the west facade facing the Akbari Serai wrap around only a small portion and doesn't extend around the entire gateway. This makes the western elevation taller than the eastern, disrupting symmetry—an essential feature of Shah Jahan's architectural style.</p>	<p>The height of the parapet on all four sides is the same.</p>
Crenellation	
<p>The roof line is finished with fine edged sandstone band without crenellation.</p>	<p>Crenellations are stylized by Merlons (Mudakhil) (raised and depressed multifoil form) that creates a different skyline as compared to Jahangir's tomb gateway.</p>
Turrets	
<p>Red sandstone colonnettes are positioned at top of the four edges of the west facing wall which aesthetically accentuate the portal. These colonnettes are slender and capped with finials that seem structurally disproportional as compared to the massive structure of the gate.</p>	<p>Main entrance has four umbrellas /Chattris at its four corners originally decorated with golden fluted ribs. Each one is square in plan with as massive pedestal having a small open pavilion called Baradari (summer house). This baradari features multifoil arches.</p>

	<p>Plinth</p>
	<p>Plinth all around the building is characterized by the arrangement of rectangular double framed panels depressed in red sandstone (at west façade) and bricks (at east façade). These frames are almost similar in sizes. This is bordered with patterned red sandstone. All corners of the plinth are transitioned by the placement of balusters, which creates an admirable decoration in the turning plane from one surface to another.</p>
	<p>The plinth all around the building is divided into small and big regular rectangular panels in burnt bricks. All corners of the building are chamfered in the form of a vase (guldān).</p>
	<p>Entrance Sitting</p>
	<p>Before entering the gate there are two projected sitting spaces toward north and south constructed in special small sized burnt bricks. Carved red sandstone is placed over the seats carved and adorned with engraved leaf patterns which in the local language is called Dassa. These sitting spaces are also present on the eastern side of the entrance.</p>
	<p>Sitting spaces both on the eastern and eastern side are also present comparatively with less seating width. These seats are built with similar materials and pattered borders.</p>
	<p>Materials & Surface Decoration</p>
	<div data-bbox="352 658 703 1122" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Fig 18. Panel Decorations of Entrance chamber of Jahangir's Mausoleum Gateway Source: The Authors</p>
	<div data-bbox="948 658 1299 1122" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Fig 19. Panel Decorations of south façade of Nawankot Gateway Source: The Authors</p>
	<p>The entire west-facing façade is adorned with recessed rectangular and square panels crafted from red sandstone. These panels feature inlay of pietra dura motifs embedded in wall that shows imitation of <i>chinikhana</i>. (A space with recessed niches designed specifically for the display of precious vessels.) The bands framing the panels are further embellished with geometric patterns meticulously carved in white marble. The other motifs of decoration include ghulab pash, guldasta, goblets and flowers, lilies, irises, and dishes full of fruits.</p>
	<p>The facades of the gateway are fully adorned with recessed frames crafted from cut bricks, arranged in square and rectangular shapes. These frames are beautifully decorated with <i>Kashi Kari</i> in vibrant shades of blue, green, orange, and yellow. The motifs include <i>guldasta</i> designs, vases, trees, vines, and geometric patterns, reminiscent of the decorative elements seen on the walls of the Wazir Khan Mosque and the Gulabi Bagh Gateway, both constructed during the era of Shah Jahan. Most of the decoration on exterior and interior walls, ceilings, and vaults have been damaged and vivid through white stain of dampness and eroded bricks. Only impression of motifs and coarse lime plaster is seen over the brick masonry.</p>
	<div data-bbox="357 1467 699 1877" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Fig 20. Spandrels and half vault of Jahangir's tomb gateway Source: The Authors</p>
	<div data-bbox="967 1467 1278 1877" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Fig 21. Spandrels and half vault of Nawankot gateway Source: The Authors</p>

<p>The spandrels of the outer and inner arches of the grand entrance are crafted in plain white marble, free from any elaborate ornamentation. The only embellishments are two circular motifs, known as shams, placed on the triangular sections of the spandrels, adding a subtle touch of variety to the design.</p>	<p>The spandrels of the outer tall arch and the inner small arch are adorned in a style that distinctly contrasts with the overall colour scheme and patterns, creating a unique visual emphasis.</p>
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Conclusion

The gateways, once a prominent feature of tomb gardens, served not just as tomb entrances, but as expressions of power, divine authority, and aesthetic grandeur. An exploration of these gateways in the tombs of Lahore reveals that there is a notable absence of such structures and garden paradises from Akbar's period in Lahore. A few tombs from the reigns of Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb originally featured these gateways, though today, no visible traces remain of them. However, a few surviving gateways from the later Mughal periods, especially those from the time of Shah Jahan, provide valuable insights into the continuity and change in Mughal architectural practices.

The comparison between the gateway to Jahangir's tomb and Nawankot Gateway constructed during Shah Jahan's reign underscores the meticulous design choices of Mughal architects, as well as the role of gateways in funerary settings. The gateway to Jahangir's tomb stands out for its intricate spatial arrangement and elaborate ornamentation, reflecting the combined patronage of Noor Jahan (Jahangir's wife), and his successor Shah Jahan. The use of white marble and red sandstone, fresco work and slender cylindrical turrets are some features that mark its resemblance to the Akbar's tomb in Agra and is evidence of the consideration of design taste of Jahangir in its construction. Most intricate and elaborated use of muqarnas vaulted entrance and straight parapet bands without crenellation reflect Shahjahan's elements that are very much visible in later constructions. In contrast, the Nawankot Gateway represents the taste of its patron Zeb un-Nisa with Rajput style small chatri domes on top of the gateway and multifoil formed crenelations. These elements make it unique from Jahangir's tomb gateway and others built during Shahjahan's era. This gateway not only reflects the imperial ambitions of its time but also demonstrates stylistic continuities, particularly in its Kashkari tilework, and floral patterns which echoes the craftsmanship seen in the Wazir Khan Mosque—an emblematic creation of the Shah Jahan period. Together, these gateways reveal the evolution of Mughal architectural traditions and their enduring legacy in funerary and ceremonial contexts with distinctive features such as axial alignments, symmetrical layouts, and refined decoration. However, the deterioration of these gateways raises critical concerns for heritage conservation. The loss of these monumental structures is not just a loss of physical form, but of the cultural and historical narratives they carry with them.

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